



C U Y A M A C A  
• C O L L E G E •

# **Comprehensive Program Review Report**

Academic - Music (MUS) - (AHSS)

# Program Goals

## Program Overview and Update

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## Program Reflection and Description

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### **Provide your program's mission statement. If your program does not have a mission statement, what is your timeline for creating a mission statement?**

We do not have an official mission statement as such, nor was I aware we should have one until this very moment. Creating one is something I would definitely want department wide input on and the most logical time and place to do that is at our department meeting during flex week so to answer the question directly the timeline for creating one is February 2025. I can share now that we as a faculty have some shared values that I think will show up in the mission statement, namely that music making can be a powerful catalyst for positive transformation in a person's life and in the community broadly. I will come up with some draft language in that direction and take it to our department and see what everyone thinks and hopefully we can have an official mission statement.

### **Is the program description in the current college catalog up to date and accurate?**

Yes

### **Describe how your program advances the College's vision of equity, excellence, and social justice through education. How does the program reflect the College's mission and values?**

As I just touched on above in discussing the mission statement, our department believes in the capacity music has to be a catalyst for positive transformation in the lives both of individual students but also in the broader community. This is something that most people experience often in their life and yet it can become sort of dismissed and misunderstood largely I think because it feels a little bit fuzzy to pin down. Sure every human culture that currently exists on planet earth and every human culture we have evidence of having existed in the past has had music making at the center of its culture and daily life. Sure we listen to music and make music every day in ways that are inextricably intertwined with our daily lives such that we cannot imagine having a birthday party or a funeral or shopping at walgreens without music being a constant and deeply meaningful and I would argue entirely necessary part of our lives. We generally have an awareness of how music helps students do better in school or has therapuetic capacities or just that it generally makes life a little more worth living. We understand the importance of music in these generally pleasant if not a bit fuzzy ways and so we see its value to a greater or lesser extent but when it comes time for decision making and reports like this that fuzziness seems all too often to push the importance of music making out to the periphery of the more serious and "real" academic disciplines. I once heard an air force colonel who conducted the United States Air Force Band in D.C. describe how he would often have to answer the question "why should we not buy this airment bullets and instead spend that money for you to buy a clarinet?" or something like it. He would have to justify music making in that extreme context and he was able to do it largely by talking about the idea of resillience.

The nature of being alive on this planet at this time is such that suffering and difficulty are baked into the cake. Everyone we will ever know will die. Everyone we will ever love will get sick or break our heart or struggle profoundly. We will each of us face obstacles and challenges which are hereto unimaginable to us and once they arrive will feel insurmountable. To be alive is to be certain that back breaking difficulty will haunt our lives and if we are to go on living and find a way to make something beautiful and wort living out of all that we must first and foremost ready ourselves for that struggle. In terms of our students, this means they will come to us with unimaginable hardships. Poverty, abuse, violence, lack of housing, language struggles, psychological trauma, learning disabilities, medical problems, etc. etc. the list goes on and on. To a certain extent we can help substantively with these things and the reason Cuyamaca is the most amazing place I have ever worked for is because we do. We have food banks and counseling and DSPS and a parking lot that can be used at night. We have a responsibility to meet students where they're at and do what we can to deal with these tangible, substantive challenges and we do that well here. In the grand picture however, none of those things in my opinion compare to the importance of arming these students with the tools, experience and defiant spirit necessary for them to not only eradicate these challenges in their own life, but to pay it forward once they have. To give back what they were

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given to the next person down the line. This is the secret sauce that makes Cuyamaca a truly special place and this is where I am most proud of the work we have done as a department and this is how I think we advance the College's vision, mission and values.

Music has a unique capacity to move the ball forward in these areas because it is a uniquely ideal vehicle for teaching resilience. You go to learn a piece, the piece is hard and you can't play it. You get a great teacher who helps you little by little, day by day get a little better. At first you can't see the progress and you doubt it is happening. Then after a few months of being cajoled and motivated and yelled at a bit all of a sudden one day you can play the thing. Through that experience you learn that you are able to do huge, difficult things and most vitally that the way you do huge, difficult things is one little bit at a time. You learn one note, then the next, then the next, then four months and 2,500 notes later you have done something incredible. This is a grand metaphor for how we make the world better, for how we put a dent in the ravenous plague which is generational poverty and violence and make the world just a little more peaceful. One student at a time. One class at a time. One lecture at a time. One patient moment of listening at a time.

It is not magic though. It is not fuzzy or happenstance and it does not run on good feelings and positive vibes. The fuel that makes all of it work are the twin pillars of quality and persistence. That's what we do in our department really well I think. We insist upon quality. We do not compromise one inch when it comes to what high level work looks and sounds like and we demand hard work. We of course are there to support and encourage and troubleshoot and struggle together. But make no mistake they must do the work and our job is not done until they have. That is the best way I know how to move the needle on human progress which I think is exactly what the college vision, mission and values aims to do and that is the best way I know to explain how we are doing it.

