

Texas Association of Music Schools Seventy-Eighth Annual Meeting

Report of State Four-Year Institutions Round-Table Discussion

Friday, January 27, 2017: 17 members present

The meeting opened at 9:01am with introductions from all present. The first question posed regarded hiring procedures for temporary employees, such as those for summer camps, guest artists, and the like. One university recently announced that an outside employment agency, requiring a fee of an additional 40% of salary, would handle the hiring paperwork for those types of workers. While most schools seem to follow many similar in-house procedures of hiring and terminating short-term employees, no one else present reported using out-sourcing to complete hiring paperwork. This move apparently was undertaken in response to concerns regarding audits and compliance issues, but these business worries are negatively affecting the academic side of the program.

The next question regarded the management of paperwork for international faculty and staff; that is, who handles visa and green card issues at the various schools? In one instance, the department chair has to manage this paperwork, but most of those present indicated that there was a particular person or office on their campuses that assists with these complicated issues.

A question about admissions policies followed, regarding having students admitted who have exceptional ability as a musician, but fall short of other standards such as a required ACT/SAT score. Most schools have procedures for admitting students by alternative means, but sometimes limit the number of students admitted in that manner. Furthermore, such students often need close supervision once they join the program so that retention rates are not negatively impacted. Sometimes the awarding of scholarships or a gateway program in the summer offer alternate ways to help students gain admission.

Next, the policy of out-of-state or international students becoming eligible for in-state tuition if they receive \$1,000 scholarships was discussed. Some schools are limiting the number of these types of tuition reductions, and some might not qualify based upon how the scholarships are awarded, i.e., is it a competitive process. On a related note, one executive mentioned that some schools require 15 credit hours per semester and/or 30 hours over the academic year to keep a scholarship. However, if students bring in a great deal of AP or dual credit, it may be difficult to impossible to take that many (required) hours, especially on a 120 hour degree plan. Therefore, they are trying to keep the retention of scholarships tied to GPA. Those present were polled regarding the number of out-of-state undergraduates that their programs serve, and none present reported a high percentage of out-of-state undergraduates in their music programs.

The next discussion regarded how many times a music major could fail (with a D or F) a music class without being dismissed from the program. Many of those present reported a "3 times, you're out" policy; one school recently initiated a policy whereby a student could only fail a music class twice before being dismissed as a music major. The reason behind this was to force students to pass sooner rather than later, hopefully helping students not to run up ever-increasing amounts of debt. Particularly with the increased fees that go into effect once students have attempted 30 hours past their degree plans, this is an important consideration.

Recruiting graduate students and the administration of graduate assistantship awards was discussed next. The various executives present reported a variety of ways of allocating their funds, including waiving out-of-state

tuition, providing stipends, and giving reduced tuition. Those present reported quite a variety of award amounts and methods of compensating their GAs. It was universally agreed that it is common for students to not understand the details of their compensation packages, and that the music units should explain clearly to students what they are receiving so that they understand not just the award amounts, but also their fees and obligations.

Next, someone inquired whether the universities of those present had experienced a decline in international student applications. Some reportedly had noticed a decrease, and other campuses representatives said “not yet, but we’re worried.”

The final topic for the morning regarded faculty workloads. A Tier One institution executive reported that its (music) research faculty were moving to 2/2 loads. His question was about managing faculty members’ workloads who are unproductive in scholarly/creative activity but still wanted to receive the reduced teaching load. A comparison of faculty teaching loads commenced, with loads varying from 2/2, to 3/2, to 4/4 and above being reported.

This session concluded at 10:19am.

Texas Association of Music Schools Seventy-Eighth Annual Meeting Report of State Four-Year Institutions Round-Table Discussion

Saturday, January 28, 2017: 10 members present

The discussion began at 9:00am, continuing with a topic related to the final one from the previous day’s meeting: post-tenure review procedures. Those present described their schools’ procedures, which typically involve the faculty member under review submitting the previous five years of faculty activity reports, chair’s evaluations, along with a CV, and sometimes a narrative.

The importance of annual evaluations to document faculty members’ achievements and issues was discussed next. The amount of time that it takes to provide a single evaluation varied from 20 minutes to hours to weeks. Some chairs meet with all of the faculty; others leave that as an option if faculty wish to meet. In some programs, the chair does not provide the annual review, and instead, a committee of faculty members from the department does it. Someone remarked that it is important to help faculty members leave if it appears that they will not get tenure. A discussion of standards for review followed. Most programs reported having clear standards that faculty understand, but other programs are still developing those measures.

Expectations for assistant vs. associate vs. full professors was discussed next. In some programs, junior faculty are funded very highly, to assist them in developing their portfolio toward promotion and tenure. In others, senior faculty are more highly funded, because as senior faculty they are expected to achieve more, not less. Start-up funds for new faculty varied from zero to \$20,000 (over multiple years). Travel fund allocations also vary quite a bit from one school to another.

The budgeting challenges related to faculty development leave were mentioned next. One program reported receiving just \$5,000 to hire a full-time replacement for a semester. Another program reported that its faculty

receive an entire semester's leave following their third-year review, which creates challenges with covering those duties.

Finally, the time consuming task of budget management was discussed. It was reported that some universities "lose" amounts in the millions when a fiscal year is closed out and another begun. It was recommended that chairs be vigilant in tracking accounts, because sometimes funds are shifted in or out that you might not otherwise notice. Some chairs budget funds in advance, while others manage the budget as the year progresses. Support for marching band programs comes from different sources; some music units must fund the marching bands themselves, but others receive funding from athletics. Also, some universities still receive HEAF, which supports schools not receiving PUF, but this universally trickles down to the music units after the universities and colleges have first used what is needed. These funds support infrastructure at the universities.

The roundtable discussion concluded at 10:00am with thanks to all for participating and sharing their experiences and wisdom with the group. One executive noted that he wished that we had more roundtable discussion time, and those present concurred, remarking upon the helpfulness and camaraderie shared by all.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Diana Sipes". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a large 'D' and a long, sweeping 'S'.

Diana Sipes, D.M.A.
Associate Dean and Professor of Music
School of the Arts, Media & Communication
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi