

The Instructional (Academic Affairs) Program Review Narrative Report

1. College: *Laney College*

Discipline, Department or Program:

Music

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2. Narrative Description of the Discipline, Department or Program:

The Music Department at Laney College is a comprehensive program offering a diverse set of courses designed to meet the needs of beginning, intermediate, and advanced music students. Students currently involved in the program are pursuing many paths including transfer to four year universities, Associate's degrees in music, professional performance, and lifelong love of music. The faculty prides itself on being sensitive to the needs of individuals while providing academic rigor in all courses.

With faculty specializing in jazz, vocal performance, Chinese opera and orchestra, keyboard, theory, composition, and conducting the Music Department has one of the strongest offerings in the entire Bay Area. Community Outreach programs include the Summer Music Program (Symphonic Band, Concert Choir, Jazz Ensemble, and String Orchestra) and the Great Wall of China Orchestra and Chorus. The department also supports the Oakland and Berkeley Youth Orchestras. This places the Laney College Music Department as the center for performing arts in the East Bay.

As that center the department has begun to see the fruits of its vision of reaching out to even more of the community. The Laney College Performing Arts Alliance (LCPAA) has welcomed new members and now includes Oakland Youth Orchestra, Berkeley Youth Orchestra, Purple Bamboo Orchestra, Young People's Symphony Orchestra, Young People's Chamber Orchestra, and the Community Women's Orchestra and Piedmont Choirs. The classes to support these groups have been established and continue to enroll students. Meetings held throughout the semester will be expanded to clarify the vision of the alliance as well as establish goals and objectives aimed at supporting these community groups. A number of other organizations have expressed interest in the LCPAA and the hope is to include even more new groups as the budget improves.

The World Music Noon Series continues to bring local professional small performing ensembles to Laney College to make concerts and clinics in world music available to all students. Music Faculty have worked hard to make this an outstanding program and continue to seek financial assistance.

As a supportive member of the Academic Program at Laney College the Music Department and its faculty realize the importance of fiscal responsibility. With this in mind the department sets high goals with regard to enrollment and seeks to offer as many classes as possible which can sustain high enrollment.

Looking to the future the department is very interested in the potential development of the Calvin Simmons Theater into an Educational Center for the Performing Arts. There are untold possibilities for this site and we would like to be on the “ground floor” of any exploration of its usage. As a community center open for large group rehearsal and performance, with training of musicians at all levels and capacities, Laney College could become a true cultural arts magnet. One small example would be the realization of one of the Music Department’s long term goals; establishing a recording arts program. The archiving of outstanding performances by musical groups whether they take place in the theater or the music building itself is very important. When the music building is remodeled it is imperative that the new facility include areas for formal performance and studios for recording.

The music department at Laney College is a strong and vibrant department with exciting plans for the future and stands ready to guide performers, music historians, composers and music theorists of the 21st century.

3. Curriculum:

The Laney College Music faculty maintains current and effective curriculum in all courses. Department meetings as well as informal discussions with colleagues and the department chair encourage the free flow and active discussion of instructional techniques and strategies to promote the highest level of student success. Course outlines are all in the process of being updated including the review of prerequisites and co requisites as well as recommended preparations. These will be presented to the curriculum committee in the next two semesters. Student Learning Outcomes will be included on every outline and the department will be ready for all outlines to be posted on the Laney College Music Department website currently being expanded every day. Formal program level outcomes will be discussed and formalized by the end of the Spring Semester.

The music department has long been known for its outreach to the community with a vital summer music program, large performing groups and the recent addition of the world music series and the performing arts alliance. In the immediate future the department hopes to add course offerings in studio recording, current music styles (including rap and hip hop), advanced improvisation, and composition. Our current faculty is well versed in many of these areas and the department has engaged in an outreach program to encourage new instructors to submit resumes for possible adjunct employment.

A department PLO states the students will demonstrate performance skills. Each semester all performance classes have a recital component. Some are public

performances while others are “in class” concerts. Students have responded extremely positive to the opportunity and audiences will attest to the high level of musicianship of participants.

4. Instruction:

Laney music faculty is directly involved in the field of music. All of the members of the faculty are professional performers and many can be heard in Bay Area and nationwide venues. This currency in the field makes the department a true source of important information for students. Faculty share “hands on” experiences and solutions to musical situations as they occur in the real world. The department has finally been allocated some money to purchase needed new equipment but technology innovations are often demonstrated by faculty who have to use their own resources. It is important for the department to receive substantial increases in funds for technology upgrades.

