

**ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW**

**Visitors' Report**

**DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC  
UNIVERSITY OF WEST FLORIDA**

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**Dr. Kyle Marrero, Chair  
February 13–14, 2006**

**by**

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**Department of Music  
Academic Program Review  
February 2006**

This Academic Program Review was coordinated with the re-accreditation by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM). In that context, two external reviewers joined the internal reviewers in reading the Self-Study and in making the visit. During the site visit, reviewers visited classes, private music lessons, ensemble rehearsals, and performances by students and student ensembles. The structures of the degree programs were reviewed and evaluated. Materials in the library and processes of student recruiting, admission, advising were assessed. Processes of faculty appointment and evaluation were considered. All aspects of the program were open to discussion and evaluation. The purpose was to assess a general view of the nature of the program and its current status in fulfilling how it perceives itself. A significant consideration of context, both institutionally and nationally, was very important in framing the entire visit and in writing this report.

Significant gratitude is expressed to the faculty, staff, and students of the Music Department. They made a significant commitment of time and energy in writing the Self-Study, in making themselves open to potentially intrusive assessment, and in committing themselves to a process of continual improvement. That attitude of commitment to excellence is very important and is probably the chief marker of a positive future.

The external visitors express appreciation to our internal partners in review, Professors Ferguson and Houghton. They provided important institutional context to the positive work taking place in the music program and their insights are vital to the successes of this process.

The remainder of this report is a verbatim presentation of the Visitors' Report of the NASM re-accreditation process. The NASM Commission on Accreditation is the body that makes actual decisions in that regard. They will convene in June, read the Self-Study, consider the Visitors' Report, and read any Optional Response that the institution provides. The purpose of the Visitors' Report is to confirm and expand the observations made by the faculty in the Self-Study. In the Report, the visitors seek to articulate our sense of how the various standards of the association are working their way through the curriculums and practices of the music program at the University of West Florida. The Association does not 'tell' its institutional members what to do or how to proceed. The accreditation process is a point at which the institution articulates how it sees itself within the context of the articulated standards for various programs. The Visitors' Report affirms and/or challenges various points of accomplishment and the Commission judgment provides a final determination of the congruence with what the institution says it is doing and what is perceived as actually taking place. If there are potential adjustments to the congruence of vision and reality, those suggestions are articulated.

## **General Comments about Music Degrees at the University of West Florida**

### **a. Bachelor of Arts titles**

The intent and practice of the Department of Music at the University of West Florida is to offer the professional degree in music. Until 2000, however, the university was not authorized to offer the Bachelor of Music degree. In 2001, the Department of Music petitioned the Board of Trustees to change the title of its degrees from Bachelor of Arts to Bachelor of Music. The petition was not acted upon at that time. The Department of Music plans to reinstate its petition at the next opportunity.

In discussions with the Provost, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Head of Fine and Performing Arts, the visitors concluded that there is university support for changing the degree titles from Bachelor of Arts to Bachelor of Music. Given the intent and practice of the department, the visitors support the department's petition.

### **b. The Music Teaching Degree**

The Department of Music is prohibited from using the title Bachelor of Arts (or Music) in Music Education. The only CIP number available is the Bachelor of Arts (or Music) in Music Performance. This explains the rather unique degree title "Bachelor of Arts in Music Performance/Teaching." It is, in fact, a traditional music education degree. The university's Department of Education has permitted music students to receive a Minor in Education upon completion of nine hours of education courses beyond the university's 120-credit-hour limit. Because this minor is very strongly advised and almost always taken, the curricular tables include the 120-plus-9-hour plan.

### **c. The Jazz Studies Degree**

In 2005, the Department of Music submitted the Bachelor of Arts in Music Performance/Jazz for Plan Approval. NASM deferred Plan Approval, citing a rather lengthy number of concerns. After consideration of NASM's reply and further discussion with the visitors, the Department intends to withdraw its request for Plan Approval for the jazz studies degree. For that reason, this degree is not considered in the Visitors' Report that follows. It must be noted that the jazz degree was added to the university catalog and students were admitted to the program prior to the submission of the program for Plan Approval. The students currently in the program will be allowed to graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Music Performance degree. No new students are being accepted into the program.

## **A. Mission, Goals, and Objectives**

The University of West Florida's mission statement begins the music unit's Self-Study (p. 3) and is followed by the Department's own statement of purpose. The latter is stated clearly and is in strong alignment with the institutional statement. The department mission statement is also present in materials for students and faculty.

In response to recent Southern Association of Colleges and Schools re-accreditation, the university is committed to a rhythm of planning/evaluation that requires units to articulate clear goals and objectives for each degree program. These goals and objectives are to have a measure of specificity that enables clear evaluation. The Self-Study includes detailed charts that present Strategic Goals/Objectives, anticipated Student Learning Outcomes, and Assessment Results. These regular materials are presented in Appendix VI, section 4 “Student Learning Outcomes for the Degrees,” and section 6 “Annual Reports.”

