

From: Thom Priest, Chair of Performing Arts

To: Madonne Miner, Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities

Re: Response to the 2010 Program Review Evaluation Team

The Recommendations/Commendations from the Program Review Team are written in italics below. Our response to these recommendations/commendations are written below in plain text.

The members of the visiting team wish to thank the department chair, faculty, students, staff, and dean for their assistance during the visit. The spirit of openness, teamwork, and collegiality that was apparent during the visit certainly is a large factor in the success of the department. We offer the following recommendations in the spirit of building on current strengths in the Department while trying to address apparent areas of concern in three areas: Curriculum and Advising, Personnel, and Budget.

Curriculum and Advising Recommendations with Department Responses

1. Based on discussions with the faculty, students and chair, the team recommends the following options for the faculty to consider as they continue to strive to improve academic advising in the department:

a) Consider inviting the college academic advisor, Debby Murphy, to be a part of staff meetings.

Disagree: We feel it is inappropriate to have the Debby Murphy to be a part of staff meetings. Debby's primary function is to advise our students on matters related to General Education Requirements.

b) Consider identifying a strong upper division student in each program to serve as a paid peer advisor.

Agree and Disagree: We do advise students in "First Year Experience" (music) and "Freshman Seminar" (theatre) class to seek out assistance from upper division students. We also usually employ a Performing Arts student as an office assistant in the DPA office. This particular student usually functions well as an advisor for his/her particular area (music, dance, or theatre), but is more likely to refer students from a different area to the appropriate faculty advisor. If we pursue this avenue, we would need to secure students from music, dance, and theatre to serve in this capacity.

c) Consider improving accountability in advising by tracking student advising and progress to degree completion (including determining an average time to completion and reasons for significant deviation from the average) and rewarding faculty for their participation in the process.

Agree: This is a good suggestion, but we are unsure of how we would do this. How could we track student advising and progress as well as reward faculty for participating in this process?

d) Consider offering training sessions to all faculty for the cat tracks system.

Agree: We have already done this. We are also producing advising handouts for new students that clearly state what coursework students should enroll in for their first semester in the DPA.

e) Consider using a social networking site such as Facebook as a clearinghouse for student advising announcements.

Agree: Dance is pursuing this as a means of addressing advising issues. We will explore this further.

f) Consider providing a dedicated, full time, academic advisor for the Department of Performing Arts.

Agree: Considering that DPA faculty's schedules are often busy with rehearsals, classes as well as applied music lessons and that students often have very full schedules, it is not surprising that DPA students do not have many opportunities to seek out and meet with their advisors. Because of the number of our degree programs (6 majors and 5 minors) and the full schedules of our faculty, an academic advisor would be the best means to solve our troubles with providing timely and appropriate advising for all DPA students.

2. The team recommends that the music faculty consider the current practice in administering the piano proficiency and the consequences for students who do not pass the examination on the first attempt. In particular, we recommend that they discuss the option of completing the examination in modules so that failing one component does not require a student to retake the entire exam. It would be appropriate for the faculty to discuss this requirement in light of the national norms for this practice in preparation for the department's upcoming National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) self-study and site visit.

Agree: We have already made this change. Music students may now continue to test on the portions of the piano proficiency that they did not complete in their earlier attempt(s).

3. The team recommends that the faculty consider how being part of a department of performing arts can enrich the curriculum and intellectual/artistic environment by crossing the boundaries of the individual disciplines. To the extent possible, we recommend that the faculty consider providing appropriate opportunities, formal and/or informal, for student collaboration across disciplines.

Agree: We continue to seek out opportunities for collaboration, however the need to provide quality programs within dance, music, and theatre, hinders these efforts. Although we value collaboration, we must continue to compare our individual areas of music, dance, and theatre with other departments from institutions in Utah as well as comparative universities from around the nation. In many of our peer institutions, music, dance, and theatre exist as separate departments. The music area in particular must meet certain standards for accreditation by the National Association of Schools of Music and these standards seem to inhibit our ability to collaborate effectively on a regular basis. There are, however, opportunities where we do collaborate as we make decisions on hiring new faculty and in the approval of curriculum. Additionally, students from each area do seek out and participate in the other areas of the department.

WSU Department of Performing Arts Visiting Team Report Personnel Recommendations with Department Responses

4. As full time faculty lines become available to the college, the team recommends that the dean engage the chair and faculty in a discussion of where new hires would fit in their priorities for the future, considering, in particular, the administrative roles of two members of the theatre faculty. As these new hires are made, it may be wise to consider putting into place a more formal mentoring structure for junior faculty in the department.

Agree: This is a good suggestion. Since the report was issued, one of the theatre faculty in an administrative role has left the university. A member of the music faculty has taken on this administrative role. We will seek out opportunities to provide formal mentoring for junior faculty in the department. This could easily be accomplished by providing a new faculty member with a peer in his/her area.

5. The team recommends that the chair consider attending the meetings of each of the areas of dance, music and theatre and staff meetings for the department. In addition, we recommend that he consider sponsoring informal meetings for faculty from the various programs for an exchange of ideas, and regularly-scheduled meetings for the staff, separate from faculty meetings.

Agree: The chair regularly attends departmental, theatre, and music meetings and is seeking ways to better communicate with the dance faculty. We will explore the possibility of separate staff meetings. It is, however, difficult to schedule faculty for meetings because of classes, applied music lessons, and other university meetings.

Budget Recommendations with Department Responses

6. As budgets allow, the team recommends that the college and department work away from reliance on student fees for such a large percentage of the budget. Replacing student fee income with state-appropriated funds would provide a more stable base for planning and for making artistic decisions.

Agree: The new chair is becoming familiar with the process of securing funds from student fees. We would prefer not to rely upon student fees for such a large percentage of our budget and we seek opportunities to move in this direction.

7. The team recommends that the chair and dean review the budgetary processes and allocations for the department and share more detailed information regarding the budget with faculty and staff in their specific areas of responsibility.

Agree: In the process of applying for the Presser Scholarship, the chair was able to provide a great deal of information about our budget that we needed to gather for this scholarship. As the chair becomes for familiar with the budgetary process he will seek out opportunities to share this information with the faculty and staff.

8. The team recommends that the chair, dean, and facility director engage in a discussion of ways to systematize the process of budgeting for equipment replacement (computers, instruments, lab equipment, etc.) involving other members of the faculty and staff as necessary in setting priorities.

Agree: We continue to engage in discussions about budgeting for computers, instruments, lab equipment, classroom needs, and recording facilities.