

Report of the Commission on Music and General Education
January 25, 2019

Commission members present: Robert Hansen, acting moderator; Justin Hodges, Todd Quinlan

Institution representatives present:

Sarah Harris Baker	Temple Junior College
Norm Bergeron	Temple Junior College
Bradley Bolick	Hill College
Cynthia Clayton	University of Houston
Vicky Johnson	Tarleton State University
Mike Sullivan	Saint Mary's University
David Tercero	Grayson College
Paul Thomas	Texas Women's University
Kim Wallace	Texas Tech University
Tom Webster	East Texas Baptist University
Andy Wright	Grayson College

The commission's discussion began with a review of its mission. The commission formed initially at a time when the presence and relevance of the fine arts, and particularly music, in the general academic core faced challenges. We question whether the mission continues to have relevance or whether the focus should evolve.

In response to the question, "How do we define and what do we understand by the term 'general education' in the commission's charge, we defaulted to the general academic core in higher education.

Representing a private institution, Tom Webster queried whether applied lessons and ensembles could satisfy the fine arts component. While that may be an option for the private programs, representatives of public institutions concurred that only academic courses satisfy the state-mandated core. For private schools, it may be a concern for SACSCOC.

Typically, institutions seem to be meeting the requirement using traditional music appreciation courses grounded in either the Western canon or American popular music. The latter seem to be gaining in number, perhaps reflecting the appetites of the students required to enroll. Course delivery options beyond the normal semester model included intensives in 'minimesters' and an interesting hybrid model of six days of independent online work, followed by a structured week of lectures, and concluded with six days for online course completion.

We recognized a concern that faculty teaching music in general education tend to be teaching outside their areas of expertise to a student cohort distinctly different from their music-major students. They, along with faculty new to teaching generalized courses, might benefit from training in student engagement and best practices in the classroom to facilitate the transition

from “content expert” to “master teacher.” We recognize the potential value of a white paper of best practices for faculty teaching outside their comfort zone.

The bulk of the conversation moved far off topic into transfer issues and the goal of achieving easy horizontal movement from the two-year colleges to senior institutions. The discussion touched on issues of transferability and acceptance of credits, determination of proficiency of transfers in light of statutes governing proficiency examinations and required acceptance of credits, and the assimilation of transfer students into the academic and social climates of the receiving institution. The inevitable lack of continuity of course content from one institution to another poses the greatest difficulty for the students as well as the institutions accepting transfer credits. The conversation consumed most of the session.

Based on the conversation and the complexity of the issues at stake, the commission recommends that its focus should evolve from Music and General Education to issues of Transferability, Articulation, Proficiency and the statutory language impacting them. Therefore, by means of this report, we offer the recommendation to the Board of Directors.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Hansen, acting chair