

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF MUSIC

CONSULTANT'S REPORT

KEENE STATE COLLEGE

Keene, New Hampshire

Department of Music

Joseph Darby, Chair

March 4-5, 2009

Visitor:

Jon R. Piersol, Florida State University

Degree Programs for Renewal of Final Approval

Bachelor of Arts in Music  
Bachelor of Music in Performance  
Bachelor of Music in Music Education

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The visitor wishes to express appreciation for the gracious hospitality and cooperation extended by the administration, faculty, staff, and students of the Department of Music at Keene State College during the visit.

*The following report and any statements therein regarding compliance with NASM accreditation standards represent only the considered opinion of the consultant at the time of the visit. Definitive evaluation of compliance and the accreditation decision will be made by the appropriate Commission following a complete review of the application, including the Self-Study, the Visitors' Report, and any Optional Response to the Visitors' Report submitted by the institution.*

**A. PURPOSES**

The purposes of the Department of Music are published in the Departmental web site and in the Departmental brochure. The emphasis on the importance of a liberal arts education, in combination with comprehensive musical training, places the mission of the Department in accord with the mission of the School of Arts and Humanities and with the College. These purposes appear to guide and influence decision-making and planning within the Department.

**B. SIZE AND SCOPE**

The Department of Music has sufficient enrollment in each of its three degree programs, the Bachelor of Arts in Music, the Bachelor of Music in Performance, and the Bachelor of Music in Music Education, to cover the size and scope of programs offered. The number of faculty, full- and part-time, is also sufficient to support these three degree options. There are appropriate advanced courses in music and a sufficient variety of ensembles to provide the necessary experiences for the major areas of study. In both size and quality, however, the College orchestra does not appear to meet the NASM standard for the "requisite ensemble experience at an advanced level" necessary to support the educational and performance requirements for string performance majors (*NASM Handbook 2009-10*, II. B. 1. a. (3) ).

**C. FINANCES**

The operating budget for the Department of Music is low in comparison with peer institutions, but through judicious planning and ingenuity, the Department is able to function effectively and support the unit's programs. The music executive

has appropriate flexibility in the use of Departmental operating funds, and additional flexibility is provided by monies generated from ticket sales.

In order to increase financial resources in the future, particularly during difficult economic times and with limited state funding, it is important for the Department to become much more involved in private fund-raising activities. The music discipline has good potential for raising private dollars because the nature of performance activities provides access to a donor pool beyond that of only music alumni.

Perhaps the most important financial deficiency, the area in which resources at Keene are farthest behind competing peer institution music departments, is in the amount of dollars available for music scholarships. Music departments, unlike traditional academic programs, are critically dependent upon scholarship aid to attract the best students. This is particularly true for performance programs and for certain instrumental specialties, such as doublereeds and string instrumentalists (both in very short supply at Keene). Nationally, almost every music program has substantial dollars set aside for this purpose, and music student recruiting is extremely competitive, with students often matriculating at the college with the best offer. The reality of the discipline is that, in order to have the proper balance of instruments and to attract the finest students, music scholarship aid is essential.

In addition to the need for more scholarship dollars, there is also a need for the Department to be allowed to use this money more flexibly, being able to divide the scholarships into amounts other than the mandated \$3000 per student. Because of individual circumstances, some students could be attracted to Keene for less, others more; and the Department is in the best position to know how to divide that money so as to maximize the number and quality of students it can attract through limited resources.

In order to verify the disadvantageous position in which the Department of Music finds itself in competing for the most talented students, the Department is encouraged to survey peer institution music departments to ascertain their scholarship budgets, and also to correspond with students who are offered scholarships at Keene this Spring/Summer, but who decline and matriculate elsewhere (confirming whether these decisions have been determined by the financial support offered at another institution).

## **D. GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

### **1. Overall Effectiveness**

The Department of Music is administered effectively, with a very capable Chair and with actively participating faculty. Students and faculty alike are pleased to

be part of a unit that “works” and that is dedicated to providing maximum support for effective teaching and learning.

