

WSU Five-Year Program Review: Music Area

Report of the Self-Study Review Team

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April 6, 2015

Thank you for the opportunity to review the music area at Weber State University. Overall, we feel this is an excellent program in which students benefit from small class sizes, one-on-one attention, regular performance opportunities (e.g. convocations), expert faculty, and beautiful facilities. There seems to be a general sense of trust, collegiality, and comfort between students, faculty, and staff. We offer the following specific evaluations and recommendations (organized according to the self-study categories) in hopes that they will be helpful as you continue to refine this important university program.

Standard A: Mission Statement

We recommend a thorough revision of the mission statement relative to the following three considerations:

- First, the mission statement for the music area should align clearly with those of the Lindquist College of Arts and Humanities and Weber State University. For instance, the college claims to be “the Western region’s foremost institution for student-centered teaching and research that investigates the human experience and aims to educate global citizens who are responsible, creative and critical artists, performers and communicators” and the university’s mission includes “encouraging freedom of expression and valuing diversity.” How are the values of critical thinking, creativity, global citizenship, and freedom of expression reflected in the music area?
- Second, a 21st Century music program ought to be responsive to musical and cultural diversity increasingly apparent within the surrounding communities and throughout the world. We feel that realignment relative to this important value would place the WSU music area at the “cutting edge” of music education in the region.
- Third, we suggest that the new mission statement represent the collective efforts of the faculty. What skills and interests do you personally cultivate as faculty members, and how can these best be applied to meet the needs of your students and the communities you serve?

Standard B: Curriculum

We encourage the faculty to enter a formal and ongoing conversation about the music curriculum. To that end, we offer the following questions for reflection:

- How can the curriculum best be aligned with the revised mission statement?
- The students expressed a desire for increased diversity, additional opportunities for creativity, and more overall program flexibility. In what ways could current course and program offerings be adapted to meet their needs?
- The self-study authors mentioned the College Music Society “manifesto,” *Transforming Music Study from its Foundations*. Could that document serve as a useful resource in curricular revisions?
- The music education majors with whom we visited suggested that their program could include a greater focus on music education (vs. performance). Given that roughly forty percent of graduates are music education majors, how might individual courses and the program in general be adapted to meet their needs? What guidance might the Utah Effective Teaching Standards offer?
- Finally, as the university continues to grow, could it be time for the music area to explore the addition of select masters-level courses?

Standard C: Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment

Music educators are traditionally adept at performance and rubric-style assessments. We recommend a focus on these and other qualitative data with key artifacts (e.g. a couple of juries, a music history report, a major theory assignment or composition, a lesson plan, completion and placement rates) gathered uniformly from each student to serve as data points for longitudinal comparisons. These rich data, we feel, would be preferable to standardized test data.

Standard D: Academic Advising

The students were very positive overall about their experience with advising, particularly with the guidance they received from the college advisor. This system seems to be working well. One transfer student mentioned some concerns, but the other students in the interview group were quick to let this student know what processes to follow and who to contact for advising.

Standard E: Faculty

It appears that faculty members are highly qualified. There is a need to more specifically define the role of adjunct faculty within the music area. What types of interactions are fostered between full-time and adjunct faculty? Is funding for special projects (e.g. technology, travel, professional development) available to all faculty members? What programs are available for the purposes of acknowledging and incentivizing adjunct faculty?

Standard F: Program Support

Although the technology facilities are outstanding, the multimedia specialist and some of the students expressed interest in transitioning to more portable technologies in addition to, or instead of, the traditional media lab. For instance, a common software package could be required and used for multiple courses. Also, we noticed students sitting on the floor in the hall; they might benefit from lab/lounge arrangements.

A variety of scenarios were mentioned for additional administrative support. We suggest at least the addition of an associate chair from a performing area (music, theatre, or dance) different from the chair.

The relationship between the Browning Center and the music area seemed curious to us. Why is the music area required to rent space from the Browning Center? Could these important performance lab spaces at least be made available to the students during the day when not in use for performances or setup? Students need to hear how they sound in a recital hall and gain staging experience. These observations came from both our tour of the facilities and from our conversation with the students.

Standard G: Relationships with External Communities

Collaborations with theatre and dance areas, as noted in the self-study, already take place and have been well-received. Partnerships with other university departments, for instance the Beverley Taylor Sorenson Arts Learning Program and the University Council for Teacher Education, could also be mentioned and nurtured. In addition, we recommend a greater programming synergy with the Center for Cultural Affairs; at the very least, a music faculty member should be included on that committee.

Standard H: Program Summary

Overall, this is a strong comprehensive music program. Recommendations for the previous program review have been implemented, and plans have been made relative to the self-study. The following is a summary of our recommendations:

1. Work together as a faculty to update the mission statement to reflect college and university mission statements and to become more responsive to musical and cultural diversity in the surrounding community.
2. Enter conversations as an entire faculty to explore how the curriculum might be adapted to reflect the mission statement and to meet the evolving needs of students.
3. Use key artifacts (e.g. papers, compositions, lesson plans) and rubric assessments (e.g. juries) as qualitative data points for longitudinal comparisons.
4. Outline, more specifically, the role and place of adjunct faculty in relationship to full-time faculty.
5. Continue updating digital and electronic media with special attention to portable technologies and lab/lounge arrangements.
6. Explore the possibilities of students using the Browning Center's performance venues as space is available.
7. Provide more administrative support within the department by adding an associate chair.
8. Foster and support across-campus collaborations including BTS-ALP and UCTE partnerships.