Detailed Assessment Report
2015 - 2016 Music Graduate
As of: 12/02/2016 11:40 AM MDT
(Includes those Action Plans with Budget Amounts marked One-Time, Recurring, No Request)

Mission / Purpose
The New Mexico State University Department of Music serves the music educational needs of New Mexico’s diverse population through comprehensive programs of education, research/performance, and public service. The Music Department strives to prepare students for careers in music education, business, and/or performance; give the student body opportunities to perform, study, create, and experience music; enhance the cultural lives of our constituency by performance of superior music; and create an artistic environment which fosters the development of personal realizations we believe to be essential to the fabric of a healthy society.

Goals/Objectives
G 1: Research and Writing
All Graduate Music students will be able to effectively research a given topic and produce a written document with a well-stated purpose, providing credible information in a well-organized fashion in an appropriate academic style format.

G 2: Writing Assessment Project
Graduate music students will demonstrate their ability to develop their writing skills in music at the graduate level by specifically demonstrating the following: 1. The ability to summarize a peer-reviewed music journal article in a coherent, organized manner; 2. Appropriate, discipline-specific writing style.

Student Learning Outcomes, with Any Associations and Related Measures, Targets, Findings, and Action Plans
S 1: Writing Projects
The student will demonstrate the ability to research a given topic and appropriately/effectively construct a scholarly paper that demonstrates an understanding of the material being presented, informs the reader, and provides substantive content in a well-organized manner within the proper style and with accepted documentation. Students enrolled in MUS 450 (Research Methods in Music) will complete a series of research paper assignments that include creating a fully annotated bibliography, a final term paper outline, submission of a graded rough draft, and subsequent submission of a final 3,000-word term paper with appropriate illustrations, score examples, appendices, and full citations. The student's final paper will be evaluated by the course instructor by the end of the Spring 2015 semester using the specific criteria stated in the Evaluative Criteria rubric (attached). NOTE: MUS 450 is a course required in each of our Master of Music degree plans. Every student in our graduate program takes this course.

Relevant Associations:

General Education / State Common Core Associations
1.1 Analyze and evaluate oral and written communication in terms of situation, audience, purpose, aesthetics, and diverse points of view.
1.2 Express a primary purpose in a compelling statement and order supporting points logically and convincingly.
1.3 Use effective rhetorical strategies to persuade, inform and engage.
1.4 Employ writing and/or speaking processes such as planning, collaborating, organizing, composing, revising & editing to create presentations using correct diction, syntax, grammar and mechanics.
1.5 Integrate research correctly and ethically from credible sources to support the primary purpose of a communication.
1.6 Engage in reasoned civil discourse while recognizing the distinctions among opinions, facts, and inferences.
5.1 Analyze and critically interpret significant primary texts and/or works of art (this includes fine art, literature, music, theatre, and film).

Strategic Plan Associations
Arts and Sciences College
1.1 Goal 1: Provide students with a high quality education in the arts, humanities, social sciences and sciences, at the Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral levels.
1.2 Goal 2: Promote discovery through scholarship and creative activity, encourage innovation and dissemination, spark economic advancement, and inspire a culture of excellence.

Related Measures
M 2: Research Papers
Students enrolled in MUS 450 (Research Methods in Music) will complete a series of research paper assignments that include creating a fully annotated bibliography, a final term paper outline, submission of a graded rough draft, and subsequent submission of a final 3,000-word term paper with appropriate illustrations, score examples, appendices, and full citations. The student's final paper will be evaluated by the course instructor by the end of the Spring 2015 semester using the specific criteria stated in the Evaluative Criteria rubric (attached). NOTE: MUS 450 is a course required in each of our Master of Music degree plans. Every student in our graduate program takes this course. [Preview Formatting] FINDINGS: (assessment by Dr. Shearer) GENERAL SUCCESSES Students demonstrated a clear understanding of research goals and how to undertake the research process in their specific discipline Students were generally able to read the writing prompt and create a document that met the required criteria Students found the research process focused and enlightening; more than other classes they had taken to date, they indicated that they enjoyed the process of exploring a specific assigned topic at a deeper level GENERAL PROBLEMS (Degree varies from student to student) Students have an inconsistent understanding of what constitutes third person writing Students have an inconsistent understanding of comma use, particularly when dealing with the use of commas and conjunctions between independent/dependent clauses and independent/independent clauses Students do not properly choose “that” or “which” for use in the correct writing situations Students do not take the
time to clearly execute proper use of the Turabian formant, which is required in all of our departmental classes (i.e., they should have a clear understanding of this format before they get to MUS 450) (Please note that detailed instructions, style sheet bullet points, and various examples of successful papers in the Turabian format are posted on the class Canvas website) Students do not clearly understand what constitutes plagiarism/clear use of citations. Students do not have a clear understanding of the difference between “scholarly” and “colloquial” writing styles. Students do not take the time to proofread with care.