## **B. Size and Scope**

The music unit appears to have sufficient enrollment to have a community of learners appropriate for the degrees offered by the Department of Music. HEADS reports failed to provide detailed information about music major enrollments. Recent reports merely listed totals for baccalaureate liberal arts programs. Because the department considers their degrees to be professional degrees, the visitors asked for detailed 2005/2006 enrollment figures as required for Bachelor of Music programs. The resulting information is attached to this Visitors’ Report.

The overall size of the faculty appears to be minimally adequate to cover the size and scope of the music program. However, there appear to be serious concerns about the distribution of faculty expertise and the balance of tenure-track and adjunct positions. The number of faculty lines has not increased since the 1970s, a time when the university was an upper division institution with a small enrollment. The current 16-to 1 full-time to student ratio places the UWF Department of Music in the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile compared to similar institutions. These concerns are addressed below (see Section E of the Visitors’ Report).

The curricula offer sufficient advanced courses and requisite ensemble experiences.

## **C. Finances**

Financial resources appear to be reasonably adequate to support the current mission, goals, and objectives and the size and scope of the Music Department’s offerings. A significant challenge emerged in the current budget year (FY 2006) regarding support from the Student Government Association (SGA) for the ensembles of the department (see p. 6 of the Self-Study.) That reduction in funding for FY 2006 was offset by positive action from the Dean. Information received since our visit indicates that the SGA funding has been restored for at least the next fiscal year.

It was the visitors’ understanding that a prerequisite for SGA funding is to present concerts and other events that are well attended by students (the funding is based on aggregate attendance). It is important for the university to ensure that adequate staff is available in the performing venues to manage the routine duties of this kind of activity (ticket sales, instrument maintenance, physical arrangements on stage, etc.). It is the visitor’s opinion that the prospects for this kind of support are reasonably positive.

Of greater concern is the overall funding posture of the university. The visitors were given to understand that public institutions in the state are growing rapidly. However, enrollment at UWF has not increased parallel to the overall state growth. This could put the university at significant risk. This lack of parallel institutional growth could result in cuts in state support. The only other significant source of funding for the institution is tuition. Given limits on tuition increases (and state restrictions on fees), cuts in state support could create a significant overall funding challenge for the institution. Even given the very positive commitment to Music within the university's leadership, a climate of flat or constricting budgets could have significant negative effects.

The visitors observed that leaders in upper administration of the university consider the Music Department to be on an upward trajectory in terms of quality and quantity. Indeed, it is possible that music (and the other arts) could become part of an overall recruiting strategy of the university, becoming part of a potential solution rather than only a point of financial expenditure out of proportion with the income the unit brings in. This kind of thinking appeared to be emerging from various conversations that the visitors encountered. However, any expanded tasks (e.g., recruiting) need to be supported by additional resources (for example, travel funds for ensembles to tour/recruit).

Appropriate funding for piano maintenance is needed. This concern is discussed in Section F (Facilities, Equipment, Safety) below.

Other aspects of budgetary support appear to be normal in terms of planning and projections. The unit has articulated anticipated needs for new faculty positions and other programmatic expansions. (However, the visitors encourage the Department to consider modifying some of the requests for additional faculty to reflect more attention to specializations in areas of Music Theory and Musicology/Music-Literature. See below in Section E.)

Anticipated needs for new faculty and for enhanced programmatic support (including scholarships) appear to be understood by the Dean and the Provost. Their conceptual support for the Department and for the newly appointed Chair is very positive. In addition, the President has placed the Arts in a central position for expanded efforts at external support.

External fund-raising is a positive part of the Department's current financial posture relative to similar institutions. Several "Friends" groups have been in existence and have been effective in garnering a reasonable level of support. The visitors recommend that the Department consider consolidating these efforts to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

External fund-raising is a positive part of the Chair's experience. It can be noted that even though he is in his first year at the university, he has been leading the Pensacola Opera for several years. He has been effective in raising money for that entity and this may have a positive impact on gaining greater external support for the Department.

Continued attention is essential, however, to avoid potential conflicts of interest and risks of sending mixed messages to donors.

Normal processes of accounting for expenses and planning for future budgets appear to be in place. The institution's financial reporting documents seem to provide a good range of data in an accurate and timely manner.

#### **D. Governance and Administration**

At the time of the visit, the Chair had only been in that position for about six months. The Chair is positive and energetic and appears to enjoy strong support from all levels of university administration. Equally strong support is evident from the students and from the majority of music faculty members. The department appears to be administered efficiently and effectively. The Chair appears to be actively involved in developmental activities. He has also initiated a number of reforms in policy and procedure that appear to be appropriate and overdue. The music faculty meets twice per month and appears to be appropriately involved in policy-making and planning.

