DePaul University School of Music

Dean’s Report to the Academic Program Review Committee on Progress toward Realization of the Specifications Made in the recent “Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)”

October 8, 2002

I have read the recent report of the Music Review Committee on this same topic and note that it is, from my point of view, responsible and accurate.

Actions Specified in the MOA:

1. Students

   a. Advising. The advising initiative has been addressed by the Dean and the School’s Administrative council. During the coming academic year 2001-02, a new method of advising will be implemented. Students will be advised by full-time faculty. Faculty (with the exception of department chairs) will be compensated with a reduction of their load by 1/9. By the end of the academic year, the School will seek input from full-time faculty on how the new system has worked.

   Dean’s response: Since the issue of the MOA, each full-time faculty member in the School of Music has accepted formal advising responsibilities, and systems have been developed and implemented which guide the faculty advisors in fulfillment of their new responsibilities. Activation of the Degree Audit feature of PeopleSoft expected later this month will complete that process. Students and faculty alike report that the new system functions well, but all also expect the level of service to further improve as faculty become more experienced and better informed in their roles as advisors. The school intends to survey students and faculty on their satisfaction with the new system before the end of the current academic year.

   b. Graduate Attrition. In the 2001-02 academic year, the School will track graduate enrollment more closely to examine what initially appears to be a recent increase in graduate attrition. The review Committee note that attrition does not necessarily signal a problem. Currently students leaving the program are required to fill out an exit questionnaire, and on that basis students usually seem to leave the program for positive reasons, such as taking a job, or switching career paths. The School has changed the program based on student feedback in the past and will continue to be open to student input regarding the graduate program.
Dean’s response: For three years, the associate dean has conducted an exit interview with each withdrawing student in which she sought to determine the root cause of the withdrawal. These data suggest that undergraduate attrition is declining, and that graduate attrition is stable. The Music Review Committee, however, is in my view correct in its assessment that much of the graduate attrition that exists reflects student success rather than the reverse. Some students have won auditions for professional positions or prestigious internships and leave their degree program to assume those new roles. Further, a recent revision to the graduate curricula holds promise to increase the degree-completion rate.

2. Curriculum/Instruction

a. Course Evaluations. To address the problem of slow turn-around time on course evaluations, a subcommittee within the School has developed a new course evaluation form. The new form is scannable, which will greatly expedite the tabulation and reporting of the results to faculty. The new form will be presented to the whole faculty for approval in June and will be implemented for use at the end of the Autumn 2001-02 quarter.

Dean’s response: A newly designed course evaluation form was proposed, revised and then recommended by the Faculty Policies Committee, approved by the faculty, and implemented beginning with Autumn term, 2001. Scanned data reporting remains slower than ideal. The dean will work to find ways to expedite data reporting to the faculty.

b. Role of Ensembles. The School of Music considers ensembles to be an integral part of every student’s education and requires large ensembles -- chorus, orchestra, and wind ensemble/symphony -- for degree completion. Ensembles are also necessary for the School’s promotional activities. However, in a recent student survey, some students (especially those studying Guitar and Piano) rated ensembles lower in importance as an influence on their musical development. In order to address this student opinion, the School will work to make the ensemble experience more meaningful for guitar and piano students. The AVP suggested that the School consider how the ensemble requirement is presented to students during advising making certain that students understand its importance to their education.

Dean’s response: The major ensemble experiences remain central for most students, and recent excellent faculty hires to direct the Wind Symphony, second chorus, Chamber Orchestra, and the second and third jazz ensembles have
reflected the continued emphasis being placed on these experiences for most students. Alternate ensemble requirements for guitar and piano students are being considered.

3. Admissions

a. Intent-to-Major Policy. In the past, students were admitted to the School as general Music majors; specialization was not declared until the sophomore year. As of next academic year (Fall 2001-02), the School will ask incoming students to declare an “intent to major” upon application and admission to the School. After completing requisite coursework, students would then have to petition to major; faculty would still have the right to decide whether or not to accept students into a major. Knowing what majors students intend to pursue would help the admissions committee consider their entrance auditions in the context of the students’ future goals in the School.

Dean’s response: Beginning with the incoming classes in the Autumn term of 2001, the Admissions Office in the School of Music have collected “intent to major” information from every prospective student. That information has helped focus admissions decisions, inform advisors, and encourage students to broadly consider their opportunities.

Issues on which there is Commitment to Continue Working:

1. Collaboration with other Units. The School is committed to pursuing collaborative ventures with the Theatre School. In the past, three possible areas were discussed with the former dean: a) a Musical Theatre production; b) sharing faculty or trading faculty time to teach in the other School; c) a curricular collaboration, such as a joint program with required courses in both Theatre and Music. With the new Theatre Dean in place next year, the School will discuss with Theatre each of the these three possibilities.