Source of Evidence: Project, either individual or group

S 2: Music Journal Article Summary
By the conclusion of the course, graduate music majors will be able to score an 8 or better out of 10 possible points, which will demonstrate their proficiency in summarizing a scholarly music article by showing clear organization, discipline-specific content, which discriminates essential information and meets the criteria for the assignment.

Relevant Associations:

General Education / State Common Core Associations
1.1 Analyze and evaluate oral and written communication in terms of situation, audience, purpose, aesthetics, and diverse points of view.
1.4 Employ writing and/or speaking processes such as planning, collaborating, organizing, composing, revising & editing to create presentations using correct diction, syntax, grammar and mechanics.
5.1 Analyze and critically interpret significant primary texts and/or works of art (this includes fine art, literature, music, theatre, and film).

Strategic Plan Associations
Arts and Sciences College
1.1 Goal 1: Provide students with a high quality education in the arts, humanities, social sciences and sciences, at the Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral levels.

Related Measures

M 3: Graded Journal Summaries
A rubric outlining the criteria for the assignment will be used at the beginning of the semester to assess student's achievement of the goals for the assignment. At the end of the course, another journal article will be assigned, and using the same rubric, and the scores will be compared.

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

Target: 100% of students will achieve a composite score of 8 or higher out of a possible 10 by the end of the semester on the assessment.

Finding (2015 - 2016) - Target: Met
Students scored an average of 7.4 on the first assignment, and scored an average of 8.6 on the final assignment. This goal being met is mitigated, however, by the new framework being provided by the instructor for the second assignment.

Details of Action Plans for This Cycle (by Established cycle, then alpha)

Follow-up in subsequent courses
The deficiencies noted, from the writing projects in MUS 450, will be addressed in subsequent graduate-level Music History and Music Theory courses. Also, when these projects are presented in MUS 450 to the next class of Music students, in the Spring of 2016, more emphasis will be given by the instructor to the issues/problems noted.

Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Writing Skills Deficiencies
In discussion with the faculty, it was decided that because the level of improvement sought was achieved in the assignment, we had achieved our target, in terms of discipline-specific writing. As noted in last year’s Action Plan, the deficiencies noted from the writing projects in MUS 450, will be addressed in subsequent graduate-level Music History and Music Theory courses. This fall, in MUS 523, Romantic Music (taught online), rather than a full term paper at the end of the semester, more writing opportunities will be offered, in the form of four medium-length research papers (1,500 - 1,800 words each), as well as low-stakes/less formal writing, in the form of video/audio commentaries written each week.

Established in Cycle: 2015 - 2016
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Implementation Description: Research Paper One - Due: Thursday, Sept. 22 Research Paper Two - Due: Thursday, Oct. 13 Research Paper Three - Due: Thursday, Nov. 10 Research Paper Four - Due: Thursday, Dec. 8

Responsible Person/Group: Dr. James Shearer

Analysis Questions and Analysis Answers

1. Engagement: How did you engage faculty, administrators, staff, students and/or other stakeholders in discussing results of the assessment and determining the effectiveness of the assessment in measuring the identified outcome(s)? Include meeting dates, topics of discussions, audience and any decisions made.