The visitors have some concern about the combined teaching and administrative load of the Chair. He teaches applied voice, conducts the UWF Singers and the UWF Madrigals, supervises the Recital Hour, and (this year, at least) directs the musical theater production. There appears to be a plan to add the responsibilities of Head of Fine and Performing Arts to his portfolio. The chair is quite energetic and dedicated and appears hesitant to relinquish any of the current (and projected) responsibilities. However, some adjustments may become necessary and advisable in the near future lest there be occasional inadequacies in one or more of these activities and/or the danger of premature "burn-out." As the standards articulate: "The institution shall provide the music executive and other administrators of specialized areas sufficient time and staff to execute the required administrative and/or teaching duties effectively" (*NASM Handbook* [2003-2004], p. 61, item II.D.¶5). Note also the NASM standard regarding teaching loads (*NASM Handbook* [2003-2004], p. 63, item II.E.4.¶1).

In the meeting with music students, the visitors were impressed by the cogent and mature questions and concerns posed by the students. In many cases, their concerns could be rather easily addressed by constructive dialogue with the Chair. While the Chair maintains an open door policy, many students are hesitant to interrupt a very busy administrator. The visitors recommend the creation of some kind of representative student council that could meet with the Chair on a regular basis (e.g., one per month) to share concerns and information, discuss issues, and develop solutions.

## **E. Faculty and Staff**

Based on the visitors' observations of classes, ensembles, and studio lessons, the faculty as a whole appears competent and well trained. They demonstrate enthusiasm and significant commitment to the processes of teaching, to the institution, and to the students. Many are also involved in important creative work in musical activities in the community and the region.

The Faculty Data in the Self-Study (Appendix III) chronicle the academic background of the faculty and profile their current scholarly and creative activities. The visitors have some concern about the composite profile of the faculty. While important academic experience and continuing professional activities are present, there appears to be a lack of core background in the crucial areas of Music Theory and Musicology/Music-Literature. The visitors noted that the creative/scholarly activity of the current faculty is strongly present in performance, but there appears to be a void regarding Music Theory and Musicology/Music-Literature. Correlation between academic degree work, teaching assignment, and scholarly productivity seems tilted toward the performance side of things, to the exclusion of the core areas of theory and history. The result is what appears to be a troubling unevenness in the delivery of courses in music theory and history. In some classes, there was a high level of student engagement with appropriate material. However in other classes, significant rigor and energetic student accomplishments seemed to be absent. It appeared to the visitors that the overall music program would benefit by having faculty members whose primary training, experience, and scholarly activities were focused in the areas of music theory and music history. Such a faculty presence should have the effect of bringing coordination and appropriate rigor to courses in these core areas of all music curricula. Given these considerations, it was not clear to the visitors that the Department of Music was meeting the NASM standards for number and distribution of faculty (*NASM Handbook* [2003-2004], p. 62, item II, E. 2).

The Department has embarked on a discipline of regular evaluation and a projection of needs. The most recent projections of additional needed faculty articulated a first priority for a full-time person to enhance the Jazz program, specifically a performer/teacher in the Brass area. Other articulated needs include a full-time faculty member in Low Strings, and a person in the Vocal/Choral area to offset the administrative responsibilities of the Chair. (See the Self-Study, p. 14; and Appendix VI, "Annual Report, 2004–2005.") The visitors are concerned that such faculty additions would merely exacerbate the existing problem. It is difficult to see how the enrollment numbers reported in recent HEADS reports justify full-time faculty positions in these areas. Instead, the Department is encouraged to reconsider these faculty needs in such a way that the core areas of music theory and music history are addressed by filling faculty positions stressing these areas as primary with credentials in areas such as jazz, brass, low strings, and vocal/choral as secondary.

The Self-Study notes that the overall number of full-time faculty (5) is low relative to institutions with similar programs (see Self-Study, p. 14). The visitors note that this modest number of full-time persons is supplemented by well-qualified adjuncts.

The Self-Study identifies the relatively small number of full-time faculty members as its primary “weakness” (see Self-Study, p. 53). The visitors noted this, but observed the general quality of student outcomes to be positive in spite of the current part-time/full-time balance (about 3:1). It appears that the music faculty is compensating well for this apparent imbalance (except perhaps in the areas of music theory and history, as noted above).

The Department appears to have a normal and appropriate process of appointment, evaluation, and advancement of faculty. In particular, the new Chair has added stronger consistency to these processes.

Faculty loads appear to be consistent with practices at similar NASM schools. Faculty loads are articulated on page 13 of the Self-Study. Applied instruction is credited at the familiar 3:2 ratio; ensembles are on the same 3:2 basis of contact/load. It is the visitors’ observation that faculty routinely teach a full load, without an offset for Research/Creative work. This could be a long-term morale issue; and this pattern reinforces the articulated need for additional faculty.

Opportunities for institutionally supported faculty development appear to be modest at best.

The salary scale for part-time applied faculty members appears to be low. (See the HEADS Reports in Appendix I of the Self-Study.) However, this may match the market rate of the region. Although full-time salaries appear to match the relative cost of living in the region, attention to more competitive levels may be necessary as additional full-time hiring activities take place.

The primary support staff person for the Department appears to be well qualified and appropriately committed to the faculty and students. She is to be commended for her many positive contributions to the program.

