



Office of the Provost &  
Vice-President (Academic)

4401 University Drive  
Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada  
T1K 3M4

Phone (403) 329 2202  
Fax (403) 329 2097

**TO:** Mike Mahon  
President and Vice Chancellor

**DATE:** 16 November 2021

**FROM:** Alan Siaroff  
Chair, Academic Quality Assurance Committee

**RE:** Department of Music Academic Quality Assurance Review

In accordance with the U of L *Academic Quality Assurance Policy and Process*, the Academic Quality Assurance Committee approved the review of the Department of Music at its 05 November 2021 meeting.

The Self Study Committee for this review comprised of: Bryn Hughes (Program Review Coordinator, incoming), Paul Sanden (Program Review Coordinator, outgoing), Amandine Pras, and Brad Parker.

The review produced four documents:

1. Self-Study Report. Written by the Self Study Committee and received 22 December 2020.
2. External Review Report. Written by Keith Hamel (University of British Columbia) and Jeremy Brown (University of Calgary) based on a virtual site visit 22 March – 01 April 2021 and received 21 April 2021.
3. Program Response. Written by the Self Study Committee and received 25 August 2021.
4. Dean's Response. Drafted by Mary Ingraham, Former Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts, and revised and submitted by Shelley Scott, Interim Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts on 29 October 2021.

The Program Review Committee was given the opportunity to respond to the Dean's Response and they chose not to respond. An Action Plan was crafted based on these four documents to provide guidance from the Provost & Vice-President (Academic) to the Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts.

### **1. Self-Study Report**

The body of the report noted several **strengths** of the Department of Music:

1. Faculty research and teaching profiles are of an excellent calibre, with members not only contributing vitally to the local communities, but also on national and international levels.
2. Relatively small class sizes and a sense of community provide a student (and faculty) experience built on real interpersonal relationships.
3. Overall diversity of expertise across the faculty provides reliable mentorship opportunities for students with a wide range of interests and intended specialties.
4. Excellent facilities/equipment provide top-notch opportunities for students in the Digital Audio Arts program to learn hands-on elements of their craft.

The following **weaknesses and challenges** were mentioned in the body of the report:

1. The Department of Music has long been challenged by students to update its curricular offerings to better match the changing context of today's music industries, and the changing and varied nature of our incoming students' previous exposure to formal music study.

2. Serious challenges remain around the delivery of an effective and attractive graduate program in music. There are also no classes offered within the Department solely for graduate students, and a substantial restructuring of workloads is likely necessary for this to be possible
3. Recruitment and retention data demonstrate some ongoing challenges for the Department, but it is particularly problematic with respect to a pronounced gender imbalance in the Digital Audio Arts program (not a single female graduated from the program in Spring 2021).

The Self Study Report asked for External Reviewer **feedback** in several areas:

1. Overall curriculum. Does our current curriculum meet the needs of current B.Mus. students, and properly prepare them for a future career in today's various music industries? Are there any courses we should be offering that we do not currently offer?
2. Do you see any opportunities to better design (and advertise) our programs to improve overall student recruitment and retention?
3. Viability of Graduate Program. Given current constraints and infrastructure, please advise on how we can leverage our resources to sufficiently deliver both undergraduate and graduate programming.
4. Workload issues. This is of particular concern for studio teachers (especially those without full-time, continuing appointments), and for ensemble directors. Several faculty members report frustration over workload issues, including studio cap sizes, imbalance between hours worked and credit hours recognized (especially ensemble directors), and lack of equal opportunities available for non-fulltime instructors (parking, library access, ability to weigh in on Departmental matters, etc.). The five-course load for tenure-stream faculty members is also higher than in some other faculties in the University (and indeed in many universities).
5. Internationalization. Please advise on how to attract more international students to Department of Music programs, meet their needs once enrolled and maximize internationalization opportunities in and outside the classroom and studio for all students.

The self-study report identified **key priorities** for the area in the next two years:

1. Due to the rapidly dwindling amount of government funding to postsecondary education, rethink, quite seriously and with great calculation, what directions promise to be most sustainable for the Department whilst also providing valuable and desirable learning experiences and outcomes for a broad range of prospective students.
2. Identifying a coherent identity for the Department, and for its individual programs, will be an important process going forward as we attempt to navigate these challenges.
3. The development of program-wide learning outcomes is expected to help in this process, as it will require us to reflect on what we want our curricula to achieve, in very specific ways.

## **2. External Review Report**

The External Reviewers' Report noted many **strengths**:

1. The Department has a strong reputation in Digital Audio Arts and Music Education.
2. Excellent quality of faculty, in their unwavering commitment to teaching excellence, student success, high-quality research, and professional activities.
3. The Department has access to first-rate facilities (studios, concert spaces, classrooms, rehearsal rooms, and practice rooms, recording studios).
4. The Digital Audio Arts program has a significant potential for attracting more students.