## **2. Policy-Making**

Many of the governance policies of the Department are prescribed by the College collective bargaining contract (e.g., policies for salary increments, evaluation, etc.). Where the contract allows, the Chair and faculty, through weekly faculty meetings, provide input and impetus into decisions on issues such as promotion and tenure and curricular development. Within the Department, a number of committees support the Chair in the business of decision-making and operation of a well-functioning unit.

## **3. Music Executive’s Load and Responsibilities**

The load of the Department Chair provides ca. 50% released time for administration. Although this reflects the “typical” released time for a department chair at Keene, it should also be recognized that the demands, in time and energy, on a department chair in music, because of the extensive performance administration and special activities necessary by the nature of music study, far exceed those of most “traditional” academic departments. Through efficiency and long hours, the current Department of Music Chair is able to accomplish his many administrative tasks with success.

## **4. Communication**

Communication between students and faculty, among music faculty, and between the Chair and faculty is exemplary in the Department of Music. Weekly faculty meetings, great attentiveness to student needs, and the daily interaction that occurs between faculty and students in hallways and offices throughout the Arts Center, all add to the sense of collegiality and camaraderie that is evident throughout the Department.

## **E. FACULTY AND STAFF**

The Department of Music is served by a very capable faculty who in the aggregate have excellent professional experience, academic credentials, and records of performance and service. The 8 full-time and ca. 20 adjunct faculty are distributed so that appropriate faculty expertise and specialties are available for all degree programs and the various instruments. The replacement of the recently retired full-time music education faculty member and the addition of the needed full-time position in music theory will bring the faculty cadre by Fall 2009 to the

requisite level needed to appropriately serve the curricular offerings and size and scope of the Department.

In addition to professional qualifications, there is great collegiality among the full-time faculty, and they are particularly attentive to music students, providing much individual attention and nurturing support. Morale appears to be high among full-time faculty, who enjoy being at Keene and working with students who are eager to learn. The student/faculty ratio is excellent, and the College provides good financial support for faculty development. The one full-time support staff member for the Department of Music does an excellent job of managing the myriad of responsibilities inherent in supporting a music program.

The one area in which there are problems related to faculty is that of support for part-time, adjunct faculty. The quality, longevity, and time investment of part-time faculty is critical to the instructional mission of departments of music who must employ large numbers of adjuncts. This comes about because of the very specialized nature of music instruction, particularly in the applied music/performance areas. A major portion of a music student's education is the instruction he receives on a particular instrument or voice and which continues throughout his four-year education. Often that applied music teacher is the most important faculty member in a student's musical development. The applied music teacher also can serve as one of the Department's most effective recruiters on a specific instrument, especially important in an institution with limited scholarship aid. Because many part-time faculty members are also the students' applied music teachers, these faculty assume a role far more important than part-time faculty who teach academic classes in other departments.

The problem with part-time faculty at Keene is not that these faculty members are not well qualified, but that the involvement with the Department and students is not as high as at many other institutions. Many do not invest themselves in regular activities of the Department and do not participate in auditions and recruiting activities. This problem primarily results from an inadequate level of compensation. The ca. \$32-34 per hour paid to Keene adjunct faculty in music is far below that of peer institutions, and it generally is insufficient to motivate the part-time performance faculty to invest themselves fully as dedicated and continuing members of the faculty who participate not only in juries and recitals, but also in auditions, recruiting, and the type of counseling and regular involvement with students that is part of a proper education in music.

The solution, of course, is to pay adjunct music faculty a competitive wage in order to make them a more integral part of the Department of Music and to consequently provide a better educational experience for students. (Incidentally, those few music adjunct faculty who are paid at a higher rate because of the "full-time" nature of their responsibilities provide excellent models of how effectively adjunct faculty can function.)