## Curriculum Review and Development

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**Have all of your active course outlines been reviewed within the last five years?**

Yes

**Please list any planned changes from the current semester forward for curriculum (courses, degrees, and/or certificates) and the rationale for those changes.**

The performing arts department is nearing the end of a lengthy process wherein we have made some significant changes in terms of curriculum. The three big changes we will be making are as follows:

- Continuing to make minor changes to course pre-requisites with the goal of removing barriers to student enrollment. There are just so many four semester (or more) sequences of music courses and when each semester in the sequence has audition or instructor authorization requirements, we have found it creates barriers for students successfully enrolling in those courses. We have worked carefully to find thoughtful ways of solving this, for example by leaving the audition requirement in place for the first semester in a sequence and then having the subsequent semesters require only the previous semester as a pre-requisite. This means a student has to audition the first time they take the course but then the subsequent semester is able to simply add the class (assuming they passed). There are some minor changes we will continue to implement in this area.
- We began last Spring to create a Music Education certificate and the plan is to finish that process soon. The rationale behind that certificate is two fold: first to capture recommended additional course work outside of the music education major and second to create a certificate which helps students gain employment in the music field.
  - In terms of the course work piece essentially the music education major has some unique challenges to it which often result in students not completing the degree or taking 5-7 years to complete the degree. Namely the major is a very high unit major, many of the courses required upon transfer are 1 unit courses which meet 6-10 hours a week and there are many sequences of courses which students need to take anywhere from 2-8 semesters of in order to graduate. In order to help students overcome these challenges, it is generally in their interest to take more courses than is required for the associates degree. By doing so they put themselves in the strongest possible position to be able to finish their BA in 2 years upon transfer. This requires however taking additional units beyond the AA requirements and so the certificate is a way of capturing that additional work.

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- In terms of the employment piece, there are many employment opportunities for musicians to teach in schools which do not require a bachelors degree. The methods courses we have written and began offering over the past couple years are the perfect training ground for many of those jobs and a certificate in that area serves as a strong indicator to prospective employers that these students are trained and qualified candidates for those positions.
- Finally, we are beginning a large project through curriculum of redesigning the way music students receive lessons. We are using the Applied Music Model Palomar has been using for many years wherein students are able to take music lessons and have that work captured as a course. This is going to require writing 25+ courses and that is work we plan to have done in the next year.

### **For Transfer Programs: How is your program meeting the transfer needs of students, and/or articulation with four-year institutions? If not a transfer program, please enter N/A**

As a department we have spent a tremendous amount of time and energy in this area, working to align curriculum and generally ensure students are able to successfully transfer and finish their degrees. While there is more that could be said in this area than you probably want to read, there is much that can be shared to give you a sense of some of the specific areas we are working to help students:

1. The department chair has met with the undergraduates advisor at SDSU, PLNU, USD and CSU San Marcos over the past several years to discuss strategies to ensure Cuyamaca students are able to successfully transfer and graduate. The synthesis of that work can be viewed in this presentation to counselors (<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1sS0GsSwSNkC5s9IGpAnznKA-eXEdNtak3GNLciNyA78/edit?usp=sharing>) as well as this music major advisement packet (<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/mi74tuvrx5bkl7w7pcww/Music-Education-Advising-Packet.pdf?rlkey=si0b3f27ck43xs8qasulwc6zl&st=wc4e32lu&dl=0>).
2. The department chair and music theory faculty have met with the music theory faculty at SDSU to go through the theory curriculum in great detail and work to align our curriculum to theirs. This is critical as Cuyamaca students who take theory with us are NOT granted reciprocity at SDSU and instead must take a placement exam upon transferring. Before this alignment work was done it was too often the case that students would take multiple semesters of music theory at Cuyamaca only to be placed in semester 1 of music theory upon transferring to SDSU, requiring them to complete 4 years of music theory at SDSU. We are now reliably seeing students transfer into the 5th semester of theory and limiting the necessary time at SDSU to 2 years upon transfer.
3. The department chair and faculty have done significant work to raise the performance standards of music students, most notably through the private lessons program. This means that students who go to audition to transfer to a university are performing at a much higher standard and therefore being accepted into the programs at a much higher rate. In essence this is the most powerful qualitative example I can think of which shows how we are closing equity and achievement gaps for our students. They are coming to us having been failed for decades by the educational system and as a result entirely unable to compete with their peers and they are leaving us on equal footing with their peers. We are making an enormous difference in this area.

### **For Career Education Programs: How is your program meeting labor market demand and preparing students to enter the workforce? If not a career education program, please enter N/A**

n/a

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### Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Assessment

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Please upload an updated, current version of your SLO assessment plan. (Ideally, the updated plan should specify assessment semesters for all service areas over the next 4 years, between this comprehensive program review and the next.)

[Performing Arts SLO Assessment Plan.docx](#)

### Degree and Certificate Programs

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Can students complete the degree/certificate requirements within a two-year period?

Yes

Are all of your degree maps completed?

Yes

Are the degree maps posted to the college website?

Yes

### Student Access and Achievement

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#### Distance Education Course Success (If Applicable)

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#### Career Exploration and Program Demand (Career Education Programs Only)

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#### Strengths, Challenges & External Influences

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#### Program Goals

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#### Submission

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