

May 11, 2004

TO: Elizabeth Feetham, Acting Dean
The Graduate School

FROM: Robin McCabe, Director
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Subject: Response to the Music Review Report

Let me first express our collective appreciation to the review committee for their careful study and thoughtful assessment of the School of Music. The on-site visit of the review committee proved to be a good opportunity for faculty, staff and students to reflect with our visitors on issues of significant concern, as well as mission and goals.

We have made the committee report available in the last weeks to faculty, staff and students. In preparing our response to the report we have involved these constituencies in a series of conversations. The faculty as a whole is appreciative of the opportunity for us to consider and respond to the constructive and helpful recommendations of the report.

In the text to follow we will address major themes and issues, sometimes overlapping, that the review report raises.

Enrollment Management

It is clear that the goal of developing a comprehensive enrollment model for the School of Music should be a priority, and that such a model would address many of the issues raised in this report. In order to best prepare ourselves to embark on this new direction, I have initiated conversations with my peer directors at the University of Maryland School of Music and the University of South Carolina School of Music. They have both developed, over several years, highly articulated models for enrollment planning. These models do help promote coherency in making important decisions with regard to resource allocation as well as strategic mission. Although we know such a change will not be an easy undertaking, we are resolved to pursue an enrollment plan which will help us maximize our strengths as well as buttress areas of genuine need. It will be useful, we believe, to bring in several administrators from comparable Schools of Music to visit our campus, observe our culture as it exists, and assist us in developing our own management model.

Reconsidering the Five-Year BA/BM Degree

We are currently engaged in comparative research with other Schools of Music to evaluate the pros and cons of changing our structure and developing new degree tracks. It appears that we are unique in having the five-year BA/BM degree as our 'default' degree. Lower undergraduate enrollments in recent years may be directly tied to the fact that students (and their tuition-paying parents!) are likely to seek a degree track that will allow them to finish in four, rather than five years.

One clarification should be made here to the review report's finding that '... Music Education accounts for only 9% of the enrollment as opposed to 25% at, say, Eastman.' I have asked Music Education faculty to take a current count and they report as follows: There are currently 25 undergraduates in music education, or 11 % of 230 majors. In addition, there are 12 Postbacs taking the music education undergraduate sequence. So the total number of current students studying as music education majors is 37, or 16% of the undergraduate population.

We will be involving faculty in looking at the four-year BM degrees of our national peers to see how such a degree can be developed here as the main track for our music majors. One problem to address in particular will be re-evaluating the proportion of music credits to those required outside of the music major. One concern the faculty voiced with regard to this issue: do we know that the Deans and the College/University would support the four-year BM degree, should we need to lower the number of credits taken in liberal arts distribution?

While the review report suggests that the School of Music consider the feasibility of a Direct Admissions model, our faculty was not enthusiastic about this idea. There was considerable concern that such a plan might dilute the strong academic component of our undergraduate programs. We are resolved to keep on making strong cases to Admissions on an individual basis when we know of a highly gifted performance student whose GPA may lag somewhat behind his or her musical talent and potential. But this approach should remain the exception rather than the rule.

Implementing the American Music Degree Program

It became clear in a meeting earlier this year on the subject of American Music interests that most of the resources necessary for the implementation of a degree track are already in place in the School. A robust coterie of faculty are actively involved in various topics of American Music studies: Larry Starr, Shannon Dudley, Patricia Campbell, Marc Seales and Jonathan Bernard are all engaged in teaching and research involving a broad spectrum of American music. It is our goal to identify a leader among this group of faculty who will receive support and course relief during the coming autumn quarter to put together the appropriate curriculum to present the degree as a formal proposal to the College.

Our ongoing liaison with the Allen Foundation for Music Fund has spurred some notable activity in recent years, due to a \$400,000 grant they have made to the School. This past winter term, for instance, the School created a seminar series on Music in American Cultures, a compelling combination of weekly lectures and public performances by guest speakers and performing artists from the local and national community. These events were extremely well attended, and attracted the interest of UW TV, which produced several of the concert performances for broadcast. Several years ago, the Allen grant made possible a week-long symposium, 'Around the Sound,' which featured nationally known scholars and performers who came here to engage in various forums on aspects of American musical culture.