## **F. FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT, HEALTH, AND SAFETY**

The Department of Music has been housed since 1981 in the Redfern Arts Center. Although this facility has served the Department satisfactorily in many ways over the years, there are a number of severe facility problems at the present time, and the Redfern Center is badly in need of a major renovation (and/or expansion). Among these problems is the unsatisfactory air circulation and humidity control throughout the music portion of the facility. The combination of inadequate air movement plus the lack of air conditioning in the building creates wide variations in temperature, which, combined with no humidity control, makes the conditions not only unhealthy, but a detriment to the maintenance of musical instruments and the ability to keep pianos in tune. This is true even in the Recital Hall, in which it is difficult to keep the Department's best piano in good condition. The storage area in the basement provides another example of a space that is unsatisfactory for the maintenance of instruments because of temperature and humidity issues.

Other problems include a lack of adequate sound isolation between numerous rooms throughout the building. Proper instruction and learning in music require the ability for sensitive listening and performance without the interference of outside sounds, and this is simply not possible in certain areas. Some classes cannot be held concurrently in adjacent/nearby rooms because of sound interference. A good example is sound from the percussion teaching studio, which can be heard prominently throughout the entire ground floor area.

Limited space causes additional problems. The instrumental rehearsal hall is too small for the size of the large ensembles that must rehearse there (no alternative rehearsal area exists). The backstage area for the excellent Recital Hall is almost non-existent, without room to store properly the harpsichord and grand piano (the one high-quality performance piano owned by the Department).

On the positive side, the new music technology lab is an outstanding facility which has enhanced the quality of instruction received by virtually every music student. Likewise, the 6 new Wenger practice room modules have upgraded the students' ability to practice effectively, and the planned replacement of the remaining antiquated and unsatisfactory practice room modules needs to move forward.

Another issue is the ongoing problem of scheduling essential music performances at times that are instructionally optimal and in the numbers needed in the Redfern Art Center's two large performance spaces (the ones that are satisfactory for music performance). In fact, in a meeting with music faculty, this was perhaps their greatest concern. Even in the Recital Hall, in which the Department of Music theoretically has scheduling priority, there are examples of music events being bumped or unable to be scheduled because of non-music activities taking place therein. In addition, when music students schedule recitals in the Recital

Hall, they are not allowed to concurrently schedule a dress rehearsal (this lack is virtually unheard of in college music programs nationwide). The reality is that for artistic music performance of solo and chamber music repertoire, the Recital Hall is the only proper space available, while for other types of non-music activities, there may be other options possible.

Scheduling and support in the Main Theatre is also a concern. While the Department of Music clearly recognizes the fact that this facility serves many competing interests in the College, there is a strong feeling that there is not sufficient consideration of music faculty concerns and needs for the use of that hall, even though they are one of the primary users. When the Department of Music attempts to expand or change any of its activities in the Main Theatre, they feel met with great resistance and a lack of understanding. Perhaps the fact that no individual with a music background is a member of the Arts Center staff is a factor.

The Department does not have a regular recurring budget for the upkeep and replacement of equipment and instruments, and this has resulted in a number of equipment/instrument deficiencies. One of the most serious is the lack of sufficiently high quality grand pianos for the 2 piano faculty teaching studios. In fact, these individuals must sometimes practice in the Recital Hall (on the Department's one concert-quality piano) in order to perform at the artistic level required for artist faculty in music.

A number of these facility issues clearly impact the quality of teaching and learning that take place in the Department and consequently rise to the level of accreditation deferral issues, which specify that "facilities and equipment shall be adequate to support teaching and learning in all curricular offerings and for all faculty and students engaged in them" (*NASM Handbook*, II. F. 1. d).

## **G. LIBRARY AND LEARNING RESOURCES**

The music collection in the Wallace E. Mason Library serves well the needs of the various curricular programs offered in the Department of Music. The current Department Chair has done an excellent job in building the music collection in coordination with a very knowledgeable and pro-active music liaison staff member in the College library. The budget for music acquisitions appears to be adequate, and when music faculty request that sources be added to the library collection, those works are acquired. Instruction in the use of the library is provided to music students, and students appear to make good use of the excellent and accessible library collection as part of their various curricular and performance activities.

## **H. RECRUITMENT, ADMISSION-RETENTION, RECORD KEEPING, AND ADVISEMENT**

### **1. Recruitment, Admission, Retention**

The full-time music faculty are actively involved in student recruiting, and these activities are managed properly and professionally.

