AY2015-2016 CLASS FACT Assessment Year End Report, June, 2016

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<tr>
<th>Program Name(s)</th>
<th>FACT Faculty Fellow</th>
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<td>Music</td>
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[NOTE: Items A, B, C, and D are identical to your Page 2 on your Annual Report for CAPR. Please simply cut and paste from there. Item E is unique to the CLASS FACT Project.]

A. Program Student Learning Outcomes

1. Quickly identify rhythms and pitches and maintain pitch accuracy for application in performance or composition.
2. Bring an enriched tone production with improved technical skills to the performance of their primary instrument.
3. Apply critical and creative thinking and analytical reasoning to address complex challenges in music theory and history.
4. Demonstrate the ability to work collaboratively and respectfully with other musicians in a performance context.
5. Integrate musical ideas, theory, and practice, and communicate them to others clearly and persuasively in classroom and performance settings.

B. Program Student Learning Outcome(s) Assessed

This year we selected SLO #3: Apply critical and creative thinking and analytical reasoning to address complex challenges in music theory and history.
C. Summary of Assessment Process

The undergraduate program in music at Cal State East Bay is designed to help students develop and practice the complex set of skills musicians and music educators need to perform and teach music in professional contexts. Our program divides this skill set into six different areas, namely skills in:

- basic musicianship (SLO 1);
- performance on one’s primary instrument (SLO 2);
- creative and critical thinking (SLO 3);
- analytical reasoning (SLO 3);
- collaboration (SLO 4); and
- communication (SLO 5).

Our CLASS FACT project for AY2015-2016 assessed SLO #3, using as a basis for analysis two courses required of music majors: Music Theory IV (MUS2033, Fall 2015) and Music Literature & Analysis II (MUS3156, Winter 2016). Creative thinking was assessed in the theory course with assignments that asked students to compose music using techniques and style characteristics examined in class. Critical thinking was assessed in the history course with a formal research paper project. Analytical reasoning was assessed in both courses.

In the theory course, students studied examples of concert music from the past one hundred years and then, through in-class discussion and homework assignments, identified specific techniques and stylistic characteristics used to compose the music. Students were then asked to compose short pieces using the techniques and characteristics they had identified. This approach was inherently both analytical and creative in that students needed to explicitly understand how various musical examples work and then demonstrate what they learned by composing. Students also discussed the nature of musical innovation and creativity. A broader goal of these efforts was to encourage students to use critical thinking to evaluate music they perform or compose outside of these courses.

In the history course, students were asked to write a 4-6-page research-based paper focused on a composition, composer, or event of their choice from music history. Though the total page number was low, the instructor’s expectations were high, and included the need for students to use a minimum number of relevant sources, two-thirds of which had to be academic sources; to organize the paper around a guiding research question and thesis; and to include at least one section of focused analysis of either a historical text or score. Students were told to expect this
Winter Quarter project from the Fall Quarter, the beginning of the year-long course. And the project assigned for the end of that first quarter—involving textual and score analysis—was meant to serve as a “ramping” exercise to prepare students for the following quarter’s project.

D. Summary of Assessment Results

Assigning a research project in the Winter Quarter of this course is part of the instructor’s broader goal to get upper-division music majors in the program to apply analytical and critical thinking skills to a musical-historical subject of their choice and to express their findings through writing. The hope is to use this project as the basis of an annual assessment of these skills. In keeping the project small (4-6-pages) and including a “ramp” activity in the Fall Quarter, the instructor was responding to the findings of the AY2014-2015 CLASS FACT Assessment report, which raised concerns about the significant number of music majors who “lacked the practical skills and cultural understanding needed to engage in a large-scale project involving musical analysis and historical research,” and recommended that these skills be introduced at an earlier stage in the course (if not also at an earlier stage of each student’s time in the department). Out of 33 students enrolled in MUS3156, all of them received a passing grade (“C” grade or higher) with this activity (8 “A” grades, 17 “B” grades, and 8 “C” grades).

Of the 25 students in Theory IV (Fall Quarter), 22 passed the class. Two failed, and one withdrew before the end of the quarter.

E. Suggestions and Recommendations for the CLASS FACT Project in the Future

Our department’s third SLO needs to be properly assessed, and we believe, after a number of failed attempts (in AY2013-2014 and AY2014-2015), to have found a means of doing so. While the instructors will continue to refine the assignments and projects in their courses, we think they provide a good basis to track critical and creative thinking and analytical reasoning abilities of our music majors on an annual basis.

Thank you for your hard work for the past year, and have a Great Summer!