

Academic Program Review of the  
Department of Music  
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Prepared by the Academic Program Review Subcommittee:

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## **Background**

The Music Department is a member of the School of Arts and Communication, College of Liberal Studies. Its last review was conducted in the 1997-1998 school year, and the College received its latest review in the fall semester of 2006. During the 2000-2001 school year, the program submitted an accreditation report to the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), and the report was accepted in January of 2003. The Music Department completed its Academic Program Review in the Fall of 2006.

Between the years of 1998 and 2005, the Music Department enrolled about 90 majors per year (70 of those in Music Education), with about 22 graduating each year.

## **Summary of the Self-Study**

### **Summary of program goals and objectives:**

The primary objectives of the Music Department include preparing music educators for certified service, developing a high level of musicianship and understanding in music students, sensitizing the general university population to the role of music, and demonstrating excellence in the art of music. The secondary objectives of the department include extending to the community and region an artistic, intellectual, and educational influence and serving as a center for problem-solving expertise in the art of music and music teaching.

### **Summary of how the Program attempts to reach its goals and objectives and the extent to which those goals and objectives have been achieved:**

The Department has clear learning outcomes for all three Music Education emphases (Instrumental, Choral, and General Music) and all six emphases in Bachelor of Arts/Science in Music (Performance, Jazz Performance, Piano Pedagogy, Music History, Music Theory, and Music Theatre). Observing the contemporary emphases and trends, the Department has also revised music history curriculum to include music of other cultures (“Music Cultures”), offered and developed new classes for general education students (“The Listening Experience” and

“Latin-America Music”), and continued to redesign the Music Appreciation courses to include Jazz and a World Music curriculum.

## **Notable Strengths and Weaknesses of the Program**

The most notable achievements of the Music Department is its consistent number of Music degrees granted and its successful placement of the music education graduates in public school positions—98-100% between 2001 and 2005.

### **Purposes:**

The Department of Music serves students enrolled in its programs as Majors or Minors as well as offers courses and organizes activities for the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. The Department also serves the community at large as a cultural center.

### **Curriculum:**

In addition to recent development noted above, the Music Department teaches innovative approaches to general music and has more classical guitar students than most comparable institutions. It offers Korean percussion, a New Music Festival during October, and many Music Department activities of distinction.

The strengths of the Music Department include the following: All music majors and minors receive one-on-one instruction; participation in the Department’s ensembles offers unique cultural and performance experiences to auditioning students from across the campus; and some faculty members have been very successful in recruiting prospective students.

The Department recognizes that it needs to develop a more nurturing and inclusive environment for all faculty and staff, to be constantly involved in assessing its ability to provide music students with the skills and abilities needed to be successful after graduation, and to adjust the Music Appreciation courses from focusing solely on Western classical music to world music.

### **Assessment of Student Learning and Degree of Program Success:**

In addition to using indirect indicators such as the high placement rate, the impressive number of finalists in Wisconsin National Association of Teachers of Singing and Metropolitan Opera guild competitions, and the many invitations of performance at state and regional music education conferences, the Department also assesses student learning and program success by using a series of direct tools including the following:

- Entrance auditions

- Performance juries each semester
- Special 300-level applied juries—students must reach a high-level of performance on upper-level literature and have the ability to articulate knowledge of composers and style period practices for the musical selections that they are performing
- Standardized testing for all music education Majors (Praxis test) concentrating on the music core
- Senior recitals—performance and/or composition
- Independent study and special topics projects
- Yearly ensemble auditions
- Performance juries and Music Department convocation performances for applied students each semester
- Exit survey for recent Music Department graduates

### **Previous Academic Review and New Program Initiatives:**

The review committee of 1997-1998 recommended that the Department address the need of developing General Education course assessment tools. In response, the Department designated a Music Appreciation coordinator in 2003, is offering Music Appreciation students one large lecture section and one small discussion section, and now employs the same textbook, syllabi, and exams in every section. The Department believes that these measures help to ensure the balance between uniformity and clarity for assessment on the one hand, and instructional flexibility on the other.

The 1997-1998 APR committee recommended also the continuation of a dialog with the Murphy Library Resource Center in moving the Music Department's educational media center to Murphy. With the hiring of Dr. Soojin Ritterling, students now are no longer required to check out materials, and the Department's Educational Media Center has been serving as an accessible and safe storage area.

Also, the committee recommended that the Department increase its effort to track its graduates, and the Department has implemented a graduate exit survey process since the summer of 2006.

Finally, the committee recommended that the Department improve its relationship with part-time faculty. Although the Department has been able to find instructors to teach specialty instruments (e.g., flute, oboe, bassoon, French horn, and cello), there has been a decline in the number of students majoring in the performance of specialty instruments. This low enrollment limits the selection of college/university level repertoire for the Symphony Orchestra and Wind Ensemble.

### **Personnel:**

The Department of Music currently consists of 10 tenure-track faculty positions, six tenured and four tenure-track. The Department's FTE totals 12.42 [2003] with 2.42 FTE going to instructional and academic staff positions. The Department supports five academic staff positions, one visiting professor, six adjunct instructors, and two classified staff employees.

The per IFTE of the Department in 2003 is 183.57, while the university's, 326.16, but some discrepancy is expected due the emphasis on one-on-one instruction necessary for music students.

