

Grant Report – Probationary Faculty Development Grant

String Day: An Outreach and Education Event for Young Musicians and Their Teachers

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Summary

The award of this Probationary Faculty Development Grant allowed me to design and host a music education event on the Sac State Campus for high school string players and their school music teachers. The event was called String Day and took place on May 10th, 2025, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Capistrano Hall. The event was very successful and ended up serving about twenty young musicians and ten music educators. More importantly, the template for this event can be used in the future and it is my hope that Sacramento State School of Music will have a String Day event every year. I believe that this project met the goals initially expressed in the grant application. We were able to reach music students who do not have access to private lessons. We were able to provide pedagogical resources for K-12 music educators in an area that many educators feel they need more instruction and finally, we were able to help make the Sacramento State School of Music a resource for music education in our greater Sacramento region. It is my belief that as the community continues to see the value of our music program we will benefit from improved recruitment to our program and improved attendance at our concerts and events. My sincere thanks to the Graduate Diversity Program for this grant. The release time and the budget allowed me to create the curriculum and run this event, and with the significant work that took place this year to create the model, I believe that a String Day event can be successfully run in the future.

Project Background

While many local high schools have thriving concert band and jazz band programs, there are significantly fewer string orchestra programs. Although schools are attempting to build up these programs, educators need resources in string pedagogy and many of the teachers have expressed

the value and need for string music educator seminars. With the lack of string programs in the area it is difficult to recruit new students to our campus every year. We are lucky to be one of the CSU campuses that has a thriving full orchestra, and we want to continue to build this program through strong recruitment practices. These concerns led to the idea behind the project, to create a string music education day, not only for students but also for music educators.

Significance of the Project

There were several important goals in the creation and implementation of this project. First, to create and host the event to help recruit new students to the Sacramento State School of Music. Second, to continue to make sure that Sac State is a resource for music education in the greater Sacramento area. Third, to create a template that can be used for future years, with the idea that this event could be held every spring through the School of Music. Finally, student assistants were hired and able to get hands on experience in teaching high school age musicians, as well as experience in some of the administrative tasks required to run the event. I believe that the project was a success on all these fronts and am excited to see what direction this event can continue to go in, in the future.

Methodology and Implementation of the Project

Immediately following the awarding of the grant, I set to work on developing this project. The first hurdle was to select a date and reserve Capistrano Hall. Due to the already busy season at the School of Music, Saturday May 10th, was the best date available for this event. Once the date was chosen work on the marketing materials began. Working with our School of Music Events Manager, Glenn Disney, a poster and postcard were created to advertise for this event. The poster

was sent digitally to all the local music education groups as well as many of the music educators in our area. The postcard was taken to local orchestras and other music schools to help spread the word about this event. A Qualtrics survey was created for students and teachers to sign up for the event digitally. One of the three student assistants was hired to do follow up communications with students and music educators and make sure they had all the information they needed for the event including the appropriate release forms. I reached out to the string faculty on campus and confirmed their participation in the event.

After these initial stages I began to develop the curriculum. I curated string orchestra music of various levels and prepared a two-hour lecture on string pedagogy for music educators. In addition, I worked with our string faculty on what topics and in what modality they would run their morning sessions with the students.

On the day of the event, I checked in all of the students and double checked their paperwork. The event started at 10 p.m. with groups divided up. Each instrument group went with a faculty member of the school of music to focus on individual techniques. Students played as a group and individually and focused on all the intricate elements of string technique with our wonderful faculty members. I taught a two-hour course on string pedagogy for music educators, and it was a wonderful session with a mix of veteran educators and some students who have just come out of our credential program.

After a lunch break, we took a short campus tour and then worked as a full group. I put all of the students together into a small orchestra and we took the pedagogical elements from the morning session and put them into practice in orchestra playing. We took a break from the full orchestra to discuss auditions, colleges, and answer any questions the students had. Finally, we regrouped as a full orchestra and worked some more and then had a mini performance to close out the day

at 4 p.m. We had several student assistants helping throughout the day which gave them the opportunity to do some teaching and also gave our guests a chance to get to know Sac State from the student perspective.

I believe that the event was very successful. The students learned some great new information and got to know much more about our program here at Sac State.

In addition, because of the generosity of the Graduate Diversity Program this event was free to attend, allowing access for any students who were interested and continuing to foster the values of diversity and inclusion that are such an important part of our university here at Sac State. As mentioned above the public-school programs in our area tend to skew towards winds and brass instruments. Young string players face significant access challenges when learning their instruments. Without individual lessons it can be difficult for students to make strides as string players, but this of course comes with significant cost. As a first-generation college student myself I understand how music can open doors for someone's future. It is my hope that with events like this we are helping to reduce barriers and create opportunities for students who might not otherwise have access and reinforce our values of diversity and inclusion here at Sac State. Following the event, I created another survey to send to all participants to get some feedback on the effect of the day. We received some wonderful feedback like:

“... I appreciated the session on bowing you did at the Sac State string day. I picked up the Kjelland books and it has really opened my eyes to the complexities of bowing. I'll be implementing a lot of that with my orchestra next year.”

And

“String Day was a very insightful event for me, I was able to soak in information easily that I apply to my playing now. So, I'm very grateful to the instructors and I hope I can come back next year.”

I also received feedback about the best time of year to host this event in the future. I believe that the process of creating and implementing this event will be a great benefit for our university and that it has created a model for these types of events in the future. I'm confident that we could receive even higher enrollment numbers in the future.

Final Budget

Budget Category	Description	Total
Student Assistant	Graduate Student - 6 hours at \$20 per hour	120
Student Assistant	Graduate Student - 3 hours at \$20 per hour	60
Student Assistant	Undergraduate - 3 hours at \$17 per hour	51
Student Assistant	Undergraduate - 7 hours at \$17 per hour	119
Marketing Materials	Printed Postcards	50
Food	Snacks for Participants	52
Total Expenses		452

Project Challenges

Due to the tight window between the grant being awarded and needing to schedule the event, finding an available time was a challenge. The event was hosted on May 10th, 2025. In the future based on the survey results, the early spring would be better for most students and teachers.

Hosting minors on campus for an event is a significant challenge from an administrative perspective. Every family had to fill out multiple forms (liability, media release, etc.) and all faculty involved needed to complete additional training through CSU Learn. In addition, Risk

Management needed to approve the use of the space, and this required some significant paperwork and lead time. With regard to attendance, 41 people signed up for the event, however only 30 total attended for the day; while the non-attendees did not provide feedback for why they were unable to attend, it would be helpful in the future to further examine this to see what additional barriers may have prevented everyone from attending. These limitations will be easier to manage in the future with more lead time as well as now having a better understanding of the administrative tasks necessary. Having a slightly larger budget and more student assistants would also help to facilitate and minimize these issues.

Acknowledgments

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