

APRC Response to MUSIC Review: Fall 2017

Department Summary

The Music Department is well-aligned with the Mission of the University and provides signature programs in support of the University's membership in the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges. The Department consists of three intertwined programs for students interested in the development of professional musical skills as well as their integration into other areas of study. The programs include two comprehensive degrees: Bachelor of Music in Education (BME), provides focused instruction for those seeking to teach music, either in schools or as a private endeavor; and Bachelor of Music in Performance (BM), for those seeking to become professional musicians or pursue graduate education. A third, non-comprehensive Bachelor of Arts in Music (BA) allows students to combine Music with a minor in another field of study, such as business.

Since 2008 (the time of the prior program review), the Music Department has continued its stellar work; it has thoroughly addressed all six issues brought up in the prior program review of 2008, for which APRC commends the department. Furthermore, the Music Department has continuously maintained National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) accreditation (recently reconfirmed in 2016-17), which demonstrates the highest level of commitment to national-level standards for the music discipline. All three entitled degree programs in Music provide the same solid backbone of performance, musicianship skills and analysis, composition/improvisation, history and repertory, and synthesis (NASM pp. 32-34).

The Music Department has a strong commitment to community involvement which supports the university's mission, and conversely the department successfully brings large numbers of community members onto campus for various events. For example, the "University Conservatory" program (p. 52) strongly supports the UWS mission of community engagement; the Superior Community Children's Chorus is a new initiative which brings together school-age community children with music faculty; and faculty organize numerous high-school honors events, all on the UW-Superior campus.

The Planning & Budgetary Council (PBC) may wish to review section III C of the NASM report regarding projected improvements and changes. Because of the complexity of individualized lessons in the major versus credit hour production from University Studies courses, PBC will also wish to examine Program Productivity reported in the *Music APRC Addendum to the NASM Report* (pgs 5-7), supplied to align the external NASM accreditation and the campus Program Review template.

Bachelor of Music Education

Strengths This degree program requires in excess of 120 credits due to compliance with national music standards and Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction guidelines for teachers. These credits are, however, very well-organized within a sound curriculum which could not be reduced without serious loss of content or quality. Required field experiences across 4 levels of K-12 age groups serve to fully prepare BME students for post-graduate environments. The program provides clear guided pathways to students in the form of graduation planners and department guidebooks, available online. The program is to be commended for its transparency in the dissemination of this information. Partnerships with community groups and schools lead to high placement rates of BME graduates in the region. Music Education integrates AS-L nicely (NASM, p. 66).

Recommendations Demand for music educators is high; the APRC therefore recommends continued resource allocation to recruitment and retention efforts for this program, both by the Music Department and the campus administration. There seems to be no recruitment plan dedicated specifically to music educators; we therefore recommend collaboration with the Educational Leadership Department on developing an integrated recruitment plan. We recommend that the syllabi of courses in this program be checked for compliance with the syllabus template issued by faculty governance, which were mandated for use starting in Fall 2018. We also note that the wording regarding assessment of certain Music Education courses could be construed as saying that only a final course grade is used to determine student success (NASM, pp. 85-86), when in fact a multi-dimensional rubric is employed; we therefore recommend clarifying this wording.

Summary *The three programs in music are intertwined in such a way that separate summaries are not warranted, but instead considered as a whole unit under the Department Summary.*

Bachelor of Music in Performance

Strengths This program requires a thorough development of skillsets in each of the three foci (vocal, instrumental, and keyboard). The requirement for a juried performance before a student enters the program contributes to strong retention of students in the major.

Recommendations The APRC recognizes the valuable contributions of the program to UW-Superior and the surrounding community. However, the low student-to-instructor ratio, while a strength of the program in terms of providing individual attention (per the UW-Superior mission), leads to concerns about the long-term viability of the program. We therefore recommend continuation of year-to-year monitoring of the need for, and distribution of, adjuncts. APRC also recommends the department as a whole identify and communicate specific plans through which campus administration might provide increased resource support for the purposes of recruitment and sustainable enrollment numbers: For example, support formal collaboration with Advancement or another office for printing, advertising/mailing, and travel for workshops or related events.

Bachelor of Arts in Music

Strengths The BA degree in Music provides a “liberal arts” (i.e., non-comprehensive) degree, compelling students to add a minor or second major and thus (NASM, p. 36; 40-41; 45) add a related skillset to enhance their post-graduation marketability. The department has outlined pathways in which composition and pre-music therapy tracks may align with minors to provide such career preparation. A strongly enrolled program, the Music BA provides a “broad liberal arts approach” to the discipline of music. The variety of options available for the student capstone project (NASM, p. 43) also make this degree program more inviting for students.

Recommendations The dearth of available foreign-language coursework at UW-Superior inhibits completion of this degree (as it is a BA degree). The APRC recommends collaboration between Music and World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, with a view to adding at least one more language.