



# Cyclical Program Review of Music

PROGRAMS:

Honours Bachelor of Music

## Final Assessment Report

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Date: April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015

## PART ONE: EXECUTIVE RESPONSE

Please provide a brief response to each of the following.

### A) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REVIEW DOCUMENTS (SELF-STUDY, REVIEWERS' REPORT, UNIT RESPONSE)

The Reviewers' Report acknowledges the excellence of the Self-Study, the Unit Response acknowledges the excellence of the Reviewers' Report, and this Final Assessment acknowledges the excellence of the Unit Response (and of the Self-Study and Reviewers' Report). In other words, careful preparation and a high level of commitment from all parties has produced a practical and important set of recommendations that will help chart the way forward for the Faculty of Music.

Through all the documents run certain themes – the quality of the program in particular is emphasized at every turn, as is its strong appeal and its proven track record.

The pragmatism of the Reviewer's Report is reflected in the Unit Response. Of 15 recommendations, 12 were accepted outright and none were rejected. In three instances, the recommendation was questioned by the unit - one on principle (Recommendation #4), one because of financial considerations (Recommendation #10), and one because the reviewers had misunderstood the Faculty's administrative structure (Recommendation #13). The Final Assessment Report concurs with the Unit Response and adds these observations:

**Recommendation #4:** To the extent possible, harmonize entrance standards, requirements, pedagogy, credit requirements, and educational philosophy across the specialized programs.

*While, administratively, it may be efficacious to standardize certain elements across the programs, the unique characteristics of each program must be borne in mind. It remains to be seen whether, during the strategic planning process, the Faculty opts for greater standardization or not.*

**Recommendation #10:** Hire new faculty with expertise in ethnomusicology and popular music/jazz and possibly Music Education to open up new pathways for students.

*The spirit of the recommendation is appreciated; students need to have as many options as possible and diverse course offerings are highly desirable. Certainly, if any positions become available through attrition or otherwise, the Unit is encouraged to think about filling them in new and innovative ways, rather than simply replacing, for example, a pianist with another pianist.*

**Recommendation #13:** Appoint coordinators of the individual program specializations for better coordination.

*As noted by the unit, such coordinators are already in place so no further action is required.*

## **B) IDENTIFICATION OF PROGRAM STRENGTHS**

The External Reviewers' Report contains a wealth of insights concerning program strengths. In fact, the Report summarizes some of the strengths at the outset:

We should point out first of all that we encountered a Bachelor of Music Program that is demonstrating clear evidence of strong training of students, that is the beneficiary of successful leadership, and that receives great support from all constituencies (students, faculty, support, staff, and external institutions). We commend the goodwill of all involved, as the Faculty is able to operate with an enviable level of commitment and less strife than that which characterizes many academic units (pp 1-2).

Special mention was made of support staff:

We found the support staff to be especially collegial in their teamwork, dedicated to their jobs, and positive about their contributions to the Faculty. One staff member described the overall group as a "dream team."... It is apparent that they are all working at full-speed with little slack (p.10).

Mention, too should be made of a couple of quality indicators:

We are impressed by the metrics on student performance, such as the relative average entrance grades of students, selectivity of admission etc. Even more impressive are the achievements of the graduates, who go onto good graduate schools and into employment in very high numbers – the 2-year-out employment stats of Laurier music graduates are very strong by Canadian standards. We were entirely satisfied by the prospects of Laurier graduates (p.12).

The Faculty of Music is positioned by the Reviewers "around 4 to 7 in ranking" (p.3) among Canadian music programs after Toronto, UBC and McGill. The Report observes that Laurier's Faculty of Music possesses "unique attributes that could ... move the program upwards" (p.3) and that there is potential for Laurier to be the "Faculty of Music with the strongest community engagement program in Canada outside of the Royal Conservatory of Music system." "With a ... new performance facility, with selected investments, and with an increasing focus on the relationship with the community," Laurier is poised to realize its potential "as one of the leaders among music faculties in Canada" (p.3).

It is against this very positive backdrop that this Final Assessment acknowledges that there are opportunities for program improvement and enhancement.

## **C) OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT**

Happily, several recent curricular initiatives – the introduction of Music 100, a change in master class delivery, etc. – are strongly endorsed by the Reviewers. The Report contains several ideas for expanding the breadth and scope of its offerings, but most of these are tied inevitably to increased resources. The Bachelor of Music program is slated for enhancement by IPRM and it may be that, in time, the hiring of new faculty will aid curriculum renewal. Indeed, the lack of junior faculty was identified as “the most glaring issue with the composition of the faculty;” it was noted that “junior professors bring new ideas and enthusiasm, they are closer to their own studies and so often know better about the changes taking place in the disciplines.”

In any event, curriculum renewal remains a priority. The reviewers observed that “the curricular reform and innovations to the BMus addressed [earlier in the report] will require strong and visionary leadership, which we believe the Faculty possesses. There seems to be no question that improvements and enhancements are achievable and several of the recommendations cited in Section D below serve that end.