Members of the department meet frequently to discuss consistency in course content and delivery. Performances are held by many classes and demonstrate a strong level of improvement by students. Enrollment is consistently increasing with a high demand for entry level classes, survey courses, as well as performance groups. Advanced offerings in the department which require prior experience, knowledge and preparation will always be relatively low enrolled but the department is happy to report increased enrollment even in these areas. It is very probable that these enrollments will fluctuate but it is imperative that the department be allowed to continue to offer these courses. Laney is the only Peralta College to offer an A.A. in music as well as a complete transfer and professional preparation program. Students must be confident that these courses will be available when they are ready to enroll. Each semester Laney Music instructors discuss in class the course and career path students should follow in the program and the consistency of offerings lies at the heart of the department’s success.

Course scheduling is under constant review by the department. Support from the college to offer additional sections of high enrolled classes would assist the department to make music available to all students. The department takes student input very seriously and has made numerous adjustments to meet student needs and increase enrollment.

5. Student Success:

The music department continues to have one of the highest retention levels in the Peralta District. The numbers are high but have recently shown a slight dip. This is due to total lack of support services including budget. The department intends to maintain high standards and will increase their responsibilities to remedy this slight down turn. In the past 5 years the size of the full time music faculty has increased from 1 to 4 and this has surely played an important roll in student success. The department is still in need of a full time piano instructor and the addition of support staff to allow the faculty to focus on instruction is imperative. While the department has maintained a high rate of student success there is a critical need for facilities renovation. Good students have been patient but we still need practice room repair, sound system updating, a student listening lab, recording studio facilities, rehearsal room renovation, additional practice rooms, faculty offices, a second piano lab to only begin the list. The details of these needs will be

submitted to the dean of instruction immediately following the submission of this program review and it is hoped that some of the needs can be fulfilled immediately.

The department needs support in the area of administrative assistance. Students have expressed concern about the ability to access practice rooms without interrupting instructors in class. Maintenance of the music library, sustaining and strengthening the world music program, summer music program, and the performing arts alliance make the securing of administrative help very urgent.

Student learning assessment has always taken place in the music department but the program level student assessment has to date been informal in nature. In department meetings in the next two months the formalization of assessment of student learning at the department level will take place.

6.Human and Physical Resources(including equipment and facilities)

The music department has always been and will continue to be a vibrant part of the Laney College Academic Family. We seek to involve all students and welcome ideas for expansion and improvement. The department currently has 4 full time faculty and 6 part time faculty with additional faculty involved in the summer music program and the arts alliance programs. As mentioned in other sections of this document the facilities are outdated and in need of repair. Many of the needs should be fulfilled immediately.

At one time an architect toured the music facility with the department chair and discussions were held regarding connecting the theater and the music buildings as well as creating a concert hall. Expansion to the sidewalk was also discussed but that seems to have been abandoned with the start of new landscaping now under way. The original plan called for a marquis to announce all Laney events on the second story cement façade of the building. The music department could become a state of the art program if these new ideas were allowed to come to fruition. The enthusiasm for our new noon concert series as well as the performing arts alliance is unprecedented and it is very important that the forward momentum created by these new programs not be hindered in any way.

7.Community Outreach and Articulation

A primary goal of the music department is to prepare students for transfer to music departments at 4 year institutions. Students leave Laney to enroll in programs at nearby institutions including U.C. Berkeley, U.C. Davis, U.C. Santa Cruz, C. S. U. East Bay, C. S. U. San Francisco, C. S. U. Sonoma, C. S. U. San Jose, University of the Pacific and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music as well as colleges throughout the United States including the Berklee School of Music, Mannes College, and Northwestern University to

name only a few. Many members of the Laney Faculty have direct connections to these programs either as alumni or current adjunct faculty. The music community is a very “tight knit” group and students from Laney are sought after as strong additions to 4 year programs. Documented students successes include former Laney graduates or transfer students who now have successful careers working in the fields of film scoring, conducting, education, and performance. Music departments in 4 year institutions always administer placement exams for incoming students. The possible content of many of these exams has been shared on a collegial basis with many of the Laney Faculty. As a result, specific course content often reflects instruction in and preparation for these placement exams. As mentioned previously curriculum is reviewed on a regular basis.