Faculty and staff were part of regularly scheduled Music Faculty meetings at the end of the spring semester (4/26/16) and at the beginning of the fall semester (8/15/16) and 9/6/16) in discussion of both the Assessment projects and the impact and consequences of the assessment. The Music Faculty was also surveyed electronically during the week of 9/15/16 with 6 responses to the survey (out of 17 faculty). A separate graduate survey was given from the undergraduate survey, with substantially different questions. In looking at the survey results and in discussion with the faculty, it was agreed (100% of responses) that our graduate students need to improve their writing skills, and are not as well-prepared as they should be when they enter graduate school for the type of writing required. Another issue is that many of our graduate students are international, and therefore have language barriers to negotiate as well. 60% of faculty felt that writing should be required in all music courses, not just music history, but that the majority of their writing should be in history courses (50%
2. Impact: Discuss the impact of your assessment. Does the data collected answer the question you had about the intended outcome? If not, why? Did you learn anything about the intended outcome you did not anticipate? If so, what? Did the assessment provide sufficient information about the outcome that you can now make informed decisions about programs/practices or specific, directed improvements to programs/practices?

The data collected did not really show the full range of writing skills required for our graduate students (such as a term paper), so it is difficult to discuss the impact of the assessment in more general terms. The assessment project tracked just one aspect of their writing skills, and the student were successful in achieving the outlined goal. This project definitely worked toward improving our students' critical thinking skills (analysis, evaluation, etc.) rather than their general writing skills.

3. What specifically did your assessment show regarding proven strengths or progress you made on outcomes/objectives? (Strengths)

The assessment showed that our graduate students were clearly able to improve their critical analytical writing skills with prompts and practice throughout the semester. The use of guided writing prompts for this assignment were utilized throughout the course, resulting in the students meeting the final assignment goals in a clear and organized manner.

4. What specifically did your assessment show regarding opportunities for improvement. Describe how you intend to address those issues over the next year. If you met all targets, what specifically do you intend to do in the next assessment cycle to promote continuous improvement in your area?

As the assessment project did not address general writing skills, a different type of assessment project will be undertaken in the next cycle which is different from the previous cycle (2014–15) which was a term paper. As mentioned in the analysis for our undergraduate students, it is evident that more opportunities for our students to undertake lower-stakes writing assignments, with earlier feedback opportunities, will be necessary for our graduate students to improve their writing skills within the shorter span of a graduate program. To that end, in this fall’s graduate music history course, four short papers are being assigned rather than one term paper. It was also decided that a review of the writing components being required in graduate applied pedagogy and literature courses needs to be undertaken.

5. Specifically, what have you learned about your program, and/or your students' learning?

As noted in last year’s summary of our music graduate students, one of our issues with our graduate students is that many of them are international, and therefore they are not at a graduate level in terms of their English language writing skills. We are most interested in the musical aptitudes of our graduate students at entrance to the program, rather than focusing on their writing skills. These skills, can, however, be improved through the course of the degree, in our music history courses, especially, as well as more writing emphasis in our applied pedagogy and literature courses.

6. Provide a brief summary of your program, department, or unit's activities in the current assessment cycle. You might want to describe a major accomplishment or explain how your area contributed to Baccalaureate Experience learning, or to Vision 2020. Alternatively you may want to discuss how your program is using this assessment to inform decisions and actions for improvement. This summary should be appropriate for broad audiences.

As mentioned in last year’s summary, several of our graduate faculty have gone through the OCIP as many of our graduate courses are taught online. This has had a positive impact on our online graduate courses, which all have a focused writing component. As mentioned, the writing component of some of our graduate music history courses has been refocused to include lower-stakes assignments, rather than one end-of-term paper, allowing for more feedback and opportunities for research across a wider spectrum of topics than an end-of-term paper allows. As is noted in Vision 2020, depth of research is an important component of graduate education, but if a student lacks basic writing skills at entrance to graduate study, then more opportunities for both writing and early feedback will be needed to develop those skills for the final graduate thesis or graduate analytical paper, which should show all of the skills developed throughout the course of the degree, and allow for the most in-depth research undertaken during the course of the degree.