

The Instructional Program Review Narrative Report

1. College: MERRITT

Discipline, Department or Program: MUSIC

Date: February 10, 2010

Members of the Instructional Program Review Team: David Morales, Larry London, Faculty; Stacy Thompson, Dean, Division 1.

2. Narrative Description of the Discipline, Department or Program:

Please provide a general statement of primary goals and objectives of the discipline, department or program. Include any unique characteristics, degrees and certificates the program or department currently offers, concerns or trends affecting the discipline, department or program, and any significant changes or needs anticipated in the next three years.

Through our music course offerings, we strive to foster an understanding and appreciation for music that will enhance our understanding of history and our place in today's world. Through study, rehearsal and performance we seek to motivate and develop the best corporate ideas and efforts of the whole in order to inspire and entertain in creative ways unique to humankind.

At Merritt, we currently offer five (5) different courses that meet Area 3 GE Humanities requirement. We also support a community choir, community orchestra and instruction in classroom piano. We do not offer a degree or certificate in music at Merritt College.

Looking ahead, we anticipate adding a gospel choir and a vocal (voice) class targeting popular, blues, country and R&B, which is a newly established field in major university settings. We also plan to add a class focused on the history of Hip-Hop music. We are not looking to invest in the digital music field as we have limited facility space and it is very costly. However, our students could greatly benefit from a recording lab, which could be shared by other disciplines, where they could record music.

3. Curriculum:

- Is the curriculum current and effective? Have course outlines been updated within the last three years? If not, what plans are in place to remedy this?
Curriculum is current and effective. Course outlines been updated within the last three years with the exception of elementary piano. The update will be completed this spring.
- Has your department conducted a curriculum review of course outlines? If not, what are the plans to remedy this?
We have conducted a curriculum review of course outlines, ensuring that they are current with information, including textbooks.

- What are the department's plans for curriculum improvement (i.e., courses to be developed, updated, enhanced, or deactivated)? Have prerequisites, co-requisites, and advisories been validated? Is the date of validation on the course outline?

We have added classes in Jazz, Blues and Popular Music of America and The American Musical Theater. The first is already being offered and the latter will be offered in F10. I will submit a course in The Music Hip-Hop Culture this spring in hopes of offering it in 2010-11. Both meet Area 3 GE requirements and are transferable. We have also deactivated courses which we no longer offer and updated the College Catalogue accordingly. We do not offer courses requiring prerequisites or co-requisites.

- What steps has the department taken to incorporate student-learning outcomes in the curriculum? Are outcomes set for each course? If not, which courses do not have outcomes?

Student Learning Outcomes are in place for all classes, submitted through Curricunet, except elementary piano. That will be completed this spring along with a course outline update.

- Describe the efforts to develop outcomes at the program level. In which ways do these outcomes align with the institutional outcomes?

Our program level outcomes include:

- *Deepening awareness of history and cultural diversity as expressed through music.*
- *Appreciation of music as a liberal art, freeing us to think creatively through our understanding of life articulated through the musical language.*
- *Articulating with clarity and precision through writing and class discussion.*
- *Demonstrating ethical behavior that addresses respect, integrity and honesty.*

Our music program outcomes are specifically responsive to the College's Institutional Outcomes adopted in 2009.

- Recommendations and priorities.

The financial crisis, further amplified in California, is the major stumbling block for student success through our music offerings. With our inability to offer a wide and growing array of classes that meet transfer and degree requirements because of our inability to employ adjunct faculty we are limited with what we can accomplish with only one contract instructor. This needs to change.

It is also a priority to offer music classes that stimulate and educate the rapidly growing number of retirees (baby-boomers) who want to keep their minds active and stay healthy. There is now clear documentation around education providing a mental stimulus that counteracts dementia, so this is a growing concern for this segment of the populace. Merritt's unique location makes this extremely critical. Hopefully, better financial times will allow this to change as well.

