

ASSESSMENT REPORT 2016-2017

Music, Visual & Performing Arts
(Instructional Degree Program)

AA, BA, BFA
(Degree Level)

Program Mission:

Music Program at New Mexico Highlands University provides our students with exceptional educational experiences, fostering creative talent through the performance and creation of musical art. Working closely with faculty, music students transform into capable musicians as they create, perform, and critically examine diverse music from the past, present, and across the globe.

Student Learning Outcome 1:

Creativity, Originality, and Expressiveness

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 1

- Mastery of Content Knowledge and Skills
- Critical and Reflective Thinking Skills
- Effective Communication Skills

First Means of Assessment for Outcome 1:

For voice and instrumental music students, the particular aspects of performance assessed for this area are Musicianship and Presentation. Musicianship includes the performer's ability to express the emotional content of the music. Emotion may be communicated with facial expressions, body movements, physical actions that convey meaning, dynamic fluctuations in the music (loudness and quietness), and articulation (the envelope of notes or syllables). Presentation includes the deportment and decorum of the musicians as they perform, and student collaboration with accompanists or other performers.

Music Technology, Composition, or Production students may perform alone, with other musicians, or present audio recordings of their studio productions. The particular aspects of performance or presentation assessed in this area are Dynamic and Aesthetic Content. Dynamics (loudness and quietness) and changes in dynamics is a fundamental technique by which musicians communicate emotional meaning in music. Although the principles underlying the musician's works may vary, the existence of aesthetic content must be presented in the work in an integral way that may be recognized by a knowledgeable listener.

The program goal will be considered met if the percentage of students meeting this criteria is greater than 90%.

Summary of Data:

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	16	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0
Total Number of Students Assessed:	16	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	100%

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 1:

High student-to-teacher ratios (due to lower student enrollment numbers) contributed to a high success rates in student achievement in music juries, from which data were collected.

Additionally, frequent participation by students in Recital Attendance (Music Convocation) events further contributed to a high level of student success in the 2016-2017 year. We believe that student performance experiences in weekly recital performances prepares students for the skills and musicianship techniques required in the music jury.

Low numbers of students not meeting assessment criterion provides a unique opportunity to increase the rigor and raise the level of expectations for Music students. The focus will be on increasing rigor in the areas of 1) focus on “serious” music repertoire; 2) higher number of works created/performed; 3) knowledge and research of a style’s historical origins; 4) performances/compositions completed earlier in the semester.

Student Learning Outcome 2:

Knowledge of style

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 2

- Mastery of Content Knowledge and Skills
- Critical and Reflective Thinking Skills
- Effective Communication Skills

First Means of Assessment for Outcome 2:

For voice and instrumental music students, the particular aspects of performance assessed for this area are Pitch Accuracy and Tone Production/Quality. Pitch accuracy is an essential skill for every musician. Stated negatively, pitch inaccuracy has the capacity to produce intense discomfort in the listener. Pitch accuracy requires skillful control of musical audio frequencies while the musician is in the act of performing a musical work. Similarly, tone production is the “color” of sound, which may be altered with seemingly insignificant alterations in the musician’s posture, breath control, or hand position. The development of skills in these areas is vital to the development of

successful musicians.

Music Technology, Composition, or Production students are assessed in Melody/Harmony and Rhythm for Outcome 2. The focal point in music is the melody, and therefore is a prominent feature in musical works. Harmony is the accompanying notes that support or create tension with the melody. Rhythm is the occurrence of these elements across time. The competence of the songwriter or composer to manage the combination of these three elements is assessed in this outcome.

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Student Learning Outcome 3:

Technical Competence

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 3

- Mastery of Content Knowledge and Skills
- Effective use of Technology

First Means of Assessment for Outcome 3:

For voice and instrumental music students, the particular aspects of performance assessed for this area are Rhythm and Basic Technical Competence. Rhythm is the occurrence of musical elements across time, and it is imperative that the musician possess an exactitude of pulse that is necessary for an effective musical performance. Musicians may refer to this skill as an internal clock, which provides a level of precise timing needed in order to provide the listener with a gratifying experience. Technical requirements for effective musicianship include breath control and a kinesthetic facility that is particular to the student's instrument or voice.

Music Technology, Composition, or Production students, the particular aspects of performance or presentation assessed for this area are Timbre/Balance and Form. Timbre is the "color" of a particular note, and occurs when a compendium of overtones resonate along with a fundamental pitch. Timbre is the characteristic that enables a listener to identify a piano from a trumpet, even though they play the same pitch. The timbral palate is virtually limitless considering the large numbers of orchestral and synthetic instruments, as well as the possible combinations, available to contemporary musicians. Form is sectionalization, repetition, and order of musical building blocks presented in a work. Form in music has the function of piquing and holding the interest of the listener, which usually involves variations in the density of texture, variations within repeated sections, and contrasts in implications of character in the various sections of music.

The program goal will be considered met if the percentage of students meeting this criteria is greater than 90%.

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Utilization of Results:

Faculty will discuss methods of implementing the following in Applied Music Lessons:

- 1) focus on “serious” music repertoire;
- 2) higher number of works created/performed;
- 3) knowledge and research of a style’s historical origins;
- 4) performances/compositions completed earlier in the semester.

Faculty will support each other in these shared goals.

The expectation of increased rigor in these four areas will also be reflected in increased rigor in the jury assessments at the close of each semester.

Changes to Program Based on Results:

Specific-- The four areas are defined, and will be implemented incrementally over the next two semesters.

Measurable-- Measurements will occur as students perform in recitals, and then finally in juries. Examples include a serious song in each student’s repertoire replaces a popular song, historical references are discussed in recitals/applied lessons, compositions will be perfected earlier in the semester, as will memorized vocal performances, and overall numbers of works completed/performed will increase by at least one per semester per achievement level.

Achievable-- As the implementation will be incremental, then the goals are achievable.

Results-focused-- As currently assessed.

Time-bound-- Goals are for this and next semester (2017-2018).

Retention Strategies:

The Music Program will continue to implement the learning-community-style course called Recital Attendance, also known as Convocation. Convocations are supportive, semi-formal performance opportunities for students taking Applied Music lessons.

Convocations occur within the Recital Attendance course (MUS 260/469), and six semesters of these courses are required for most BA/BFA degrees. Each student taking Applied Music courses must present at least two performances per semester. Many students perform more than twice during the semester.

Convocations occur every other week, and then every week toward the end of each semester. Printed convocation programs are provided for each event. Faculty and students participate as audience members, performers, and accompanists. Within convocations, students gain experience and knowledge in audience and performer etiquette, musical genres, coping with performance anxiety, performing in front of an audience, and the musicianship associate with performing alone and in small groups.

Faculty often perform with students in convocations as soloists, accompanists, or in small ensemble groups. Faculty also provide encouragement and criticism during subsequent Applied Music lessons or juries. Convocations are an integral part of successful music programs in across the United States, providing performance experience for students, instructional opportunities for faculty, and contribute to student retention in the Music Program. At NMHU, convocations also bring a general sense of community, networking, and support to students and faculty in the Music Program.

For weeks when no Convocation is scheduled, the students enrolled in Recital Attendance are assigned to study groups so that they may work on homework assignments or other music-related assignments.