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Section III. Evaluation, Planning, Projections

Music Unit

In Spring 2014 the School implemented an annual Assessment Plan to determine learning outcomes and assessment tools for all undergraduate and graduate programs. The plan calls for faculty to create rubrics for the collection of data about student learning, for faculty to discuss the findings, and to “close the loop” by making adjustments to course delivery if necessary. These adjustments might include changes to course assignments and course offerings, offering tutoring, improving advising, increasing faculty support, and more. The School’s assessment data has been shared with the College, and the plan can be annually revisited and adjusted. The process is not meant as a measure of instructor competence, but as a means to monitor and improve the quality of our programs. Please see the Management Documents Portfolio for a link to the complete Assessment Plan. *(MDP #5.2)*

The School engages in several program evaluation processes throughout each year, including but not limited to: strategic planning, general studies assessment, institutional effectiveness reporting, budgeting, and updating or enhancing School governance documents. The School utilizes a Director Advisory Committee for initial planning and evaluation of major issues. The committee’s findings, recommendations, and projections are then presented to the full faculty.

The School holds monthly faculty meetings to address specific agenda items proposed by the administration and/or faculty. Additional School committees meet on a regular basis. These committees have designated chairs, either appointed or elected, and have specific objectives, goals, and measurable outcomes *(see committee-School Governance Documents, MDP #5.3)*. It is essential that all objectives, outcomes, and goals are documented and discussed to improve our School’s effectiveness and to refine the strategic plan each academic year. Additionally, each major area of the School (Performance, Academic, Professional Studies) meets on a consistent basis to discuss relevant issues.

Students

The Assessment Plan referred to above is intended to provide regular opportunities for the collection of data to determine if students are realizing the intended learning outcomes in their program of study. In addition to the Assessment Plan, fall semester juries and spring semester barrier juries, along with recital hearings, are just a few ways to determine if a student’s musical growth is improving at an acceptable rate. Students in Music Education, Music Therapy, and the BA in Music must complete Junior reviews meant to assess their overall readiness to move into the final portion of their degree programs.

Projected Improvements and Changes

1. Purposes, including levels of artistic, educational, and scholarly aspiration
We aspire to continuously improve for our course delivery, musical achievement, and graduation rates. Our new assessment process, including evaluation of advising, is intended to enable this. We also aspire to increase our pool of prospective students in order to become more selective and improve the quality and readiness of incoming classes.

2. Size and Scope

The School is hampered by a lack of physical space. We have maximized available space for faculty offices and currently have early-retired faculty sharing office spaces. There is very limited storage space, which impacts the marching band, opera program, and percussion studio. We often have to throw away stage sets after productions due to the lack of storage space. This is a waste of our limited production budget.

Our largest facilities issue is a lack of sufficient rehearsal rooms. We have just one large rehearsal room used primarily for instrumental ensembles, and one room, essentially a double classroom, used for vocal ensembles. This means that only one instrumental and one vocal ensemble can rehearse at any one time. The result is that most academic classes must be scheduled in the morning, making it extremely difficult to create a class schedule without creating conflicts for the students. Juggling one large rehearsal space for all of our ensembles is a logistical nightmare and in some cases, compromises the quality of our students’ ensemble experiences.

Other facilities problems include serious HVAC issues. These problems manifest themselves in uncontrollable temperatures which damage instruments and cause an additional burden on tuning and maintenance, particularly with pianos and wooden wind instruments.

3. Governance and administration

The University has implemented a new budget model entitled Responsibility Centered Management (RCM). This model funds academic units based on credit hour production, graduation numbers and other factors, which in the long term may impact our curricular and staffing decisions. RCM was put into place beginning Fall 2014, so the impact of this new model may not be fully understood for a period of time. *(MDP #5.18)*.

There are no anticipated major shifts to the governance structure on the School or College levels.

