

## Assessment Cycle 2024 - 2025

**Program: Bachelor of Music (BM) (242)**

**Division: College: Arts and Sciences**

**Prepared by: Malena McLaren**

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**Approved by: Dr. Francene J. Lemoine**

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**Northwestern Mission.** Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution committed to acquiring, creating, and disseminating knowledge through innovative teaching, research, and service. With its certificate, undergraduate, and graduate programs, Northwestern State University prepares its increasingly diverse student population to contribute to an inclusive global community with a steadfast dedication to improving our region, state, and nation.

**College of Arts and Sciences' Mission.** College of Arts and Sciences' Mission. The College of Arts & Sciences, the largest college at Northwestern State University, is a diverse community of scholars, teachers, and students, working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. The College strives to produce graduates who are productive members of society equipped with the capability to promote economic and social development and improve the overall quality of life in the region. The College provides an unequaled undergraduate education in the social and behavioral sciences, English, communication, journalism, media arts, biological and physical sciences, and the creative and performing arts, and at the graduate level in the creative and performing arts, English, TESOL, and Homeland Security. Uniquely, the College houses the Louisiana Scholars' College (the State's designated Honors College), the Louisiana Folklife Center, and the Creole Center, demonstrating its commitment to community service, research, and preservation of Louisiana's precious resources.

**Department of Music Mission.** The Music Department is part of the **Dear School of Creative and Performing Arts** at Northwestern State University and is dedicated to the development of students for roles in academic, leadership, professional, performing, education, and research careers in the challenging fields of music, music business, music performance, and music education. Utilizing transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, courses in core musical fundamentals, performances, research, and service, the department produces graduates equipped to be productive members of society and professionals in the arts in which they will help develop and improve the overall quality of life locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. The department delivers the Bachelor of Music degree with concentrations in Performance, Sacred Music, and Music Business, and works collaboratively with the School of Education to offer the Bachelor of Music Education degree. The department also offers the Master of Music degree with concentrations in performance and music education.

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**Purpose (optional):** The bachelors program will prepare students for lives as artistic professionals and educators who are responsive to the artistic demands of the profession.

**Methodology:** The assessment process for the BM program is as follows:

- (1) Data from assessment tools (both direct – indirect, quantitative, and qualitative) are collected and returned to the program coordinator.
- (2) The program coordinator will analyze the data to determine whether students have met measurable outcomes.
- (3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the program faculty.
- (4) Individual meetings will be held with faculty teaching core Music Education courses if required (show cause).
- (5) The Program Coordinator, in consultation with the BM faculty and curriculum committee, will propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, curricula and program changes.

### Student Learning Outcomes:

**SLO 1. Students will be able to demonstrate excellence as solo and ensemble performers at a level to provide a basis for a professional career as a musician.**

Course Map: Tied to the Objectives:

Applied Study:

MUSIC 1710 – Major Study

MUSIC 3710 – Major Study

MUSIC 4720 – Recital

Ensembles:

MUSIC 1310 – Band

MUSIC 1320 – Men's Chorus

MUSIC 1330 – Chamber Choir

MUSIC 1340 – Orchestra

MUSIC 1380 – Women's Chorus

### Measure 1.1. (Direct – knowledge):

**Details/Description:** Students will demonstrate excellence through performance before a jury of 2-5 faculty each semester, auditions for ensembles at least once a year, and qualifying juries to assess whether they are ready for upper-class applied study. For Performance Majors, a Senior Recital is required, for which a Preview hearing

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performance in front of the student's Recital Committee must be passed.

**Acceptable Target:** A rubric for each of these juries is used to evaluate the student and is kept on file. Qualifying jury results are filed and noted in the CAPA offices. Acceptable target is 90% passing the Qualifying Jury and Senior Recital.