During the years between 2000 and 2005, two faculty members have been awarded sabbaticals. One faculty member worked with several composers, and another completed a musical theatre work, which was presented in concert version in January of 2006. Faculty members have also used faculty Development/Travel Grants to preview European performance venues, to develop new online formats for current courses, and to purchase software and instruments to enhance the teaching of applied voice. Finally, each year, a majority of Music Department members apply for assistance to attend state, regional, and national music conferences.

### **Support for Achieving Academic Program Goals (Resources):**

The Department of Music has major concerns in this area. In terms of physical facilities, there are the needs for a concert hall, a larger Music Library, and more small ensemble rehearsal space in the Center for the Arts. In terms of supplies and equipment, there are the ongoing needs to replace pianos in practice rooms and teaching studios, to upgrade the required software for the Department's Listening Lab, and to purchase CDs and specialty instruments.

Technologically, the Department now maintains a piano lab, where 15 electronic keyboards are linked to computer terminals, a small technology lab, and a Listening Lab. The booth in the Annett Recital Hall has digital recording software, and the Department also owns portable recorders (CD and flashcard).

### **Comments on External Review/Department Response/Dean's Letter:**

In March of 2000, the Department of Music was visited by representatives of the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) for re-accreditation purposes. The subsequent Visitor's Report was very thorough and noted the Department's many strengths as well as areas in need of attention. Of particular concern were several NASM Standards that appeared not to have been met for the BS in Music Education degree. In October of 2000 the department responded to the concerns raised in the Visitor's Report. Accreditation was initially deferred for the BS in Music Education degree. The department responded to the deferral of accreditation in September of 2001 and the department's degree programs were re-accredited in January of 2003. The Department's APR was completed in 2005 and in September and October of 2006 the Dean and Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Studies responded.

Trends that emerge over this period of time include the following strengths: continued accreditation by NASM that is reflective of the high quality of department programs, its diverse and highly qualified faculty, its strong and broad curriculum, and its varied ensemble opportunities. Strong community outreach both by faculty and students, opportunities abroad for students, university wide non-major or minor participation in department curriculum and ensembles are also cited. Extremely high placement rates for graduating Music Education Majors, and generally successful student recruiting, among many others, round out department strengths. Over time strong assessment has led to change and progress toward department goals including areas mentioned below.

Areas that require strengthening fall into four major categories:

**Facilities and resources:** There is no concert hall of adequate size for the rehearsal and performance of large ensembles thus inhibiting the work, growth and mission of the department. Foundation has not been able to generate enthusiasm among potential donors for support of building a new facility. Backstage facilities for the 288 seat Annett recital hall are inadequate or non-existent. Additional storage space for instruments and library holdings needs to be secured as well as studio teaching space and rehearsal space of appropriate size for small ensembles. The Listening Library requires updated technology as well and funding needs to be secured to digitalize library holdings (most of which are vinyl LP's). The ongoing need to replace music department pianos as they wear out is a constant concern.

**Collaboration with the School of Education:** The selection process for admission into the Music Education program excludes music faculty participation. Although progress has been made, there have continued to be conflicts in advising, course offerings and rotations, time conflicts between School of Education clinicals and Music Department required classes and ensemble rehearsals, resulting in longer time to degree rates for Music Education majors. However it should be mentioned that despite noted difficulties there are job placement rates for Music Education graduates in the 95-100% range and all parties celebrate this achievement. The Dean's letter mentions the large enrollment numbers for the B.S. Education, Music Education Major and suggests the possibility of reducing the size of this Major. The relationship with the School of Education will remain in constant need of monitoring and strengthening. These graduates are, at high rates, placed teaching in programs from which the Department recruits. This has potentially beneficial and certainly long-term consequences for student recruitment, enrollment in ensembles (both by Major and non-Majors), and overall musicianship among incoming students.

**The recruitment, retention, and mentoring of junior faculty:** The NASM report expressed concerns over the relatively few number of full professors for a department of its

size. While these numbers have grown, the self-study and the Deans' letters admit a more nurturing environment for junior faculty needs to be established with improved mentoring, support, and clearly defined expectations for recruitment.

**Long term planning:** The recruitment and retention of students to play and instructors to teach specialty instruments effects educational opportunities for all by limiting programming possibilities for ensembles. In light of expected retirements, plans need to be developed to proactively deal with future staffing needs. The possibility of changing the Department's core degree to a more expedient Bachelor of Music, if undertaken, will require sustained shared effort. The NASM visitor's report cites the need for a clear and consistent vision for the future. The self-study and the Dean's letter both mention departmental collegiality and internal communications are less than ideal.

## **APR's Recommendations**

1. The Department and the School of Education should continue to address issues related to advising, admissions of, and credit policies regarding music education students. We see this as very beneficial to the long-term health of the Department.
2. The Department needs to explore ways to further engage in fund raising so as to collaborate with the College of Liberal Studies and the School of Arts and Communication to make a new concert hall a priority.
3. The Department needs to foster better recruiting methods that can attract full-time or high profile instructors as private teachers for specialty instruments in order to request an increase in the adjunct budget.
4. The Department needs to improve mentoring and support of junior faculty.
5. The Department of Music should undergo its next Academic Program Review in seven years.