

School of Music

Assessment Report (2001-02 & 2002-03)

Learning Outcomes and Assessment Methods

a. Undergraduate Music Degree Program Outcomes (BA, BM, BME)

When students graduate from the UNL School of Music with a bachelor's degree, they will be able to:

Outcome 1: perform in solo and ensemble settings (large and small) with sufficient technical and musical skills requisite for artistic self-expression.

Method of assessment: random, stratified sample of students across all performance areas to be taped at first semester jury and final degree recital semester jury; possible reciprocal, external assessment of tapes with another university

Outcome 2: demonstrate a working knowledge of the solo repertoire of their instrument and the interpretative skills needed to execute a full range of styles within that repertoire.

Method of assessment: random, stratified sample of students' repertoire sheets across all performance areas for assessment by UNL graduate students using rubrics (graphic rating scales) designed by each area.

Outcome 3: read solo and ensemble literature at sight with fluency.

Method of assessment: assessment of all students at first semester jury and final degree recital semester jury by UNL studio faculty using Saunders/Holanhan Sight-reading Rating Rubric (see attached).

Outcome 4: utilize the piano to support musical instruction.

Method of assessment: piano proficiency requirements will be assessed every five years by a team of external evaluators.

Outcome 5: demonstrate fluency in the written fundamentals of music theory.

Method of assessment: major field exam

Outcome 6: demonstrate an understanding of the principles of common-practice harmony, musical form and compositional process.

Method of assessment: major field exam

Outcome 7: demonstrate aural comprehension of common-practice music.

Method of assessment: Kraus-designed aural proficiency examination

Outcome 8: demonstrate an understanding of the styles, genres, composers, forms and processes of the standard periods of art music in the Western European tradition, including works by composers of both genders and various ethnicities who have contributed to this tradition.

Method of assessment: major field exam

Outcome 9: synthesize historical and style-analytical information to create an oral or written presentation on a musical work for their instrument*.

Method of assessment: performance project from Music 445

Outcome 10: demonstrate an understanding of contemporary art music, both tonal and atonal**.

Method of assessment: major field exam

Outcome 11: develop curricula and plan for instruction in P-12 settings***.

Method of assessment: program portfolio; outside colleague review

Outcome 12: facilitate the development and growth of students' vocal and instrumental skills through appropriate instructional/rehearsal techniques and methodologies***.

Method of assessment: outside colleague review

Outcome 13: use assessment appropriately in various educational settings***.

Method of assessment: program portfolio

* Applies only to BM

** Does not apply to BA with minors in business & technology

*** Applies only to BME

b. Dance Degree Program Outcomes

When students graduate from the UNL Dance Program with a bachelor's degree, they will be able to:

Outcome 1: demonstrate the skills of ballet technique and modern dance technique.

Method of Assessment: juries

Outcome 2: demonstrate a working knowledge of the history of dance as it relates to the dance forms studied.

Method of Assessment: pre/post tests

Outcome 3: create dances and dance compositions, which incorporate individual concepts and movement inventions.

Method of Assessment: Composition II--capstone course

Outcome 4: develop and implement class plans for ballet technique and modern dance technique.

Method of Assessment: in practicum in pedagogy class

Outcome 5: demonstrate an understanding of the kinesiology based principles of safe and injury-free dance training.

Method of Assessment: in practicum in pedagogy class

c. Master of Music Degree Program Outcomes (Option I)

When students graduate from the UNL School of Music with a masters degree (Option I), they will be able to:

Outcome 1: present and defend the results of scholarly research or compositional activity.

Method of Assessment: publications & presentations; prizes/awards; outside performances; commissions; admittance into doctoral program; thesis defense

Outcome 2: demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the literature and other source materials in their area of expertise.

Method of Assessment: publications; oral & written comprehensive examination

Outcome 3: synthesize historical and style-analytical information to inform scholarly research or compositional activity.