**Ideal Target:** Ideal target is 100% passing Qualifying Jury and Senior Recital.

**Implementation Plan (timeline):** Each semester

**Key/Responsible Personnel:** Music Faculty

**Supporting Materials:** Jury comment/grading form; Jury repertoire form; Qualifying Jury Assessment form; Recital checklist; Recital Grading Sheet; Recital Preview Hearing Form; Voice Jury Form; Voice Qualifying Jury Form; Voice Recital Preview Hearing Form

**Findings:** Target was **not met**.

**Analysis:** In AC 2023-24 the target was **not met**. The passing rate for Fall Qualifying Juries was 75% (3 out of 4 total Qualifying Juries attempted) and the passing rate for Spring Qualifying Juries was 68% (17 out of 25). All recitals attempted were successfully passed (12 total). Of all Qualifying Juries and Senior Recitals attempted, 76% successfully passed. The passing rate for Conducting II final projects was 100% (12 student total). The passing rate for all pedagogy/skill assessments in Methods/Pedagogy courses was also 100% (41 students total). The Conducting and Methods/Pedagogy classes include daily assessment of progress in conducting, pedagogy, and classroom management. The small class size and close monitoring by the professor has proven successful in these upper-level classes.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, the faculty made the following changes in AC 2024-25 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty served as advisors to their freshman and sophomore music education majors, which allowed for more in-depth discussion of any issues outside of applied lessons. Faculty also used campus resources (counseling, etc.) earlier for students that needed assistance. Faculty provided individualized practice plans for each student to address any weaknesses or deficiencies, which included potential reading and listening assignments to supplement the areas of wellness and pedagogical analysis of fundamentals. In addition, faculty used upperclassmen and graduate students where appropriate to help mentor and assist younger students in technique and scale study. This allowed for a second possible mentor relationship for younger students (applied faculty/student and older student/younger student). The second year of the pilot course focusing on career preparedness for musicians also took place. The first year of data on the new SLOs showed that small class size and regular assessment and guidance are proving successful in developing teaching disposition, teaching skills, and pedagogical application. The Department Chair monitored class size as registration took place.

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Faculty in these classes will also updated any materials where applicable to ensure that assessment measures were responsive to the current educational trends in K-12.

Teaching disposition and skills were assessed through final teaching presentation or practicum in all Instrumental Methods II classes (MUS 1850, MUS 1870, MUS 1920, MUS 1930), Vocal Pedagogy (MUS 4150) and Secondary Methods (MUED 4010) classes. These courses were also specific to the students' area of specialty (instrumental, vocal) and include: fundamental teaching skills, numerous observations and reflections of both conducting and classroom management, as well as bi-weekly lab ensemble participation which required them to observe and reflect on their peers conducting and rehearsal technique.

Additionally, while music educator knowledge, teaching skills, and disposition are embedded within each course in the degree program, the Department Chair added several assessments to this SLO in order to drive the cycle of improvement. Conducting skills were assessed throughout the Conducting courses (MUS 3090, 3100, and 3110) but were specifically measured in the final project for the MUS 3100 (Choral Conducting) and 3110 (Instrumental Conducting) courses. These courses were specific to the students' area of specialty (vocal, winds, strings) and were intensive in their study and expectations. The final project assessed the students' growth and ability in these areas.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2024-25, the target was **not met**. The passing rate for all Qualifying Juries was 83% (25 out of 30 total Qualifying Juries attempted). All but one recital attempted were successfully passed (15 out of 16 total, 94%). The one recital that was not successfully passed was due to a student's extenuating circumstances. The student received an Incomplete and will complete the recital in the Fall. For all Qualifying Juries and Recitals attempted, 87% successfully passed. This is an increase since last year, but it is not at an ideal passing rate. The Qualifying Jury is attempted at the end of the music students' sophomore year. This sophomore class was in their 1<sup>st</sup> year of high school when the COVID pandemic caused shutdowns of schools. As we experienced and learned during the pandemic, virtual learning in music created a pause in student musician development in that the individual instruction on instruments and the ensemble experience of live music was completely stopped for nearly a year. This represents an important time in the development of young musicians. The drop in passing rate for the Qualifying Jury is likely reflective of these students entering college with deficiencies in their musical fundamentals due to this gap in their development. We are likely still seeing some of the effects of these students being at an important developmental phase in their music education when COVID closed their schools. However, it is encouraging to see improvement, as this helps us to know that our approaches to remediating fundamentals where possible is likely helping these students. In addition, it is highly likely that music educators in the high schools are being effective in getting these students back on track. The passing rate for

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Conducting II final projects was 95% (20 out of 21 total students). The passing rate for all pedagogy/skill assessments in Methods/Pedagogy courses was 100% (16 students total). The Conducting and Methods/Pedagogy classes include daily assessment of progress in conducting, pedagogy, and classroom management. The small class size and close monitoring by the professor has proven successful in these upper-level classes.