The External Reviewers' Report discussed **challenges** in the report:

1. The number of credits required to fulfill the University's Liberal Education requirement and a large number of core requirements in the BMus program impacts students' ability to take courses that are important to their educational objectives.

2. Significant decline in funding from the Alberta government makes it difficult to run programs, support concert series, fund tours, undertake recruitment initiatives, cover faculty vacancies, etc.
3. The B.Mus. and music education (combined degrees) programs are highly prescriptive.
4. There are problems related to the Conservatory being in an off-campus location.
5. Workload issues seem to stress virtually everyone working in the Department. Faculty and instructors feel overworked because a significant amount of time is put into activities that are not accounted for in workload allocations, and the reduction of support staff numbers means fewer resources to manage an increasing number of music events, requests for technical support, and student advising.
6. Studio instructors feel isolated from the departmental decision-making processes.
7. Teaching and supervision of graduate students are usually taken on as an additional workload and there are not enough graduate students within any one area of study to form a cohesive graduate cohort.
8. Lack of space and infrastructure for: a) an informal learning area where students in the Music programs could work; and b) a space for Integra Contemporary and Electroacoustics ensemble.

The External Reviewers' Report contained 13 **recommendations** for improving and/or maintaining the Department of Music:

- 1) That the Department of Music establishes learning outcomes for each of their degree programs, these learning outcomes include indigenization, multiculturalism / musical pluralism, societal / community responsibilities, and wellness in addition to the development of specific musical, technical, intellectual, and communication skills.
- 2) That the Department of Music revises the core music requirements to better align with the learning outcomes for the degree programs and provide more flexibility for students to take music electives in their areas of interest, further, we suggest that the core requirements in the Digital Audio Arts and Music programs need not align with one another.
- 3) So that students can fit music electives into their program, we recommend that music electives be offered on a rotating basis, so students will know ahead of time which year of their program- specific courses will be available. This may also help in distributing faculty workloads more equitably and allow courses planning to cover multiple years.
- 4) That the University of Lethbridge reassess the faculty workload calculated on music courses such as ensembles and music skills for which students receive 1.5 credits. We feel that faculty workloads should be decoupled from course credits and that a more equitable system be instituted for calculating faculty workloads.
- 5) While faculty and staff at almost all universities are over-worked, the faculty and staff in the Department of Music at the University of Lethbridge are in danger of "burning out." It should be made clear what activities (teaching, coaching, supervising) are expected within their course allocations, and they should cull the extra activities they take on outside of those responsibilities. The programs may not be able to support all the activities that students may wish to take.
- 6) That the course load of Instructors in the Department of Music should be reassessed by the University and brought into line with the number of contact hours expected in a full-time teaching load.
- 7) That the Department of Music continues to monitor the viability of the MMus program, the Department may consider focusing the program on one or two areas within the Department where they feel they can

attract more students and offer graduate courses to a more discipline- focused cohort of graduate students.

- 8) The University investigates the possibility of creating an informal study space or student lounge that could be used for collaborative work and provide more opportunities for social interaction between students.
- 9) That clear policy and firm deadlines for requests for concerts, master classes, public events and other Department of Music activities be established to allow the support staff to manage these events more effectively.
- 10) That an Admissions Oversight Committee is established that will oversee admissions to the programs, this might involve setting targets or quotas for particular instruments or areas in hopes of creating more balanced programs and better accommodating faculty resources.
- 11) That the Department of Music identifies a secure room as an electroacoustic ensemble rehearsal space and installs equipment (such as a multichannel sound system) to support the ensemble's needs, some practice rooms could be outfitted with audio systems to facilitate individuals who are working with live electronics.
- 12) That a committee is established to investigate the relationship between the B.Mus. and B.Ed. programs to see if there are ways that they could be better integrated and mechanisms by which training in the use of music technology could be enhanced in the combined programs.
- 13) That the Department of Music strike a Faculty of Fine Arts/Conservatory Committee that ensures effective communication between the Faculty of Fine Arts and the Conservatory and examines the full potential of collaboration with the B.Ed., Digital Audio Arts, and Studio degrees.

### ***Program Response***

In their Program Response, the Self Study Committee addressed the 13 recommendations from the External Review Report:

<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>Response:</b>
1. <i>Establish learning outcomes for each of their degree numbers.</i>	Agreed. The department formed a committee dedicated to the development of both a department mission statement, and department-wide learning goals.
2. <i>Revise the core music requirements.</i>	Agreed. Will use the newly-formed learning outcomes discussed above to guide the decisions regarding these recommendations.
3. <i>Recommend that music electives be offered on a rotating basis.</i>	
4. <i>Reassess the faculty workload calculated on music courses.</i>	Agreed. The department has begun discussions surrounding a more equitable workload allocation for musicianship skills and ensembles.
5. <i>Make clear what activities are expected within their course allocations and cull the extra activities they take on outside of those responsibilities.</i>	
6. <i>The course load of Instructors in the Department of Music should be reassessed and brought into line with the number of contact hours expected in a full-time teaching load.</i>	

