

## **Texas Association of Music Schools Eightieth Annual Conference**

### **Report of Four-Year State Schools Round-Table Discussion**

Friday, January 25, 2019: 18 members present

The meeting opened at 10:30 a.m. with introductions from those present. The first topic discussed was scholarship offer procedures at various programs. Members know to observe the May 1 commitment deadline. Before a music scholarship may be offered after the deadline, entering students are asked if they have already accepted a music scholarship elsewhere, which would make them ineligible without a release. Having transfer students obtain a scholarship release from their current school before auditioning at another school was also mentioned. This does not apply to students in their second year of study at a two-year program. The majority of problems arise when students do not observe the guidelines or are not truthful. Everyone agreed that educating students about the procedures is important and can help avoid improprieties.

The next topic was helping students transition smoothly from two-year to four-year programs. It was recommended to follow the Field of Study; some programs adjusted their curriculum to match directly. Many use the Texas Common Course Numbering system or have developed transfer guides or articulation agreements to simplify the transfer of credits. Problems related to a 60-hour associate's degree that does not include a complete core because of the number of music credits required were discussed. Those present were asked if their programs would be helped by receiving a portfolio and/or jury documents from the community colleges to help guide the transfer students' advising. The executives present believed that their programs' auditions, interviews, and placement tests currently in place are adequate for their needs.

The next discussion centered on theory instruction. The first question: how do programs handle incoming transfer students with differing theory levels? One program uses MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) as a resource for their students to take free theory courses if they need to improve their skills. Another program offers a free review class, which meets at nights. One executive asked if any programs were offering Theory I, II, III, and IV all semesters. Responses varied: a few offer all levels in all long semesters, some are moving toward offering some or all of the theory courses online at various times in the year, while many retain the tradition Theory I and III in the fall, Theory II and IV in the spring. Some also add Theory I in Spring and Theory II during the summer to help the students to catch up. Some programs offer a remedial theory or fundamentals class to help prepare new majors for the theory sequence, so they have usually designed a schedule that allows those students to catch up or continue their theory studies. However, one school reported that they no longer offer a Fundamentals class. Incoming majors are told in writing ahead of time where they can study in advance to prepare for Theory I. Others mentioned that their programs offer Fundamentals to give less experienced students an opportunity to strengthen their skills while not holding back the stronger students. A theory fundamentals course may also be a desirable or even recommended class for students in other majors, such as Theatre. Retention and learning in theory classes were increased in one program by reducing class size. Theory class sizes were reported as being between 20 to 32 students per section across various schools; 15 was a typical number for aural training classes.

This led to a discussion of the challenges of summer budgeting, and whether programs are able to offer classes for their music majors during the summer. Most do not offer applied music lessons in the summer because it is too expensive. Universities compensate their faculty in various ways for summer teaching. Senior faculty are more expensive if pay is calculated based upon 9-month salary. Some schools are using flat fees to pay faculty for

summer teaching; other schools are paying based upon salary percentage but with a cap. Deciding who teaches in the summer was discussed, too. While some programs have difficulty finding enough teachers to staff summer teaching, others do not have enough courses for those interested in teaching. One program uses the same people to teach in the summer who teach the course during the long semester, while another rewards adjuncts by offering them teaching in the summer. One school is seeking ways to make it financially advantageous for students to enroll in online courses.

Expectations for auditions and applied lesson progress by students entering music industry or similar degrees was discussed. One person reported that students in this type of degree at their school are permitted to count any type of ensemble for their ensemble requirement. Multiple programs are initiating having students audition on computer as their primary instrument; students in this degree typically take lessons on a secondary instrument, such as keyboard. Composition may be the principal lessons taken. One person mentioned that music notation facility has become an optional skill at Harvard. Computer music is a huge study in other parts of the world; the continued evolution of music studies in the United States will be interesting and important.

This session concluded at 11:46 a.m. with thanks to all those present for participating.

### **Texas Association of Music Schools Eightieth Annual Conference Report of Four-Year State Schools Round-Table Discussion**

Saturday, January 26, 2019: 14 members present

The session began at 9:00 a.m. with discussion about zero credit courses. Some programs offer none of these, but others offer recital class and junior/senior recitals as zero credit courses. These are typically pass/fail or credit/no credit courses. At least one program offers zero credit sections of ensembles for those music majors who have earned enough ensemble credits for their degrees and may be past receiving financial aid and moving toward excessive hours. Ensembles including a zero credit option include marching band, choir, orchestra, concert band, and a catch-all chamber music course. The zero credit option could help non-majors, as well. There are strong restrictions regarding who qualifies to take zero credit classes. Adding a course fee to zero credit classes means that there will not be as much of a loss for the university. Other programs may use other means of increasing revenue, including differentiated tuition and/or a “music program enhancement fee” attached to the major code. Music needs higher funding because the one-on-one instruction is more costly. The state’s funding formula distributes at a higher percentage for music classes, which helps music budgets a bit.

Many programs struggle with space and scheduling issues. One program reported using a different schedule than many; this program uses the same class length on a MWF/TR schedule. Then, every so often, the MWF classes get a week off, since those students have spent more time in class. These “off weeks” open up the schedule for extra events, rehearsals, etc. during the MWF rest weeks.

Next, the challenge of creating four-year degree plans for music education majors was discussed. One school has created two options, one of them including summer studies. Others reported creating plans with 18 credits per semester. “Education on Demand” or “EOD” has been explored, where students take classes that are accelerated, as in 6 week sessions, and may include an online instruction, too.

A question was asked about offering ensembles for continuing education credit. Most present did not report that their programs do this, but at least one offered zero credit as an option, restricted to requiring permission of either the department or instructor.

The various ways that methods (techniques) classes are offered for music education majors was briefly discussed, including the length of class meetings and the possible combinations of instruments offered in each class. There is flexibility in these decisions because the goal is to give students the knowledge that they need and to meet proficiencies for NASM.

Next, the topic of recruitment and retention related to faculty evaluations was raised. Many present remarked that this is a part of their evaluation process. With applied faculty, part of the measurement is looking at the size of the studio. Some have recruitment and retention written into the program's tenure and promotion policies. Recruiting is more under service, whereas retention is more related to teaching effectiveness. Allocating scholarship money toward higher need areas such as oboe, bassoon, and viola can affect this a bit.

Closing questions included a request for advice about covering a studio teacher's duties after the dean tapped that person for administrative release time. Seeking adjunct support was the general advice given. The next question was about addressing retirement for a faculty member while remaining in compliance with HR guidelines. The general consensus is that you may not address it directly.

The session concluded at 10:00 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".

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