### **Decision or Recommendation.**

In AC 2024-2025, the target was **not met**. Based on the information gathered from analysis of the AC 2024-25 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-26 to drive the cycle of improvement.

Faculty will assess students' individual needs for practice plans and performance suggestions to address individual weaknesses and areas for improvement. Faculty will suggest additional pedagogical resources through guest artists (virtual and live) and online resources. MUS 1500 will be restructured to include elements that help students prepare for all careers in music (writing a bio, having a headshot taken, critiquing performances of peers and professionals, providing constructive feedback in defined areas for critique, and speaking from the stage). Discussions of these skills and career-readiness elements will also take place in MUS 1500. With these discussions and preparedness exercises in the freshman through junior levels, those students who choose to take the Career Preparedness elective course (MUS 4740 Career Seminar for Musicians) in their senior year will be ready for more in-depth discussions and projects, further preparing these students for a career in music. In addition, discussions of physical and mental wellness will be provided in master classes, studio classes, and a campus-wide full yoga class each semester.

These changes will improve the students' ability to demonstrate excellence as solo and ensemble performers at a level to provide a basis for a professional career as a musician, conductor, and educator thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

**SLO 2: Demonstrate specific knowledge in music theory and aural skills at a level to provide a basis for a professional career as a musician.**

**Course Map:** Tied to the Objectives:

Music Theory:

MUSIC 1150 – Music Theory I

MUSIC 1160 – Music Theory II

MUSIC 2150 – Music Theory III

MUSIC 2160 – Music Theory IV

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### Aural Skills:

MUSIC 1151 – Aural Skills I  
MUSIC 1161 – Aural Skills II  
MUSIC 2151 – Aural Skills III  
MUSIC 2161 – Aural Skills IV

### Measure 2.1. (Direct – Skill / Ability):

Students will demonstrate knowledge through ongoing assessment and cumulative final exams which require the student to demonstrate competence in these areas before continuing to the next level. Completion of all 4 levels satisfies the requirement.

**Acceptable Target:** These courses serve as pre-requisites for several upper level required courses. Having this knowledge and these skills is essential to progressing towards the completion of the degree. Acceptable target: 90% of students passing final exam and final composition project (in MUS 2160), working toward completion of the cycle of these courses.

**Ideal Target:** Ideal target is 93% passing final exam and final composition project (in MUS 2160).

**Implementation Plan (timeline):** Each semester/ongoing

**Key/Responsible Personnel:** Music Faculty

**Findings:** The target was **met**.

**Analysis:** In AC 2023-2024, the target was **met** for both the final project (97%) and the final exam (97%).

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, the faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2024-25 to drive the cycle of improvement. Students at this level seemed to be reaching out earlier when they needed help, which allowed for theory faculty to assist students while there was time for improvement during the semester. The music department participated in the university-wide FLAME initiative to provide regular tutoring hours by faculty that accommodated students outside of the library. Tutoring by the music faculty in Music Theory was regularly offered. The Department Chair and Music Theory Coordinator assessed and further developed the lab course (previously online MUS 1700 X1N, this year in-person MUS 1700 45N or 46N) to be taken in conjunction with Music Theory I (MUS 1150) for those students who were at a developmental level in music theory and aural skills. This course was offered in person this year, rather than online. This allowed the professor of the MUS 1150 course to closely monitor the progress and identify specific needs of those developmental students.

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In AC 2024-25, the target was **met** for both the final project (93%) and the final exam (93%). The department participated in tutoring initiatives again this year. However, a greater effort was made to meet students at the places (common areas in the Music building and Varnado Hall dormitory) and hours that worked best for them (evenings). Students seem, for the most part, to be reaching out when they need help. An effort was also made by the Department Chair to involve graduate students in tutoring students in the undergraduate theory classes. The option for the Research/Analysis paper in place of the final composition project remained. While no students chose this option this year, having the choice in place allowed students to present their capstone project in the Music Theory courses in the manner that was most comfortable for them.

These changes impacted the students' ability to demonstrate knowledge through ongoing assessment and cumulative final exams which required the student to demonstrate competence in these areas before continuing to the next level. These changes also provided flexibility and allowed the professor to assess students through varying styles of learning and communicating, providing a more student-oriented assessment process for this important professional skill.

### **Decision or Recommendation.**

In AC 2024-2025, the target was **met**.