The Chair of the Department is in his first year at the university and in his first administrative appointment. He appears to enjoy broad and deep support from the majority of the faculty and from all levels of the university administration. He is to be credited with enhancing a solid sense of positive direction within the program.

## **F. Facilities, Equipment, and Safety**

The fourteen-year-old Center for Fine and Performing Arts houses the departments of music, theater, and art. The facility appears to be very well maintained. However, the usable spaces for the music department are barely adequate. The most severe need

appears to be classroom space. There is only one classroom in the music wing (room 206), and this room is used by other university components. As a result, some music classes (e.g., some music theory classes) are taught in the ensemble rehearsal room using movable chalkboards (thus reducing the time available for ensemble rehearsals for which the room is designed). Fortunately, a solution appears to be available. A very nice space in the music wing is now serving as a piano lab, computer lab, and music library. It appears that these functions could be relocated, thus allowing this space (approximately 900 square feet) to be reconfigured as a large classroom, or two medium classrooms, or a medium classroom and several offices. The visitors recommend that the university pursue these relocations/reconfigurations as soon as possible. More will be said about the music library relocation in Section G of this report.

The Music Hall (recital hall) is a nice facility but is a very “live” hall. Some minor acoustical adjustments (e.g., sound absorbing or dispersing materials on the rear wall) could result in significant improvement. (NASM *Handbook* [2003-04], p. 64, item II. F, ¶4).

Sound transfer within the practice rooms appears to be a problem. The problem may be caused primarily by exterior windows. It may be possible to modify the construction around the windows in order to reduce the sound transfer. (NASM *Handbook* [2003-04], p. 64, item II. F, ¶4).

Piano maintenance appears to be a rather significant concern. Every piano the visitors heard was out of tune (this included pianos in practice rooms, the classroom, the rehearsal hall, and even the Steinway concert grand in the Music Hall). A more robust program of piano maintenance is strongly recommended. (NASM *Handbook* [2003-04], p. 64, item II. F, ¶6).

The visitors heard no concern about building access. Safety also did not appear to be a concern.

## **G. Library**

The library is described on pages 17–22 of the Self-Study, with additional information presented in Appendix VI. These pages present a summary of the materials in the collection. A check of holdings by the visitors confirmed the overview. The Pace Library faculty/staff is to be commended for their partnership with the music faculty and an overall atmosphere of positive support.

The visitors have some concern about the NASM standard regarding adjacency of materials and ease of use: “The institution shall provide an effective environment for study. Facilities should be as centralized as possible to provide access to all library holdings devoted to the study of music. For example, scores, recordings, and listening equipment should be located in close proximity for effective use in conjunction with one another.” (NASM *Handbook* [2003–2004], p. 66, item II.G.5. ¶1)

At present the collection of books and periodicals is housed in the Pace Library with extended hours of access and full professional staffing. However, the primary score collection and a very modest collection of CDs is in the Music Building as described on page 17 of the Self-Study. There appears to be a plan to relocate the score collection to the Pace Library (see Self-Study, p. 22). This would leave the sound recordings and modest listening equipment in the Music Building—separate from the score collection. This plan appears not to meet the NASM standard cited in the preceding paragraph.

The Self-Study describes the sound recordings as numbering 3,732—but the overwhelming majority of them are LPs; all of the playback equipment in the Pace Library is limited to CDs and DVDs via computer stations. This problem will need to be addressed if the scores and recordings are brought together in the Pace Library. Furthermore, it is not clear that shelving options will allow close adjacency between the printed scores, the CDs, and the computer stations that play back the CDs. There is a strong understanding of this priority among the music faculty and the library faculty/staff, but options within the Pace Library are somewhat limited.

The move of scores and recordings to the Pace Library building is seen by the visitors as a significant positive step, enhancing student access and overall professional management of the collection. It will be important to ensure that appropriate catalog and shelving activity take place as this transition is completed. For example, some of the scores are Collected Works and probably need non-circulating treatment in the main library. Other materials are performing editions of scores and these need different shelving and access. It was not clear to the visitors that all of these nuances were fully engaged.

Also, the general size of the CD collection appears too modest for the scope of the current academic program. Continuing growth will make this issue even more acute. However, the university has made commitments to subscription services that include sound recordings. It may be important for the Department to continue to monitor the breadth of recordings available to students via the emerging technology of web-streaming and on-campus network delivery of this subscribed material.

## **H. Recruitment, Admission-Retention, Record-Keeping, and Advisement**

### **1. Recruitment, Admission, Retention.**

Current recruitment procedures appear to be working well for the music program. The current chair has enhanced the audition process.

### **2. Record Keeping.**

In general, student records were very orderly and were efficiently maintained. However, the files reviewed randomly by the visitors did not contain records of the student's repertory studies nor performances (NASM *Handbook* [2003-04], p. 66, item II. H, ¶4).

