

**Central Washington University  
Assessment of Student Learning  
Department and Program Report**

Please enter the appropriate information concerning your student learning assessment activities for this year.

Academic Year of Report: 2011-2012

College: College of Arts and Humanities

Department Music

Program: Bachelor's degrees in Music: B.A. in Music, B.A. in Music with Specialization in Jazz; B.M. in Performance, B. M. in Music Education; B.M. in Composition/Theory

**1. What student learning outcomes were assessed this year, and why?**

In answering this question, please identify the specific student learning outcomes you assessed this year, reasons for assessing these outcomes, with the outcomes written in clear, measurable terms, and note how the outcomes are linked to department, college and university mission and goals.

The Department of Music continued to evaluate aspects of two student learning outcomes in the music core curriculum for academic year 2011-2012: *1. Students become literate musicians* and *5. Students will be equipped with a set of theoretical and conceptual abstractions that are applicable to and useful for the understanding of a substantial body of musical literature, applicable to music degree programs in the fields of music education, performance, composition, jazz studies, and music as general field of study.*

These outcomes are related to the Department of Music curricular goal: "Students will receive a foundation of knowledge and skills leading to specialization in one of the major programs in music education, performance, or composition" and the program goal "Increase the percentages of students retained in upper division from lower division courses." This in turn addresses the College of Arts and Humanities student learning goals "Ensure that students develop disciplinary specific competencies for success in their field" and "Develop students' intellectual and practical skills for lifelong learning." The selected outcomes are consistent with CWU's Core Theme 1: Teaching and Learning: Outcome 1.1.1: "Students will achieve programmatic learning outcomes," and Outcome 1.1.2: "Students will persist to graduation with increased efficiency and rate." They support CWU's Goal I: "Maintain and strengthen an outstanding academic and student life on the Ellensburg campus," and Goal V: "Achieve regional and national prominence for the University."

We chose to continue monitoring these outcomes through analysis of student achievement in the core music theory sequence, piano proficiency, and attendance and participation in Convocation and department concerts and recitals. As will be explained below, our particular interest was in evaluating the program changes instituted in 2011-12 based on prior assessment results.

**2. How were they assessed?**

In answering these questions, please concisely describe the specific methods used in assessing student learning. Please also specify the population assessed, when the assessment took place, and the standard of mastery (criterion) against which you will compare your assessment results. If appropriate, please list survey or questionnaire response rate from total population.

## **A) What methods were used?**

2.1 We examined the grade distribution of the final aural and written exams for MUS 146 (written), 146A (aural) and 246 (written and aural), which represent the culmination of the first- and second-year theory courses (153 students assessed). The population assessed was all students in the first year sequence (primarily freshmen) and students at the end of the second year sequence (primarily sophomores), and was administered in the Spring quarter. The faculty would like to see 90% or more of the students earn a C or above on these exams.

2.2 A second direct measure of student literacy in aural and written music theory was the pass (retention) rate for the six-quarter sequence composed of MUS 144-146 and MUS 144A-146A and MUS 244-246 (184 students assessed). We chose to continue monitoring this rate to allow us to compare current data with the same information collected since 2007-2008. The population assessed was all students in the music theory sequence (basically all freshmen and sophomore students with some transfer students). The department goal is to maintain 90% pass rate throughout the sequence, with at least 75% of students completing the first year and 75% completing the second year.

2.3 We examined an indirect measure--the rating and commentary provided on the Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEOI) forms. We reviewed these data for MUS 146 and MUS 246 for Spring 2012 (95 students assessed). The department goal is to equal or exceed department and College means on selected items, and to have no items with means below the midpoint. The department assessment coordinator also reviewed the open-ended (constructed response, qualitative) student comments to note trends of student attitude toward these courses.

2.4 An important direct measure of student skill is the departmental Piano Proficiency exam required of all majors (53 students assessed). This exam is administered individually by a piano faculty member (or TA) on a quarterly basis. As a graduation requirement, it ultimately boasts a 100% pass rate. However, the department faculty has been dissatisfied with how many students must retake the exam, or wait until late in their program to attempt it. This is a difficulty for music education majors, as they are required to demonstrate proficiency prior to applying for placement in the student teaching internship. The department goal is a 90% or better first-time pass rate. Based on prior assessment data, the department instituted a new policy in 2011-2012 that aligns the final exam for the third quarter of piano, MUS 154A, with the proficiency requirement. Students not passing the exam/course will receive a "U" grade and will be required to repeat MUS 154A until proficiency is achieved. This will allow students the opportunity to learn without negative impact on their GPA.