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2024-25 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. The Department Chair and Theory Coordinator assessed the outcomes and effectiveness of offering the MUS 1700 X1N lab course in conjunction with the MUS 1150 Music Theory class for those students who were at a developmental level in music theory. After the data was analyzed, the decision was made to no longer continue the MUS 1700 X1N lab course. The department will return to offering two courses in the fall: MUS 1000 (Introduction to Music Theory) and MUS 1150 (Music Theory I). Students will be placed in the appropriate class after they take a Music Theory Diagnostic exam (placement exam) at Freshman Connection or before beginning classes in August.

These changes will improve the students' ability to demonstrate specific knowledge in music theory and aural skills at a level to provide a basis for a professional career as a musician, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

**SLO 3: Demonstrate specific knowledge of music history and demonstrate the ability to write and speak effectively about the art of music.**

**Course Map:** Tied to Objectives:

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Music History:

MUSIC 2030 – Music History/Literature I

MUSIC 2040 – Music History/Literature II

MUSIC 3030 – Music History/Literature III

MUSIC 3040 – Music History/Literature IV

### Measure 3.1. (Direct – knowledge)

In each of the Music History courses, students are required to write research papers. In-class essay questions on exams require students to demonstrate competence in these areas before continuing to the next level. Completion of all 4 levels satisfies the requirement.

**Acceptable Target:** Students choose subjects, submit proposed topics, submit rough drafts, and (after receiving feedback) submit final drafts. Some are chosen to make presentations at the University's Research Day. Acceptable target is 60% students receiving a passing grade on the research portion of their grade in the course.

**Ideal Target:** Ideal target is 70% receiving a passing grade on the research paper portion of their grade.

**Implementation Plan (timeline):** Each semester/ongoing

**Key/Responsible Personnel:** Music Faculty

**Findings:** The target was **met**.

**Analysis:** In AC 2023 - 2024, the target was **met**. The passing rate for Music History II was 98% (an increase of 8%), while the passing rate of the Music History IV class was 96% (a drop of 2%).

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-24 results, faculty made the following changes in AC 2024-25 to drive the cycle of improvement. Shorter research/writing assignments were utilized, as these have proven to be successful in measuring student abilities to write and more frequently address any issues. The test format was restructured to include more writing as an approach to incorporate assessment in testing situations.

In AC 2024-2025, the target was **met**. The passing rate for Music History II was 93% (a drop of 5%), and the passing rate for Music History IV was 90% (a drop of 6%). While these drops are not alarming, the Music History professor will be monitoring the Music History II cohort in the Fall 2025 semester to assure they are improving.

These changes improved the students' ability to demonstrate specific knowledge of music history and demonstrate the ability to write and speak effectively about the art of music, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.



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### **Decision or Recommendation.**

In AC 2024-2025, the target was **met**.

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2024-2025 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement.

There was a disruption in the teaching continuity in the Spring 2024 semester, as the Musicology professor needed to take a medical leave of absence. While the replacement professor was well qualified and credentialed (and had previously taught Music History courses at NSU), the disruption of the regular teacher may have caused some students not to improve at the usual rate. The Musicology professor plans to test each class more often to more frequently assess the mastery and rate of improvement. In addition, shorter research/writing assignments will be utilized, as these have proven to be successful in measuring student abilities to write and more frequently address any issues. The test format will be restructured to include more writing as an approach to incorporate assessment in testing situations.

These changes will improve the students' ability to demonstrate specific knowledge of music history and demonstrate the ability to write and speak effectively about the art of music, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

### **SLO 4. Gain keyboard proficiency sufficient to assist in their professional career as a musician.**

**Course Map:** Tied to the Objectives:

Class Piano:

MUSIC 1800 – Piano Class I

MUSIC 1810 – Piano Class II

MUSIC 1820 – Piano Class III

MUSIC 1830 – Piano Class IV

Applied Study in Piano:

MUSIC 1700A – Minor Study (piano)

MUSIC 1710A – Major Study (piano)

MUSIC 3710A – Major Study (piano)

### **Measure 4.1. (Direct – knowledge)**

Proficiency is demonstrated at the conclusion of each semester of keyboard study (prescribed proficiencies for each level). A cumulative proficiency is administered and required at the completion of the 4<sup>th</sup> semester - MUS 1830. Skills achieved include playing accompaniments, score-reading, improvisation, transposition, scales major and minor,

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and melodic harmonization.

