

Undergraduate Degree Program Assessment Progress Report Cover Sheet:

Degree: Music BA 18 For Calendar Year 2009

Date submitted to college committee: 2/28/09 By Rolf Groesbeck

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1) Student Learning Goals addressed this year:

Every year the goals are the same. Students who successfully complete the BA in Music will be able to:

- 1) Hear, identify, and work conceptually with the elements of music—harmony, texture, melody, rhythm, and form (Aesthetic Experience, Information Technology [in the area of Songwriting LO 1])
- 2) Demonstrate understanding of compositional processes, aesthetic properties of style, and the ways these shape and are shaped by artistic and cultural forces; (Aesthetic Experience, Critical Thinking, Verbal Literacy, Historical Consciousness, Social/Cultural Awareness, International Awareness)
- 3) Demonstrate an acquaintance with a wide selection of musical literature; the principal eras, genres, and cultural sources (Aesthetic Experience, Historical Consciousness, Social/Cultural Awareness, International Awareness)
- 4) Develop and defend musical judgments (Aesthetic Experience) (Note: this Goal was inactive in 2009, therefore no LOs have derived from it)
- 5) Achieve ability in performing areas appropriate to the students' needs and interests (Aesthetic Experience)
- 6) Sight read (Aesthetic Experience)
- 7) Utilize procedures for realizing a variety of musical styles (Aesthetic Experience)

The Goals as a whole address distinct aspects of the department's mission ("...to cultivate an appreciation and understanding of diverse genres of music...to ensure each music major is able to perform, read, notate, analyze, and contextualize music"...), as revised in the department's 2006 strategic plan; in a sense the goals just collectively restate these two aspects of the mission. The Program Goals (also created by the Department for its 2006 Strategic Plan), by contrast, are more oriented towards faculty achievement and less to student learning (with the possible exception of #2 and #5, below). But the Secondary Ed program as a whole responds to Music Department Program Goals #6 and #8, as well:

- 1) "The Department will...recruit and retain the state's best music students as... majors";
- 2) "...expand its program offerings...";
- 3) "...support and strengthen [the department's] faculty...";
- 4) "...provide a facility...conducive to...music study and performance...";
- 5) "...expand its...experiences for the...students, faculty/staff, and the community...";
- 6) "increase its role in the arts community and with area schools";
- 7) "...ongoing...workshops for the community";
- 8) "...educational outreach program...for...disadvantaged...public school students"

2) Learning Outcomes/Objectives for those goals addressed this year:

The LOs are associated with emphases as well as with goals. Assessment reports since 2002 have divided the department into nine separate emphases or tracks, as follows:

- a. **Music History (hereafter MH)**
- b. **Music Theory**
- c. **Songwriting/Composition**
- d. **Guitar**
- e. **Voice**
- f. **Piano** (as a major area of concentration chosen by a small number of majors; contrast with g, below)
- g. **Group Piano** (as a requirement of all majors; i.e., all majors are required to pass a piano proficiency exam, and they prepare for this exam by taking group piano/piano skills classes)
- h. **Other instruments (percussion, strings, woodwinds, brass.** The last two times we assessed this area (2002, 2005) the numbers of majors in these areas were almost nonexistent, with the exception of string bass both times. Thus, they were not considered major areas of concentration by the department, and with the exception of bass were not reported upon. In most cases these areas were manned by adjuncts. Recently, however, we have made faculty hires in these areas, and the numbers of majors in these areas has grown. I did not request reports for any of the faculty working in these areas for 2009, but we anticipate writing reports for some of them in 2011 (for the 2010 year).)
- i. **Music Secondary Ed/Vocal Licensure**

All music majors are required to achieve proficiency in a, b, and g. In addition, each student chooses to concentrate in (usually) one of the above (except g), as his/her primary emphasis.

Each track, except i, has its own LOs. The program as a whole has no LOs. The LOs of specific tracks derive from one or more of the Goals stated above, but it is more convenient to list LOs first by track. The linkage between Goals and LOs will be summarized at the end of this section.

Assessment Cycle (modified slightly since last year):

Plan 2001-02 (i.e. written in early 2002 for year 2001), 2006-07, 2012-2013 etc.

MH 2002-03, 2005-2006, 2009-2010, 2013-2014 etc.

Guitar 2002-03, 2005-06, 2010-11 etc.

Music Theory, Songwriting/Composition 2003-04, 2007-08, 2010-11 etc.

Voice 2004-05, 2008-09, 2011-2012 etc.

Piano 2004-05, 2011-2012 etc.

Group Piano 2004-05, 2008-09, 2011-2012 etc.

Other Instruments 2004-05 (bass only), 2010-11 etc.