Method of Assessment: defense/oral & written comprehensive exam

d. Master of Music Degree Program Outcomes (Option II)

When students graduate from the UNL School of Music with a masters degree (Option II), they will be able to:

Outcome 1: demonstrate a thorough working knowledge of historical, philosophical, psychological, sociological, and technological constructs necessary for the development of comprehensive music curriculum and instruction in pre-12 schools.

Method of Assessment: oral comps; exit portfolio and videotape

Outcome 2: demonstrate the ability to utilize a variety of conducting, rehearsal, and instructional techniques appropriate to specific music instructional settings and to the age of the student.

Method of Assessment: exit portfolio and videotape; professional awards

Outcome 3: demonstrate the ability to select, analyze, prepare and teach appropriate literature.

Method of Assessment: exit portfolio and videotape

Outcome 4: demonstrate the ability to understand, appreciate and analyze a wide variety of music literature, with emphasis on music in 20th century American society as well music from diverse cultures.

Method of Assessment: oral examination

e. Master of Music Degree Program Outcomes (Option III)

When students graduate from the UNL School of Music with a masters degree (Option III), they will be able to:

Outcome 1: perform with a high level of technical and interpretive skills requisite for artistic expression within a full range of musical styles.

Method of Assessment: acceptance into DMA & other professional training programs; other jobs in their field; prizes/awards in competitions

Outcome 2: demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the repertoire and history of their instrument or ensemble.

Method of Assessment: applied lessons/conducting repertoire lists; master comps

Outcome 3: synthesize historical and style-analytical information to create oral and written presentations on musical works for their instrument or ensemble.

Method of Assessment: required recital program notes; oral & written comps

f. Doctor of Musical Arts Degree Program Outcomes

When students graduate from the UNL School of Music with a DMA degree , they will be able to:

Outcome 1: perform or conduct and rehearse with a professional level of technical and interpretive skills requisite for artistic expression within a full range of musical styles.

Method of Assessment: degree recitals; professional engagements; performances at regional & national conventions; prizes/awards in competitions

Or)

compose with a professional technique requisite for artistic expression within contemporary styles/idioms.

Method of Assessment: degree recitals; professional engagements; performances at regional & national conventions; prizes/awards in competitions

Outcome 2: demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of the literature and other source materials in their area of expertise.

Method of Assessment: written & oral comprehensive examination; publications

Outcome 3: give oral and written presentations on musical works, which synthesize historical and style-analytical information for their instrument, ensemble, or compositional medium.

Method of Assessment: written & oral comprehensive examination; publications

Outcome 4: demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the history of their instrument, ensemble or compositional medium.

Method of Assessment: applied lessons/conducting repertoire lists; written & oral comprehensive examination

Outcome 5: present and defend the results of scholarly research or compositional activity.

Method of Assessment: lecture recital; document and oral defense; publications & presentations; prizes/awards; outside performances; commissions

Outcome 6: demonstrate the ability to select appropriate literature for teaching.

Method of Assessment: written & oral comprehensive examination; publications

Outcome 7: articulate appropriate teaching strategies for building a technical foundation and the understanding of musical styles.

Method of Assessment: written & oral comprehensive examinations

Assessment Activity in 2001-02 & 2002-03

The School continues to collect information about student learning (i.e., jury examinations, proficiency examinations, field experience evaluations, recitals, capstone projects, etc.). The School plans to adapt this existing information (currently used to provide feedback to individual students), as well as to collect some meaningful new standardized, normative data, and to synthesize this feedback into a resource that faculty can use to assess the overall program for them. All of these assessment activities provide information for the appraisal of the learning objectives for all of the degree programs--BME, BM, BA, MM (approved since the last assessment report), & DMA.