**Acceptable Target:** Students must complete the keyboard proficiency exams in all these areas before they are granted a passing grade in the final course in the sequence. If they do not pass the proficiency exams, they simply re-take the course. Acceptable target is 90% of students passing each proficiency level.

**Ideal Target:** Ideal target is 95% of students passing each proficiency level.

**Implementation Plan (timeline):** Each semester/ongoing. To be assessed at the end of each academic year.

**Key/Responsible Personnel:** Head of Keyboard Area/Music Faculty/Department Chair

**Findings:** The target was **met**.

**Analysis:** In AC 2023-24, the target was **not met**. An acceptable target of 91% of the total students passed all levels of the proficiency exams. This was a decrease of 2% from the previous year. Of the total 31 students enrolled in the Piano IV class, only 3 did not pass all proficiency levels. One student received an incomplete due to extenuating circumstances. It was expected that 2 of the 3 students who did not pass would re-take the class and pass all proficiency levels the next year.

Based on the analysis of the 2023-24 results, faculty made the following changes in AC 2024-25 to drive the cycle of improvement. Piano faculty moved around the room more often to more frequently monitor students' hand placement/position/fingerings. This was a helpful solution to work around the issues with rearranging the classroom and the difficulty with the keyboards' pairing function, despite the target not being met at the ideal level. Piano faculty also resubmitted a Board of Regents grant this year to replace keyboards in the Group Piano classroom. Students in the first year of Piano Classes transitioned to a new textbook—Alfred Group Piano for Adults (AGPA)—which is a widely used text nationally for group piano programs. There are many more resources/examples to choose from in this text (two books---Book 1 for MUS 1800 and MUS 1810 and Book 2 for MUS 1820 and 1830) including score reading examples which were supplemented with other resources previously. From the experience and expertise of our Piano Faculty teaching several different texts in Group Piano settings, the repertoire used in the AGPA was more appealing and motivating to students in the class piano setting. MUS 1800 and 1810 (Book 1) started using AGPA this year. MUS 1820 and 1830 used their current text and proficiency exams remained the same so that students didn't have to switch mid-sequence. The change in text would mean that the proficiency exam content would change after this year. The categories/structure would likely remain the same, but different score reading and harmonization examples would be used. Piano faculty also reduced the required two-octave scales to include only major and harmonic minor scales (no longer requiring natural and melodic minor scales). This brought the scale requirement in line with most Class Piano textbooks.

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In AC 2024-25, the target was **met**. An ideal target of 100% of the total students passed all levels of the proficiency exams. This is an increase of 9% from the previous year. All 38 students enrolled successfully passed the proficiency exams.

### Decision or Recommendation.

In AC 2024-2025, the target was **met**.

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2024-25 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-26 to drive the cycle of improvement. The Piano faculty will experiment with only requiring hands separate (instead of hands together) for scales. This is in-line with many of the top university pedagogy programs in the country. Now that our current Coordinator of the Group Piano/Piano Pedagogy area has been teaching at NSU for several years, he plans to propose that the scores for each area of the proficiency exam simply be calculated arithmetically. Students could, in theory, fail one or two elements of the entire proficiency exam series but still pass the overall exam. The exception would be the Final Proficiency Exam, in which students can fail no more than a single element. The reasoning for this proposed change is that students end up having to re-do a lot of elements to proceed. Since the categories are similar for every exam (Score Reading, solo repertoire, harmonization, etc.), their time would likely be served equally well or better by looking forward to the material on the next exam to improve that area.

The changes outlined will improve the students' ability to gain keyboard proficiency sufficient to assist in their professional career as a musician, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

### Comprehensive Summary of Key Evidence of Improvements Based on Analysis of Results.

Program faculty made several decisions after examining results of data analysis from AC 2023-2024 which resulted in improved student learning and program improvement in AC 2024 - 2025

- Faculty served as advisors to their freshman and sophomore music education majors, which allowed for more in-depth discussion of any issues outside of applied lessons.
- Faculty also used campus resources (counseling, etc.) earlier for students that needed assistance.
- Faculty provided individualized practice plans for each student to address any weaknesses or deficiencies, which included potential reading and listening assignments to supplement in the areas of wellness and pedagogical analysis of fundamentals.