Secondary Ed/Vocal Licensure every year

This means that only MH and Secondary Ed came up this year (2009-10). The LOs for MH are below:

- a) **Historical/Cultural Knowledge (hereafter HCK):** By means of short-answer, multiple choice, listening-identification, and essay questions, as well as research papers, students will display knowledge about musical style, historical development, and social/cultural context in a variety of musical traditions.
- b) **Critical Thinking (hereafter CT):** By means of essay questions and research papers, students will demonstrate that they have interpreted the above knowledge to answer holistic, broad-ranging questions, often which go beyond the scope of any one set of data presented in a given class;
- c) **Verbal Literacy (hereafter VL):** By means of essay questions and research papers, students will explain their ideas in clear prose;
- d) **Style Analysis (hereafter SA):** By means of listening-identification and essay questions and, at times, research papers, students will analyze written musical scores or recordings in terms of musical elements (rhythm, melody, tempo, harmony, dynamics etc.) and place these scores or recordings into specific style categories.

LINKAGE BETWEEN GOALS AND LOs (MH only)

Goal 1: LO d

Goal 2: LOs a-d

Goal 3: LO a

Goal 4: inactive, as previously noted

Goal 5: irrelevant to MH; it is addressed in the LOs of other departmental emphases (esp. d, e, f, g, and h)

Goal 6: same as Goal 5

Goal 7: same as Goal 5

3) Courses and activities where assessed (MH only):

Courses and Activities	LO A HCK	LO B CT	LO C VL	LO D SA
MUHL 3322 (Survey)	Extensive (tests, final, paper)	Extensive (esp. paper and essay qs. on tests/fs.)	Extensive (esp. paper, essays)	Extensive (esp. tests)
MUHL 3381 (American)	Extensive (tests, final, paper)	Extensive (esp. paper, essays)	Extensive (esp. paper, essays)	Somewhat (esp. tests)

Note: the only two required upper level MH classes, for music majors who entered after summer 2006, are Survey and American. (Students who entered before summer 2006 can take any three upper level MH classes they want.) Majors in addition are required to take

one additional upper-level MH course, from at least ten choices. The MH Capstone is completed only by MH majors (as opposed to majors in Music Theory, Songwriting, Piano, Voice etc. etc.—see the list of Dept. tracks under #2 above), and only a few students within the last four years have majored in MH, with only two completed capstones. For that reason this map focuses on Survey and American.

4) Methods used:

a) MH: In 2006, when MH was last assessed, it used the following procedure: a set of portfolios was collected, one per student, consisting of tests, papers, and finals from major-level classes from the previous three years. In Fall 2005 we had about 76 music majors, but many of these had not taken upper-level MH classes as of yet (all of the upper level MH classes are intended for juniors and seniors), and compilation of portfolios for those who had done so over the previous three years proved time consuming. Thus, the MH subcommittee had chosen to assess thirty portfolios (which turned out to be way too much).

This year, following the decision to dispense with portfolios and rubrics in voice last year (see the 2008 Progress Report), I decided to do the same in MH. The argument for doing so is admittedly stronger in performance areas (voice, piano etc.) than in classroom areas (music history, music theory, music ed). (See last year's report for a summary of this argument.) Nonetheless, I believe that the decision is justified for the following reasons:

- 1) Most MH classes here are very small. A number are actually one-person private readings; many others draw in single digits. Even Survey and American, the two required classes, rarely draw more than 20-25 students (usually down to 10-20 by the end of the semester). Thus my argument that “the intimate nature of pedagogy...means that the...faculty always have enough data on which to base decisions about findings and their use, without needing to rely on portfolios and rubrics” (quoted from last year's annual report), applies also to MH.
- 2) As with voice in 2009, in 2006 most MH subcommittee decisions regarding interpretation of results and use of findings to make decisions regarding the program had emerged from subcommittee discussion, not from interpretations of numerical ratings. In fact, the most important recommendation had been triggered by a visit from NASM (National Association of Schools of Music), our accrediting organization. The numerical ratings did not particularly help us understand issues with the MH program.

i) Secondary Ed/Vocal Licensure BA: This emphasis is in a category of its own, since it is examined primarily by NCATE (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education). The materials it uses to assess student learning consist of the following instruments, placed on Chalk and Wire:

- 1) Overall score and subscores on Praxis II (which students tend to take near the ends of their college careers); the Praxis exam, required of all students, has been tested for reliability and validity by educational scoring boards, thus providing face validity;
- 2) Voice jury sheet for jury to be taken after completion of MUPR 2116 or 2226 (typically after the sophomore year);
- 3) Assessment of Candidate's Ability to Plan Instruction, as indicated by unit plans for classes in Music in Elementary Grades and Choral Music. This assessment consists of a rubric sheet with scores, completed by a music education instructor;
- 4) Assessment of Internship or Clinical Experiences—four observation forms completed by a music education faculty member are graded;
- 5) Candidate Effect on Music Education—candidates prepare a pre- and post- skill assessment data sheet of an instruction experience in both elementary and secondary grades, and the music education faculty member assigns a rating for each. In addition, the student's reflective paper, based on his/her teaching experience, is also evaluated;
- 6) Piano Functional Skills exam pass sheet (the sheet that indicates whether or not the student has passed the piano proficiency exam; see the discussion under 2, Learning Outcomes/Objectives, g, above);
- 7) Transcript indicating that student has passed relevant music classes (Music Ed, Music Theory, Conducting, private vocal study, Music History, musical ensembles), typically taken throughout the student's career, with grades of C or higher
- 8) Research paper written for American Music class (typically taken in the junior year or after); paper must receive grade of C or higher

These artifacts have been placed on Chalk and Wire continuously, so that there is no assessment cycle; all artifacts are collected and assessed by the Secondary Ed professor in the Music Department, every year. Since few music majors concentrate in Secondary Ed, all Secondary Ed principals will be assessed.