4. Faculty and Staff

The School is currently in the initial stages of a search for a tenure-track faculty member to head the Music Theory area. In addition, a search will soon be underway for a full-time, non-tenure track faculty member in Music Therapy. There remains a need for additional faculty in music theory, voice, and in the string area on bass (currently taught by adjunct faculty) and viola (currently taught by our violin professor). Staffing needs also include restoration of previous staff accompanist lines. Additionally, the School would highly
benefit from the addition of a new staff position to oversee marketing/promotion work, which is central to the mission of the School. Such a position could also help facilitate better outreach to alumni.

Since our last self-study, the graduate collaborative piano degree program was suspended upon the elimination of a faculty line due to budget cuts. Interest in this program remains strong as exhibited by steady student inquiries. Along with the staff position described above, the reinstatement of this faculty line is sure to have a significant, positive impact on the School with regard to addressing critical student accompanying needs.

5. Facilities, equipment, technology, health, and safety

The quantity and quality of our available physical spaces continue to be a significant problem. The lack of rehearsal space, HVAC problems, and classroom shortages are continuing issues.

An additional issue that we are working to address is the use of rooms within Glidden Hall by non-music University classes when the rooms appear to be free on the scheduling system. This makes it very difficult to schedule such music activities as chamber music rehearsals and sectionals. All of these issues have been, and will continue to be, addressed with the University administration.

We are also having serious issues with large equipment purchases, especially pianos. Our lack of a piano technician, the age of the instruments, and the HVAC problems will undoubtedly combine to create a crisis in the coming years. We are currently fundraising to purchase a new concert grand piano for the recital hall. These efforts have been largely unsuccessful, and unfortunately our budget cannot support such a purchase. The resolution of this problem is unclear at this time.

The School houses a MIDI lab that features 14 work stations outfitted with Apple desktop computers, keyboards, and relevant software. Our technology fund has been able to keep up with the software demands in the lab, however these funds are not adequate to replace the lab’s soon-to-be outdated computers. The funding source for this upgrade is at this time unknown.

The School has taken strides to provide students, faculty, and staff with information and resources pertaining to health and safety. Relevant NASM documents pertaining to vocal, aural, and neuromusculoskeletal health are easily accessed on the School’s website. (see links to health/safety info for students/faculty MDP #5.15) Emails were sent to all music students and all faculty/staff in early January 2015 to reinforce the existence of these online materials.

In addition, music students, faculty and staff have access to two important on-campus resources: the Ohio University Hearing, Speech & Language Clinic; and the SHApe (Science and Health in Artistic Performance) Clinic. (See MDP #1.5) Qualified professionals from each of these clinics have visited the School and spoken to students during our
Performance Lab meeting times. We are pleased to report that student and faculty make frequent use of these clinics, and faculty have incorporated additional visits from these professionals into their classes. Music classes also make frequent trips to the SHAPe clinic.

One unique course offering, MUS 3790 - Performance Preparation, is a course dedicated to developing strategies for preparing physically and psychologically to achieve maximum potential in musical performance.

For general health and wellness, the faculty and staff have access to WellWorks, the Ohio University health and wellness facility. This resource is available to employees, retirees, and spouses/dependents.

In an effort to promote general safety within Glidden Hall, students are consistently encouraged to keep personal items locked up when not in use. Lockers are available for a small rental fee. Posted operating hours are enforced, with exterior doors to the building locked at closing hours. Policies for utilizing the 6th floor of Glidden (practice room floor) are posted, and reiterated in the student handbook. Contact information is also made available in the music office to Ohio University Counseling & Psychological Services.

6. Library and learning resources

Our Music/Dance Library is funded and controlled by the University library system. This system has worked well over the years. Our music librarian recently left for another position, and the University library has pledged to conduct a national search for a new head Music/Dance librarian.