### 3. Advisement.

In the meeting with music students, the visitors heard several concerns about the advisement process. The first concern was related to the university advisement center. The students reported that advisors in this center were knowledgeable about general education requirements, but seemed unfamiliar with the rather specialized needs of music students (e.g., the need to begin the theory sequence, private instruction, ensembles, etc. from the very first semester at UWF). It was suggested that the best advisement system might involve the centralized advising center for general education matters, and departmental advising for the music curricula.

The second concern was that music faculty members were not always reliable advisors, even about the music curricula. It is unclear how faculty are trained or kept abreast of changes in the unit and institution. The music unit might wish to consider offering annual training that deals with the rules, regulations, and curricular changes.

#### **J. Published Materials**

The visitors observed that the published materials (both printed and web versions) appear to be in keeping with the criteria established by NASM. In particular, the new brochure and promotional material developed by the Chair are a positive step. The Department appears to be presented in an attractive, accurate, and consistent way in all of its published materials.

#### **K. Branch Camp ses, External Programs, Use of the Institution’s Name for Educational Activities Operated Apart from the Main Campus or the Primary Educational Program**

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Not applicable

#### **L. Community Involvement and Articulation With Other Schools**

The Department of Music is a cultural resource for the Pensacola area. It provides a noon chamber music series at the Old Christ Church—a series that is heavily attended. The visitors attended a Black History Month concert that filled the Music Hall. The chair of the department is very active in various community cultural organizations, especially the Pensacola Opera, for which he serves as Artistic Director. Written agreements with the Pensacola Symphony and the Pensacola Opera work to the benefit of both parties to the agreements (see Self-Study Appendix VI).

Relationships with public schools in the area appear to be very positive. The visitors met with a cooperating teacher and a current student teacher. Both reported that the UWF Department of Music is well regarded in the area and is interactive with various school musical organizations. The university maintains articulation agreements with community colleges throughout the region.

**M. Non-Degree-Granting Programs for the Community**

Not applicable

**N. Standards for (A) Independent Postsecondary Music Units Without Regional or Other Institutional Accreditation and/or (B) Proprietary Institutions**

Not applicable

**O. Programs, Degrees, and Curricula**

Comments at the beginning of this Visitors' Report address the titles of UWF's music degrees and the status of the Jazz Studies degree. To summarize briefly:

- The Bachelor of Arts title is a remnant of a time when the university was not authorized to offer a Bachelor of Music degree. The degrees described below are intended to be professional degrees in music and are therefore evaluated as such. The Department of Music intends to petition the Board of Trustees to change the existing degree titles to Bachelor of Music. The university administration appears to support this change.
- The Bachelor of Arts in Music Performance/Teaching is, in effect, a Bachelor of Music Education degree and is evaluated as such in the comments below. The Department is not authorized to use the more traditional "music education" title. Because the university's 120-hour degree limitation does not allow for all required teacher certification courses, the department offers the Bachelor's degree and strongly advises all students to add a nine-hour minor that completes the certification requirements.
- The Bachelor of Arts in Music Performance/Jazz is currently pending Plan Approval. The expressed intent of the department, however, is to withdraw this curriculum from consideration. Because it does not have Plan Approval and is being withdrawn, it is not evaluated below. NASM's response to the Plan Approval application provides a very thorough evaluation of the degree plan.

"Hidden hours" are a common (and regrettably necessary) part of most music curricula across the country. Nevertheless, they should be minimized wherever possible. It was the visitors' impression that the recital attendance requirements at UWF, while laudable perhaps, are unusually heavy. These requirements (for no credit) include the following:

- Recital Hour (weekly student recital hour)
- An aggregate of at least 50% of all other concerts and recitals, which includes those listed below:
  - All Music Hall Artist Series concerts
  - All student recitals in the student's applied area
  - At least one Pensacola Symphony Orchestra concert per semester

These attendance requirements roughly equate to an extra two-credit hour course per semester. Failure to meet the requirements has a significant impact on the apparently unrelated private lesson grade (lowered one full letter if the 50% attendance requirement is not met, and one half letter for each required concert missed). The visitors would urge the music faculty to reexamine the policies regarding recital attendance and grading in hopes of crafting a policy that is somewhat fairer to the students.

## 1. Specific Curricula

### Renewal of Final Approval

#### Bachelor of Arts in Music Performance

Although the department offers MUS 2360 (Music Technology), it has been eliminated as a requirement in the Bachelor of Arts in Music Performance degree. Given the increasing level of technological competency displayed by incoming students, the department has opted to require a technology proficiency examination (a “hands-on” exam) in lieu of the course requirement. The proficiency exam is being developed at this time. The visitors recommend that the department provide the Commission with a copy of this proficiency exam in order to establish that the applicable NASM standard is being met (NASM *Handbook* [2003-2004], p. 84, item VII.E.).

It is not clear that the Bachelor of Arts in Music Performance provides sufficient knowledge of applicable solo and ensemble literature (NASM *Handbook* [2003-2004], p. 87, item VIII.A.3.a). The Self-Study asserts that this competency is addressed in the private lesson format (Self-Study, p. 34). However, it is not clear to the visitors that the private lesson format provides ample opportunity to achieve a broad and structured knowledge of applicable solo and ensemble literature.