4. Instruction:

- Describe effective and innovative strategies used by faculty to involve students in the learning process. How has new technology been used by the department to improve student learning?
In our lecture classes we regularly use a laptop computer and LCD projector, along with PowerPoint and coupled with access to YouTube for viewing musical performances. Students also make use of this equipment and software when completing classroom presentations. In addition, we regularly use a TV screen and DVD player as well as recording equipment, including CD, cassette and record players, plus MP3s and ipods.

- How does the department maintain the integrity and consistency of academic standards within the discipline?
Through interaction online and at music conventions with faculty, plus searching offerings at other community colleges throughout the country through Curricunet, I routinely review course outlines and descriptions. With the assistance of our campus Articulation Counselor, we are held to high academic standards.
- Discuss the enrollment trends of your department. What is the student demand for specific courses? How do you know? What do you think are the salient trends affecting enrollments?
- *Enrollment has increased along with productivity over the past four years, 227 in F05 to 281 in F08, a 24% increase. Along with that, productivity has gone from 14.49 to 19.33 in the same period. Already in F10, we are offering four lecture classes with over 50 students in each.*
- Are courses scheduled in a manner that meets student needs and demand? How do you know?
What is clear is that we have increased enrollment and productivity in music, which means that the days and times of offerings are meeting the needs of more students. We do offer classes on various days, including evenings and Saturdays. In addition, we are very productive in our summer music offerings.
- Recommendations and priorities.
As previously stated, the college budget, which is rooted in the state budget, is the limiting factor during these next years. Regarding technology, it is essential that our classrooms be upgraded to be smart classrooms, enabling us to readily use technology for instruction without hauling machines around. This is essential for both faculty and students, the latter in adding a sense of legitimacy to the quality of the education they are seeking to complete.

5. Student Success:

- Describe student retention and program completion (degrees, certificates, persistence rates) trends in the department. What initiatives can the department take to improve retention and completion rates?

Student Retention Rate by Ethnicity		
<i>Students who are retained and do not drop or withdraw</i>		
Ethnicity	Baseline Fall 2004-07	Fall 2008
Asian	75%	87% (15)
African American	67%	74% (119)
Filipino	69%	75% (4)
Hispanic/Latino	74%	80% (49)
Native American	90%	67% (3)
Other	85%	50% (2)
White	92%	97% (66)
Unknown	81%	86% (22)
College Average	75%	82% (280)

Student Retention Rate: Gender		
Gender	Music Baseline Fall 2004-07	Music Fall 2008
Male	73%	76% (106)
Female	76%	85% (169)
Not Supplied	71%	100% (5)
College Average	75%	82% (280)

Retention rates in music are well above the college average, as well as above previous yearly averages in music. I would suggest that this is due to the quality of teaching we offer. We seek to engage and challenge students in ways that motivate and inspire learning, rather than creating a dialectic tension between faculty and students centered on judgment.

- What are the key needs of students that affect their learning? What services are needed for these students to improve their learning? Describe the department's efforts to access these services. What are your department's instructional support needs?

Key needs for students today are economic, including rising tuition fees and textbook charges. Solutions rest beyond the scope of our discipline, but they include the college's ability to get financial aid into the hands of students as quickly as possible. Other needs include class offerings to accommodate the demand of students. State financial reductions have caused music classes to be canceled, which is affecting students' ability to complete their educational goals. Instructional support needs include hiring adjunct instructors to teach additional sections beyond those being taught by our one contract instructor.
- Describe the department's effort to assess student learning at the course level. Describe the efforts to assess student learning at the program level. In which ways has the department used student learning assessment results for improvement?

Student learning is assessed through a variety of tools, including testing, assigned essays that explore critical thinking and reflection, group discussions and written exit essays completed at the end of the semester. Through evaluating the results of these efforts, teaching methods adapt appropriately to more effectively communicate and engage students in the class. Changes have led to additional group discussions and group projects as well as an increased use of multimedia with lectures.
- Recommendations and priorities.

Primary, is attention given to students outside of the discipline related to tuition and textbook expenses. Finding other means of accessing information outside of purchasing textbooks must come into play.

Next, is securing funds from the state to hire adjuncts to teach additional sections of music to meet the growing demand of students.

