

# **Program Review Executive Summary**

Kathleen Cassity, Dean, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

---

## **Western Oregon University: Music Department (Creative Arts Division)**

### **Majors Reviewed:**

- Bachelor of Arts in Music
- Bachelor of Music

### **Minors and Certificates Reviewed:**

- Music
- Popular Music
- Audio Production

**Dates of Program Review: Academic Year 2019-20**

**Report Submitted: December 2019**

(External review waived due to COVID-19)

**Date of Executive Summary: July 2021**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:  
MUSIC DEPARTMENT (CREATIVE ARTS DIVISION)**

The Music Department conducted a formal program review during the 2019 calendar year, submitting its self-study report in December 2019. (The external review by Dr. Matt Cooper, originally scheduled for April 2020, was postponed several times due to the COVID-19 emergency and subsequently waived when the Music faculty determined it was in the program's best interests to move ahead with their self-study recommendations.) The LAS Dean visited virtually with both Dr. Diane Baxter (outgoing Music Department Head) and Dr. James Reddan (incoming Music Department Head), as well as with David Janowiak, Chair of the Creative Arts Division. At this time, implementation of most initiatives suggested in the report has already been completed, is well underway, or is on "pause" pending improvement in the university budget.

The program review emphasized the following programmatic strengths:

- a. Excellent faculty with outstanding expertise in their specialty areas
- b. Exceptionally vigorous recruitment efforts, with a resulting surge of new majors
- c. Exponential enrollment improvements in choral music ensembles
- d. "Business of Music" course emphasizing career possibilities
- e. Recent improvement in departmental collegiality following a period of challenge
- f. New faculty-driven rubric for assessing student competency
- g. Newly developed partnership with Chemeketa Community College

The following challenges were identified:

- a. Fiscal challenges at the university, making it difficult to replace retiring/resigning TT faculty and implement new programmatic initiatives
- b. Relatedly, existing TT faculty are stretched thin, posing challenges to growth
- c. Aging and deteriorating facilities, without a budgetary source to support necessary renovations and updates
- d. Some of the small ensembles lacking a vigorous on-campus recruitment initiative
- e. Small number of TT faculty, resulting in increased advising and service loads

Opportunities include:

- a. Expected job growth (albeit this data was gathered pre-pandemic) in music and arts-related education, both state-wide and nationally
- b. Key driver for community engagement and institutional visibility
- c. New ensemble tuition scholarships will make it easier to recruit non-music majors to ensembles
- d. Discontinuing NASM accreditation\* actually provides some flexibility for developing creative new approaches, such as certificates

Not stated in the self-study report (since it was submitted prior to the pandemic crisis) was the major challenge that COVID-19 created for academia in general, and the creative arts/music in particular. Since the self-study preceded the pandemic, I will not discuss these challenges in detail in the executive summary of the Music program review, except to note that the department

would do well to re-examine its goals and actions in light of the complex reality created by the public health crisis. (I would also like to commend the program for the phenomenal work it did in keeping music ensembles vital under sub-optimal conditions during the 2020-21 academic year. Student testimonials have made it clear that for many of the students who remained on campus during the pandemic, the ability to participate in music ensembles was a driving factor.)

As a result of the self-study, the Music faculty has already pursued, and in most cases completed, the majority of the recommendations they developed through their self-study (with the exception of the Music Therapy proposal, which cannot be considered at this time due to budgetary constraints). These initiatives are all supported by the Dean and outlined in the Implementation Matrix below.

### IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

<b>New Program-Driven Initiatives</b>	<b>Completed/ Ongoing</b>	<b>Underway (Target Completion Date)</b>	<b>To Be Done (Will be Ongoing)</b>
Develop a four-year pathway toward Music Education licensure in conjunction with College of Education	X		
Revise curriculum to emphasize Jazz Studies rather than the previous “contemporary music”	X		
Pursue a Music Therapy specialty			X (on hold indefinitely)
Eliminate the confusing “Contemporary Music” designation from the degree	X		
Streamline ensemble offerings	X		
Revise and streamline lower-division Music core to solidify curriculum and improve course enrollment means	X		
Redesign and improve web site		X	
Increase online and hybrid course offerings in Gen Ed		X	
Consider developing Gen Ed courses that could be delivered in Salem			X
Resume operation of regional secondary school music festivals and competitions on WOU campus			X (Start in AY2021-22)
Improve and professionalize Music scholarship process			X (Start in AY2021-22)
Lobby university and potential donors for the development of additional scholarship funds*		X	

Incorporate more courses into curriculum that focus on musician health		X (F2021)	
Expand possible internships, practica and off-campus experiences for all students			X (AY2021-22)
Lobby administration for improvements, updates and expansion of facilities		X	

<b>Continuation of Ongoing Effectiveness</b>	<b>Completed/Ongoing</b>	<b>Underway Target Completion Date)</b>	<b>To Be Done (Will be Ongoing)</b>
Continue to engage in vigorous recruitment activities	X		
Continue to use faculty-developed rubrics for gauging student competency levels	X		
<b>LAS Dean Recommendations</b>	<b>Completed/Ongoing</b>	<b>Underway Target Completion Date)</b>	<b>To Be Done (Will be Ongoing)</b>
Update web site and marketing materials to appeal to diverse students; engage in vigorous marketing efforts, both internally and externally			X – Start in AY 2021-22
Consider possibility of developing certificate programs, such as pedagogy or composition			X – Start in AY 2021-22
Pursue additional opportunities for public performance beyond campus, and/or use nontraditional venues on campus			X – Start in AY 2021-22
Work with Admissions to share information with potential new students who may wish to pursue music on the side while majoring in another field		X	
Leverage new Creative Production degree for Music enrollments (beginning Fall 2022)			X – Start in AY 2022-23
Keep Music Therapy proposal “on ice” for time being, to be reconsidered when fiscal circumstances allow			X

Work with WOU Foundation to identify potential donors and develop additional scholarship opportunities		X	
--	--	---	--

The Music Department has already proactively initiated almost all of the initiatives they identified in their self-study. It is unfortunate (and beyond the control of the Music Department) that the pandemic hit during the year when Music had recruited the highest number of new majors in many years; the need to deliver all Spring 2020 coursework online was particularly challenging with Music, given its nature. Accordingly, Music offered the majority of the few face-to-face courses on campus during the 2020-21 academic year. As we (hopefully) emerge from the pandemic, the Music Department has strong potential to attract and retain numerous face-to-face students, including non-Music majors who sing or play instruments and may wish to pursue those activities while majoring in another field. If this momentum can be re-established and maintained, the department will be in a good position to lobby for both replacement positions and facilities improvements in the future, which will in turn allow the Music program to grow and thrive with its new Music Education emphasis—a turn which had begun to generate robust new enrollments just as the pandemic threatened to undo all these efforts. I have every confidence that the newly energized Music faculty will emerge from this crisis stronger than ever and with a clear, purposeful vision.