The visitors have some concern about Secondary Performance requirements for students in the Bachelor of Arts in Music Performance. As stated in the *Handbook*, “Experiences in secondary performance areas are recommended” (NASM *Handbook* [2003-2004], p. 83, item VII.A.5). This recommendation is being clearly followed for non-pianists by means of a required piano proficiency (see Self-Study, p. 31). However, it is not clear how this recommendation is being met by pianists.

## Bachelor of Arts in Music Performance/Teaching

The Self-Study asserts that competencies in arranging are accomplished through MUT 4311 (Instrumentation) (Self-Study, p. 37). However, after reviewing the syllabus for this course, it was not clear that students are provided instruction in arranging for choral ensembles (NASM *Handbook* [2003-2004], p. 96, item VIII.J.3.d.2). Nor does it appear that theory courses and the counterpoint course provide adequate instruction in arranging for the future choral ensemble teacher (again, as asserted in the Self-Study, page 37).

It does not appear that students in this degree are provided an adequate knowledge of the repertoires applicable to instrumental and choral ensembles (NASM *Handbook* [2003-2004], p. 97, item VIII.J.3.c.4). The Self-Study asserts that this knowledge of ensemble literature is covered in MUE 4411 (Special Methods: Choral Techniques) and MUE 4493 (Special Methods: Instrumental Techniques). A review of the syllabi for these courses did not support this assertion.

Although the department offers MUS 2360 (Music Technology), it has been eliminated as a requirement in the Bachelor of Arts in Music Performance/Teaching degree. Given the increasing level of technological competency displayed by incoming students, the department has opted to require a technology proficiency examination (a “hands-on” exam) in lieu of the course requirement. The proficiency exam is being developed at this time. The visitors recommend that the department provide the Commission with a copy of this proficiency exam in order to establish that the applicable NASM standard is being met (NASM *Handbook* [2003-2004], p. 84, item VII.E.).

Although MUE 3311 (Methods for the Elementary Music Teacher) includes formal observation, it would be desirable to expand the students’ opportunities for observation and practical experience prior to student teaching (NASM *Handbook* [2003-2004], p. 97, item VIII.J.3.d.2). The Self-Study (page 39) indicates that the Department is anxious to provide such a practicum experience (this was confirmed by the Department Chair).

Currently, the Bachelor of Arts in Music Performance/Teaching requires a half-hour private lesson per week for two credit hours per semester (Self-Study, page 26). This does not appear to meet the NASM standard that students in professional programs should have a minimum of one hour of individual instruction per week (NASM *Handbook* [2003-2004], p. 75, item II.R.2.¶3). It appears that this problem could be corrected rather easily without adjusting credit hours (simply increase the lesson time from 30 minutes to one hour).

## **2. Study of the Transcripts of Recent Graduates and Comparison with Catalogue Statements**

A review of an assortment of transcripts revealed no serious discrepancies from published curricula. However, it should be noted that where discrepancies did occur, there was an absence of documentation that explained the discrepancy (e.g., course substitution forms, etc.). The Department Chair indicated that this procedural shortcoming was being addressed. It was not always immediately clear which edition of the catalogue applied to the transcripts. Thus, compliance was sometimes obscured due to changing course numbers and minor changes in degree requirements.

## **3. Visitors' Evaluation of Students' Work**

The visitors reviewed a wide variety of student activities during their campus visitation. Included were classes, ensemble rehearsals, a student recital, and a public concert. Student morale appeared to be excellent and the students appeared to be very engaged in the learning process.

The visitors were particularly impressed with both solo and ensemble performance levels displayed by music students at UWF. An unusually high percentage of such performances were comparable to those typically encountered in music programs of far greater size and national reputation.

## **4. Performance**

The visitors observed private lessons, ensemble rehearsals, a performance by two of the choral ensembles, and the student recital featuring a representative cross section of the student body. In addition, there was a full collection of printed concert programs and recital programs available to the visitors. These allowed the visitors to obtain a relatively broad vision of the music regularly performed by students at the university.

The Chair and members of the faculty have made recent changes in things like audition procedures, semester jury requirements, and student recital activities that appear to have a good correlation with positive performance outcomes.

The visitors were impressed by the attention given to the quality of musical performance at the university. The quality of musical performance heard by the visitors seemed quite good. Students appeared to represent the normal ranges of talent in American universities, and some of the students would be comfortable in performance programs at virtually any institution. While some of the significant positive quality can be attributed to 'stars' among the students, it is the observation of the visitors that there appears to be

an overall effective focus on performance quality. The level of quality of musical performance appears to be good.

Students appeared to be actively engaged in a variety of performance experiences. Both ensemble and solo performances during our visit were of high quality.