Dean’s response: The MOA is incorrect in reporting that it was a former dean who led discussions regarding possible collaborations with the Theatre School in the three areas; it was the current dean. There seems to be general agreement among the faculty and administration of both schools that carefully developed collaborations promise to enrich both schools. The schools are examining the efficacy of reshaping the Theatre Management Program from the Theatre School, and the Music and Business Program from the School of Music, into a coordinated program of Performing Arts Management
with two tracks and a shared faculty appointment. That project is nearing completion and the change is anticipated.

A collaborative production has also been discussed, especially in the context of a joint campaign for a new performing arts facility to serve both schools. The two deans are expecting to approve a joint production within the next few years, but funding and schedule will be a challenge to them. The faculties and staffs of the two schools have shared a common social event during each of the last two years.

The project now underway to realize new facilities for the two schools will deepen what is already a substantial cooperative relationship between these two schools.

2. Diversity. The School is committed to improving the representation of minorities among the student population. In the incoming class of this year, only 18 of 115 new students were students of color. The School will continue to explore ways to recruit minority students, such as attending national college fairs for high school seniors. The School is also committed to increasing diversity among its faculty. The School expects find and hire a minority candidate for the World Music position when it comes open, probably in several years. The AVP suggested that the school also remain open to expanding the variety of musical forms and traditions it offers its students. The Dean challenges the faculty search committees to find people who may not be immediately visible but who would serve the School of Music well.

Dean’s response: The last seven full-time faculty appointments made in the School of Music have been to five women and two African-American men. Student diversity seems to be growing slowly as the Admissions Office staff tests various strategies to identify and attract qualified students of color. The presence of a highly visible and personable African-American on the full-time faculty seems to be having a positive effect as well.

3. Part-time Faculty. The School currently has 94 part-time faculty and 22 full-time faculty. The part-time faculty are high-ranking musicians (such as from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra) who are an asset to the school and who strengthen DePaul’s reputation. These faculty do not carry heavy teaching loads and do not have service responsibilities, though the part-time faculty do hear juries. This means that the majority of the service responsibilities fall disproportionately to the 22 full-time faculty members. The department always invites the voices of the part-time/adjunct faculty on School governance issues, policy changes, etc; but most are happy to come in to teach one or two courses with limited involvement with the rest of the Schools affairs. The School is committed to building community among the part-time faculty. The School will continue to sponsor community-building activities such as social events, and seeking input on governance issues.
Dean’s response: The school continues to inform and meaningfully “connect” with part-time faculty through a series of social events, quarterly Faculty Conferences, and a weekly newsletter. The welfare of the part-time faculty is a keenly felt responsibility of the Performance Department Chair, the department to which most of the part-time faculty are assigned. A printed “Faculty Guide” is in development, designed especially to aid part-time faculty. The Mentoring Committee has been asked to investigate, coordinate, and elevate the new faculty orientation systems for part-time faculty in the School of Music.

4. Resources

a. Staff Support. The review Committee noted that the School is understaffed as clerical and administrative burdens continue to grow (especially related to the PeopleSoft transition efforts). The School feels that the current staff is excellent, and though progress has been made—three full-time staff positions were added in the last few years—the School would like to hire additional staff members to keep up with administrative responsibilities and growth.

Dean’s response: The staff is superb, on the whole, but stretched thin. Though additional staff positions would be welcome, none are expected. Policies are being considered which are designed to increase operating efficiency for the staff members.

b. Facilities. The School is committed to working with the university/Academic Affairs in the context of Vision 2006 to address the space needs of the School. In the next year, the School of Music and the Theatre School will meet to discuss first steps regarding facilities needs. An overall plan to improve facilities will look at existing resources, look at possible sites within the Lincoln Park campus area, and price a range of options for infrastructure development. The EVP explained that funding for facilities will come from University sources and from funds raised by Theatre and Music themselves; both Schools have already been given funds to begin fundraising efforts. In two to three years, the University will assess the prospects for fund-raising for facilities and make appropriate plans. The time frame for the facilities project may be as long as nine or ten years.

Dean’s response: A variety of opportunities for realizing new facilities for the School of Music have been explored during the past two years. The need for new facilities and their relative priority among other university needs seem to have been affirmed among the university managers during these past two years as well. Changes in the course and ensemble schedules are being pursued to help relieve some of the “gridlock” that has developed among students and faculty who have improved in quality and expectations.
Respectfully submitted,

Donald E. Casey,

Dean