Admission policies specific to the Department of Music are appropriate, with an entrance audition required for all students wishing to major in music, in addition to College academic requirements.

Student progress is carefully monitored throughout a music student's degree program (including performance juries at the end of each semester). At the end of the sophomore year, students must pass piano proficiency and aural skills exams, as well as participate in a "Sophomore Review." As a result of ongoing faculty attention, retention of music students is good.

### **2. Record Keeping**

A folder for each music student is maintained in the Department office by the Department of Music staff member. These student files include such music-specific materials as audition forms, admission letters, scholarship notifications, and programs from Music Workshop performances and degree recitals.

### **3. Advisement**

All music students are assigned a music faculty advisor with whom they meet during registration periods and any other occasions when advice or counsel is needed. Music students are very complimentary about the quality of advising and individual attention they receive in the Department of Music.

### **4. Published Materials and Web Sites**

The Department of Music has an attractive and informative web site, as well as an effective Departmental brochure and promotional ads developed in conjunction with College Relations. In addition, the Department has begun regular publication of an alumni newsletter (the inaugural issue in Spring 2008 was well done). The opportunities for further publicity and advertising, however, are limited because of the nature of the shared staff publicity position in the Redfern Arts Center.

The proper and exact wording of the Department's accreditation by the National Association of Schools of Music is carefully prescribed in the *NASM Handbook* (Rules of Practice and Procedure, Article XII, Section 1, C). Appropriate changes need to be made in the wording of these statements at Keene as currently presented in the Department of Music web site and Department brochure.

**J. BRANCH CAMPUSES, EXTERNAL PROGRAMS, USE OF THE INSTITUTION'S NAME FOR EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES OPERATED APART FROM THE MAIN CAMPUS OR THE PRIMARY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

N/A

**K. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT; ARTICULATION WITH OTHER SCHOOLS**

The Department of Music and its faculty are heavily involved in the community. Through its many performances and outreach activities, it serves as an important cultural resource for the community and surrounding areas.

**L. NON-DEGREE-GRANTING PROGRAMS FOR THE COMMUNITY**

N/A

**M. STANDARDS FOR (A) INDEPENDENT POSTSECONDARY MUSIC UNITS WITHOUT REGIONAL OR OTHER INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION AND/OR (B) PROPRIETARY INSTITUTIONS (if applicable)**

N/A

## N. PROGRAMS, DEGREES, AND CURRICULA

### 1. Specific Curricula

The curricula for the 3 degree programs in music, the Bachelor of Arts in Music (with 5 emphases), the Bachelor of Music in Music Education, and the Bachelor of Music in Performance degrees, have each been carefully developed and modified over the years; and all represent strong academic programs that reflect the overall intent and standards of the National Association of Schools of Music. Because of the nature of this consultative report, the excellent qualities of these programs will not be discussed, but rather only those few curricular items which appear not to meet NASM standards.

#### *Bachelor of Arts in Music (Renewal of Final Approval)*

All 5 options in the B.A. degree appear to meet NASM standards for curricular balance (see *NASM Handbook*, VII. C. 2. a). The division of courses into prescribed categories for presentation in the required NASM curricular charts, however, needs to be modified (see Instructions for Preparing Curricular Tables in the NASM Format, p. CT-13). These categories are: Musicianship; Performance/Required Music Electives; General Studies; and General Studies Electives (rather than just reflecting the “music core”). Incidentally, IAMU 114 (Music Cultures of the World) should be incorporated into the “Musicianship” portion of the curricular chart.

In order to ensure that all students realize that the B.A. in Music is clearly a liberal arts degree, that fact should be made clear in the description in the Keene State College Catalog (2008-09, p. 54), just as it is in the Department brochure and web site.

B.A. (Composition Emphasis). This appears to be an excellent program which meets all NASM standards.

B.A. (Music for Elementary Teachers Emphasis). Although this is a somewhat “non-traditional” emphasis for a B.A. degree in Music, it would appear to meet NASM standards if all 12 hours of “Required Music Electives” clearly fit within the “Music for Elementary Teachers” subject area (the *NASM Handbook*, IV. C. 2. c., requires that “course work in an area of emphasis occupies at least 10% of the total curriculum”). Elective options such as IAMU 115 (Women in Music) and MU 218 (History of Jazz) do not on the surface appear to fit within the “Elementary Teachers” framework.

