

Music Department Meeting
10 December 2014

1) What are the strengths of your department/program? What do you already do well? Remember that these responses will be shared with the community at large, so please use this opportunity to brag a little bit. What do you want people outside your department/program to know about your successes and strengths?

-We have over 500 students per semester participate in classes, lessons, and ensembles. We do a great job getting students involved, and this is a large part of their education.

-We have quality performing ensembles composed primarily of non-music majors and minors. We thus offer quality experiences for all students, not only our own majors.

-Our faculty and students often perform off-campus.

-The faculty is active in composing and performing. Many also do workshops in schools and for groups, and additionally do things like adjudicate competitions.

-We work with Admissions to recruit students on- and off-campus. For example, we sponsored a "Music Exploration Day" in April that attracted 84 students, far more than Admissions expected.

-We work with alumni relations.

-We help the outside world come to CSBSJU to see what we are doing through our performances. Our faculty also brings CSBSJU to the world. Pastiche, our faculty ensemble, performed on an arts series at the Fergus Falls Center for the Arts earlier in the year. We also did a performance in one area school and workshops in another. Pastiche tries to do one off-campus performance each year. Some of our faculty also perform as members of the Duluth Symphony, the Minneapolis Pops Orchestra, and other ensembles; some perform recitals in different parts of the country or abroad.

-We work one-on-one with students (our private lessons have this format). This helps us be very good at mentoring and advising.

-We have a lot of graduates who are friends for life because of how we build relationships with students.

-Students will have a Music faculty member for 7--8 semesters for applied lessons; this is one of the reasons why we build such great relationships.

-Music lends itself to vulnerability and emotion; this also helps builds bonds between faculty and students.

-Ensembles become like a family for students. In ensembles, 50--60 students meet 3--5 times each week with a common goal, and this fosters community and friendship.

-We use a cooperative model; faculty and students work together.

-We "do more with less." We have small budgets, yet still provide quality concerts.

-We work well together as a faculty both for our students and in group endeavors such as Pastiche concerts.

--Our music education and liturgical music students get jobs in their fields at a very high rate. The other concentrations (performance, composition, and music studies) have less clear job paths and our liberal arts degrees are not really intended to lead to specific jobs as a professional music degree would, so talking about "placement" rates is far less meaningful. However, a number of our students in these concentrations have been remarkably successful in music in many different ways.

2) What do you wish you could do better, or do more of? What would it take (resources, support, etc.) for you to reach those goals?

-We are limited when students graduate early. We need seniors to be leaders in ensembles, but they aren't there when they graduate early. This lack of leadership and experience hurts.

-We can't offer courses in research and bibliography, specialized courses (e.g. Italian opera), and others; we just do not have enough faculty members.

--On the other hand, upper-level specialized courses are also difficult to fill at a school like ours. Our majors are often involved with concentration-specific courses when they reach upper-level.

-We need to keep up with peers in terms of course offerings/touring. For example, many of our closest competitors have much larger touring budgets and full-time staff to arrange ensemble tours. Our directors do everything themselves. Frankly, it is an enormous waste of time for faculty to be arranging concerts, housing, and transportation on top of the work they do as professors. However it shows the extraordinary dedication of the music faculty and the passion we have to make our students' experience first-rate. We have a choir leaving for Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic on May 11. The conductor said he is spending 5-6 hours a day in recent weeks on logistics. If there is one thing the music department needs above all, it is a staff position dedicated to setting up tours and dealing with the logistics of our large performances such as the Christmas Basilica concert.

-We should be better at self-promotion both on- and off- campus. We would like to try to get more double majors and minors, and we need to let students know that double-majoring is a good option for music and most majors.

--In response to the previous point, the music department does quite well in self-promotion both on and off campus to the extent we are able given our financial and staff resources. We sponsor approximately 100 events a year from large public performances to our Thursday Recitals where majors primarily perform for each other. The music department office creates programs for nearly all of them and designs posters for all faculty performances and performances by curricular student ensembles.

--Our advertising budget is smaller than our competitors. It is not unusual for faculty, especially a new faculty member, to return from a conference and ask why we are not advertising in the conference program given that our competitors are.

3) Leaving aside discipline specific knowledge, in what ways does your department/program best contribute to providing our students with a liberal education for their lives beyond college, as informed and engaged citizens, productive employees, ethical beings, etc.?

-Our faculty and students provide music for free at CSBSJU events.

--Making music involves teamwork and discipline. These are qualities that are valuable in most everything in life. All the students in our ensembles benefit in this way.

-Students in our CC courses really like the Music CC classes---they feel like they get a good education in beauty, discussion, etc.

-We have concerts with other choirs that are focused on ideas like social justice and domestic abuse ("Still I Rise" was hosted by CSB this April as a fund raiser for Anne Marie's Alliance, which runs a women and children's shelter in this area.) . We look at literature for through the social justice lense.

--Our courses for non-majors also view music through various lenses. Women in Music explores the often overlooked contributions by women to music throughout history. Exploring World Music studies the roles music plays in world cultures. "Thinking Less: Minimalism" and "The Romantic Spirit" consider music in specific historical context and in comparison with other arts and literature.

-One of our students wants to add an FAE-type requirement that focuses in on cultural experiences; we think this is a good idea (unless it replaces the FAE requirement).

-We consider music from many centuries, and we can use the music to educate on things like different political situations in history. We have also tied music to art.

-FYS classes have come to Thursday performance. Karen Erickson brought in Music faculty for her classes. Our faculty is willing to work with other faculty members to improve their classes when music is needed.

4) Are there ways in which you would like to see your department/program contribute to liberal education that so far it has not been able to?

-We are involved in licensing (education, in particular), much like nursing. This limits our ability to contribute to the Common Curriculum. We cannot offer as much as we would like.

-We should connect FAE to other departments: could other departments go to FAE events as a class? Could other classes bring music to their classes? Talk to Music Department about bringing people in? Karen Erickson brought in Music faculty to sing in different languages.

-There are seniors who have never been to any auditorium, art show, anything. So FAE is better than nothing, but it could be improved.

-We cannot help all students take lessons on any instruments. This is frustrating, since students can register for a course, but they are still not guaranteed a slot (majors first, then minors, then seniors, etc).

-We could do a lot more if we have more sixths in the department, but we already overload too much.

Bonus discussion of the FAE requirement:

-There needs to be an orientation for FAE---students do not know how to behave at these events (editorial note: this is NOT the responsibility of the Music Department, though; it is the responsibility of the faculty). There used to be an orientation to FAE and proper decorum by the fine arts chairs during first-year orientation in August.

-On FAE: There is no assessment of it (Is exposure enough? To let students know that they like something?) Again, this is not the Music Department's responsibility).

--Ideally, FAE would include teaching and follow-up components for each event. For example, imagine a ten-minute faculty introduction to an event followed by short reaction papers from students afterwards. However, that is wholly unfeasible with respect to the necessary faculty time commitment. And simply monitoring reaction papers in addition to attendance would double the headaches that already exist in tracking attendance. Without significant new resources FAE will need to rely on "exposure" to the arts with the hope that students will be engaged enough to think about what they experience.