Although much of the assessment work originates with the School's Undergraduate Curriculum and Graduate Committees, the goal continues to be to engage all faculty in meaningful dialogue about teaching and student learning across the curriculum. This dialogue, which includes analysis and reflection, is the basis for recommended curricular and procedural changes in the

School's degree programs. This report will review the progress toward this end in four undergraduate and two graduate degree programs:

- a. Bachelor of Music
- b. Bachelor of Music Education
- c. Bachelor of Arts (Music major)
- d. Bachelor of Arts (Dance major)
- e. Master of Music
- f. Doctor of Musical Arts

a. Bachelor of Music

The Undergraduate Committee remains committed to finding ways to assess the outcomes/objectives that represent the types of knowledge, skills and attitudes/values that faculty want the BM students to attain upon graduation. For example, one of the outcomes for BM students [and all other undergraduate students as well] is to be able to “. . . perform in solo and ensemble settings (large and small) with sufficient technical and musical skills requisite for artistic self-expression.” Previously the Committee had suggested that a random, stratified sample of students across all performance areas be tape recorded at the first semester jury and final degree recital semester jury for assessment by faculty at another university. The School continues to pursue this assessment activity. The School is now aware of models in use at other institutions, which utilize digital video to record students' performances. These performances are then converted to streaming video and placed on a web site for perusal and assessment via a rating scale that utilizes the Likert response format. The data are then loaded directly into a spreadsheet for analysis. The School is exploring ways of adapting this model for use at the UNL School of Music.

The faculty continues to use the Educational Testing Service (ETS) Major Field Test in Music to provide normative data regarding the BM students' knowledge in theory; history and literature; style analysis and basic terminology and identification in music. BM students recorded an excellent mean(*M*) total score of 162 [maximum = 200; percentile (*P*)=91st; Standard Deviation (*SD*) = 8.6] on Major Field Test in Music last year. The percentile sub scores were equally impressive: Theory (*m* = 63.4; *SD* = 7.8; *P* = 97); History & Literature (*m* = 58.4; *SD* = 8.6; *P* = 83); Style Analysis (*m* = 62.7; *SD* = 7.6; *P* = 98), and Basic Terminology and Identification (*m* = 59.9; *SD* = 8.5; *P* = 86).

b. Bachelor of Music Education

The Bachelor of Music Education program faculty continue to use six to ten learning outcomes in each of four categories (personal growth, intellectual growth, musical growth, and pedagogical growth) as the basis of what students should know and be able to do when they leave the program. The faculty currently utilize data collected about individual BME students in the form of portfolios and direct observation in field settings by both university supervisors and cooperating teachers as the basis of program revision and development. The faculty is currently discussing the use of the ETS Praxis II Series Music Education Test to provide normative data about the students and the music education program. The test includes sub-scores in the areas of music history and literature; music theory; performance skills; and curriculum, instruction and professional concerns. An important feature of this

instrument is that is not only tests comprehension and application of concepts via multiple choice questions, but nearly a third of the test questions involve responses to recorded musical examples. This is important as listening skills are critical to the successful teaching of music. If the use of this instrument were adopted by the faculty, a powerful new tool would be available to assist with reflection on program effectiveness.

c. Bachelor of Arts (Music Majors)

As with the Bachelor of Music program, the first step is the identification of what knowledge, skills, and attitudes graduates of this program should have after completing the program. These outcomes have yet to be determined. The School recognizes the complexity of this task because music majors in BA program may emphasize music performance, research, business, or technology. Nevertheless, it is a necessary prerequisite to developing the appropriate measurement tools and assessment strategies necessary to collect needed data for outcomes assessment. Many of the measurement tools and procedures utilized for the Bachelor of Music degree program can be applied to assess music performance, but meaningful assessment for this degree program in other areas of emphasis will undoubtedly require the assistance of faculty outside of the School (i.e., business). The School continues to discuss ways in which BA students with various areas of emphases can be effectively assessed. Use of the ETS Major Field Test in Music will be considered for BA students in the coming months.

d. Bachelor of Arts (Dance Majors)

