January 19, 2007

Dr. John S. Husser, Head
Virginia Tech Music Department
241-A Squires Student Center
Blacksburg, VA 24061

Dear Dr. Husser:

Regarding your request on January 12, 2007, for written notification of the Music Department’s approved ViEWS Plan, this letter will serve as official notice that the Music Department’s Plan was reviewed and approved on February 16, 2006, by the University Core Curriculum Committee (recently renamed “University Curriculum Committee for Liberal Education”).

We appreciate your assistance with establishing a ViEWS Plan for your department’s undergraduate degree program as required by Presidential Policy Memorandum No. 231 (which can be found on the following website: http://www.policies.vt.edu/policymemos/index.php). If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Quinton J. Nottingham, Chair
University Curriculum Committee for Liberal Education
March 14, 2005

Addendum to ViEWS Plan addressing UCCC request for clarification

Apologies for returning this late, but the deadline of March 14, the day after Spring Break, did not allow for consideration by our Departmental Curriculum Committee. All references are to the original Implementation Plan, dated December 1, 2004, a copy of which is attached.

The UCCC requests clarification on the following.

- Statement integrating ViEWS student learning goals and objectives into the curricular goals, and relationship to the discipline.

Sorry for the confusion caused by trying to address all of our program options in a single document. The following addresses the ViEWS student learning goals and objectives of our professional degree options only.

- Our overall goals are to provide our professional majors with the best communication skills possible, along with the ability to adapt to the many changes in communication methods they will encounter during their professional lives. Each degree option, however, has its own hierarchy of goals.

- Our Music Education Option, while recognizing the importance of written, visual and artistic communication, puts primary emphasis on spoken communication in keeping with the need to excel in the classroom environment. Music Education students participate in a weekly Laboratory Ensemble, taking on increased responsibilities for directing rehearsals each semester of residence. The goal is to have teachers who can communicate articulately and effectively in the give and take of musical rehearsals. This is already in place and does not require further implementation. Assessment, using immediate feedback from the supervising instructors and feedback from self-analysis of video recordings of their work, is immediate and ongoing. During the 2005-2006 academic year we will develop the assessment tools needed to summarize this ongoing assessment process and the others in a way that can be incorporated into the department's outcomes assessment process. Written communication is addressed both through constant writing assignments in a variety of classes and through the formal required Writing Intensive music history and analysis courses. Skill in visual communication is ensured by the departmental emphasis on developing and using these skills across the curriculum. Skill in artistic communication is fundamental to our mission.

- Our Professional Performance Option, while recognizing the importance of written, visual and oral communication, is and must be primarily concerned with artistic communication, which is fundamental to our mission. Progress in this area is constantly assessed through performances in master classes, studio classes, and outside refereed competitions; through required performances before music majors and faculty every semester; through end-of-semester juries performed for
faculty committees; through the Continuation Exam at the end of the Sophomore year; and through Recital Hearings and Solo Recitals in the Junior and Senior years. This is already in place and does not require further implementation. The matter of putting these ongoing assessments and those mentioned below into a form that can be incorporated into the department's outcomes assessment process will be addressed during the 2005-2006 academic year. Written and visual communication are addressed as under the Music Education Option above. Opportunities for increased oral communication and assessment of oral communication skill will also be developed during the 2005-2006 academic year, and will be centered on oral presentations about the music, composers, and history of the pieces presented for the required performances enumerated above.

- **Our Professional Music Technology Option**, while recognizing the importance of written, visual and artistic communication, again centers on the professional need for clear and articulate oral communication skills in dealing effectively with conductors, singers and instrumentalists in the context of the highly technical fields of recording, filming, or audio design for live performance. The Music Technology curriculum develops these oral communication skills while simultaneously teaching the necessary technical skills and knowledge, and culminates in a capstone Senior Project. This is already in place and ongoing. What is not in place is a means of assessing progress and summarizing it in a form that can be incorporated into the department's outcomes assessment process, and this will be addressed during the 2005-2006 academic year. Written, visual and artistic communication are developed as in the other degree options, and assessments will be developed during the 2005-2006 academic year.

