Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes
Degree Program Report

College:  Arts and Humanities  Department: Music
Program:  Music    Degree: Master of Music
Prepared by: Dr. Bret P. Smith, Dr. Jeffrey Snedeker  Academic Year of Report: 2014-15

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

In 2013-14, the department revised its student learning outcomes for all graduate degrees, and established new assessments and standards of mastery in 2014-15. Given this was the first year of the revised procedures, we gathered data relating to all six program outcomes:

MUSG1: Students will demonstrate masters level research, writing, and presentation skills.

MUSG2: Students will create a thesis or thesis project at a masters level, directed toward their professional and personal goals, as a culmination of their graduate work, in keeping with their major fields of study.

MUSG3: Students will demonstrate masters level competency and progress in a specialized field, selected from musical composition, conducting, performance, performance-pedagogy, and music education.

MUSG4: Students will demonstrate masters level knowledge in music theory, including a range of compositional styles and techniques.

MUSG5: Students will demonstrate masters level knowledge and critical thinking in music history, including terminology, chronology of styles, composer and landmark work recognition.

MUSG6: Students will demonstrate advanced performing skills and their knowledge of ensemble repertoire.

All outcomes align with CWU Strategic Outcome 1.1.1: Students will achieve programmatic learning outcomes. Outcome MUSG2 aligns with Strategic Outcome 3.1.1: Sustain participation by faculty, students, and staff in quality research, scholarship and creative expression, and/or 3.1.2 Sustain the number of courses that include research, scholarship, and creative expression skills as key outcomes.

2. How were the student learning outcomes assessed?
   A) What methods were used?

The following assessment methods were used:
MUSG1: Faculty rubric ratings of class projects/papers/exams in MUS 521 (Research Methods), graduate theory and history classes, and MUS 700 (Thesis/Project/Exam). This is a direct measure of student knowledge and performance. The standard of mastery for this outcome was MUS 521: 90% of students “satisfactory” or above, history and theory: 90% of students “satisfactory” or above, MUS 700: 100% of students “satisfactory” or above.

MUSG2: Faculty ratings on MUS 700 theses/projects and oral examinations. This is a direct measure of student knowledge and performance.

MUSG3: Faculty ratings on MUS 700 theses/projects and oral examination. This is a direct measure of student knowledge and performance.

MUSG4: Faculty rubric ratings of class projects/papers/exams in graduate theory classes. This is a direct measure of student knowledge.

MUSG5: Faculty rubric ratings of class projects/papers/exams in graduate history classes. This is a direct measure of student knowledge and performance.

MUSG6: Faculty rubric ratings of graduate students enrolled in university ensembles. This is a direct measure of student knowledge and performance.

The standard of mastery for all outcomes excepting MUSG1 was initially set at 100% students receiving “satisfactory” or above.

We interpret “performance” as a broader category than musical performance, that encompasses student performances such as preparing a presentation, creating and executing a research project, etc.

B) Who was assessed?

There were 58 students actively enrolled in the MM program during the academic year; 42 enrolled in the summers-only program leading to the music education specialization, and 16 in the academic-year program leading to specializations in performance, performance/pedagogy, composition, or conducting. Students were assessed multiple times to address the six program outcomes. There were a total of 382 student assessments (inputs) considered for this report.

C) When was it assessed?

Students completed projects in the quarter of enrollment in the theory, history, and ensemble courses. Students take MUS 521 (Research Methods) in their first quarter of enrollment. Students complete MUS 700 in their final quarter of enrollment.

Data was provided by faculty for all outcomes in Fall, 2015.
3. What was learned?

Based on an initial standard of mastery of 100% of students rated “satisfactory” or above, data revealed the following results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Mastery</th>
<th>Met/Unmet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MUSG1: Research</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>Met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSG1: Theory/History</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>Met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSG1: Thesis/project</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSG2: Thesis/project</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSG3: Specialized field</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSG4: Theory</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSG5: History</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Unmet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSG6: Ensemble/ performance</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Unmet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These data indicate that students are generally performing well in achieving the program outcomes.

