

PLNU Department of Music Multi-Year Assessment Plan

In an earlier document, the PLNU Department of Music stated that a multi-year assessment was forthcoming. At that time (Fall 2011) the Department of Music Faculty were only just beginning to develop a comprehensive plan for departmental assessment.

The Department offers five degree programs, the Bachelor of Arts in Music, Music and Ministry and in Music Education, and the Bachelor of Music in Composition and in Performance. The five programs share a core of courses and competencies, such as participation in ensembles, private lessons and certain academic courses, but diverge in their upper division course load. In addition to these degree programs the Department of Music also oversees an after-school program for elementary-age string players, community involvement in its performing ensembles and a vibrant and growing alumni base. As the Music Faculty began looking at all of its programs and the components it appeared that there was a natural three-part division between academic courses, performing ensembles and private instruction, and ancillary programs.

Many of these programs are already being assessed on a regular basis. Students regularly submit assessments of their academic courses using the IDEA evaluation tool. Private lessons have been assessed using an evaluation questionnaire that was developed by the faculty over a number of years. However, missing from this data are evaluations submitted by other stakeholders in the program, including parents and students in the afterschool string program and PLNU music alumni. With this in mind the Faculty developed the following timetable.

2012-13	Assess after-school and community programs, and alumni
2013-14	Assess Music Theory, History and academic units
2014-15	Assess ensembles and private instruction
	repeat the sequence every three years

In the Spring of 2012 the Music Faculty participated in a workshop to revise the Curriculum Maps for all five of the music programs. As a part of that process they also identified the courses and signature assignments that would be used to assess student progress in these programs.

Moving Towards a Portfolio-Based Model

In the hopes of improving the assessment process and providing a better experience for our students, the Faculty agreed to embark on developing a portfolio-based model for

the Department. The faculty identified key assignments for all of its courses, developed rubrics for scoring these assignments and developed a system for storing these assignments using the software program LiveText. The process begins this year by videotaping all student performances and posting these performances in the student portfolios, along with the recordings of the final juries. The upcoming years will add to this process by storing all of our signature assignments in LiveText, thereby creating a long-term data set through which the success of our programs can be measured.

Although data will be collected every year, as these assignments are loaded into LiveText and scored with their accompanying rubrics, the assessment focus will shift across the various aspects of the program from year to year, as mentioned earlier.

The String Project Questionnaire

In July 2012 the Department sent out a questionnaire to both the parents of students and the student teachers of the University's after-school program called the PLNU String Project. The String Project was begun in Fall 2003 with a grant from the American String Teachers Association (ASTA), a group now called the National String Project Consortium (NSPC). The program uses University string students to teach young children how to play string instruments. As a result of a full program review and the responses from the student teachers in the program, it became clear that the program needed a major re-adjustment. Over the course of the last five years, the program had lost significant enrollment, struggled to attract University students to work as student teachers and was in danger of becoming insolvent.

As a result of the review of this program the Program Director has revised his procedures and developed some new strategies and goals for keeping the program viable and sustainable. The Program Director set the following goals:

1. Improve marketing & recruiting (includes developing image-enhancing materials)
2. Create, maintain, and protect record-keeping systems
3. Improve teacher-mentoring
4. Develop goals and assessments for those goals
5. Return to the spirit and intent of the original structure of the String Project
6. Increase enrollment each year
7. Hire a Master Teacher as soon as it is economically viable

The Chairs of the Music Department are working closely with the Program Director to monitor the progress of these goals and to ensure that the program stays viable and sustainable.

The Alumni Database

Also new in 2012 is the Department's first effort in many years to contact its entire alumni base for the purpose of seeking their input, developing data about how our programs have prepared them for their careers and also to simply reconnect. To this end we have pulled a preliminary list from our main University-wide database and are beginning the process of contacting them. Our hopes are to make contact with each of our alumni this year and develop a brief survey that requests input in the assessment of our programs. Although most of our efforts this year will be very informal, our hopes are to use the process to make a first contact and to ensure that the database contains accurate contact data.