5) What are the assessment findings? How did you analyze them? What conclusions were drawn?

- a) MH** As the only professor to teach Survey and American during the 2006-09 period (i.e. since the last MH report, in 2005-06), I have chosen to speak on behalf of the MH faculty. The 2006 report indicates that “an adequate amount of student learning [was] taking places in all areas,” but more so in HCK than in CT and VL, and more so in the latter two than in SA. This situation appears to be continuing:

LO A (HCK): Students tend to do well in tests that evaluate their ability to identify composers, genres, dates, historical periods, cultural contexts, and style traits, by means of multiple choice and short answer questions. This was the case in a number of

departmental classes, not just Survey and American. When students struggled, it was in areas outside their immediate experience (e.g. Andean music as opposed to blues).

LO B (CT): Students' achievements in this area have improved over the past several years. In Survey especially, this may be because I have devoted more class time, and time in review sessions, to preparing students for essays and papers. (As noted, LOs B and C are tested largely in essays and papers.) When students' performances in these have been weak, their problems have not in general centered on an inability to "[use] [historical and cultural knowledge] to answer holistic, broad-ranging questions" (see the earlier definition of CT, under #2), but rather on imperfect mastery of the data themselves, especially in the cases of Western art music outside the common practice period (ie before and after 1700-1900) and American popular music before 1940.

LO C (VL): Students have been relatively strong in the area of writing skills, especially in comparison to the performances of non-majors in core classes. Their greatest weaknesses have been in library research skills (for the papers); they have struggled to find appropriate sources or to cite them correctly. Some have been afraid of writing assignments, and hand papers in late or not at all. (Very few leave essay questions blank, however.) Of the four MH majors who have at least started the capstone since 2006, one finished a very short capstone thesis, and two have taken longer than normal to finish, probably reflecting a fear of an extended writing assignment.

LO D (SA): This is where students are weakest. They tend to struggle with analysis of written musical scores, probably because their music reading abilities are weak. This observation echoes last year's report on voice: "Many students have inadequate musical skills, especially in the area of sight-reading. This is not a Vocal Area problem alone, and we need to address the continuing problem of students who enter the vocal program with no musical literacy..." Students tend to miss questions on tests requiring them to find examples of a stylistic trait in a score, or hear form in a recorded example. They also tend to give short shrift to style analysis in papers.

i)Secondary Ed/Vocal Licensure BA: no data have been reported as of yet. The Secondary Ed coordinator has promised to get me the data posthaste.

6)What decisions were made as a result of the above? How were stakeholder groups involved?

Proposed changes

a)MH: As regards LO C, in F09 I started requiring annotated bibliographies, connected to students' main papers, in all of my major level MH classes. This move had several salutary effects. First, as the bibliography requirements specified sources upon which students were required to draw, they caused them to read central works in the discipline, as opposed to relying exclusively on Wikipedia and other net sources. Second, students were graded partly on their ability to cite sources correctly, and thus their

citation skills improved. Third, it forced students to start early on their papers (the bibliographies were due some time before the papers). Also, I continue to offer to take my students on library fieldtrips.

Attention to library research skills and papers was triggered partly by an alumni survey conducted for us, at our former chair's request, by T. Trevino Richard and other members of the Sociology department, in 07-08. Although our alumni in general have a high opinion of the education they received here, most said that they had not learned library research skills or paper writing skills from our department. It is partly because of this that I have attempted to focus on these areas in my classes, especially Survey.

As regards LO D, many of us take advantage of the technology in the department's smart classroom (FA 112). I put musical scores on the screen (by means of a document reader) in almost every class, and have started doing this in tests as well. (Formerly, I Xeroxed scores and attached them to students' tests; this meant that the scores had to be reduced, and perhaps students had difficulty reading them.) I hope that this will result in increased score-reading ability. But the main thrust in improving students' literacy (which is important in development of style analytical skills) must come from my colleagues in music theory, aural skills, and group piano. I discussed this issue in my last report, on voice and group piano:

"The voice faculty believes that...[music majors] [need to]...develop [skills in]..music literacy/music theory, and only by advising...students forcefully to take the music theory, aural skills, and piano skills together can [we] ensure that students have the background they need."

i)Secondary Ed/Vocal Licensure BA: no data as of yet

Stakeholder Involvement

In general our primary stakeholders are students and faculty, but for reasons detailed above (the Sociology dept.'s survey of our alumni), stakeholders in MH now include alumni. As noted earlier, a question on this survey helped trigger my modification of my approaches to paper assignments (the annotated bibliography, increased amount of class time spent discussing papers).