

Marshall University  
Department of Music

**Yearly Report: Undergraduate Program Assessment**

Submitted to the Dean of the College of Fine Arts, September 14, 2007

Dr. Jeffrey Pappas, Chair

**I. ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES**

**A. PROGRAM GOALS**

The Marshall University Department of Music offers the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Fine Arts with a Degree in Music with an emphasis in music performance, jazz studies, theory, and/or composition. 128 credit hours are required within each emphasis to complete the degree. The department also supports the Bachelor of Arts in Education leading to certification in music from pre-kindergarten through adult by supplying 88 of the necessary 151 credits (58% of total) for the degree. However, since this degree is housed in the College of Education and Human Services, specific assessment information about it will not be included in this report.

As mentioned in our National Association of Music self-study report in 2001, the department of music “continues to affirm its core purpose of providing quality, contemporary education to a wide range of students.” This important belief has not changed.

The department via the BFA program provides the opportunity for each student to:

1. Create an effective applied music performance:
  - a. by integrating comprehensive capabilities in major performing medium including technical facility, musicianship, musical styles, and musical interpretation;
  - b. by demonstrating knowledge of literature for performing medium.
2. Identify use of theoretical materials in music:
  - a. through synthesizing and articulating theoretical and stylistic concepts and perspectives;
  - b. by utilizing aural skills for performance, historical and theoretical analysis.
3. Explain knowledge of musical repertoire and the relationship between repertoire and musical developments:
  - a.. through synthesizing and articulating historical and stylistic concepts and perspectives;

- b. by integrating knowledge of historical, cultural, and stylistic contexts in compositional, performance, scholarly, pedagogical and historical contexts, according to specialization emphasis.
4. Justify his/her communication of ideas and musical information in a broad context:
  - a. by assessing knowledge of music through the application of music technology;
  - b. by integrating theoretical, historical, and interpretive knowledge via written, oral and musical performance.

## **B. LEARNING OUTCOMES/DATA COLLECTION AND C. RESULTS**

(Please see the attached *Assessment of Student Outcomes Chart* for additional information.)

A three-part assessment process provides regular and coherent data for evaluation of student progress. Within that umbrella process, entrance auditions and interviews, jury exams, theory/aural skills barrier exams, sophomore and recital hearings, the graduation oral examination and capstone course present unique opportunities for faculty to gather as a panel and consider the body of work by individual students. The entrance assessment requires a performance audition for all incoming students, regardless of the intended area of emphasis. This audition evaluates their performing skills and determines the incoming applied music level. In addition, students must earn a grade of at least “C” in all music courses. Procedures used to assess each outcome differ according to the activity.

We conduct and record the methods of assessment listed in the following table via these methods:

- Course assessment instruments are given and graded by faculty teaching the specific courses.
- Barrier examinations are created and administered by the faculty of the departmental area represented in the exam.
- Forms for juries, the Sophomore Hearing and the Junior and Senior Recital Hearing are completed by the appropriate faculty committee, filed in the department, and shared with the student. A faculty panel must approve the entire recital before the program will be presented. Approval is based upon demonstration of a high level of proficiency in technique, presentation, interpretation, and intonation.
- Capstone materials are assigned and graded by a committee of three music faculty.

The core of the music curriculum is the applied music program, through which students study and develop skills in performing music. Using a variety of measures, a faculty jury of at least three members evaluates semester juries, sophomore and recital hearings, and recitals. The evaluative measures include course descriptions and literature/technique/musicianship requirements given in the levels description; each combine faculty experiences at a variety of institutions which reflect national norms for undergraduate performance in our degree options. Ensemble conductors are responsible for evaluating student progress in performance groups.

This evaluation is based upon their performance skill and overall musical and professional contributions to the ensemble.

The outcome of the jury, including the applied music level assignment, is one of several criteria considered by faculty before final course grades are issued, and before permission is granted to register for specific applied music courses in the next semester.

The Sophomore Hearing is an adequate measure of musical performance. Successful completion of all parts of this assessment tool permits the student to move from lower division to upper division applied study (100 level to 300 level). The levels system codifies the progress of the student through the applied music program.

Some final assessment tools prior to graduation are the Senior Recital Hearing, the Senior Recital and the Capstone Course, all of which are judged by a panel of music faculty who ensure that our student outcomes are being met via these assessment tools.

In addition, external judges are used for various competitions sponsored by the Department of Music. These include the Jackson, Turley, Orchestra Concerto and Wind Symphony Soloist competitions.

