



Date: February 21, 2020

To: John Stalvey, Interim Provost

From: John Petraitis, Interim Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

Cc: Mari Hahn, Professor
Grant Cochran, Professor; Chair, Department of Music

Re: AY20 Expedited Program Review Findings

Program/s in this review: Music BM (includes Music Education and Music Performance)

Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable): National Association of Schools of Music

Campuses where the program is delivered: Anchorage

Members of the program review committee:

Mari Hahn, Professor
Grant Cochran, Professor and Department Chair

Centrality of Program Mission and Supporting Role

UAA's mission is to discover and disseminate knowledge through teaching, research, engagement and creative expression. UAA is committed to serving the higher education needs of the state, its communities and its diverse peoples. It is also committed to instruction at multiple academic levels, success of all students regardless of their higher education goals, and service to the diverse peoples and communities of the state. UAA's core themes are (1) Teaching and Learning, (2) Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity, (3) Student Success, (4) UAA Community, and (5) Public Square. UAA values international and intercultural education, diversity of experiences and perspectives, and the diversity of our unique location in Southcentral Alaska that comes from the Alaska Native peoples of this area.

The College of Arts and Sciences contributes to UAA's mission with a suite of programs that provide, among other things,

1. general education courses for undergraduates in CAS and other Colleges,
2. opportunities for undergraduates to pursue majors in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and the arts, and

3. opportunities for faculty and students to pursue research and creative activities in CAS's academic disciplines,
4. graduate programs for advanced studies.

Given decreased enrollments across UAA and significant budget cuts to CAS, the challenge is to serve UAA's and CAS's missions with only 75% of the funds it had in 2018-2019. CAS's shrinking budget is especially challenging for programs that rely on state financial appropriations through CAS because the programs have a gap between (a) the total costs of everything the program does and needs, and (b) the tuition CAS receives to cover those costs. This describes most programs in CAS: most rely on state appropriations and CAS has 30% less than it had two years ago.

The Music Department contributes to CAS's and UAA's mission by providing four courses as general education options for all undergraduates. The Bachelors of Music then gives highly qualified students the opportunity to pursue a major in music performance or music education, working in close mentorship with highly qualified professional musicians who also engage in creative activities as part of their work. Before being admitted into the BM program, students must first go through a trial period as a Music Pre-major, something that narrows the pool of incoming students. Students who earn the BM are positioned well for the Masters of Arts in Teaching (MAT) to become qualified as K12 music teachers. The program is accredited by the National Associations of Schools of Music (NASM), an accreditation that is not required for training or employment in music.

Program Demand (including service to other programs), Efficiency, and Productivity

One indicator of demand is the number of incoming students who select Music as their initial major. Combining those seeking the Music BA with the Music BM, about 13 incoming students per year pick one of these options, a number that is slightly above the median (10) for CAS's undergraduate programs. Another indicator of demand is the number of majors. When considering demand for the Music BM, one must look at three groups: Music Pre-Majors, Music Education majors, and Music Performance Majors. Institutional Research data show there were 74 such students in 2017, 66 in 2018, and 56 in 2019, showing a downward trend in demand.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to assess efficiency of the BM by itself because most of the courses taken by BM students overlap with courses taken by BA students. But, when all Music courses are looked at together, CAS received enough tuition to cover 99% of the instructional costs of Music course in 2019, an improvement over recent years that came about when faculty worked hard to significantly reduce their instructional costs without significantly decreasing their enrollments. That said, when all costs are considered for everything Music faculty do (teaching, research/creative activity, and service), the full costs of the Music Department are not covered by the tuition revenues, therefore, requiring state appropriations through CAS to fill the gap.

As to productivity, the highly selective process of moving from a Music Pre-Major to a BM student creates conditions where relatively few students earn the BM. Over the past four years, only nine students, on average, earned this degree.

Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success

There is little doubt that the program quality is strong. The faculty are all highly-skilled professional musicians. Many of the graduates with the BM use the Masters of Arts in Teaching (MAT) as a fast stepping stone to becoming K12 music teachers in Alaska. One challenge for the program, however, is that the pool of incoming students gets divided into smaller and smaller groups: first divided into BA vs. BM, then BM students are divided into Music Performance vs. Music Education, and then divided further based on their instrument (e.g., guitar, piano, voice, etc.) and given the option for a Jazz emphasis. This stretches a modest pool of students and fine faculty thin.

Program Duplication / Distinctiveness

Like UAA, UAF also offers a BM (and BA) in Music. Combined, the programs award 10-15 BMs per year with about 2/3rd of UA's BM awards coming from UAA. Given the importance of face-to-face instruction, however, there is some merit in having two programs. To the faculty's credit, they did point out that there is opportunity to collaborate on sharing some online classes where appropriate.

Commendations and Recommendations

Faculty are commended for individualized and group work with talented students who put on multiple performances per year, and place graduates in K12 positions and as professional musicians. Faculty are commended for their hard work to significantly decrease their costs with modest impact on students. The faculty also should be commended for the hard work they put into their expedited program review submission.

Decision

Continued review.

Given CAS's budget challenges, the program should focus on two things. First, it should continue to narrow the gap between the program's overall costs (not just instructional costs) and its revenue while aiming to minimize, where possible, the impact on students. Second, the program should also conduct an objective cost-benefit analysis of having accreditation with NASM. Although such accreditation is a point of pride, it is not required. As such the faculty should fairly address the following questions:

1. What are the various costs and obligations that come from NASM accreditation?
 - a. How does that accreditation impact what the Music Department must do in terms of courses, faculty hiring, facilities, equipment, etc.?
 - b. How does it impact the duties faculty and staff must do to apply and retain accreditation?
2. What are the various benefits of having NASM accreditation?
 - a. Among UAA's peer institutions with NASM accreditation, what benefits do those institutions and its graduates gain?
 - b. In what ways are non-accredited institutions no different than NASM-accredited ones?

The program should report on its progress by Spring 2022.