2.5 Related to the selected learning outcomes, the department has a policy that requires student attendance at all Convocations (4 per quarter) and at least 8 concerts or recitals (314 students assessed). In addition to providing a breadth of music listening experience, we also believe that this is an indicator of student disposition (attitude) to engage in the community of musicians as an active listener. The department goal is to have 90% of students completing this requirement each quarter. We examined the percentage of students completing the requirement in each quarter of 2010-2011, and instituted a new policy in 2011-2012. Under the new policy, rather than linking quarterly completion of the requirement to the applied lesson grade (a policy which

was inconsistently implemented and cumbersome), student attendance is tracked via a handheld scan of student ID cards at each event and tallied as a cumulative total. Students may fall behind or exceed the quarterly requirements without immediate repercussion, as long as the required total is reached by graduation. Absence at a Convocation requires 3 additional concerts or recitals, reflecting the department's belief that Convocation attendance represents a strong commitment to the learning community.

**B) Who was assessed?**

See above.

**C) When was it assessed?**

See above.

**3. What was learned?**

In answering this question, please report results in specific qualitative or quantitative terms, with the results linked to the outcomes you assessed, and compared to the standard of mastery (criterion) you noted above. Please also include a concise interpretation or analysis of the results.

3.1 We examined score distributions from the final aural and written exams for all sections of MUS 146, 146A, and 246 in the Spring of 2012 and calculated the percentage of students earning a C or better on the examinations. We compared this against the totals from 2010-11 and the department goal of 90% at C or above.

Course/Exam	% at C or above (2011-12)	% at C or above (2010-11)
MUS 146 Written	93	80
MUS 146A Aural	74	69
MUS 246 Written	89	84
MUS 246A Aural	79	70

These assessments relate to both learning outcomes described above, in that they illustrate a student's level of music literacy (in the sense of notational and theoretical constructs) and mastery of theoretical and conceptual abstractions necessary to understand a large body of music literature.

These data indicate that a) student achievement is increasing year-on-year, nearing our goal of 90% pass rate for these particular assessments, and b) students continue to be generally stronger in written than in aural theory.

Beginning in Fall 2011 and as a direct result of our assessment process, the written and aural skills components of the freshman music theory courses were split into two classes. We will continue to monitor student achievement on these exams in light of this substantial curriculum change.

3.2 Retention data for 2011-12 in the core music theory sequence demonstrate a downward trend relative to 2010-11.

Academic	MUS	MUS	MUS	Completed	MUS	MUS	MUS	Completed
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Year	144	145	146	Sequence	244	245	246	Sequence
07-08				50% (est.)				40% (est.)
08-09	77%	86%	78%	53%	85%	95%	87%	67%
09-10	79%	88%	89%	68%	84%	100%	96%	81%
10-11	87%	90%	92%	74%	91%	96%	92%	81%
11-12	83%	91%	91%	67%	84%	93%	91%	79%

We are near achieving the department goal of at least 90% of students passing each course of the sequence. We are near the goal of 75% completion for both years.

With regard to the split of MUS 144-146 into aural and written courses, much like a lecture and lab, we noted that of the 30 students (26%) that did not pass one of the quarters, 17 of them (15%) failed both aural/written that quarter, 4 (3.5%) failed written only, and 9 (8%) failed aural only. It appears that the splitting of course content did not result in a dramatic number of students failing one area or another and facing delay in sequence completion; however, it appears that students are having more difficulty with the aural component.

3.3 We examined student SEOI data for all Spring 2012 sections MUS 146 and 246 (7 sections, 95 students). This was the first year of the newly developed online format, that did not include “Course as a Whole” or “Instructor’s Teaching Effectiveness” questions which we reviewed in past assessment reports. However, individual item responses for all sections showed a clear trend of equaling or exceeding department and College means, indicating our department goal was met. Individual student comments reflected a few concerns with course content and structure/pacing as well as characteristics of individual instructors; as a whole, the vast majority of comments praised the rigor and level of engagement these courses required. We believe these student evaluations provide evidence of the effectiveness of the core theory sequence in its recent revision.

3.4 As mentioned previously, in 2011-12 the department instituted a new policy regarding the piano proficiency graduation requirement. In prior years, this assessment was independent of required or elective piano classes, and relied on the student to independently prepare the necessary skills during their program. This led to an unacceptable number of students delaying the proficiency exam until their final quarters on campus--a particular problem for music education students, who must complete the exam prior to student teaching.

Under the new policy, the final exam for MUS 154A (Class Piano III) is aligned with the proficiency requirements, and students who are not successful must re-enroll in the class until proficiency is demonstrated. In the first year of this policy, 75 students enrolled in MUS 152A (Class Piano I) in Fall of 2011. By spring, 53 students enrolled in Class Piano III (71% of the Fall enrollment). Of these, 45 passed the class and 38 were awarded proficiency. In terms of percentages, 51% of students who began the sequence completed with proficiency in 3 quarters of piano; 71% of students who enrolled Class Piano III earned proficiency. As a new policy, it was unclear how student performance would be tracked, which resulted in the inconsistency of 7 students passing the class but not earning proficiency. In light of the new policy, it is difficult to compare these data with our prior standard of a 90% first-time pass rate. We believe that

retention/attrition from Class Piano I to Class Piano III (currently 29%) will improve, and that we can approach 90% passing of Class Piano III in the first quarter attempted.