- **Our Professional Designed Option** is deliberately structured to give students maximum flexibility in developing a personal degree plan, while ensuring that their basic education in music theory, music history, and musical performance are up to the standards of the profession. This is necessarily monitored by the Departmental Curriculum Committee, which must approve all Designed Option Plans including the proposed Senior Project. That committee will develop, during the 2005-2006 academic year, appropriate additions to the presently-required items each proposal must contain, which will require students to state how the ViEWS objectives will be addressed in their individual plans, and that committee will also develop an assessment process allowing the assessments to be summarized and included in the department's outcomes assessment process.

- **While a single writing intensive course does address written competencies at one level, is there any place where student writing is further developed?**

Again, my apologies for being unclear in our December Proposal.

- Music majors in the Professional options are required to take not one, but two approved Writing Intensive courses within the department, and because of course scheduling these are normally taken in different semesters.

- In addition, a great many other courses in the department include requirements for written work, sometimes rather intensive requirements. Such courses are taken in each of the students' four years. These courses have not been given formal Writing Intensive status because each professor will approach the course curriculum differently, but some of these courses go well beyond the formal Writing Intensive requirement. We feel that we are already addressing the matter of Writing Across the Professional Curriculum in keeping with the spirit of ViEWS.

- **Need to relate the assessment of student learning related to oral competencies is not addressed. Relate assessment to the ViEWS student learning goals.**
On rereading our December proposal, we must agree that this is the weakest part of it. We hope that the information given above will help, and we have attempted to pinpoint the areas in which we need to develop assessment plans. We cannot present them at this time in finished form. We do, however, fully intend to seek the help of John Muffo and his office in this development, since none of us are assessment specialists.

- *As the assessment component is being clarified, please include how it will be implemented and how it can be incorporated into the department's current outcomes assessment process.*

This is addressed, to the extent that it can be addressed at this time, in the answer to the question above. We understand what needs to be done, and we intend to pursue it in the coming academic year. We cannot present a finished plan at this time, but we understand what needs to be done. (At least we are not falling back on "student exit surveys"!)

- *In our efforts to complete review of the plans, we need a statement clarifying the use of resources from outside your department.*

This is easily answered. We are not requesting any such resources.

- *Please note that the resolution establishing the ViEWS requirement also requires student checklists be changed to reflect your department's specific plan.*

We will, of course, follow the procedures established by the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences to meet this requirement. It would be a great help to have guidelines readily available.

______________________________  __________________________
John Howell                  Date
Chair
Department of Music Curriculum Committee
December 1, 2004

Implementation Plan for meeting Writing, Speaking, and Visual Intensive Criteria

The Music Department’s present curricula already meet most of the of the new Communication Policy’s expectations, and with some small adjustments should meet all of them. The following is organized according to the type of communication addressed and the goals for each of our degree options.

Writing-Intensive Criteria
Four upper-level Music History and Literature courses are approved as Writing Intensive. All majors are required to take a minimum of one of these courses, and Professional Degree students must take a second. We plan to keep this requirement in place.

Timeline: Already in place.
Assessment: Already in place through periodic assessment of WI courses.

Oral Communication-Intensive Criteria
In some degree options the criteria are already being met. In others we can add or formalize opportunities for oral communication. Several courses taken by our majors already require formal or informal oral presentations.

Music Education Option
Music Education students participate in a weekly Laboratory Ensemble, taking on increased responsibilities for standing before the group and directing rehearsals each semester. They receive both immediate feedback from the supervising instructors and self-feedback from analysis of videos of their work. The goal is teachers who can communicate articulately in the give and take of musical rehearsals.

Timeline: Already in place.
Assessment: Carried out within the department.

