

Review of the B.A., B.S. in Music (Liberal Arts)

Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code: 50.0901
Music, General

The B.A., B.S. in Music program is housed in the School of Music within the College of Fine Arts. At the undergraduate level the school also offers a Bachelor of (Music) Performance (B.M.), a Bachelor of Music Education (B.M.E.), and minors in music and jazz performance. At the graduate level the school offers a Master of Music (M.M.) and a Master of Music Education (M.M.Ed.). Reviews of the two music education programs are scheduled with reviews of the other teacher preparation programs at the University (scheduled for 2019-2020) rather than with other programs in the School of Music.

The B.A., B.S. in Music is a liberal arts program for students interested in studying music but not earning a professional music degree. The program is also an option for students who start in one of the professional music degree programs but later find they prefer not to pursue a professional degree or are not academically able to fulfill requirements of the professional program. Graduates of the B.A., B.S. in Music program have found careers in a wide variety of occupations, often but not always related to the field of music. Completing the music business sequence of the program can lead directly to employment in the music industry without the need for a graduate degree. The program has also offered a sequence in musical theatre for many years, but that sequence was disestablished in 2016 because most students who begin in the sequence change to a major in the School of Theatre and Dance. Faculty of that school has considered establishing its own musical theatre sequence to accommodate interest in that area of study.

Fall census day enrollment in the B.A., B.S. in Music program has steadily increased in recent years, from 45 students in 2012 to 53 students in 2015. The program is one of 10 undergraduate programs at public universities in the state assigned CIP code 50.0901.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY PROGRAM REVIEW SELF-STUDY REPORT

Self-study process. The School of Music Advisory Committee worked throughout the fall 2014 semester on extensive revisions to the school strategic plan that serves as the foundation for all programs in the school. The school also completed a comprehensive self-study in 2013 as part of the regularly-scheduled reaccreditation process with the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM). In December 2014 an undergraduate program review coordinator was named to facilitate self-studies for the B.A., B.S. in Music and the Bachelor of (Music) Performance programs. The coordinator contacted the music librarian to review and assess Milner Library holdings and contributions to the School of Music programs. All School of Music faculty members were given opportunities to contribute to the program review, particularly in areas of strategic planning and alumni tracking.

Program curriculum. Admission to School of Music programs involves two separate processes. Students first apply to the University through the Admissions office. The second process, applicable to all music degrees, requires students to perform an audition on their chosen major instrument. Once accepted to the B.A., B.S. in Music program, students choose between a general plan of study in music or a music business sequence. Students enroll in core music classes in the first semester of their first year and continue this core throughout their four years of study. Core classes are scheduled throughout the curriculum rather than completed in the first year because of the complex nature of music study, which involves one-on-one instruction in the student's major instrument, a sequence of music theory and history courses, and piano instruction. The core curriculum was revised in 2015 to include a two-semester freshman seminar designed to help students succeed through subsequent music theory and music history courses. The first semester of the seminar, which focuses on music theory, leads into a four-semester theory sequence. The second semester of the seminar prepares students for music history coursework in the sophomore year and for two music history survey courses in the junior year. In addition to coursework and one-on-one music instruction, students are required to participate in a music performance group each of eight semesters, choosing from Wind Symphony, Symphonic Band, Jazz Ensembles, Marching Band, Symphony Orchestra, Men's Glee, Women's

Choir, Concert Choir, Madrigal Singers, Opera Practicum, or Guitar Ensemble. Students in the music business sequence complete a supervised practicum in a music-related organization or business as a capstone experience.

Program or academic unit faculty. The School of Music has 52 full-time faculty members including specialists in all applied areas of major band and orchestra instruments and multiple applied specialists in keyboard and voice. Thirty-eight faculty members are in tenure track positions. Consistent with university policies, a rigorous and comprehensive hiring process, involving a national search, is followed when hiring for tenure-line positions. All tenure track faculty members possess a doctorate in their field, are near completion of a doctorate, or have been granted an exception based on professional experience.