Related to curriculum renewal is the observation that “Nearly everyone spoke of the lack of flexibility and lack of room for electives.” As one of our reviewers remarked, “the sum total of many good ideas is often a bad idea, and it became clear that one of the goals of ongoing curricular reform should be to free up a few more credits for exploration on the part of students.”

The Report was particularly scathing with respect to the three areas pertaining to facilities, and while not programmatic in nature, is clearly an area for improvement and enhancement:

Firstly, the Aird Building lacks even the most rudimentary entrance of a creative facility. Coming in off the street, once enters a dismal cinder block hallway with an elevator, a space made more disheartening by the snow and slush tracked in and by the near-freezing temperature (our visit occurred in November).

The practice rooms too, though perhaps minimally adequate, were poorly maintained, heavily banged up for their apparent age, and lacking in sufficient light, and what we could see of the pianos did not fill us with confidence. [Finally, we found] the Theatre [Auditorium] utterly depressing and alienating. The overall space envelope does not conform to the desired space of orchestral or operative performance, the hall is simply ugly, and the orchestral pit does not work. This means that the proscenium theatre stage is generally unusable and all activity takes place on the floor of the former gymnasium. Given that many visitors attend performances in this space, we are concerned at the impression this gives of WLU [and] the Faculty of Music (p.11).

In terms of improvement and enhancement it would seem that renovation to the entryway/practice/performance space is the highest priority, followed by curriculum/faculty renewal.

## **D) RECOMMENDATIONS APPROVED FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN PRIORITY ORDER**

Recommendations are followed by commentary from the Final Assessment Report Authors:

**Recommendation #1:** Initiate a strategic planning process for the Faculty.

*Now that all the necessary groundwork is in place, including IPRM and this Review, we concur that strategic planning must proceed apace. A Strategic Planning document, that takes into consideration other recommendations in this report, should be completed under the leadership of the Associate Dean within the next two years.*

**Recommendation #2:** Continue—and make ongoing—the process of curricular reform. Curricular reform must reflect a rapidly changing environment, both in terms of the qualifications and expectations of entering students, and the qualifications and expectations of graduating students. The current core offering could and should be revisited and perhaps expanded to include greater choice, breadth and diversity. As positions become available new hires will need to reflect this revised program and core. As noted in the Unit Response, it is unlikely that the three new hires the report recommends will be possible in the short- to medium-term, but we note and concur with the recommendation that new hires would be ideal.

**Recommendation #3:** Continue the tiered system of master classes, Music 100, and the 3-year skills program.

*Recent curricular changes are acknowledged and lauded, which is encouraging. Change is rarely easy. As noted in the Unit Response, these changes will become the new norm over time and certainly further, more dramatic changes are anticipated in future.*

**Recommendation #15:** Move forward to incorporate the Beckett School under the auspices of the Faculty.

*This major community outreach initiative accords well with Laurier's vision, mission and academic plan. It benefits both the University and the Community and represents a bold new step for Waterloo Region.*

**Recommendation #12:** Create a second Associate Dean position, and allow each Associate Dean to supervise either performance or academic programs.

*The Unit is encouraged to put in place a second Associate Dean within the next few months, although alternatives to the "conventional" division between performance and academic Associate Deans might be explored. An AD internal and AD external, or an AD current students and AD prospective students, or an AD undergraduate and an AD graduate & research are among many possibilities. The Dean is inclining towards an AD internal*

*(student advising, curriculum etc.) and an AD external (community partnerships, Beckett School, fundraising etc.). In effect, the first AD would deal with curricular functions and the second AD would deal with non-curricular functions.*

**Recommendation #9:** Elevate the fundraising for the new Performance wing into a top priority for the University, and include in the work a renovation of the practice spaces and a new entrance to the Faculty.

*As Laurier moves into Phase 2 of its current fundraising campaign the Faculty of Music's capital initiatives can finally move from the back burner to the front burner. The Dean maintains, however, that the campaign cannot succeed without additional support from Development and it remains to be confirmed that this support is forthcoming.*

**Recommendation #6:** Institute regular (perhaps biennial) Festivals and other integrative events for the entire Faculty.

*Students benefit tremendously from capstone, cross-curricular initiatives. The planning and coordination takes considerable time and energy, so the Faculty will need to explore ways and means of making such events occur without too much financial and human investment, but there is certainly opportunity to build on the success of this year's Stravinsky Festival.*

**Recommendation #7:** Engage the Faculty of Arts in planning for a BA in Music as well as a minor.

*Clearly, the old BA model – in essence, a default degree – is unworkable. A new model has been under discussion for several years and the new funding model will likely act as an impetus to move forward with these plans during the next round of curriculum revisions.*

**Recommendation #5:** Produce additional flexibility by reducing specialization requirements and increasing the number of credits requirement for the BMus to 22. *Some current curricular needs could be addressed by streamlining programs to allow for more elective space. It is difficult to imagine increasing the number of credits for graduation without added program costs and, in the current climate, increased funding may help maintain aspects of the program, but is unlikely to be substantial enough to allow for substantive program enhancements. On the other hand, anything that can be done to increase revenue should be considered since added tuition/BIU income will work in the unit's favour under the new activity-based budget model.*

**Recommendation #8:** Terminate the Forte Piano specialization, promote the 3-year Diploma in Performance internationally, and consider making the two one-year Diplomas into an MMus in Performance.