Due in part to the fundamental importance of theory and aural skills, we continue to be concerned over our ability to assist "at-risk" students, particularly in the theory sequence. Students not able to pass the entrance theory proficiency exam are placed in a developmental theory course (MUS 101) and a developmental section of class piano (MUS 102). Graduate teaching assistants recently and currently assigned to serve as theory instructors and tutors have been quite successful. Recent semesters have shown improvement in reducing attrition rates in the music major, due in part to earlier and more successful intervention with students showing deficient incoming skills.

The theory sequence permits students to register independently for theory (MUS 111, 112, 211, 212) and aural skills (MUS 113, 114, 213, 214). Students may not get more than one semester apart; i.e., they may take Theory 2 and Aural Skills 1 concurrently, but cannot take Aural Skills 4 while taking Theory 2. Students may not register for the junior level analysis courses (MUS 301/302) until both Theory 4 and Aural Skills 4 have been passed with at least a grade of C.

Barrier exams in general musicianship and music history/literature are also reliable and valid indicators of probable success in graduation progress. We are considering the adoption of an exit comprehensive examination for all seniors.

In conclusion, the goals and student outcomes for the BFA degree reflect the comprehensiveness of competencies and skills music students will need to possess to be successful in the professional world. Our assessment tools and approaches are "tried and true" and reflect both national and our own internal standards. The one area we can improve is the gathering of more quantitative data to support our strong belief that we are effectively meeting our goals and outcomes. The music profession for years has qualitatively approached assessment; we now will begin to add a more objective approach to our analyses. However, our student learning as it currently is assessed provides a strong feedback loop throughout a student's studies in our department.

## **II. Plans for the Current Year**

Our first and foremost goal is continue to promote the high standards and requirements within our program via our current assessment approaches.

Most if not all departmental assessment reports have been compiled and written by the department chair. One goal for the upcoming year is to include faculty in the assessment process

from the review of goals and student outcomes to the creation of rubrics for specific assessment tools to begin gathering more quantifiable data. The current data we are reviewing indicate that students are successful in our program; however, by gathering, compiling and reviewing more quantitative data, we suspect our confidence in our program will only be heightened.

Rubrics will be formulated based on our student outcomes for the “milestones” in our program: the Sophomore Hearing, the Senior Recital Hearing and the Capstone/Oral Examination. Each in their own way propels a student on to a higher level of study (or employment). Numerical standards and benchmarks (using internal and/or national norms – if the latter are available) will be established prior to utilizing these new rubrics. From this information, more data and yearly and long-term judgments can be made as to the on-going effectiveness of the outcomes in our program.

We will also begin discussion of what types of indirect assessment measures our department can undertake to broaden our assessment effort.

### **III. Assistance Needed**

As the department begins to review our goals and student outcomes and create rubrics to gather more quantifiable data, we may need assistance or feedback from the Office of Assessment. Since this process is also supposed to be a departmental-wide effort, a visit from a member of the Assessment Office at a faculty meeting to underscore the faculty’s role in this process would be helpful.

Assistance in the creation and implementation of more indirect means of assessment instruments (graduate and employer surveys) would also be beneficial, as would any further and specific clarification of Marshall’s assessment process.

### **IV. What one most important thing has the department/program learned through this process?**

The Department of Music has many assessment procedures already in place that help us determine the effectiveness of our program. We need to continue them, but (as already mentioned) begin to design mechanisms where we can obtain more quantifiable data in our review process.

**Marshall University**  
**Assessment of Student Outcomes: Component/Course/Program Level**

**Component Area/Program/Discipline: Music - BFA Degree**

**YEAR: 2007**

<b>Component / Course / Program Level</b>					
<b>Student Outcome</b>	<b>Person or Office Responsible</b>	<b>Assessment Tool or Approach</b>	<b>Standards/Benchmark</b>	<b>Results/Analysis</b>	<b>Action Taken</b>
<p><i>The student will...</i>             integrate comprehensive capabilities in major performing medium including technical facility, musicianship, musical styles, and musical interpretation.</p>	<p>Individual applied teachers; faculty of applied area; ensemble conductors</p>	<p>Entrance audition/interview; End of semester juries; level system; sophomore hearing; junior recital hearing; junior recital; senior recital hearing; senior recital; ensemble performances</p>	<p>Individual course descriptions provide required literature and performance expectations for each semester of study; levels descriptions provide the overall program goals and require a student to achieve a certain level for each semester of study, with a culminating level needed for graduation; Sophomore hearing; junior recital hearing; junior recital; senior recital hearing; senior recital assessed on a pass/fail basis with national norms and faculty experience used in the assessment process.</p>	<p>Student's K-12 music education is directly related to probability to succeed; there are numerous opportunities for assessment throughout a student's curriculum; assessment tools are "tried and true" feedback methods and are excellent indicators or a student's success; levels descriptors merit continual attention, so students understand them clearly; it does allow for students to have a more specific indicator of their applied performance growth in a given semester; students seem to be making good progress under this system.</p>	<p>Standardize jury forms for all areas so quantifiable data can be gathered and analyzed and create numerical benchmarks (using internal and/or national norms- if the latter are available) to compare data to assess on-going effectiveness of program; continue to utilize the jury and levels system and the recital hearings for feedback; identify the standards for each in MUS 100 and private studio classes each semester; continue to update standards in evaluating the results of juries and hearings.</p>