Program goals and quality indices. The strategic plan for the School of Music guides all decisions and processes of the school. Eleven core values are articulated in the strategic plan: musical excellence of the highest quality; a faculty that demonstrates professional excellence; students who are among the finest at the University and in the region; diversity and inclusion; personal integrity; artistic and academic collaboration; rigorous curricula that meet or exceed accreditation standards; a commitment to general education; university and community service; strong alumni relations; and state-of-the-art facilities and equipment. The School of Music adheres to the goals and standards of quality measurement adopted by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM).

Student learning outcomes assessment plan and process. Students in the B.A., B.S. in Music program are assessed formally and informally. Formal assessments include a jury (graded solo performance) on the student's major instrument, a music theory assessment, a music history assessment, and, for students in the music business sequence, a capstone practicum assessment. Student progress in the program is tracked more frequently through informal methods. Informal assessment is an ongoing holistic process intended to provide students the best chances for success by alerting faculty when situations or issues need to be addressed. Through the individualized approach to applied study, faculty members have numerous opportunities to observe student progress and difficulties. Within the guidelines of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), faculty members consult with each other about students when there are concerns or when congratulations are due.

Specialized accreditation. Illinois State University is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), which recognizes music programs at the University as meeting NASM quality standards. The University was most recently reaccredited by NASM in 2013, with the next accreditation study and site visit scheduled for 2022-2023.

Responses to recommendations resulting from the previous program review. Results of assessments in music theory and music history courses coupled with the fail rate for students in those courses has led to the revision of the core curriculum of the B.A., B.S. in Music program since the last program review. Faculty determined that students were insufficiently prepared for theory and history study at the university level and could benefit from introductory courses in those areas. Faculty also determined that too much time elapses between completion of music theory coursework and application of music theory concepts in other classes. Therefore, the curriculum was revised to introduce music theory and music history through a new two-semester freshman seminar designed to prepare students for the multiple-semester sequences of courses in theory and history.

Changes in the academic discipline, field, societal need, and program demand. Trends in popular music change weekly, but classical music, which is the primary focus of the School of Music programs, is far more stable. Thus, content of courses in the school does not require as frequent revision as it would if the program focused on more contemporary genres. However, pedagogy and assessment require ongoing attention by faculty to remain current with rapidly changing technologies and their impacts on music education. Enrollment in School of Music programs has decreased slightly in the past few years, concurrent with decreases in funding for arts programs. Enrollment in the school is slightly under the target enrollment of 400 students. The enrollment decline may be related in part to the legitimate concern by some students that jobs may be harder to find with a music degree than with a professional degree in some other field given the current economic climate. However, interest in some areas of music, such as music therapy, remains strong. School faculty remains confident that with expanded recruiting efforts by the school, such as scheduling program auditions in Chicago, enrollment will meet or exceed the target enrollment as early as the 2016-2017 academic year.

Major findings of this program review self-study. Major findings of this review can be summarized in four areas: facilities, scholarships, faculty, and assessment. Music facilities needs have been apparent for decades. Plans are being developed to remedy some, but not all, of the problems through reconstruction of the fine arts complex at the University. Unfortunately, that project has been stalled due to increasing state budget deficits and related cash flow difficulties. Until the project commences, short-term improvements to life-safety systems in music facilities are needed. The School of Music relies on scholarships to attract and retain highly gifted students. However, the lack of sufficient scholarship support in recent years has resulted in many talented students choosing to enroll in other institutions that are able to offer more financial support. The school anticipates numerous retirements among its applied faculty during the next program review cycle. To adequately support the target enrollment, new faculty positions in those studios will be needed. Faculty continues to assess student learning in all school programs, both formally and informally. However improvements in some aspects of assessment are needed, particularly in the assessment of music theory and history.

Initiatives and plans for the next program review cycle. Initiatives and plans for the next review cycle can be summarized in four areas: facilities, scholarships, faculty, and assessment. By the time of the next program review, in 2023-2024, the School of Music hopefully will occupy some renovated and some newly constructed spaces. Private fundraising efforts being planned by the college will hopefully have succeeded in increasing the pool of scholarship funds used to attract and retain highly talented students. The school will hopefully have been allocated faculty lines to replace retiring applied faculty members. Faculty hopefully will have found creative solutions to its student learning assessment challenges.