7. Recruitment procedures

The School is being encouraged to grow our undergraduate student population. In order to grow in a healthy way and to maintain balance within programs, ensembles, and applied studios, we desperately need to develop new scholarship funds. Our current funds are inadequate for our recruiting needs, and certainly do not allow for growth in underrepresented instruments/voice types. We often have very talented students who identify OU as their top choice but who cannot attend due to limited scholarship support. The School is eager to work closely with University advancement personnel to address this critical and fundamental need. The faculty invest considerable effort on individual and collective recruiting, including numerous free lessons and multiple events geared towards prospective students. This issue is under review by the Dean, and we hope to pursue new university-supported scholarship funds.

8. Published materials

The Dean has established a team in the College office to help maintain the quality of printed materials. We will work with this team and the newly hired Director of External Relations. There has been considerable frustration with the School and College websites. The redesign that took place a few years ago left the School website worse in most ways, and
without a staff position assigned to maintaining the site, it is a continual challenge to ensure its accuracy and clarity.

9. Community involvement

There is a need to increase the visibility of the School across campus, the city, and the region. While numerous faculty and ensembles work closely with individuals and entities in the community, it is essential that music, and the arts in general, are highly visible to community members who consume and support our efforts. The School hopes to expand Summer Camp participation, Athens Community Music School enrollment and offerings, and to enhance community services offered by the Music Therapy area.

10. Any current curricular issues

We are currently reevaluating the core music theory curriculum. Proposed changes include adding a remedial class that would be required for students scoring poorly on the entrance music theory test, and providing trailer sections of core theory courses. Staffing additional sections is not possible at the present time, but we plan to move forward with the remedial class, with trailer sections if necessary, in order to improve our theory completion rates.

There has long been tension between the School and the College of Education regarding the completion of requirements for teacher certification. While lines of communication have been open between the School and the College of Education, issues regarding requirements and field experience remain unresolved (see MDP #5.4 for specific proposals and comparisons of other state schools). We continue to work to address these issues, acquire more control of students’ pre-professional experience, and to refine the curriculum to better serve the needs of our students.

11. Levels of admission, retention, and/or graduation requirements

Student retention is a concern and a major focus for our faculty. The music theory issues discussed above are one of the ways we are addressing this issue. Our new initiatives in assessment and subsequent adjustments to program delivery are additional approaches to improving retention and graduation rates. The At Risk program is another effort whereby faculty identify students who are having trouble in any academic class.

12. Plans for expanding or ending curricular offerings

Following the change from quarters to semesters, we need to continue to question the number of classes we offer and determine if the classes are appropriate for our new schedule and current staffing. For example, on the quarter system we offered a two-year rotation of literature classes that resulted in offering a total of six different classes. Under semesters, we still have six classes, but only four semesters in which to offer them. This has resulted in low enrollment in some classes.

The College of Business has partnered with the School in the recent addition of a Certificate in Entrepreneurship. Under the Certificate, students will take three business/marketing
courses, along with two electives. The School has identified courses that can serve towards these electives for the certificate. We anticipate that this certificate will be attractive to students who wish to supplement their music degrees with business skills and knowledge that will serve them as music professionals.

Discussions are underway to reevaluate the BA in Music, with the goal of expanding student enrollment in the program. One proposal includes the creation of emphases within the degree, such as in Jazz Studies or other academic disciplines (musicology or theory, for example).

13. Other issues important to the music unit.

**Futures Issues**

The School is working to develop a strategic plan that will help to shape and define our priorities as we move forward. The College has contracted with consultants from the Genysys Group to help facilitate and coordinate that process. The School’s leadership has had meetings with the consultants and will continue the process, continually adding more faculty into the discussions. With the aid of the consultants, the School has begun crafting a strategic plan to clearly define and communicate our goals and challenges in the coming years. This process is not yet complete, but has resulted in several emerging themes:

- The need for an additional rehearsal space
- The need for reasonable heating and cooling in the music building
- A desire to shape our faculty to represent our needs and to maximize our strengths.
- The need for additional scholarship funds to attract the best students, particularly on needed instruments.
- The need to increase collaboration within the College. (Co-production of the musical “Urine Town” with Division of Theatre scheduled for Spring 2016)
- The desire to improve our connection to alumni of the School

**Strengths of the School of Music**

**Our Faculty**

We are proud to feature an outstanding and nationally-recognized faculty at all levels – adjunct through senior full professor. These are professional practitioners in a wide variety of academic and performing areas. The School is incredibly well-represented through faculty activity across the U.S. and abroad.

The faculty has a long record of success in preparing students for careers in numerous musical fields. We are fortunate to have full-time studio faculty on many instruments, most of whom also teach academic subjects. The School is large enough to have a complete program but small enough so that there is a respectable student-to-teacher ratio, with undergraduate students often taking on leadership opportunities in ensembles. Instruction is provided largely by faculty rather than GAs, which can be the case at other universities.
Faculty strive to maintain a curricular balance between students’ academic and performance opportunities, and invest considerable time personally mentoring students, especially the graduate teaching assistants. With a mostly full-time faculty, many of whom reside close to campus, there is greater opportunity for consistent accessibility between faculty and students.

Of particular significance is the atmosphere of collegiality maintained by the faculty, which includes open and respectful communication. This collaborative spirit has historically been a defining feature of our School’s faculty, and has not shifted despite significant changes in personnel since our last self-study.

Our Students
As with the faculty, our students are active as performers and scholars. Many compete at regional competitions, represent the School in honors/intercollegiate ensembles, and participate in regional and national professional conferences. On campus, our students are exposed to outstanding performance opportunities via a variety of ensembles offered to music majors and general university students. Through advising and other procedures, the faculty tracks and assists each student who enters as a music major.

Our students benefit from comprehensive offerings, including such unique programs as Music Therapy (which distinguishes us from other schools in the state), Honors Tutorial College program, and Minor in Jazz Studies. Those students who enter our program are nationally competitive, many of whom receive well-funded assistantships, providing “on the job” training.

Our Graduates
Our graduates receive high placement in outstanding masters and doctoral programs around the country, and also win prominent professional positions. Job placement rates are high for Music Education and Music Therapy graduates. Music graduates stay connected through participation in the School of Music Society of Alumni & Friends, and with the OU Alumni Association. Under new leadership, our alumni board is eager to identify new ways in which to support the School and promote its offerings.

Our Service to the Community and Region
Our community outreach is substantial. The School presents more than 140 concerts/workshops/recitals annually to the University and region, most of which are at no charge. Our students, faculty, and visiting artists enrich the community with high quality presentations. A significant outreach component is the Athens Community Music School, which provides classes, lessons and ensembles to all ages. The Communiversity Band (which offers the summer Concerts Under the Elms series) and Hallowpalooza concert (which provides an annual concert to 1,500 school-aged students) are examples of additional initiatives that extend the School’s reach beyond campus.

The service work of our faculty, including recruiting, courses to non-majors, and concerts on and off campus, is commendable, and unique to the entire campus. The Honor Band, Honor Choir, and Honor Orchestra events have proven to be highly successful recruitment
activities. A high percentage of these students matriculate to OU. Often in other majors. Additionally, many applied studios host on-campus recruiting events, and numerous faculty members utilize travel funds and technological tools to reach out to recruits.

*Our History*

Our beautiful campus provides a safe and inviting learning environment. Located near the center of campus within Glidden Hall, the School has been officially in existence since 1917, although some of the individual programs date back to the 1880s. As early as 1883 Ohio University offered piano lessons, however such lessons were considered an extracurricular activity. In 1889 the University established a Department of Vocal Music under Eva Norris within the College of Arts and Sciences. In 1892 the music program expanded to include instrumental as well as vocal music. In 1917 the Department of Vocal and Instrumental Music became the School of Music with Alexander S. Thompson as Director. In 1936 the departments of music, dramatic art, and art combined and became the College of Fine Arts, which presently includes four Schools: Art; Dance, Film, and Theater; Interdisciplinary Arts; and Music.