The Dance Faculty have identified a list of learning outcomes for this program, and the faculty of the School have ratified these outcomes. A late resignation of a relatively new faculty member at the beginning of the 03-04 academic year has made progress on assessment activities difficult in this program. A search is underway currently for a new dance faculty member, with plans to resume assessment work in the area in the fall.

e. Graduate Programs

The assessment plan for the School of Music Graduate Programs includes diagnostic and summative student learning assessment procedures, which provide an appraisal of growth in student learning for the student and faculty. It also includes program assessment in the areas of curriculum, recruitment, resources, program completion, and placement/impact of alumni. Data obtained from these student and program assessments then become the basis for changes in course offerings and program structure. For example, the Doctor of Musical Arts degree program has in place demanding screening procedures for entry into the program. Both area faculty and the Graduate Committee review DMA applicants' admission materials, which include transcripts, letters of reference, a statement of purpose, and the results of a written exercise. The area faculty typically listen to both a pre-audition screening tape and an on-campus audition. They also interview the candidate to determine if the student's goals are commensurate with program and faculty resources. This information is utilized in a diagnostic way by the supervisory committee and the student in planning his/her program. Measures or indicators of student learning for DMA students include presentation and review of degree recitals; a comprehensive written examination and an oral examination; a thesis or

final composition; and a final oral examination, which is primarily a defense of the document or composition.

Discussion of Results and Improvements

Assessment is a circular process. Assessment information gathered needs to be used to re-examine learning outcomes and make appropriate adjustments. For example, several years ago the School reduced the number of courses in music history from three courses to two courses. Results from the ETS Major Field Test indicates that this change has not resulted in a reduction of the students' ability to master the learning outcome related to music history (Demonstrate an understanding of the styles, genres, composers, forms and processes of the standard periods of art music in the Western European tradition, including works by composers of both genders and various ethnicities who have contributed to this tradition) as the students scored at or the near the 90th percentile on the norm-referenced test.

Since the adoption of a set of learning outcomes for the Master of Music degree program, the Graduate Committee has initiated curricular changes to assist students in achieving the outcomes. Assessment has been a key component in identifying areas where change was needed and in determining the effectiveness of the curricular changes initiated. For example, listening is a key component to the study, teaching and performing of music. Incoming masters students' listening skills have been assessed as part of the diagnostic testing prior to beginning the program for many years. However, until two years ago, students with listening deficiencies were not offered a formal, systematic way of improving these skills. The past procedure involved simply retesting the students until proficiency could be demonstrated. The lack of students' success on listening tasks near the end of their programs had reached the point where action needed to be taken. The curriculum now contains a Graduate Review of Ear Training course (MUSC 048), which provides a structured opportunity to regain listening skills through a self-directed text/computer software package. The instructor meets with the students once a month to monitor progress. These efforts have been successful. Of the thirteen students having listening deficiencies upon entering the program this fall, all but three students have demonstrated competency after only their first semester of study.

A major tenet of the assessment package concerns the adaptation of existing data sources to provide more meaningful feedback for the individual student and to provide a framework for program revision. An important measure or indicator of the DMA student's musical growth is the presentation and review of degree recitals. Based on concerns documented by students, the Graduate Committee has taken steps to ensure more accurate and detailed feedback is generated regarding recitals. Supervisory DMA committee members are no longer able to simply record a pass/no pass vote for a recital. Each committee member must record a letter grade for the recital, along with specific written feedback to the student (positive and negative) regarding the performance. All of these comments are shared with the student by the chair of the supervisory committee. This "recital feedback vignette" is an example of how the process of assessment has been used to inform decisions about the learning climate in the DMA degree program.

Conclusion

The School of Music continues to use assessment as an important tool to improve student learning and make adjustments in curriculum for all of its degree programs. The immediate goals include the further exploration of the use of technology to assess the students' musical performance skills via video streaming and the adoption of the ETS Praxis II Series Music Education Test