

## **Departmental Assessment Meeting: Report**

**Please fill out this report based on your department's conversation and return via e-mail to Megan Leonard or Sasha Pfau by March 31, 2017.**

In March 2017 the full-time faculty of the Music Department met for approximately three hours to discuss assessment and departmental learning goals. This report summarizes the results of those meetings.

### **Summary of past decisions**

Since the last HLC visit (08-09), the Music Department has made the following changes in its offerings and requirements:

Women in Music course. Due to both faculty and student interest, a Women in Music course will debut in the 2017-18 academic year. In addition to covering a field of study previously omitted in our offerings, this course will also address diversity and inclusion issues. Both music majors and non-majors will be able to take this class.

Introduction of Pep Band. With the revival of football at Hendrix, both students and alumni expressed an interest in having a pep band perform at home football games. Thanks to a generous gift for purchase of equipment, the Hendrix Pep Band had its first outing in September 2016. Since this ensemble requires a large time commitment from students, it generates  $\frac{1}{4}$  course credit just like the other major ensembles. However, unlike the other major ensembles, it neither counts towards Odyssey credit nor fulfills the major ensemble requirement.

Dropping the requirement for a comprehensive exam. For many years the Music Department has been unique in that two grades occur in the area reserved for the capstone experience, one for the comprehensive exam and the other for the Senior Project. For over fifteen years the Department has used the Major Field Test as the comprehensive exam. While this gave us a nationally recognized exam with definitive metrics, the small number of majors taking it made the results statistically unreliable for futures planning. When the College decided it would stop paying for the MFT, the music faculty decided to drop the comprehensive exam requirement. Since students are assessed regularly in their required coursework, the assessment provided by the MFT is largely redundant. Furthermore, the faculty believes that the Senior Project by itself provides an adequate means of assessing student achievement for majors.

### **Looking forward**

For the coming year, the Music Department plans to focus on improved assessment of applied lessons. Four of the five full-time faculty currently teach applied lessons, and for them it is easy to ensure a high level of student feedback in the form of course assessments. However, with seventeen adjuncts, the level of response has been much spottier. We hope that electronic evaluations will result in a higher, and more informative, response rate.

Two of the options for senior projects (recital and composition portfolio) also require a written component. We hope to devise means to make that written component more closely tied in to both the coursework required for the major and the performance/portfolio itself.

## **Achieving departmental goals for students**

Here are the departmental learning goals as they stood at the beginning of our discussions:

### **Learning goals for both majors and minors:**

1. An understanding of and experience with music as a performing art, an academic discipline, a cultural expression, and a creative medium.
2. An understanding of the theoretical basis for music as practiced in our culture and the development of skills (sight singing, aural skills, and keyboard harmony) to demonstrate understanding and practical competency.
3. Knowledge of the history of Western art music and the traditions practiced in other cultures, including an understanding of the evolution of specific genres, styles, and musical philosophies;
4. The ability to conduct basic research in music and to communicate ideas and information coherently in both written and oral formats.

### **Learning goals for non-majors:**

An understanding of and experience with music as either a performing art, an academic discipline, a cultural expression, or a creative medium.

The music faculty soon realized that Learning Goal 1 was excessively general and was difficult to fit into the new Vision for Student Learning Goals. While we decided to retain the language of that particular goal for non-majors precisely because their experiences are so general, we then rewrote Learning Goal 1 for majors and minors as follows:

1. An understanding and practice of music as a creative medium and performing art, which demands a cyclical process of both applying materials from the classroom into performance and reflecting on the experiential learning inherent in musical performance.

This new goal addresses those parts of the curriculum dealing with applied lessons, ensembles, and composition in a more intentional way than before. The required theory and history sequences apply to Learning Goals 2 and 3 as they stand. Likewise, required courses in both the theory and history/literature sides of the curriculum cover learning Goal 4.

## **Your department's role in achieving the college's shared goals for students**

Please see the attached document to assess how Music Department goals match the Vision for Student Learning goals.