Music Assessment Report

St. Norbert College

September 2011
LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND ASSESSMENT

The music curriculum has four primary focuses of learning objectives and assessment: Comprehensive Musicianship, Conducting, Music Education, and Individual Performance.

Direct Evidence in Assessment

Our six-semester core curriculum of music theory and history, known as COMPREHENSIVE MUSICIANSHIP, is common to all music and music education majors. Competencies in this area include mastery and practical application of standard notational styles, historical performance practices, individual and national contributions to musical culture, and the application of specific analytical techniques. A baseline assessment exam is given to all incoming students who audition. Student learning is assessed through papers, tests, and original music composition during the 3-year sequence, and through a comprehensive exam given at the end of the junior year. Data gathered allow faculty to recognize curricular strengths as well as areas that need attention and improvement.

Two CONDUCTING courses are also required of all music and music education majors. The assessment at the conclusion of the second semester (either advanced choral or advanced instrumental conducting) includes both instructor evaluation and student self-reflection. Written work and video recordings of conducting practicums produced during the two-semester sequence document improvements in student conducting, rehearsal pacing and instruction, and general musicianship. These artifacts become a part of the student portfolio, and help instructors identify strengths and weaknesses in the overall conducting curriculum, based on student performance.

The final semester for the pre-service MUSIC EDUCATION student is spent in practice teaching. Assessments conducted during these field experiences are a direct way of monitoring the effectiveness of the music education program. An observation rubric gives pre-service teachers feedback on how their teaching can improve, and provides instructors data on overall strengths and weaknesses in the music teacher preparation curriculum. This rubric is divided into four sections: Lesson Planning and Assessment, Skill in Teaching in the Content Area, Classroom Management, and Professional Demeanor and Development.

The music discipline assesses the INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE skills of its majors through scholarship and ensemble auditions each year, studio class and faculty-juried performance examinations each semester, upper division qualifying juries, and a junior recital presented by all performance and music education majors. Written and verbal evaluations by faculty assess overall musicianship as well as characteristics such as sight reading skills, tone quality and intonation, accuracy of rhythm and dynamics, diction or articulation, and stage deportment. The faculty reviews its assessment tools to evaluate strengths and weaknesses in the overall performance curriculum. Beginning in the Fall of 2011, a newly developed set of rubrics will be added to assess a second full solo recital required of all performance majors during the senior year.
Indirect Evidence in Assessment

St. Norbert graduates with Music or Music Education degrees have been successful at securing teaching jobs and/or being accepted into graduate programs. In the five years since our last performance review (2005-10), 100% of the 33 music education graduates who sought a teaching position were hired within six months of graduation. 88% are still teaching, one joined the Norbertine order, and three are pursuing advanced degrees in Music Education or Vocal Pedagogy (Boston University, UW - Madison and NYU). Of our seven performance graduates, two maintain private teaching studios in Northeastern WI, three were accepted into masters performance programs (Boston University, WSU - Kansas, UW-Milwaukee) and one is pursuing his doctorate in piano performance at the University of West VA. Three other liberal arts-music emphasis graduates were accepted into masters programs in music composition or musicology at UW-Milwaukee during the same time period.

Document program improvement based upon assessment

- The Music Education curriculum was reviewed by the DPI in June 2010 resulting in several revisions based on recommendations from this organization, including the elimination of the Instrumental Music 6-12 Only option for teaching certification.
- Following feedback from music education graduates and cooperating student teacher supervisors, we are phasing the Piano Practicum curriculum into the six-semester piano lab sequence required by all students as part of Comprehensive Musicianship. We hope to apply the two credit hours freed up by this change to additional vocal training for both instrumental and vocal certification students, as mandated by DPI. Implementation of these new courses in voice will align with the revised 2012-2013 college catalogue.
- Again, in response to feedback from graduates and music educators in Northeast Wisconsin, we have increased our emphasis on lesson plan design and execution in all of our music education classes and methods courses.
- A music theory specialist has been hired, and a full review of the six-semester Comprehensive Musicianship sequence is under way.