For MUSG5, we noted that student written work was generally rated as “outstanding,” exams are generally “satisfactory,” and oral presentations are split between “outstanding” and “satisfactory.” Five student written assessments, 1 oral presentation, and 2 examinations (out of 151 total assessments) were rated as “unsatisfactory.”

For MUSG6, we compiled musical performance ratings from large ensembles, small ensembles, and accompanying/collaborative piano. Out of 64 total assessments, the rating of one student in MUS 592, Accompanying Practicum, accounted for the Unmet relative to the standard of mastery.

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

We generally believe that these data confirm that current program structures and practices are allowing students to gain and demonstrate the knowledge and skills defined in the program outcomes.

We will consider the music history classes at the graduate level as we focus on this area for the BA and BM programs in the future. We may be able to better support student musicological writing through increased access to individual consultations, process modeling, and peer review.

Since the result of the Unmet rating for MUS6 was due to one student, we will discuss ways that we may be able to more effectively detect and intervene in cases where students are showing
indications of not meeting outcome expectations. While it may be unrealistic to expect a 100% success rate due to individual circumstances, we believe it is a goal worth striving for.

Results of this initial graduate assessment will be discussed at a faculty meeting early in Winter 2016. We will evaluate the appropriateness of the outcomes and assessment methods, and consider adjustments to the assessment plan (including baseline standards of mastery). We will consider the development of indirect methods of assessment and the assessment of student attitudes, for example a graduation or alumni survey through Qualtrics.

The department provides assessment plans and annual reports to the CAH Dean and Academic Assessment for public posting on the CWU Academic Assessment website. We are considering creating an Assessment and Accreditation section on the department website to bring together results of recent assessments, NASM accreditation, PESB endorsement review, and other internal studies in a convenient location.

5. What did the department or program do in response to previous years’ assessment results, and what was the effect of those changes?

The main change to the department’s graduate program has been the introduction of a summers-only program leading to the MM with music education specialization in 2012. This initiative was not directly related to program assessment, but was part of the Academic Planning Task Force recommendations at that time. In developing and refining this program, we have had several opportunities to consider and discuss recruitment, admissions, placement/remediation, program outcomes, and standards of mastery for the MM degrees overall. Given continued interest in the program via inquiries and applications, as well as the quality of student achievement and our NASM accreditation, we believe the CWU music department is offering a viable and successful graduate program.

Assessment of student learning within the department’s graduate program has developed considerably in the last few years. Prior to the introduction of the summer program, there were relatively few students enrolled, and assessment was primarily course-based. As the department met and crafted program vision, mission, and goal statements through retreats, we revised undergraduate outcomes and refined the assessment plan. The next project was to update graduate outcomes in a consistent fashion. We evaluated students primarily based on final course grades, as well as some consideration of the diagnostic test in music theory and history and the results of the Advanced Measures of Music Audiation (AMMA) administered to incoming summer students.

Based on feedback from prior reports and ongoing questions in the department about the utility and meaningfulness of the diagnostic tests and AMMA in measuring student outcomes, we decided to try a different approach for 2014-15. Instructors were asked to provide direct information based on student work, and to specify whether that data was from a written project, oral presentation, examination, or demonstration of musical performance. This allowed us to gather information from multiple settings to evaluate achievement of each outcome, as well as to map where and how assessment was being implemented across the program. The department’s Graduate Committee will review this method and suggest improvements.
One initiative that has gained interest in the Graduate Committee is the introduction of Canvas-based outcome assessment in graduate courses. This could provide the same advantages of a multi-course outcomes assessment approach with less work required of faculty for record-keeping and reporting.

Overall, we believe the department’s ongoing and increasing involvement in the assessment process has improved the program. The availability of objective data has focused faculty on the outcomes themselves. The current debates on the purpose and quality of higher education programs in general, as well as the introduction of RCM processes at CWU, have increased faculty investment in documenting student success and engaging in continuous program improvement.

6. Questions or suggestions? Contact Tom Henderson (henderst@cwu.edu) or Bret Smith (bpsmith@cwu.edu)