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<i>The student will...</i>  demonstrate knowledge of literature for performing medium.	Individual applied teachers; faculty of applied area; ensemble conductors	Entrance audition/interview; end of semester juries; levels system, sophomore hearing; junior recital hearing; junior recital; senior recital hearing; senior recital	Individual course descriptions provide required literature and performance expectations for each semester of study; levels descriptions provide the overall program goals and require a student to achieve a certain level for each semester of study, with a culminating level needed for graduation; Sophomore hearing; junior recital hearing; junior recital; senior recital hearing; senior recital assessed on a pass/fail basis with national norms and faculty experience used in the assessment process.	Prior musical study has a direct influence on probability of success; assessment approaches are good indicators of a student's progress; numerous opportunities throughout curriculum to assess this outcome; levels system is good indicator of knowledge in this area; students need to have made adequate progress and show ability to prepare and present adequate literature prior to and after each benchmark; the data we are collecting in semester juries and levels' hearings is beneficial in assessing this outcome.	Review criteria contained in departmental assessment forms for each approach to ensure this outcome is being quantifiably measured – if not, create rubric to do so; create numerical benchmarks (using internal and/or national norms- if the latter are available) for continuing assessment purposes; continue to use levels and jury system, as it ensures a student's artistic growth in as fair and equitable manner as possible.
<i>The student will...</i>  synthesize and articulate theoretical and stylistic concepts and perspectives.	Theory, aural skills and analysis teachers; applied teachers; conducting faculty	Entrance proficiency exam; course assessment instruments such as tests, performances, computer drills; successful completion of courses in theory sequence	Completion of theory and aural skills barrier exams; correct use of terms in all analyses, projects and lab situations (i.e. ensembles); successful completion of	Theory is one area where students tend to struggle; assessment of this outcome is occurring throughout the curriculum; the formation and continuation of MUS	Create rubric for collecting quantitative data for this outcome in the capstone and oral examination; begin discussing as a faculty the implementation of a theory assessment to the

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		(structured hierarchically); capstone project; oral exam	hierarchical lower- and upper-division classes leading to capstone project; capstone project	101 (a remedial course in music theory) has alleviated some, but not all, of this problem; inclusion of theory portion in capstone committee and oral exam will provide further (and a more cumulative) assessment of this outcome.	Sophomore Review; create numerical benchmarks (based on internal and or national norms – if the latter are available) for all rubrics used in the assessment process; the redesign of the theory and aural skills components of our curriculum into two separate classes will continue - allows for important individual assessment of these two areas to occur; inclusion of theory component and faculty member with theory background on capstone committees and oral exams will continue.

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<i>The student will...</i> utilize aural skills for performance, historical and theoretical analysis.	Theory, aural skills, analysis and history teachers; applied teachers; conducting faculty	Course assessment instruments such as tests, performances, computer drills; successful completion of courses in theory and history sequence (structured hierarchically); capstone project; oral exam	Completion of theory and aural skills barrier exams; successful completion of lower – and upper-division classes leading to capstone project; capstone project	Aural skills is perhaps the weakest area of our incoming students and a constant source of struggle for many continuing students; it is included in as many of our courses as possible -this is essential not only for our ability to assess our students in this area but to ensure our student's growth in this area; separation of theory and aural skills classes allows for more careful assessment of a student's abilities in theory and aural skills.	Create rubrics to gather quantifiable data and generate numerical benchmarks (based on internal and/or national norms – if the latter are available) to monitor effectiveness of this outcome; discuss implementation of aural skills component in Sophomore Review; we need to continually address the aural skill's component of our curriculum and make sure it is included in as many areas as possible; keep theory/aural skills classes separate; work to make sure adequate tutoring is available for students when necessary.
<i>The student will...</i> synthesize and articulate historical and stylistic concepts and perspectives.	History faculty; individual applied teachers; ensemble conductors; capstone teacher; capstone committee	Course assessment instruments such as tests, performances, computer drills; successful completion of courses in music history sequence (structured hierarchically); capstone project; oral	Completion of history sequence; correct use of terms in courses, paper and lab situations (i.e. ensembles); correct representation of stylistic musical concerns in MUS 100 recitals, sophomore hearing, junior recital	Numerous means to gain feedback for this outcome; current music history sequence is less effective than desired; student's fail to make "class to class" connections.	Rubrics need to be created to get quantifiable data and numerical benchmarks need to be created based on internal and/or national norms – if the latter are available; discuss employing an assessment tool in the

