Department of Fine and Performing Arts
Major Field Assessment Abstract – B.M., B.M.E., and M.M. Degrees

Exit Surveys: The 2010 Major Field Assessment provides data from many sources and years. *Exit survey scores* for the years 2007-08 and 2008-09 provided the BM degree students with on overall score of 4.17 in 2007-08 and 2008-09 on a 5-point scale. Low scores (below 3.5) were noted in the following items: "Library resources related to your major," "The music history classes you took," "Usefulness of the academic advice you received from your advisor," and "Your advisor's knowledge of requirements." The written comments are quite diverse and in one case appear to support the complaint regarding library resources. Comments dealt with lackluster teaching (though the respondent noted that the offending teacher was now gone), unfairness in selection of students who play solos with ensembles, upkeep and maintenance of the facilities, the library's holdings of scores and other items, perceived unfairness in board exam grading for piano students, and a problem with a theory instructor who has been replaced.

Exit Surveys of BME degree students: The 2010 Major Field Assessment provides data from many sources and years. *Exit survey scores* for the years 2007-08 and 2008-09 provided the BME degree students with on overall score of 3.92 in 2007-08 and 2008-09 on a 5-point scale. Low scores (below 3.5) were noted in the following items: "availability of required courses," "global perspective of courses," "the success of methods classes in preparing you to teach the full range of vocal or instrumental music required by typical elementary, middle school or high school position," "music history classes you took," "clarity of degree requirements," help you received from faculty in your department with regard to finding employment in your field," and "usefulness of the academic advice you received from your advisor." The written comments describe the advising process as "confusing" and request a deeper knowledge of the BME curriculum from both the department of music and department of education advisors. One suggestion was that the students have both a music advisor and education advisor. Other comments dealt with the methods class focusing on learning how to play an instrument rather than teaching its history, availability of required courses, having more opportunities to conduct ensembles at Southeastern before the student teaching experience, possibly paying the students to stay and play at commencement. The majority of students had positive comments about the current faculty members and that the "quality of instruction is excellent."

Alumni Surveys: Institutional Research provided two surveys of Southeastern alumni. The first, dated August, 2009 was administered to three graduate alumni who graduated in 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 and the second survey (no issue date available) was administered to two 2007-08 BM alumni. The combined average for these scores was 3.375 on a 5-point scale. Low scores (below 3.5) were noted in the following items: "Clarity of the degree requirements as outlined in the catalogue and/or curriculum," "Usefulness of the academic advice you received from your advisor," "Opportunity for meaningful interaction with faculty in research or other scholarly activity," "Availability of elective courses you wanted to take in your major," "Library resources related to your major," "Use of appropriate technology in the classroom," "Facilities and equipment (including computer resources) related to your major," "Help you received from faculty in your department with regard to finding employment in your field," "Global perspectives presented in courses," "The relevancy of courses," "'Real-world' experiences, exposure, examples, etc. in or out of the classroom" and "Your advisor's knowledge of requirements." It should be noted that a small sample of only five alumni makes it difficult to arrive at conclusions. One or two disgruntled respondents, for example, can skew the data and make it unreliable (see the Wikipedia article on statistical surveys).

Recital Hearing Ratings: The Degree Recital Form was instituted several years ago and includes the following objectives: Musicality, Technical Competence, Stylistic Awareness and Diction (for singers). Students are rated numerically in each category from 1-10, 10 being the highest rating (a rating sheet carefully delineates each rubric to reduce issues of rater reliability). Instrumental BM students achieved an average rating of 7.02 and a median score of 6.10. Vocal BM students achieved an average rating of 7.33 and a median score of 7.30. The

departmental objective is 7.0 or higher, so on the face of it we are achieving our mark. Median scores suggest that yet more may be done for instrumental BM students, however.

Student Teacher Evaluations Instrumental and Vocal Music: Institutional Research has provided evaluation data for student teachers in 2008-09 in both instrumental and vocal music. It is not indicated in the information provided how many student teachers were evaluated in the two areas, but the totals indicate a compilation of multiple student teachers. These students were evaluated in the following categories with a variety of questions: Planning, Management, Instruction, Assessment, Other, and Professional Attributes Scale. Student Teachers in 2008-2009 scored as follows:

On average 3.5 or more points (out of 4) were scored in most categories with the exception of **Instruction**, "the student teaching/intern delivers instruction effectively, presents appropriate content and provides opportunities for student involvement in the learning process," where the score was 3.36. The lowest scores in this category showed weakness in "integrating content across the curriculum," and "relates relevant examples, unexpected situations or current events to the content."

