

TAMS Commission on Music in General Education

Members of the Commission present included Richard Fiese, Chair, Robert Hansen (WTAMU), and Todd Quinlin (Blinn College).

Total attendance at the Commission meeting was nine.

It was noted that the mission of the Commission was somewhat obscured over time and that Commission members needed to work to establish and define our purpose to better serve and respond to the needs of the membership. Two primary points of discussion included the suggestion by Past President Tucker to develop and submit a proposal to the TMEA Clinic-Convention in an effort to provide for professional development opportunities for those either serving in higher education or those who aspire to do so.

There were proposals submitted for the TMEA 2017 Clinic-Convention but these did not successfully progress through the selection process. At this meeting of the Commission, Todd Quinlin presented two proposals that he developed each geared for the target audience. It was noted that the challenge in progressing through the selection process by the TMEA Division Vice-President and the Executive Board was that it was difficult to readily demonstrate that the proposed sessions would attract a sufficiently broad audience such that the proposal would be selected given the relatively limited number of session slots available in the College Division. Both proposals by Quinlin were distributed to those in attendance and he was encouraged to submit the proposals for the 2018 Clinic-Convention. The Chair of the Commission indicated that he would work with both the TAMS Executive Director and the leadership of TMEA regarding these proposals.

The second major discussion point was related to the how the general student was being served in and through our academic music units. It was recognized that the two major areas in which our music units serve the general student were through ensemble participation and enrollment in those courses entitled music appreciation, fine arts appreciation, etc. It was noted that the opportunities and experiences students received in ensembles was generally positive, although some noted that their experience reflected that students expressed "burn-out" following their experiences in high school performing ensembles. In terms of the general studies core courses, concern was expressed regarding the preparation of faculty who had responsibility for these courses, the assignment of faculty/instructors to these courses for reasons beyond interest and ability, the perception that these courses served primarily to enhance credit-hour generation, and that, in some instances, the published materials tended to "drive" instruction rather than the instructor using the materials to achieve his/her instructional goals. It was also noted that the effects of high quality, readily accessible, media and the perception that students are increasingly dependent on visual stimulation rather than auditory stimulation as a means of accessing and interpreting the world has altered the experience of music from a social phenomenon to an insular and individual phenomenon. Another concern raised was the perception that "real music" is the music students already know and that art music and world music tends to be considered as irrelevant "school music." Creating personal relevance of music that is beyond their immediate experience and values remains a major challenge to those with responsibility in these courses. These are certainly neither novel issues nor unique challenges, but the perception that the degree of these challenges seems to have increased exponentially with the advent of ongoing technological advances is apparent.

There followed a considerable discussion of various approaches, delivery systems, content, and faculty assignments regarding these core general education courses. It was suggested that to gain acumen regarding the status of these courses across our state it might be advantageous to pursue a study to examine the practices used in our member institutions. It was noted that while significant data could be gleaned from HEADS, an assessment of association member institutions would potentially include data from non NASM member institutions and provide a more fully-orbed description of the status of these courses. The Chair will assess the potential for such a study to be undertaken.

There being no further discussion the meeting was adjourned.