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		exam	hearing, junior recital, senior recital hearing, senior recital; successful completion of lower- and upper-division classes leading to capstone project; capstone project; oral exam.		Sophomore Hearing that will measure the effectiveness of this student outcome; the department began a revision of the music history curriculum, but with a change of the department chair imminent, the revision was put in a "holding pattern." The music history committee will begin looking at this revision in the future to create a music history sequence fully ensuring that students are being given the educational background and methodology to meet this outcome.

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<p><i>The student will...</i></p> <p>integrate knowledge of historical, cultural and stylistic contexts in compositional, performance, scholarly, pedagogical and historical contexts, according to specialization emphasis.</p>	<p>History faculty; individual applied teachers; ensemble conductors; capstone supervisor; capstone committee</p>	<p>Course assessment instruments such as tests, performances, computer drills; successful completion of courses in music history sequence (structured hierarchically); capstone project; oral exam</p>	<p>Completion of history sequence; correct use of terms in courses, paper and lab situations (i.e. ensembles); correct representation of stylistic musical concerns in MUS 100 recitals, sophomore hearing, junior recital hearing, junior recital, senior recital hearing, senior recital; successful completion of lower- and upper-division classes leading to capstone project; capstone project; oral exam</p>	<p>Assessment approaches are spread across the curriculum; current music history sequence is less effective than desired; student's fail to make "class to class" connections as well as specific connections to/within their "emphasis" of study.</p>	<p>Rubrics will be constructed to gain quantifiable statistics to be used in the department's assessment effort; numerical benchmarks will be generated based on internal and/or national norms – if the latter are available; discuss the implementation of an assessment procedure for this outcome during the Sophomore Review; the department began a revision of the music history curriculum, but with a change of chair imminent, the revision was put in a "holding pattern." The music history committee will begin looking at this revision in the future. Faculty need to work to ensure that students are being asked to make the connections in this outcome within our curriculum.</p>

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<i>The student will...</i> assess knowledge of music through the application of music technology.	Technology teachers; capstone supervisor; capstone committee	Course assessment instruments in music technology sequence; capstone project; oral exam	Completion of Music Technology sequence; correct use of music technology in music projects and capstone course; ability to effectively describe use of music technology in oral exam.	Music Technology classes are/were being team-taught leading to some gaps or inadequacies in the material being covered; departmental financial resources are being used here to keep our labs and software as up-to-date as possible.	Create rubrics to collect quantifiable data and generate numerical benchmarks based on internal and/or national standards – if the latter are available - to assess the on-going effectiveness of this outcome; continue to develop and update technology sequence as necessary in era when information can become outdated quickly; continue to financially support our technology labs and classes to keep them as up-to-date as possible.
<i>The student will...</i> integrate theoretical, historical and interpretive knowledge via written, oral and/or musical performance.	Individual applied teacher; theory and history faculty; ensemble; capstone supervisor; capstone committee	Sophomore hearing; junior recital hearing; junior recital; senior recital hearing; senior recital; capstone project; capstone committee; oral exam	Successful completion of sophomore review, junior recital hearing and recital, senior recital hearing and recital, capstone course and oral examination.	Assessment approaches are spread throughout the curriculum; students tend not to realize early on in their academic careers that the study of music is a comprehensive endeavor; the more we ask them to integrate all of their learning via written and orals means the more successful we	Create rubrics to gather quantifiable data to assess this outcome and formulate numerical benchmarks for comparative analysis of information on a semester and/or yearly basis; discuss implementing an assessment tool/approach for this outcome during the

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				will be at creating music professionals.	Sophomore Hearing; the music faculty needs to continue to address the integration of all these areas in every possible course.