## **5. Music Studies for the General Public**

The Department of Music offers three courses intended for the general university student. These include two sections of MUH 2930 (Music Experience: Film Music and Music Experience: Concerts) and MUH 2110 (Music in Western Civilization). Four of the five tenured faculty members teach a general music course for at least one semester of each academic year. MUH 2110 is also offered via the Internet. Enrollments in these courses vary, but are generally quite substantial.

General students may also audition for ensembles and enroll in private lessons with tenure-track faculty members as teaching loads permit.

Concerts, recitals, and other presentations sponsored by the Department of Music are open to the campus community as well as the general community.

## **P. Music Unit Evaluation, Planning, and Projections**

The Department of Music has both one-year and five-year plans that establish recruitment goals as well as priorities for additional faculty lines, equipment, etc. There is also a document setting forth the Department of Music By-laws. As part of the Southern Association accreditation process, the department developed an Academic Learning Compact (Self-Study, Appendix V) and a set of specific learning outcomes (Self-Study, Appendix VI).

One of the primary indicators of student achievement is the Advancement Exam (initiated in fall, 2005). Currently, it appears that this procedure is limited to a performance jury. As indicated in the Self-Study (page 40) and in discussions with the department chair, there is the intent to expand the Advancement Exam to include a more holistic assessment of the student's progress (e.g., record in theory classes, ensembles, status of piano proficiency, recital attendance, etc.).

The Self-Study was clearly written and thoroughly prepared. Music faculty reported active involvement in the process of deliberation, writing, and approval of the Self-Study document.

## Q. Standards Summary

The following observations concern threshold compliance with accreditation standards.

- Following the NASM visit, the visitors were informed that recent budget cuts relative to the ensembles have been fully restored. This should be confirmed in the Optional Response. (NASM *Handbook*, [2003-2004], p. 60, item II.C.¶1)
- It is not clear to the visitors that the Chair's current responsibilities plus his potential emerging responsibilities (Head of Fine and Performing Arts) allow sufficient time to execute his required administrative and/or teaching duties effectively. (NASM *Handbook* [2003-2004], p. 61, item II.D.¶5). Note also the NASM standard regarding teaching loads (NASM *Handbook* [2003-2004], p. 63, item II.E.4.¶1).
- The visitors are concerned about the aggregate qualifications of the faculty. The visitors did not observe rigorous attention to Music Theory and Musicology/Music-Literature in the academic background and current scholarly productivity of the current faculty. At least three statements in the *Handbook* speak to this standards issue:
  - “The institution shall maintain faculties and staff whose aggregate individual qualifications enable the music unit to accomplish its mission, goals, and objectives. (NASM *Handbook* [2003-2004], p. 61, item II.E.1,¶1)
  - “Academic degrees are a pertinent indicator of the teacher's qualifications for instructing in theoretical, historical, and pedagogical subjects. (NASM *Handbook* [2003-2004], p. 61, item II.E.1.¶4)
  - “Multiple faculty involved in any specific area of specialization should represent a diversity of background and experience in their field of expertise.” (NASM *Handbook* [2003-2004], p. 62, item II.E.2.¶2)
- If musical scores are moved to the Pace Library (as is the current plan), recordings and appropriate listening stations should be provided in close proximity in the same facility. (NASM *Handbook* [2003–2004], p. 66, item II.G.5. ¶1)
- The Music Hall (recital hall) would benefit from some minor acoustical adjustments. (NASM *Handbook* [2003-04], p. 64, item II. F, ¶4).
- Sound transfer within the practice rooms appears to be a problem. The problem may be caused primarily by exterior windows. It may be possible to modify the

- construction around the windows in order to reduce the sound transfer. (NASM *Handbook* [2003-04], p. 64, item II. F, ¶4).
- Piano maintenance appears to be a rather significant concern. Every piano the visitors heard was out of tune (this included pianos in practice rooms, the classroom, the rehearsal hall, and even the Steinway concert grand in the Music Hall). A more robust program of piano maintenance is strongly recommended. (NASM *Handbook* [2003-04], p. 64, item II. F, ¶6).
  - In general, student records were very orderly and were efficiently maintained. However, the files reviewed randomly by the visitors did not contain records of the student's repertory studies nor performances (NASM *Handbook* [2003-04], p. 66, item II. H, ¶4).
  - The visitors recommend that the department provide the Commission with a copy of the newly developed technology proficiency exam in order to establish that the applicable NASM standard is being met (NASM *Handbook* [2003-2004], p. 84, item VII.E.). This requirement applied to both the Bachelor of Arts in Music Performance and the Bachelor of Arts in Music Performance/Teaching.
  - It is not clear that the Bachelor of Arts in Music Performance provides sufficient knowledge of applicable solo and ensemble literature (NASM *Handbook* [2003-2004], p. 87, item VIII.A.3.a). The Self-Study asserts that this competency is addressed in the private lesson format (Self-Study, p. 34). However, it is not clear to the visitors that the private lesson format provides ample opportunity to achieve a broad and structured knowledge of applicable solo and ensemble literature.
  - The visitors have some concern about Secondary Performance requirements for piano principals in the Bachelor of Arts in Music Performance. (NASM *Handbook* [2003-2004], p. 83, item VII.A.5). This recommendation is being clearly followed for non-pianists by means of a required piano proficiency. However, it is not clear how this recommendation is being met by pianists.
  - It was not clear that students in the Bachelor of Arts in Music Performance/Teaching are provided instruction in arranging for choral ensembles (NASM *Handbook* [2003-2004], p. 96, item VIII.J.3.d.2). The Self-Study asserts that competencies in arranging are accomplished through MUT 4311 (Instrumentation) (Self-Study, p. 37). However, the syllabus for this course does not appear to address this competency. Nor does it appear that theory courses and the counterpoint course provide adequate instruction in arranging for the future choral ensemble teacher (again, as asserted in the Self-Study, page 37).
  - It does not appear that students in the Bachelor of Arts in Music Performance/Teaching are provided an adequate knowledge of the repertoires applicable to instrumental and choral ensembles (NASM *Handbook* [2003-2004], p. 97, item VIII.J.3.c.4). The Self-Study asserts that this knowledge of ensemble

