

Texas Association of Music Schools Seventy-Ninth Annual Meeting

Report of Four-Year State Schools Round-Table Discussion

Friday, January 26, 2018: 18 members present

The meeting opened at 9:00 a.m. with introductions from all present. The first topic discussed was the systems being used by music programs to schedule rooms and events. One university that uses EMS combines the two buildings used by the music program into one “fake” building, so that all events and rooms are viewable at once. Reservations can only be made by the music unit; other entities can request spaces, but the music unit retains right of refusal. Another music executive recommended Calendar Whiz, a software platform that costs \$250 annually that his program uses successfully. He said that using this app, faculty can reserve rooms on their phones and also see what is happening across the unit. It allows them to manage their space efficiently in real time. They can send announcements easily to social media such as Facebook with the app and export results for university level schedulers, too. At least one program assigns applied music lessons to classrooms to demonstrate higher (and actual) space utilization. Another large program has an app that can show the calendar of events easily to patrons as well as faculty and students, even though they still produce print materials, too. For those that use EMS, it was mentioned that it shows the calendar as well as room utilization; events can be tagged as public or private there. Midas was another software recommended for room scheduling. Finally, some programs use an Outlook calendar for managing their department events and class schedules. Faculty can view this calendar, but cannot change it. Students also use it to manage recital reservations and for confirmation and billing for senior recital fees.

The next topic was application management and music program admission. Since Decision Desk has ceased operation, Acceptd has stepped in to become the solution for the performing arts. However, the Acceptd system does not link well with the general university admissions platforms in place. Having to push through the data has been problematic. Acceptd can be used to handle workshop and camp registrations, too. The hope is that Acceptd will eventually adapt to interface more efficiently with the larger scale university-level admissions platforms, such as Sales Force. Another music executive mentioned that his program uses open source software as much as possible because it is constantly updated. Another reported using My Online Camp to manage camp applications; this platform also allows for building an online presence.

A question was posed about how music units are negotiating the policies that allow financial aid only for courses in the degree or major. One school’s solution is to offer a Bachelor of Music degree with a choice of seven different emphases. Adding the emphases requirement expands the 120 hours and gives students the opportunity to add courses beyond the basics because they are on the degree plan. Another school is moving to offering ensembles for zero credit. In general, the time and energy spent on preparing for, undertaking, and recovering from audits of all kinds is increasing everywhere.

Other information was shared related to camps and related activities. One program reported that the challenges of hiring extra labor continues on his campus. Determining whether a person is a contract laborer or an employee is key; at one school, at least, even guest artists are sometimes classified as employees, unleashing a load of extra paperwork, training, and rules to follow. Another program reported that for all camps, 10% of the profit from the camp goes directly to their president’s office, and 5% goes to the dean’s office. One program successfully negotiated a discount on their fees for camp housing, arguing that it was better for them to receive some money

for the rooms rather than have them stay vacant. Another music unit reported that their College of Business approached them about offering activities in the evenings to their campers, seeing this as a recruiting venture. This helps the camp by giving them one less evening to fill with activities, broadens the camp offerings, and helps the department doing the recruiting, too.

Another topic raised was managing the music spaces that other entities might wish to use or rent, such as for film screenings, etc. Many executives noted that they receive many requests to use the music unit's spaces. One program relies heavily upon the university facilities usage statements, having established clear procedures, fees, and contracts for renting or using spaces. Many programs have few rooms open or available for others to use.

Another music representative asked about how other music programs handle the issue of faculty (and perhaps students) teaching private lessons on campus. Does it matter whether the teacher is being paid, and how can we handle free lessons often given as a recruitment incentive? These are important to personalize the recruiting of well-qualified students. In this time of heightened sensitivity, risk management is important. One executive recommended that all faculty be made aware of the rules, and that then if they chose to do otherwise, that this deliberate, purposeful negligence of the policy freed the music program and the university from liability. One program uses a software program called Collabra to audio or video record all lessons. Then, students can go back to listen to their lessons afterwards – a valuable instructional tool. Also, then there is a record of the lesson activities. Students pay a \$20 annual fee for access to the recordings.

This session concluded at 10:19 a.m. with thanks to all those present for participating.

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Saturday, January 27, 2018: 10 members present

The session began at 9:45 a.m. with discussion about athletic band funding. The first question to those present was, "How is your marching band program funded?" At least one school reported that the student service fees provide the majority of funding required by the marching band, helping to cover costs for the equipment and a staff position. Other programs reported funding the faculty and staff with the music program budget, while student service fees help with other expenses. The marching band members at one program pay a \$25 fee that goes toward expenses, such as providing water and snacks during band activities. One school reported buying marching band uniforms using HEAF (Higher Education Assistance Fund). Another program received a private donation which allowed marching band members to receive scholarships. Details related to pep bands for basketball and/or volleyball games were also discussed. Multiple programs reported students receiving \$20 or \$25 a piece per game. In some cases, athletics provided no support to the pep band, although the students in at least one program receive uniform shirts to wear at the games.

Faculty performance reviews were discussed next, especially evaluation of teaching. One program requires one peer observation of teaching each year, as well as one chair observation. The chair observation requires a meeting both before and after the observation, as well. It was mentioned that there was a session at NASM on evaluating teaching. The presenter suggested considering, "What matters?" when deciding how to evaluate a person's teaching. It should be a set of criteria that everyone agrees upon, that can be defended if (when) challenged.

Clearly knowledge of the subject matter should be considered, but there are other factors, as well. The question was raised – how does a music chair do this for sixty or eighty faculty members? One person mentioned that there has to be a system of peer observations in order to cover that many faculty. Another program representative said that his program uses comments from final jury sheets as one way to assess a teacher's performance. The challenges of evaluating teaching in applied music lessons vs. classroom teaching was mentioned. One music program has a published document of departmental standards related to teaching which includes the following: permission to discount student course evaluations; evidence of preparation; syllabus quality; professional development; self evaluation; evidence or examples of student work; responses to student comments; and innovations to teaching. One program uses forms with numerical scores, weighing performance against departmental standards. Multiple programs mentioned that they use review by committees made up of elected representatives, perhaps area coordinators. The chair has the authority to tweak the results that the committee provides. When measuring service, the number of committees as well as the intensity of the time commitment should be considered. National level service is scored higher. Whether merit evaluation systems are separate or different from the annual review system was next discussed. In many programs, annual evaluations influence merit awards; scores from annual reviews may determine the level of award. One person asked whether a faculty member should be penalized for refusing to work an unpaid overload, and whether such a faculty member should still be eligible for merit, or if refusing to work the overload places him into a negative category on the review. Evaluations for adjunct faculty members were also discussed; some programs evaluate their adjuncts as often as every semester, whereas others never observe or assess their adjunct faculty members' teaching or performance.

This led to a question about whether other music programs advertise for adjunct faculty openings. Some had done so, and reported that it could be a good way to find someone to fill an opening if you do not know anyone already. Placing an advertisement soliciting applications could also put current adjunct faculty on notice that you are actively seeking additional (perhaps different) instructors for the future. One music executive recommended keeping copies of job descriptions in a file in the office; then those are available for reference later if a faculty member disputes his/her job duties. Finally, some challenges were discussed associated with dealing with adjunct faculty who are married to tenured faculty members. In particular, multiple executives discussed the potential difficulties of negotiating when those adjuncts seek extra privileges, such as additional funding for guest artists and the like, weighed against the importance of having those adjuncts actively recruiting new students in order to qualify for those privileges.

The session concluded at 10:45 a.m. with thanks to everyone for sharing his or her experiences and insight.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Diana Sipes". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.

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