PROGRAM REVIEW OUTCOME AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ACADEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Academic Planning Committee, as a result of this review process, finds the B.A., B.S. in Music to be in Good Standing.

The Academic Planning Committee congratulates the program and school for reaccreditation of School of Music programs by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) through 2022-2023. Contributing to reaccreditation is an outstanding faculty providing individualized attention to students. Faculty, rather than graduate assistants, mentor students in courses, applied lessons, and performance groups. This faculty involvement is made possible by low student-to-faculty ratios; the ratio of students to tenure-line faculty in fall 2014 was approximately 10:1 in the School of Music compared to approximately 26:1 university-wide. The committee commends the school for maintaining rigorous hiring practices for both its tenure-line and adjunct faculty. Faculty members are known regionally and nationally by their peers, are active performers at the University and in the community, and are involved in research.

The committee recognizes the school for the many performance and professional practice opportunities it offers students in the program and for enrichment of the University and community through the many public performances sponsored by the school each year. The committee also recognizes the program and school for their service to youth of the region and state through private instruction, music clinics, and competitions.

The B.A., B.S. in Music program provides valuable opportunities for students to focus on aspects of music other than performance, such as music business. The committee commends the program for its extensive efforts to recruit students to the program, among them participation in recruiting fairs in Illinois and surrounding states and offering tuition waivers to highly-talented applicants. These efforts have resulted in a gifted, talented, and diverse student population. Since the last program review, participation by students in the University Honors program has increased to 20 percent (fall 2014) and eight undergraduate music students have been named Bone Scholars (the highest academic honor bestowed by the University).

The committee recognizes the program for its efforts to enroll students self-identifying with racial/ethnic groups traditionally underrepresented at Illinois State (28 percent of the students in the program in fall 2014 compared to 11 percent across all undergraduate programs at the University). The committee commends the program for its decision to offer auditions in Chicago and encourages the program to consider expanding that opportunity to students in other diverse urban areas of Illinois and adjacent states.

The School of Music and Milner Library have a long history of collaboration in developing and maintaining library resources, including scores and sound recordings, which support coursework, performances, and research. School and library faculty also collaborate in teaching information fluency concepts and skills, with the librarian participating in assessment of student learning outcomes related to information fluency. School and library faculty are currently working together to develop a plan for graduated information fluency instruction integrated with the curriculum. The committee commends this effort.

The committee recognizes faculty for its work to revise the curriculum in 2014-2015 to help students successfully navigate the curriculum and graduate within four years. The committee asks the program to track impacts of these changes on completion and time-to-degree for both first-time-in-college and transfer students and to report its findings in a follow-up report submitted to the Office of the Provost. The committee asks the School of Music to submit the report on behalf of the program by September 30, 2019.

It is evident and commendable that providing one-on-one feedback to students regarding their progress is deeply ingrained in the school culture. However, it is not clear whether that feedback is being systematically documented for use in program-level review. In addition, the self-study report identifies the need to develop strategies to assess student learning of music theory and music history. The committee asks faculty to further develop its assessment plan to address these needs and then to submit a revised assessment plan to the Office of the Provost by May 15, 2017. The committee further asks the program to implement its new plan in 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 and to report its assessment findings in a follow-up report submitted to the Office of the Provost by May 15, 2019.

Through the program review process, faculty has identified several aspirational programs. However, faculty has not articulated why it considers aspects of those programs exemplary and has not identified specific actions faculty might take to approach, match, or exceed those levels of quality. Accordingly, the committee asks faculty to complete its analysis and report its findings in a follow-up report submitted by the school to the Office of the Provost by October 1, 2016. The committee suggests using this opportunity to seek guidance with initiatives identified in the self-study report, such as increasing scholarship resources, increasing instructional capacity to support core course areas and new or expanded areas of study, and improving program assessment.

Recommendations

The Academic Planning Committee makes the following recommendations to be addressed within the next regularly scheduled review cycle. In the next program review self-study, tentatively due October 1, 2023, the committee asks the program to describe actions taken and results achieved for each recommendation.

- The committee recognizes the many facilities challenges faced by faculty and students in the B.A., B.S. in Music program and in all other programs of the school. The planned reconstruction of the fine arts complex, awaiting release of state funding, should address many of those challenges. The School of Music, on behalf of its academic programs, has expressed concern whether the project will be comprehensive in its reconstruction of the complex, including all facilities in the complex used by the school. The committee recommends that the school continue its discussions with the college, Facilities Planning, and the Capital Planning and Budget Team regarding strategies for meeting as many music facilities needs through the reconstruction project as possible given the project budget. The committee further recommends that the school and college work with University Advancement to explore soliciting private contributions, including contributions from college alumni, to make up for shortfalls in project funding that may prevent full reconstruction of the complex. Meanwhile, until the reconstruction project commences, short-term patches to life-safety systems in the fine arts complex will continue to be needed. The committee recommends that the school continue working with the college and Facilities Management to address life-safety problems requiring immediate attention, as well as that can be done given the level of university resources available to address the numerous deferred maintenance issues campus-wide.
- The committee concurs with the school strategic plan objective of reviewing the curriculum to identify changes needed to address trends in the discipline, changing interests of prospective applicants, and obstacles to student learning and timely graduation. Curricular changes for faculty to consider include, but are not limited to, expanding music business content, perhaps through collaborations with other units such as the College of Business, and diversifying curriculum content, which may attract a more diverse student population and faculty.

The committee supports program efforts to develop a jazz studies sequence but also encourages the program to consider coverage of additional genres beyond classical. With regard to obstacles to learning and graduation, the committee urges faculty to carefully monitor the plans of study for any negative impacts the number of recommended courses each semester might have on students as well as on faculty.

- The self-study report identifies insufficient scholarship funds as a major obstacle to maintaining a stable enrollment of highly-talented students. The committee encourages the school to collaborate with University Advancement to develop and implement a plan for soliciting private contributions to fund more scholarships for program applicants.
- The committee recommends that, in support of its student recruitment efforts, the program maintain a web presence that showcases the expertise of program faculty and the many performance and professional practice opportunities available to students.
- For the benefit of prospective and current students, the committee encourages the program to maintain an undergraduate catalog entry that accurately and clearly communicates admission and graduation requirements and available plans of study.
- Recognizing the rigor of the program and the time demands it places on students, the committee supports the school strategic plan strategy of promoting integrated and holistic services that support students' individual needs and promote student retention. As the student body becomes more diverse, the committee encourages attention to promoting a supportive environment for students from all backgrounds.
- In fall 2014, approximately 12 percent of full-time faculty members in the School of Music self-identified with racial/ethnic groups traditionally underrepresented among faculty at the University. The committee recommends that the school develop and implement a written plan for expanding applicant pools to include candidates from those groups when faculty positions are filled, particularly tenure-line faculty positions. One element of the plan might be use of the Recruitment Assistance Program sponsored by the Office of the Provost. The committee recommends looking to aspirational institutions for guidance with faculty diversity.
- The school has elements of a robust alumni relations program in place, including personal contacts between faculty and alumni and use of social media. The committee recommends integrating those and additional elements into a systematic plan for tracking alumni and documenting their professional successes. With such a plan in place, efforts of Alumni Relations at the university-level would supplement alumni relations efforts of the school, rather than the opposite. Information gathered through implementation of the plan could inform recruitment and fundraising efforts.
- The committee recognizes the program for its efforts to obtain external grant funds since the last program review. The committee encourages the program to continue these efforts and to involve more faculty members in them.
- The committee recommends that faculty explore additional study abroad options that offer applied lessons as part of the curriculum and allow students to stay on track for timely graduation.
- Beyond the work requested by the committee to revise the student learning outcomes assessment plan for the program, the committee urges the program to continue to utilize information collected through student learning outcomes assessments over the next eight years to make program improvements and to document how that has been done.