*The introduction of a new graduate degree in performance will need to be considered carefully in cooperation with the Faculty of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies. There are several ideas including a doctoral degree in community music therapy that will need to be weighed one against the other. To this point, the Faculty of Music has avoided duplicating graduate offerings at Toronto and Western, but rather developed niche programming in Music Therapy and Community Music. Any departure from this path will need careful*

*consideration, particularly in light of the length and arduous process for new program approvals. We are currently awaiting the final report of the cyclical review of the Music Therapy program (BMT and MMT).*

**Recommendation #11:** Create co-curricular/curricular ensembles/labs to create additional options for ensemble performance and training, and to incubate new areas of interest. *To meet the expectations of today's students, new and more diverse kinds of ensembles should be explored. It is not clear how to do this without compromising the quality and size of current large ensembles and without increased funding. Curriculum renewal might produce solutions to the first quandary and IPRM may provide solutions to the second quandary. In any event, creating more and more diverse ensembles is worth careful consideration.*

**Recommendation #14:** Incorporate guitar within strings, and organ within keyboards. *The unit can do more explicitly what it has done implicitly before. Certainly, no programs should be orphaned and it seems that the guitar and organ programs need to be incorporated more purposefully within the string and keyboard areas respectively.*

#### **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

The "Investment Opportunities" at the end of the review document amount to five new positions. One of these is easily achieved – an Associate Dean requires course release and a small stipend. We concur that a staff position to co-ordinate career training – something which, to our knowledge, the unit has not considered before, is an important step in aligning the program with real-world outcomes. Many competitor programs have such positions (there is, in fact, a thriving Network of Music Career Development Officers in the US) and the unit should certainly explore ways and means by which this crucial component of student success can be realized. As noted earlier, three expansionary faculty positions are unlikely anytime soon, but the point that new faculty hires should help diversify program offerings (and be academic rather than performance in orientation) is duly noted.

#### **E) PERSONNEL ISSUES (CONFIDENTIAL AND IF APPLICABLE)**

None were raised other than the need for more junior faculty members.

## PART TWO: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Please include any of the recommendations that came out of the review that are to be implemented by the academic unit.

Recommendation to be Implemented	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date	Additional Notes
<b>1. (Recommendation #1):</b> Initiate a strategic planning process for the Faculty.	Dean, Associate Dean, Faculty	N/A	Fall 2015 or before	
<b>2. (Recommendation #2):</b> Continue—and make ongoing—the process of curricular reform.	Dean, Associate Dean, Faculty	N/A	Ongoing	
<b>3. (Recommendation #3):</b> Continue the tiered system of master classes, Music 100, and the 3-year skills program.	N/A	N/A	Ongoing	
<b>4. (Recommendation #15):</b> Move forward to incorporate the Beckett School under the auspices of the Faculty.	Dean, Associate Dean, Board of Governors	Faculty of Music	April 2015 for BOG Approval, September 2015 to commence operations	
<b>5. (Recommendation #12):</b> Create a second Associate Dean position.	Dean	Faculty of Music	Summer 2015	
<b>6. (Recommendation #9):</b> Elevate the fundraising for the new Performance wing into a top priority for the University, and include in the work a renovation of the practice spaces and a new entrance to the Faculty.	Development, Dean, Faculty	Development	To be determined	



<b>7. (Recommendation #6):</b> Institute regular (perhaps biennial) Festivals and other integrative events for the entire Faculty.	Associate Dean, Faculty, Staff	Development	2016-17 academic year	
<b>8. (Recommendation #7):</b> Engage the Faculty of Arts in planning for a BA in Music as well as a minor.	Associate Dean, Faculty in Music and Arts	N/A	Fall 2016	
<b>9. (Recommendation #5):</b> Produce additional flexibility by reducing specialization requirements and increasing the number of credits requirement for the BMus to 22.	Faculty, Senate	Dean	Fall 2016 (for producing greater flexibility; it remains to be seen if Divisional Council/Senate deems an increase in credit hours appropriate)	
<b>10. (Recommendation #11):</b> Create co-curricular/curricular ensembles/labs to create additional options for ensemble performance and training, and to incubate new areas of interest.	Performance Curriculum Committee, Divisional Council	Dean	Ongoing	
<b>11. (Recommendation #14):</b> Incorporate guitar within strings, and organ within keyboards.	Strings Coordinator, Keyboard Coordinator		Fall 2015	