It is clear that a degree track here in American Music Studies would fuse the interests and abilities of a number of our excellent faculty, and with community partners such as the Allen Foundation, KEXP and EMP, potentials exist to develop a program which could position the School of Music in a prominent light nationally. In addition to jazz, there exists a vast repertoire of American musical genres and styles within a rich context of history involving immigration and diaspora. An investment from the University in this area would be of strategic value, we are confident. Support for course relief for faculty to develop the degree program and RA support would help encourage our efforts in this area.

Student Support

We note the review report's suggestion that we persuade the College to invest in additional graduate assistantships which support the enrollment model. These assistantships would provide valuable 'apprentice' experiences for our graduate students and benefit the undergraduate students as well. They would provide support for the teaching and performance preparation of Baroque Ensemble, for instance, and our Contemporary Group, ensembles currently in great need of direction and support. Additional graduate assistantships also would allow us to teach more of the general undergraduate population of the College in 100 and 200-level courses. Our course on American Popular Music, for example, regularly turns away numerous students each quarter, as does our general music appreciation course for non-majors. It is clear that it would be of considerable benefit to the School of Music as well as the campus at large if we could offer more such courses with the same broad-based appeal. Although we are very grateful to the College for its efforts every year to give us temporary quarters of assistantship, we are unable to plan ahead and satisfy this demand at the present time because of a serious shortage of permanent teaching coverage.

With regard to the suggestion that we offer scholarships and assistantships for the expected duration of a student's enrollment, it is clear that all faculty would like to follow this policy, but not to the detriment of our student population at large. At the present time, taking this path would mean a marked reduction in our student numbers. With this in mind, we could attempt to work toward a model in which, through both decreasing our graduate student population and increasing our available resources (scholarships and

assistantships) to support them, we would come as close as possible to the ideal solution, effectively supporting a large majority of our graduate students.

There are some programs in the School which seem amenable to a 'shrinking' in size. If we were to take this tack, we would like some assurance that our efforts would be shouldered by additional resources to 'reward' the programs that participate in the effort. This whole process should take place in the context of the enrollment model mentioned above in order to prevent any detrimental effect particularly on the service realized by the teaching assistants to the undergraduate student body.

We need to see this as a global and dynamic picture: a needed and healthy increase in the undergraduate student enrollment would result in an increase in the need for teaching assistants. This in turn would be realized through carefully selecting where those resources would be allocated, effectively controlling the size of the graduate student enrollments within the limits of what is possible to support.

This model would obviously be easiest to elaborate in the areas where there are already assistantships needed. Outside of these areas, we would use the model to develop a broader strategy of balancing enrollments with scholarship resources by examining carefully the needs (for example, in the instrumental ensembles) and by maintaining an essential fairness across all the divisions. To achieve this, it seems essential to receive assurance that the efforts required from the divisions to achieve this goal-at the large scale, a healthier balance between undergraduate and graduate student population - will be supported and rewarded by the administration. We cannot reasonably expect graduate programs to decrease their size if it doesn't result in something tangible and beneficial to all: the ability to offer multi-year support packages to most of their students.

Benefits from such a strategy are easily seen: the possibility of attracting the best students, without seeing them 'stolen' by schools which can offer multi-year packages (as we see every year in most divisions); a rise in the quality of undergraduate teaching by T As who have the opportunity to improve over several years; ability to prepare our future teachers by giving them sufficient experience in the classroom.

A large part of this plan's goal is to better serve a growing population of undergraduate students. It follows that this strategy has also as corollary the fact that we need to increase our scholarship resources for undergraduates. Although we are trying to develop this process with other means, as described in this response (enrollment model, revision of the undergraduate programs), it must not be forgotten that we will best support this general tendency if we can have enough resources to 'boost' areas of the undergraduate programs. We have established one scholarship fund for undergraduates in the name of donor Ruth Waters, but we must exert every effort to 'grow' this fund. Investment in a recruitment fund for undergraduates would have an immediate positive impact on our undergraduate enrollments.