3.5 Beginning in Fall 2011, students attendance at department Convocations, recitals, and concerts was tracked using a handheld barcode scan of the student ID card. In order to graduate, students are required to attend all 4 Convocations and 8 additional performances per quarter of enrollment (a cumulative total). As this policy was implemented, Allen Larsen developed a powerful FileMaker tool to automate attendance tracking and reporting. For 2011-12, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding their required attendance was: Fall, 33%; Winter, 35%; and Spring, 48%. The overall annual rate for freshmen (the first class existing wholly under the new policy) was 52% meeting or exceeding the requirement. As it is possible for students to accumulate “extra” attendance, quarterly deficits are less of a concern. Therefore, beginning in Fall 2012, we will examine the percentage of students who are within 8 scans of their requirement at any given time. Preliminary Fall 2012 data indicate that 71% of students are within this range. Using 2010-11 data as a baseline, we will evaluate the reasonableness of a 90% quarterly completion ratio (defined as within 8 of required total) and adjust the target if necessary as the implications of the policy shift develop.

#### **4. What will the department or program do as a result of that information?**

In answering this question, please note specific changes to your program as they affect student learning, and as they are related to results from the assessment process. If no changes are planned, please describe why no changes are needed. In addition, how will the department report the results and changes to internal and external constituents (e.g., advisory groups, newsletters, forums, etc.).

The department will continue to monitor student performance and retention in the core theory sequence, the piano sequence, and completion of the Convocation/recital requirement. We believe that these elements of all music degree programs constitute the most important indicators of student progress toward degree, and any incremental improvements in these indicators are worth collective effort to achieve. We have not planned any new changes to the program for the current academic year; rather, we believe that careful monitoring of the results of last year’s changes will permit more informed interpretation and decision-making. However, we will continue to improve student support in the form of advising, degree planning checklists, feedback on attendance and academic risk, and data management within the constraints of our current staff and faculty workload.

Results of ongoing assessment will be discussed in full faculty meetings and briefings with the CAH Dean and Associate Provost, and will continue to be an element of NASM certification. The annual reports available on the Associate Provost website will be linked on the department homepage.

#### **5. What did the department or program do in response to last year’s assessment information?**

In answering this question, please describe any changes that have been made to improve student learning based on previous assessment results. Please also discuss any changes you have made to your assessment plan or assessment methods.

Prior assessment information reinforced the importance of student success in the core sequences of music theory and piano, and led to heightened attention to retention in these courses. The

detailed data collected over the last three assessment cycles was critically important to our discussions, and in light of the departure of a full-time tenure-track faculty member in music theory (we currently have an interim appointment with an ongoing FT/TT search) we hope to continue gathering this information.

Feedback on the 2010-2011 departmental report indicated that the department could refine the assessment plan to include measures of knowledge, skills *and* attitudes. We believe we have done this in measuring knowledge (music theory), skill (piano proficiency) and attitude (engagement in the musical community through attendance at performances). However, we will seek additional areas in which to assess student learning. For example, we are piloting the use of Waypoint Outcomes software through Blackboard in order to embed assessment in various courses (initially MUS 253C and MUS 102). This system may prove useful in tracking student performance juries, ensemble participation, upper division music theory and history class performance, and other important elements of the degree programs. An additional area of interest, also noted in the feedback from last year's report, is in the development of indirect measure of student success through exit interviews and alumni surveys.

In the Spring of 2012, the faculty met in a day-long retreat to discuss the long-term plan of the department. This was a fruitful exercise, which generated numerous thoughts and concerns that formed the basis for the departmental Long-Range Planning Committee's work this fall. We were able to articulate an updated Vision, Mission and Values document which formed a useful backdrop to the University Strategic Planning process. Our immediate goal is to develop a new set of departmental student learning objectives aligned with NASM standards, the CWU, CAH, and Music Department Strategic Plans, and incorporated into our assessment plan. This ongoing work will continue to be a major priority in 2012-13.

Results of prior assessment reports were incorporated into the self-study required by NASM for their accreditation visit in Spring 2013. This work was ongoing throughout the 2011-12 academic year.

#### **6. Questions or suggestions concerning Assessment of Student Learning at Central Washington University:**

Attached please find results of CWU Reading Assessment for Spring, 2012.

**General Education Learner Outcomes Goals**

**REPORT (Spring 2012)**

**Course: MUS 359.01 (Dr. Maria Roditeleva-Wibe)**

<b>Rubric Element</b>	<b>Pass Native</b>	<b>Pass* Transfer</b>	<b>Non-Pass Native</b>	<b>Non-Pass* Transfer</b>
Reading Rate	15/79%	3/16%	0/0%	1/5%
Summary-Details	8/42%	2/10.5%	7/37%	2/10.5%
Summary-Discipline Specific Vocabulary	8/42%	3/16%	7/37%	1/5%
Summary-Author's Intent	4/21%	2/10.5%	11/58%	2/10.5%