B.A. (Music History Emphasis). As with the other B.A. emphases, at least 10% (12 credit hours) of the curriculum must be in the “emphasis” area (Music History). Courses such as MU 220 (Musical Improvisation) and MU 404 (Analytical Techniques in Music), while valuable, do not appear to strictly fit the “Music History” criterion. Consequently, the Department is encouraged to reconfigure the “Required Music Electives” list to ensure that there are clearly 12 hours in Music History. Alternatively, the Department may wish to change this emphasis away from music history (since it appears that there are actually only 2 “traditional” music history courses included in the degree) and into a General B.A. in Music. Simply by removing the “Music History” designation, the degree would appear to meet all NASM standards for a strong General B.A. program in music.

B.A. (Music Technology Emphasis). This option appears to meet all NASM standards as long as the “Required Music Electives” are configured to ensure that 12 hours are required in music electives (not counting the non-music technology courses). These non-music technology electives should be included in the program, but do not count toward the 12 hours of “Music Technology.”

B.A. (Music Theory Emphasis). This program appears to meet all NASM standards.

#### *Bachelors of Music in Performance and in Music Education*

The “Common Body of Knowledge and Skills” standards required for professional degrees in music (*NASM Handbook*, VIII. B. 1-6) appear to be met in all except 2 instances. First, it is not clear how performance majors “acquire the ability to use technologies current to their area of specialization” (*NASM Handbook*, VIII. B. 5). Second, it is not absolutely clear from the catalog description where students acquire basic composition skills (*NASM Handbook*, VIII. B. 3); these are typically acquired in music theory courses (as verified by course descriptions and course syllabi). The department is encouraged to address these issues in its explanatory narrative in the appropriate section of the NASM Self-Study.

#### *Bachelor of Music in Music Education (Renewal of Final Approval)*

It is not clear from the curricular chart or course descriptions in the College Catalog that the NASM standard requiring Arranging is being met for music education majors (*NASM Handbook*, IX. L. 3. b. (2) ). From discussions with the Department Chair, it appears that this competency

may be taught in MU 220 (Technology for Music Educators). Consequently, that fact should be reflected in the College Catalog course description, on the NASM curricular chart, in the course syllabus, and in the narrative discussion of the degree in the Self-Study.

It does not appear that instrumental music education students are required to have experiences in “both small and large instrumental ensembles” (*NASM Handbook*, IX. L. 3. c. (3) (c) ). At least one semester in a small ensemble should be required.

It does not appear that choral music education students are required to have experiences in “both large and small choral ensembles” (*NASM Handbook*, IX. L. 3. c. (2) (c) ).

If choral music education students receive “laboratory experience in teaching beginning vocal techniques individually, in small groups, and in larger classes” (*NASM Handbook*, IX. L. 3. c. (2) (e) ) in MU 237 (Vocal Pedagogy), this fact should be explained in the narrative discussion of the degree in the Self-Study.

#### *Bachelor of Music in Performance (Renewal of Final Approval)*

The division of courses into sections on the required NASM curricular charts (see Instructions for Preparing Curricular Tables in the NASM Format, p. CT-10), should ensure that the categories “Major Area” and “Supportive Courses” are configured in accordance with the description of areas in the *NASM Handbook* (IX. A. 1. a. (2) ). Consequently, the “Major Area” would include applied music, ensembles, pedagogy and literature, while the remaining music courses would fit under the category “Supportive Courses in Music.” When the curricular chart is configured in this manner, the percentages will come close to adhering to NASM standards. It is also appropriate to place the IAMU 114 (Music Cultures of the World) course into the “Supportive Courses in Music” category.

For instrumental performance majors, it is not clear that students receive experience in “ensemble performance in a variety of formal and informal settings” (*NASM Handbook*, IX. A. 3. c), since there is no written requirement for participation in Chamber Ensemble.