literature is covered in MUE 4411 (Special Methods: Choral Techniques) and MUE 4493 (Special Methods: Instrumental Techniques). A review of the syllabi for these courses did not support this assertion.

- Although MUE 3311 (Methods for the Elementary Music Teacher) includes formal observation, it would be desirable to expand the students' opportunities for observation and practical experience prior to student teaching (NASM *Handbook* [2003-2004], p. 97, item VIII.J.3.d.2). The Self-Study (page 39) indicates that the Department is anxious to provide such a practicum experience (this was confirmed by the Department Chair).
- Currently, the Bachelor of Arts in Music Performance/Teaching requires a half-hour private lesson per week for two credit hours per semester (Self-Study, page 26). This does not appear to meet the NASM standard that students in professional programs should have a minimum of one hour of individual instruction per week (NASM *Handbook* [2003-2004], p. 75, item II.R.2.¶3). It appears that this problem could be corrected rather easily without adjusting credit hours.

## **R. Overview, Summary Assessment, and Recommendations for the Program**

### **1. Strengths**

- Competent and dedicated leadership of the Department of Music.
- A competent and hard-working faculty that appears to be dedicated to the success of the program.
- A very supportive upper administration including the President, the Provost, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Head of Fine and Performing Arts.
- Enthusiastic and engaged students who appear to have a genuine interest in learning.
- Surprisingly high student performance levels (both solo and ensemble).
- Good fund-raising prospects (but note comments in Section C of this report regarding the coordination of fund-raising efforts).
- Strong relationships with public schools in the area.
- A well maintained facility (but note comments in Section F of this report regarding the need for additional space and some acoustical modifications).
- A vibrant arts community; good relationships between the department and various arts entities in the community.
- Improved public relations pieces that reflect well upon the program and will provide greater visibility.
- A good planning schedule with regular program reviews.

## 2. Recommendations for short-term improvements

- The Department should attempt to purchase an inventory of support materials in the area of music education. The faculty reports that the current inventory is inadequate.
- Expand the Advancement Exam to include a broader assessment of the student's progress (including progress in theory, ensembles, piano proficiency, recital attendance, etc.).
- Coordinate all fund-raising into one departmental initiative (e.g., "Friends of Music"). Designated gifts and accounts (e.g., strings, bands, etc.) can continue to exist under this more general rubric.
- Create a student council to meet with the Department Chair on a regular basis (e.g., once per month).
- Reconsider current recital attendance requirements in an effort to reduce the "hidden hours" required of music majors. Explore ways of grading attendance without impacting private lesson grades.
- Music students appear to be concerned about the advising system. If possible, it would seem to be desirable for music advisors to work with students beginning in the first year. The Department might consider offering annual workshops to be certain that all music faculty advisors have a firm grasp of current requirements.
- If the Department sees a need for additional courses (e.g., Ensemble Literature, Song Repertoire, String Literature, etc.) or providing credit for recital attendance, there will be some pressure because of the university's commitment to 120-hour degrees. However, there may be some strategies for "finding" available credit hours in the current course crediting system. These might include the following: (1) reducing Senior Recital credit from three credits to one; (2) reducing first and second year hour lesson credit from three credits to two. These changes alone would "save" six hours in the Performance curriculum and two hours in the Teaching curriculum.

## 3. Recommendations for long-term development and futures planning

- The Department should pursue authorization to change its degree titles from Bachelor of Arts to Bachelor of Music.
- The Department should consider withdrawing its application for Plan Approval for the Jazz Studies degree.
- Once the Department is authorized to offer its current degrees as Bachelor of Music degrees, it should consider creating a true liberal arts degree (Bachelor of Arts) with a major in music and a minor in another discipline offered by the university.
- In cooperation with the university administration, devise strategies that would utilize the strengths of the music program to recruit larger enrollments to UWF. This would benefit both the university and the music program.