Professional Performance Option
Performance Majors are expected to communicate information about their music effectively to an audience. The Department proposes adding a more formal oral communication requirement for all performance majors.

Timeline: To be implemented Fall 2005.
Assessment: Written comments from committee members, addressed to the studio teacher for further follow-up. At present there is no appropriate assessment instrument in the periodic Departmental Reports.

Professional Music Technology Option
The goal in this option is not formal oral presentations, but the ability to communicate clearly and effectively with conductors, singers and instrumentalists in the context of recording, filming, or setting up for live performance. This requires mastering the appropriate terminology and being able to communicate its meaning to non-specialists, very often under conditions involving deadlines and extreme psychological pressures. The music technology curriculum develops these particular oral communication skills, culminating in a capstone Senior Project. Adding a formal oral communication requirement to these projects may be possible.
Timeline: Already in place, with possible additions Fall 2005.
Assessment: Currently done within the department by music technology faculty. Assessment tools to be included in the periodic Departmental Reports can be developed.

Professional Designed Option
The student, in collaboration with a faculty advisor, prepares a degree plan which includes the music courses required of all majors, while allowing the pursuit of specific interests either within or outside the department. Once approved by the Departmental Curriculum Committee, this plan becomes a contract between the student and the Department. In keeping with the flexibility implicit in this option, the Department will modify the requirements so that students selecting this option must state how the oral communication requirement will be fulfilled.
Timeline: Effective Fall 2005.
Assessment: Individual advisor reports. Corresponding formal assessment tools for the periodic Departmental Report will be developed.

Liberal Arts Degree Options
These options meet the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) requirements for Liberal Arts degrees in music. Oral communication requirements will vary depending on the particular option. The majority of semester hours for these options will be outside the Music Department. Therefore, opportunities for oral presentations in other disciplines will be likely.
Timeline: Adjustments will follow those made for Professional Degree Options.
Assessment: Similar to the assessments used in comparable Professional Degree Options.

Visual Communication-Intensive Criteria
Beyond the visual communication skills required of all Virginia Tech students, music majors must be able to convey musical information to other musicians through the use of musical notation, both hand-drawn and digitally-produced using music engraving software, with or without using MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) devices. Music majors at all levels are required to submit assignments (in 2025-2026 Harmony, 3044 Orchestration and Analysis, 3054 Choral Arranging, 4014 Jazz Arranging, and other courses), both hand written and using notation software (presently Sibelius). MIDI instruction is covered in courses required of all majors.
Timeline: Presently in place, subject to ongoing development.
Assessment: Takes place in individual classes where these skills are required.

Artistic Communication-Intensive Requirement
Music, as one of the re-creative arts, requires specific skills in non-verbal, aural communication. Every music major is required to become skilled in music performance and to pass a continuation examination at the end of the Sophomore year for admission to upper level performance study. All music majors are required to prepare and perform a minimum of one formal public recital. The Professional Performance option requires a minimum of two such recitals.
Timeline: In place, and fundamental to all degree options.
Assessment: Within the department by faculty committees recommending admission, approving continuation and approving recital hearings.

Summary
The timeline for the approval of departmental plans is unclear at this time. If this proposal is approved before March 1, 2005, the recommended changes could be implemented for Fall 2005, with the assessment tools in place by Fall 2006. Following is a summary and checklist of the recommended changes.
Action items:

1. Implement oral communication objectives (OCOs) for students in
   a. the Professional Performance Option and
   b. the Professional Designed Option.

2. Implement adjustments to OCOs for students in the Liberal Arts Options.

3. Explore assessment instrument for OCOs for students in
   a. the Music Education Option
   b. the Professional Performance Option
   c. the Professional Music Technology Option
   d. the Professional Designed Option.

4. Explore the adaptation of assessment instruments for OCOs for students in the Liberal Arts Degree Option.

Curriculum Committee Chair

Date

Department Head

Date