7. <i>Continue to monitor the viability of the MMus program.</i>	Agreed. The department will continue to monitor the viability of this program, and hopes to improve its viability by addressing workload issues.
8. <i>Investigate the possibility of creating an informal study space or student lounge that could be used for collaborative work and provide more opportunities for social interaction between students.</i>	Agreed. The department formed a committee to investigate potential spaces that could be used to fulfill this recommendation.
9. <i>That clear policy and firm deadlines for requests for concerts, master classes, public events and other Department of Music activities be established.</i>	Agreed. These policies have already begun to be implemented.
10. <i>That an Admissions Oversight Committee is established that will oversee admissions to the programs.</i>	Agreed. Formed the Admissions Oversight Committee at the department retreat in May 2021.
11. <i>Identify a secure room as an electroacoustic ensemble rehearsal space and install equipment to support the ensemble's needs.</i>	Agreed. The department formed a committee to investigate potential spaces that could be used to fulfill this recommendation.
12. <i>That a committee is established to investigate the relationship between the BMus and BEd programs.</i>	Agreed. The department moved to form a committee at the department retreat in May 2021.
13. <i>Strike a Faculty of Fine Arts/Conservatory Committee that ensures effective communication between the Faculty of Fine Arts and the Conservatory and examines the full potential of collaboration with the BEd, DAA and Studio degrees.</i>	Agreed. Formed this committee at the department retreat in May 2021.

### 3. Dean's Response

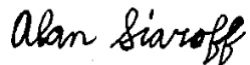
The Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts responded to the 13 recommendations from the External Review Report:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Establish learning outcomes for each of their degree numbers.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Revise the core music requirements.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Recommend that music electives be offered on a rotating basis.</i></li> </ol>	<p>The Department of Music will conduct a needs assessment to identify learning objectives at program and course levels, and then renew its curriculum. The curriculum review will increase options for electives, increase flexibility and clarity, incorporate greater diversity in curricular offerings, and potentially reduce the number of core courses.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. <i>Reassess the faculty workload calculated on music courses.</i></li> <li>5. <i>Make clear what activities are expected within their course allocations and cull the extra activities they take on outside of those responsibilities.</i></li> <li>6. <i>The course load of Instructors in the Department of Music should be reassessed and brought into line with the number of contact hours expected in a full-time teaching load.</i></li> </ol>	<p>A committee will be struck to recommend adjustments to teaching load assignments, specifically by considering changing the weight of labs and ensembles to align with other institutions.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. <i>Continue to monitor the viability of the MMus program.</i></li> </ol>	<p>Graduate programs undergo a separate review process.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. <i>Investigate the possibility of creating an informal study space or student lounge that could be used for collaborative work and provide more opportunities for social interaction between students.</i></li> </ol>	<p>The Fine Arts Facilities Manager and Associate Dean must consult with the Department of Music regarding their space needs and the design of new spaces as they become available.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. <i>That clear policy and firm deadlines for requests for concerts, master classes, public events and other Department of Music activities be established.</i></li> </ol>	<p>This situation was resolved in 2020-2021 and the request process continues to be refined with the Visiting Artist Coordinator and Operations Manager.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. <i>That an Admissions Oversight Committee is established that will oversee admissions to the programs.</i></li> </ol>	<p>The Department of Music will inventory and consider human, financial, asset, and facilities resources on an annual basis to confirm the number of student spaces available and will communicate these numbers to academic staff prior to audition periods, ensuring the best students are admitted and that studios and ensembles are as fully populated as possible.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. <i>Identify a secure room as an electroacoustic ensemble rehearsal space and install equipment to support the ensemble's needs.</i></li> </ol>	<p>The Fine Arts Facilities Manager and Associate Dean must consult with the Department of Music regarding their space needs and the design of new spaces as they become available.</p>

12. <i>That a committee is established to investigate the relationship between the BMus and BEd programs.</i>	The Department of Music will review the curriculum of the Music Education program in consultation with the Faculty of Education, with a view to updating course content and interests in digital audio arts and contemporary society's reliance on technological skills.
13. <i>Strike a Faculty of Fine Arts/Conservatory Committee that ensures effective communication between the Faculty of Fine Arts and the Conservatory and examines the full potential of collaboration with the B.Ed., DAA and Studio degrees.</i>	The Department of Music will involve the Conservatory in creating opportunities for pedagogical and professional development, implementing new programming, and sharing responsibilities that will require them to have more frequent contact. The Conservatory should be promoted in a more strategic and concentrated fashion as an integral part of the University.

The Academic Quality Assurance Committee is satisfied that the Department of Music academic quality assurance review has followed the U of L's academic quality assurance process appropriately and acknowledges the successful completion of the review.

Sincerely,



Dr. Alan Siaroff  
Chair, Academic Quality Assurance Committee  
Professor, Department of Political Science

cc Erasmus Okine, PhD., PAS, FICN  
Provost & Vice-President (Academic)