Planning: average score 3.82
Management: average score 3.89
Instruction: average 3.36
Assessment: average score 3.78
Other: average score 4.05
Professional Attributes Scale included a variety of scoring scales, using both between 1-3 and 1-4. In the categories scored 1-3 the average was 2.94. In the categories scored 1-4 the average was 3.82.

Opinion of Recent MM Graduates: The most recent exit surveys indicate our MM program fares well, overall, in the opinion of our graduates. To most exit questions, students scored our department 4 or more points (out of 5) in most categories, including overall quality of the department, effectiveness of faculty as teachers, friendly and supportive environment, curriculum, etc. Relatively weaker scores indicate some student dissatisfaction with: (1) the quality of graduate advising, (2) the availability of up-to-date computing facilities and technology, and (3) the quality of student experience in the graduate music theory courses. The latter concern is perhaps moot because of the recent resignation of the instructor concerned.

Graduate Program Goals: The relatively small number of recent graduates from our MM programs probably does not provide sufficient data for a meaningful statistical study.

GOAL: To prepare students for doctoral level of study in a music field. Graduates of the MM program will be well prepared for further graduate study.

Achieved. Our graduates generated an average 4/5 score to the question "How satisfied are you with your readiness for graduate-level music study?" All of our students who applied were admitted to doctoral programs. Two of our graduates within the last 10 years have completed their doctoral studies.

GOAL: *To provide advanced knowledge in music theory and history. Graduates of the MM program will be well grounded in the subjects of music theory and music history.*

With our single recent MM graduate in Music Theory, this benchmark has been apparently achieved, as the candidate scored a highest ratings in all categories, as rated by a faculty committee. According to an attitudinal survey, our students felt satisfied by the quality of music history instruction (4.7/5). In recent graduate music theory and history comprehensive exams, most students (4 out of 5) scored 7.0 or higher; one student failed.

GOAL: *to develop professional skills. Graduates of the MM programs in Applied Music and Music Theory will demonstrate ability to conduct significant research.*

See comment above regarding Music Theory. All MM students in the Performance concentration produce a document (MUS 642 Directed Independent Study) that consists of theoretical analysis of a composition that is part of their graduate recital program. All recent graduates have achieved 7/10 or better in the opinion of their graduate committee. All applied graduates of the MM program have been evaluated (Degree Recital Hearing) with a score of 7.0 or better.

ETS Major Field Achievement Tests: Education Testing Services MFA test scores were provided from May 2009, May 2008, October 2007, and January 2007. A cursory examination of these scores demonstrates that we approached achieving our goal of "every graduate scoring in the 50th percentile or better." Ten out of twenty-three graduates scored below the 50th percentile in the May 2008 report. In statistics, an outlier is an observation that is numerically distant from the rest of the data (see *Wikipedia* article, "Outlier"). If we were to consider that any score of 25th to 1st percentile were outliers, our sample from May 2008 would indicate that 12 out of 17 graduates, scored in the 50th percentile or better. The May 2010 report contains 4 outliers, 5 scores between the 25th and 50th percentile and 4 in the 50th or better percentile. In the May of 2009 report, 22 scores were reported of which 16 would be considered outliers. Of the 6 remaining scores, four were in the 50th percentile or better. The October 2007 report contains 3 outliers and three scores in the 50th percentile or better out of a total of 7 scores. The January 2007 reports 3 scores of which one was an outlier and the other two fell below the 50th percentile.

This gives a total of 13 scores that lie between the outlier category and 50th or better percentile category. The subscores (subscore 1 is listening comprehension, subscore 2 is written theory and subscore 3 is written history) when averaged are revealing. The average for subscore 1 is 53.3, for subscore 2 is 40.8 and for subscore 3 is 46.76. This indicates that our students who are not outliers but who score below the 50th percentile are most deficient in the areas of written theory and written history.

Conclusions: The Music Education program generates the most negative results in attitudinal surveys, a finding that has been consistent over time. Dissatisfaction with advising is linked to the organization of the degree between two colleges, and the many recent changes to the curriculum as a result of the Blue Ribbon Commission. Clearly, the retirement of Dr. Sara Bidner has (or will) aggravated the issue; hiring her successor must be a priority as the economy improves.

Other revealed concerns include graduate advising (in which there has been a rapid turnover of advisors), and instruction in music theory. Recent personnel changes may positively affect future assessment of theory, but music history and music theory subject matter should be better integrated (as opposed to fragmented) across the entire music curriculum.