



Coefficient --Statement of Beliefs from The 2020 Summer Institute for Music Programs

Music is a ubiquitous human expression, yet its meanings, uses, and roles are endlessly varied. As such, teaching, making, and performing music at public liberal arts colleges creates unique opportunities to advance equity, inclusion, and diversity.

#musiciansarecool Music facilitates collaborative, accountable communication -- it emphasizes where to show up, how to listen, when to create sound. Through its disciplinary content, multi-disciplinary connections, and pedagogy, music:

- encourages people to explore freedom within constraints
- promotes deep listening
- contributes to deep cultural expression, and
- models how to apply skills in presentation, communication, and collaboration

Area One -- Key Assets of Music Programs at Public Liberal Arts Universities

The creation and control of sound is pervasive in society. We believe that music programs make great things happen with sound on a large scale.

Music programs are highly visible. Unlike many other programs, the results of music instruction are on prominent, public display. Through tours, concerts, summer camps, competitions, private lessons, internships, and training the next generation of musicians, our programs go out into communities more often than most other academic programs. Every academic term, we regularly represent our universities at regional, national, and international venues. Like athletics, music is invariably the public face of our institutions. We are free advertising. We represent and demonstrate our universities' missions.

Music programs strengthen and add value to a community. Our students and faculty make noise. We are included in almost all public expressions of community, since few human events do not have music associated with them -- parties, marches, rallies, athletic events, ceremonies, life events. Throughout 2020, people have turned to music to define contexts, to express solidarity, to lean into emotions, to bolster health, and to extend fellowship.

Music programs help recruitment, community relations, and advancement. Being able to participate in a music program attracts students to a COPLAC university and contributes to the viability of other academic programs on campus. Non-music majors, as well as community members in some cases, can easily be involved in our classes and ensembles (often at advanced levels). In fact, learning in our programs is enhanced through the participation of community members and students from diverse majors. Community members are attracted to performances as musicians create art in real time. Finally, alumni benefactors remember their experiences in our programs and contribute monies to support music.

Music programs make vital contributions to public liberal arts universities. Because it teaches people how to assemble components, music is among the most inclusive disciplines in academia. Music inherently reinforces participating in a community -- it requires both a performer and an audience. And in an ensemble, music insists that you humble yourself and learn to blend. Music brings people together collaboratively across disciplines and invites performers and audiences to reflect on what is aesthetically valuable. The public liberal arts university music department combines professional training in performance, music education, music therapy, and other subdisciplines, while also providing a firm grounding in technical, theoretical, and historical concepts. The special focus of the public liberal arts institution allows for a greater synthesis with all other aspects of a humanistic education. A deeper understanding of literature, history, languages, etc., deepens musical understanding and connection-building.

Music programs develop skills that are easily transferable to a wide range of professions. For example, musicians bridge the humanities and technological innovation. They possess a strong knowledge base on how to navigate an industry that is automated. They do not hide technology and artificial intelligence, they use it and make their discipline evolve with it. In 2020, emergency remote education demonstrated music's ability to use technology effectively and to adapt quickly.

Area Two -- Key Vulnerabilities of Music Programs at Public Liberal Arts Universities

To other programs and external groups, music might be considered "elitist" or "superfluous," despite its historical place as one of the key liberal arts, its strong contributions to campus culture, and its work with equity, inclusion, and diversity. In addition,

music can sometimes be seen as not *real* collegiate study. Often, rehearsing is not perceived as a legitimate academic experience, on par with laboratory or archival research. Faculty professional activity may not be regarded as comparable with that in other academic disciplines, and may thus be discounted by promotion and tenure committees, state oversight boards, or granting agencies.

Music programs are expensive to operate, e.g., ensemble tours, faculty to student ratio. However, that expense translates into music's robust level of engagement with a wide variety of communities. Music is a key part of how communities survive and how we improve our campus environments.

Although costly, music programs often perform for free. There is a need to figuratively monetize what our programs contribute to campus, as well as a need to advocate for the arts, and to model professionalism -- musicians do not give their intellectual contributions away for a free meal or exposure.

Music programs rely on a large number of adjunct instructors to provide expert instruction in diverse areas. As institutions respond to financial constraints, they may reduce the number of adjunct instructors with detrimental effects on the quality and breadth of instruction, as well as cause the inability to provide applied lessons for students currently in programs.

Area Three -- Key Challenges Facing Music Programs at Public Liberal Arts Universities Over the Next Few Years

Music departments at public liberal arts universities must firmly articulate their missions and strengths in order to address enrollment issues and resource allocations to focus on workload, aging facilities, and replacing instruments.

Like many disciplines, music faces declining enrollments and competition for resource allotment based on credit hours generated or number of majors, etc. In addition, scholarships devoted to the liberal arts often highlight undergraduate research, but not creative activity, thereby limiting financial aid packages available to talented students.

As the quality of many high school music programs has declined due to similar financial and staffing challenges, it becomes more difficult to keep students engaged with music at the college level. Additionally, what a student sought from music in high school may not be what a collegiate institution is providing.

Teaching licensure draws numerous students to our music programs, however, prescriptive education requirements, popularity of music education, and high credit loads stretch the small number of music education faculty. Faculty struggle to cover required teaching licensure courses and are thereby less able to participate in more liberal arts and cross-disciplinary courses.

Area Four -- Next Steps: Key Opportunities for Music Programs

Music programs at public liberal arts universities have an uncommon ability to interact seamlessly with other units on campus as well as with programs at other COPLAC campuses. Music as a key element of interdisciplinary education. It can converge civic duty and community service. It can partner with business administration by incorporating public relations and marketing training into performance courses. It can work with sociology/anthropology to highlight the music of underprivileged communities.

We should be mindful about demonstrating our value as a liberal art. We can ask non-majors in general education courses: "What's next for you and your relationship with sound?" We can emphasize the retention, graduation, and job placement rates of our music majors. We can highlight funding that has come to our universities as a result of our programs -- donated instruments, scholarships, endowed positions, corporate sponsorships, summer camps, etc. We can open up general education courses to diverse and multidisciplinary topics (e.g., music and conflict, music and politics, music and trauma, music and film). In the applied lesson setting, we can model the liberal arts to our students -- we can intentionally represent the value of the liberal arts in our teaching, examples, assignments, conversations, etc. We can continue to promote our valuable connections with surrounding communities through our after-school programs, private lessons, internships, community involvement in ensembles, involvement with concerts, and programming. Music equips students with a range of transferable skills that are crucial in the contemporary workplace: collaboration, analysis, work ethic, focus, diligence, empathy, innovation, team work, communication, responsiveness, interpretation, consistency, and performing well under pressure.

We encourage each other and administrators to support collaborations with other COPLAC music programs. Among initiatives we would like to see are guest instructors, faculty exchanges, ensemble tours, recitals, alumni residencies, etc. All of these could involve virtual collaborations or even multi-campus work on group projects. In addition, faculty exchanges could provide expert instruction between member campuses that have and those that lack specialization in some areas. This would require administrative support and creativity in credit load assignment, but we envision this could be possible. And perhaps, programs could create a pool of applied instructors willing to teach students online for those enrolled at institutions in rural areas without access to those particular applied music instructors.