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- Faculty used upperclassmen and graduate students where appropriate to help mentor and assist younger students in technique and scale study. This allowed for a second possible mentor relationship for younger students (applied faculty/student and older student/younger student).
- The second year of the pilot course focused on career preparedness for musicians also took place.
- The Department Chair monitored class size during registration to assure that class sizes were kept small (no more than 12-15 students per section), as the data on the SLOs showed that small class size and regular assessment and guidance were proving successful in developing teaching disposition, teaching skills, and pedagogical application.
- Faculty in these classes updated any materials where applicable to ensure that assessment measures were responsive to the current educational trends in K-12.
- Teaching disposition and skills were assessed through final teaching presentation or practicum in all Instrumental Methods II classes (MUS 1850, MUS 1870, MUS 1920, MUS 1930), Vocal Pedagogy (MUS 4150) and Secondary Methods (MUED 4010) classes.
- Discussions of musicians' physical and mental wellness were increased in master classes and applied lessons—including a department-wide workshop in Alexander Technique and a full yoga class during Studio Class time.
- Small live performance opportunities (master classes, studio class, elective recitals, MUS 1500 performances) were encouraged for all levels (freshman through senior).
- Faculty provided highly personalized practice plans for each student who did not pass the Qualifying Jury in the 1<sup>st</sup> attempt and included more discussion of musicians' physical and mental wellness.
- The music department participated in the university-wide FLAME initiative to provide regular tutoring hours by faculty that accommodated students outside of the library. Tutoring by the music faculty in Music Theory was regularly offered.
- The Department Chair and Music Theory Coordinator assessed the second year of a lab course (MUS 1700 X1N) to be taken in conjunction with Music Theory I (MUS 1150) for those students who are at a developmental level in music theory and aural skills.
- Shorter research/writing assignments were utilized.
- The test format was restructured to include more writing as an approach to incorporate assessment in testing situations.
- Piano faculty moved around the room more often to more frequently monitor students' hand placement/position/fingerings.
- Piano faculty resubmitted a Board of Regents grant this year to replace keyboards in the Group Piano classroom.
- Students in the first year of Piano Classes transitioned to a new textbook—Alfred Group Piano for Adults (AGPA)—which is a widely used text nationally for group piano

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programs.

- The change in text meant that the proficiency exam content would change after next year. The categories/structure would likely remain the same, but different score reading, and harmonization examples would be used.
- Piano faculty also reduced the required two-octave scales to include only major and harmonic minor scales (no longer requiring natural and melodic minor scales). This brought the scale requirement in line with most Class Piano textbooks.

### Plan of Action for Moving Forward:

Program faculty examined the evidence and results of data analysis from AC 2024-2025 and will take steps to continue to improve student learning in AC 2025-2026:

- Faculty will assess students' individual needs for practice plans and performance suggestions to address individual weaknesses and areas for improvement.
- Faculty will suggest additional pedagogical resources through guest artists (virtual and live) and online resources.
- MUS 1500 will be restructured to include elements that help students prepare for all careers in music (writing a bio, having a headshot taken, critiquing performances of peers and professionals, providing constructive feedback in defined areas for critique, and speaking from the stage). Discussions of these skills and career-readiness elements will also take place in MUS 1500.
- Discussions of physical and mental wellness will be provided in master classes, studio classes, and a campus-wide full yoga class each semester.
- The decision was made to no longer continue the MUS 1700 X1N lab course. The department will return to offering two courses in the fall: MUS 1000 (Introduction to Music Theory) and MUS 1150 (Music Theory I). Students will be placed in the appropriate class after they take a Music Theory Diagnostic exam (placement exam) at Freshman Connection or before beginning classes in August.
- The Musicology professor plans to test each class more often to more frequently assess the mastery and rate of improvement.
- Shorter research/writing assignments will be utilized, as these have proven to be successful in measuring student abilities to write and more frequently address any issues.
- The test format will be restructured to include more writing as an approach to incorporate assessment in testing situations.
- The Piano faculty will experiment with only requiring hands separate (instead of hands together) for scales.
- Now that our current Coordinator of the Group Piano/Piano Pedagogy area has been teaching at NSU for several years, he plans to propose that the scores for each area of

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the proficiency exam simply be calculated arithmetically. The exception would be the Final Proficiency Exam, in which students can fail no more than a single element.

- The Department Chair will monitor class size in the Conducting, Pedagogy, and Methods courses as registration takes place to ensure classes do not exceed 12-15 students per section.
- Faculty in the Conducting, Pedagogy, and Methods classes will update materials where applicable to ensure that assessment measures are responsive to the current educational trends in K-12.