6. Human and Physical Resources (including equipment and facilities)

- Describe your current level of staff, including full-time and part-time faculty, classified staff, and other categories of employment.
Currently we have one contract fulltime and three adjunct instructors teaching seven to eight sections per semester. In addition, we currently offer two sections in the summer.
- Describe your current utilization of facilities and equipment.
At present, we use one classroom for music lecture classes and a separate room functioning as a piano lab. Our college orchestra shares a large classroom across campus.
- Are the human and physical resources, including equipment and location, adequate for all the courses offered by your department (or program)? What are your key staffing and facilities needs for the next three years? Why?
Cutbacks for funding adjuncts continue to diminish our offerings, first to life-long learners, those pursuing personal development. If forced to make deeper cuts, we will need to eliminate additional courses that are transferable and essential for matriculation and where there are identified student demands. We have no musical classified staff or other employees related to music. We need additional funds to support music classes offered by adjunct instructors. This is essential for meeting the needs of students.

Our lecture classroom does not adequately accommodate the 50-plus students in these courses. We have been awaiting new desks for three years from Measure A funds, but, unbelievably, they have yet to arrive. Our lecture classroom needs equipment upgrade that allows a laptop to be connected to a computer projector, both located in a secured cabinet, as well as a large screen for projection. We need a “smart” classroom, and in our case, that also encompasses equipment for playing music from various sources (CD, tapes, records, ipods, mp3).

The piano lab is also too small to accommodate the overflow of students, now at forty. We have purchased additional electronic keyboards to meet student demand, and are awaiting their arrival this spring.

The orchestra classroom functions well. However, we lack sufficient storage space for related equipment (stands, percussion instruments, etc.)

Our students could also benefit from a music lab (which could be shared with other disciplines) where students could explore writing and recording music, which is the fastest growing field in music today.

- Recommendations and priorities.
 1. *Converting A117 into a “smart” classroom, including 50 new desks.*
 2. *A new classroom space designated as a piano lab that holds 40 electronic keyboards.*
 3. *Access to additional storage space in the P building for orchestra equipment.*
 4. *A lab room that can function as a recording studio.*

7. Community Outreach and Articulation

For vocational programs:

N/A

- Describe the department's connection with industry. Is there an Advisory Board or Advisory Committee for the program? If so, how often does it meet? Is the program adequately preparing students for careers in the field? How do you know?
- Have students completing the program attained a foundation of technical and career skills? How do you know? What are the completion rates in your program?
- What are the employment placement rates? Include a description of job titles and salaries. What is the relationship between completion rates and employment rates?
- What industry trends are most critical for the future viability of the program? How do you know? What are the implications of these trends for curriculum development and improvement?

For transfer programs:

- Describe the department's efforts in meeting with and collaborating with local 4-year institutions. Is the program adequately preparing students for upper division course work? How do you know?
We only offer lecture classes that are transferable to local four-year educational institutions. We work with Merritt's articulation counselor to ensure success in this regard. We also continue to add new classes to our offerings as new courses are added to the CSU and/or UC system.

Our classes absolutely prepare students for upper division course work. Our lecture classes consist of assignments that include numerous writing assignments requiring critical thinking skills on the part of students in addition to college level research. In this world of internet communication, I routinely hear from former students as to their educational success, including their gratitude for the quality of preparation given them in our classes.

For all instructional programs:

- Describe the department's effort to ensure that the curriculum responds to the needs of the constituencies that it serves.
I stay current with new music courses offered on CSU and UC campuses, and I will continue to add those courses that would seem attractive to our student populace. A more significant measurement of success is bodies in chairs. In that regard, enrollment remains high along with productivity, in S10 at approximately 24, with more than 50 students in each of four lecture classes.
- Recommendations and priorities.
Once again, the state, district and college budgets must allow for us to offer more music classes taught by qualified and enthusiastic adjunct. The demand from students is present, but not the funding to meet student needs. I will continue to lobby for the arts estimable place in developing our students for success in today's society.