

Music and Dance

A department in the College of Humanities and Fine Arts offering the B.A. and B.F.A. in Dance; the B.A. and Ph.D. in Music; the Bachelor of Music; and the Master of Music.

■ The Review Process

This review addressed the Music programs only. Dance is offered in conjunction with the Five College Dance Program, and is separately evaluated on a different schedule. The review of the Music programs was conducted through development of an AQAD self-study in preparation for an accreditation self-study and external team visit by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM). NASM reviewers were:

Don Gibson (Florida State University)
Karl Kramer (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign)
Patricia Lee (San Francisco State University)

■ Main Issues

Overall, the team found the Music program to meet the standards established by NASM. The team noted that the department has “engaged in extensive planning processes during the past few years,” and that “the work in this area exceeds that of any other unit the visitors have examined.” As a result of these planning efforts, the department has “targeted for growth three areas of music study that appear to have potential for special distinction: Jazz and African-American Music, Music Theory, and Music Education.”

The team made a number of specific findings and recommendations:

- **Governance and administration.** The team noted a “new and salutary era with the arrival of a new Department Chair and a new Dean of the College” which should “engender better communication, positive relationships, and positive actions both within the Unit and between the Unit and the College.” Previous lack of clarity regarding the reporting relationship of the Director of the marching band has been resolved.
- **Faculty and staff.** The department was found to “meet NASM standards with regard to size, distribution, and professional qualifications of the faculty.” The team observed that only two tenure-track searches had been authorized between the early 1990s and 2006, but that significant new hiring had now been authorized and searches are underway. The team noted that “opportunity now exists for important tenure-track appointments in all three ensemble-conducting areas: choral, orchestra, and wind symphony,” and recommended that “priority attention be given to hiring senior-level” faculty for these positions. The team urged conversion of the “unusually large number of non-tenure-track appointments ... to restore the music unit to a model more typical of major, comprehensive, university-based music programs.
- **Facilities, equipment, and learning resources.** Facilities were found to “suffer from a combination of severe neglect in the form of deferred maintenance, unfortunate design, and difficult scheduling. The marching band facility appears to be completely inadequate, unsafe,

and embarrassing.” The percussion storage/practice space in the FAC was also found to be “woefully inadequate.” The team also raised concerns regarding technology support for students and faculty. The music library collection was found to be “quite respectable,” and the additional resources available through Five College institutions were noted.

- **Student recruitment, retention and advising.** The overall number and distribution of students appeared “acceptable for a program of this size and scope,” but the team reported “little effort dedicated to the recruitment of excellent students, ... partly a reflection of the numerous non-tenure-track appointments in the unit.” Student advising was said to be “recognized throughout the institution for its excellence.”
- **Programmatic concerns.** The team observed that “for a university of this size, the music unit offers surprisingly few academic courses for the general student,” and noted that “the suggestion of increasing general education offerings was frequently cited in planning sessions.” Two specific issues were raised regarding program curricula: 1) a need for greater clarity as to how knowledge of solo and ensemble literature and pedagogy are provided for students in the Bachelor of Music in Performance program; and 2) a need for clarity regarding training in arranging and adapting music from a variety of sources for students in the Bachelor of Music in Music Education.

■ Student Outcomes Assessment

The Music Department has developed a detailed description of competencies common to all undergraduate and graduate Music majors and competencies specific to individual areas of concentration. The competencies common to all undergraduate majors address the following areas: performance; basic skills and analysis; composition and improvisation; repertory and history; technology, and; synthesis. The department has also developed detailed lists of requirements for each area of concentration within the music major. Students’ acquisition of competencies is evaluated in part through completion of course requirements (taking advantage of the performance-based evaluation model in the discipline), as well as through a variety of tests of performance and skills, the completion of final thesis and/or independent study research projects. Placement rates of graduates for each area of concentration are tracked and used to measure program success. The department has identified several areas for programmatic improvement for the undergraduate and graduate programs.

During AY2008-2009 all undergraduate programs will be engaged in a comprehensive review of the status of their student learning assessment plans, identifying both the assessment components already implemented and the targets for the coming year.

■ Response to the Review

In November of 2007 NASM voted to continue the Music program’s current accreditation. In doing so it requested additional information regarding the two programmatic concerns described above, and regarding the facilities for the Marching Band. This information has been provided and is under review by NASM.