The quality of the College orchestra does not appear to provide a performance experience at a sufficiently “advanced level” (*NASM Handbook*, II. B. 1. a. (3) ) for string performance majors.

It is not clear that vocal performance majors meet the standard requiring “the study of foreign languages” (*NASM Handbook*, IX. A. 3. b) in addition to vocal diction.

## **2. Total Performance Program**

The philosophy of the Department places a strong emphasis on music performance for all students. Students must pass a successful audition for acceptance as a music major in any of the degree programs. Evaluation of acceptable progress in performance is evaluated each semester in departmental juries. Students are required to perform regularly on departmental student recitals (Music Workshop), and both performance and music education students must perform graduation recitals.

Music faculty at Keene, both full- and part-time, are active performers, playing both on and off campus. Students very much appreciate the models in performance which these faculty members provide.

The College and Department also support a good program of guest artists to campus, all of whom provide special workshops for music students.

In service both to degree programs and to the community, the Department of Music presents over 50 concerts/recitals on campus each year.

## **3. Music for Non-Major Students**

The Department provides excellent service to the College through its offerings for non-music-majors. A variety of music courses attract large numbers of non-majors; and non-music-majors, where qualified, are also admitted to applied music study and to College performance ensembles.

## **O. MUSIC UNIT EVALUATION, PLANNING, AND PROJECTIONS**

Planning is an ongoing process in the Department of Music. Weekly faculty meetings provide ample opportunity to plan and evaluate activities throughout the year, and semi-annual retreats allow attention to larger planning/projection issues. Discussions with a number of music faculty show that the Department is attuned to the necessity for careful and future planning.

**P. STANDARDS SUMMARY**

Areas in which the Department of Music does not appear to comply with NASM operational and curricular standards include the following:

*Facilities and Equipment* (see discussion in Section F. above)

*Published Materials* (see discussion in Section H. 4. above)

*Programs, Degrees, and Curricula* (See discussion in Section N. 1. above)

**Q. OVERVIEW, SUMMARY ASSESSMENT, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PROGRAM**

**1. Strengths**

The Department of Music has a number of important strengths:

- A well-qualified and dedicated music faculty.
- An advantageous faculty/student ratio and individual attention to students.
- Music students who are eager to learn and who appreciate the quality of instruction that they are receiving.
- A very capable Department Chair who provides collegial leadership.
- Support from the School of Arts and Humanities.
- Replacement position in music education and the new faculty position in music theory.

- Well-crafted and balanced music curricula.
- Emphasis on performance in the curriculum and by faculty.
- New music technology laboratory.
- College support for faculty development.
- Excellent advising program.
- Large and very active student MENC chapter.
- Outreach to the community.

2. **Recommendations for Improvement**

- Increase the involvement of the Department of Music and its Chair in private fund-raising activities.
- Find a way to increase the level of compensation for part-time faculty in music, in order to improve their longevity and involvement with the Department.
- Explore ways in which to establish an “instrument usage/replacement” fee assessed each semester on all music students (thereby creating a recurring fund for equipment/instrument replacement and repair). This practice is very common with music departments nationwide.
- Increase substantially the amount and flexibility of scholarship aid in the Department of Music (see discussion in Section C.).
- Look for ways in which to increase Department of Music involvement/influence in the management and the selection of staff for the Redfern Center, including scheduling in the Main Theatre.
- Add an additional year of Class Piano to the curriculum of choral music education majors to better prepare them for future teaching demands. (This can be accomplished without adding hours to the degree by dropping 2 hours of instrument classes.)

3. **Primary Futures Issues and Long-term Development**

The future ability to maintain and increase the quality of the Department of Music, a very valuable and visible component of Keene State College, would appear to be impacted in particular by the following 3 issues:

1. The ability to upgrade the quality, longevity, and involvement of part-time music faculty.
2. A sufficient amount of music scholarship support to attract the best students, to provide the proper balance for music ensembles, and to enable the improvement of the College orchestra to a level able to support performance majors.
3. Facilities to support properly the various instructional and performance activities of the Department of Music (as could occur through a major renovation and/or expansion project).