Development

It is increasingly clear that private dollars will be crucial to maintaining the 'vital signs' of programs at the University of Washington. The breadth of our development activity has grown in quantum leaps since the last self-study undertaken by the School, even though the actual FTE devoted to development (officially 10% of a 60% appointment) has not changed in the last 15 years. The person in this position has worked tirelessly and is now retiring from these duties. Finding support for a 50% FTE in development for the School of Music is a priority confirmed by the entire faculty and staff. The current director has elected to immerse herself in development and fund-raising initiatives, and thus far in her term, the general endowment has grown from \$1.345.191 in 1995 to \$4.194.896 in 2003. Given appropriate staff assistance, we believe we can make even greater strides in securing support for the School of Music.

An area of support which would be of great benefit to both Music and Drama would be the annual underwriting of one of our opera productions. \$25,000 would allow us to keep up with the increasing production costs from Drama's side, in terms of labor and materials needed to build high quality sets and costumes. Since opera (and even our musicals, which also involve the Dance Program), provides invaluable experiential opportunities for our students in all three programs, the University would reap a significant 'return' for this kind of investment.

Divisional Structure and School of Music Governance

The review report which followed the 1993 decennial review suggested that the School revise its divisional structure with the aim of having fewer divisions. The idea met then with great resistance among the faculty. The 2004 review report returns to the same suggestion, in the context of seeking better communication and coherence about the music unit as a whole.

In our dialogue thus far as a faculty, it is clear that there remains a fair amount of trepidation with regard to this topic. While some faculty were willing to consider this potential, others spoke with some heat about the possible 'distraction' and 'dilution' of being enjoined with another division. I believe that the main fear here is that such reconfigurations would affect resource allocation, or that the annual 'feeding frenzy' for T A quarters will escalate. Nevertheless, we are resolved to attempt to make some changes with regard to divisional structuring.

At this point we are considering the following structural changes:

Creating a single Instrumental Division (this would bind together strings, winds, brass and percussion, harp and guitar)

Voice and Opera would combine together as one division, which should address the issues of improving mutual support and strength of the vocal program. We will continue to target our enrollments (and our scholarship dollars) toward the recruitment and

retention of exceptional voice students who can take on central main-stage roles in our opera productions.

The Conducting Division would combine both Instrumental and Choral Conducting. This reconfiguration would allow us to reevaluate the population and appropriate proportion of the graduate students in each of these areas.

This, at least, would bring us from 13 to 10 Divisions.

Another area of school governance discussed in these recent conversations was the idea of activating a Council of Division Chairs in the School, which would meet once a month (three times each quarter). The agenda would be set by the director and associate director, who would attend one of these meetings each quarter. Although not a governing body in the School, such a council would certainly be listened to by the faculty, since it would represent the entire constituency of the faculty. They could make regular advisory suggestions to the directors as well as to the faculty. The faculty has expressed a need for more divisional 'cross talk,' at various times in the past years. One could imagine this body discussing the implementation of the four-year degree, for example. Also, the divisions could learn from each other about effective projects and initiatives with a view to recruitment, fund-raising and community visibility. We believe that such a body, meeting at regular intervals, would go a long way towards improving communication between the administration and the faculty at large. It would be a way of empowering the faculty by giving them management of long-term projects and goals as invested 'stakeholders' in the School.

Conclusion

Between the NASM review of 2001, and the Decennial review of 2003, the School of Music has undertaken a significant amount of self-assessment. I believe the faculty as a whole has benefited from the process in that differences are acknowledged and a certain amount of healthy tension keeps energy and initiative as part of the unit's 'ecology.'

Informed communication among the 'parts' and a coherent respectful understanding for the 'whole' will continue to be major goals for us as a School of Music. Making collective, enlightened decisions about the education we will offer our students in this next decade will depend on keeping these goals integral to our dialogues.

Should you or the committee wish any additional information or discussion, I would be very glad to respond. Thank you again for your attention and consideration.