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Balancing Music Industry Curricula in Undergraduate Degree Programs: A Course Distribution Survey and Analysis

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Introduction

Institutions offering degrees under the various names of music business, music industry, music management or music merchandising, most often employ some type of interdisciplinary curricular approach.¹ By interdisciplinary, it is implied that studies in additional subject areas beyond so-called music industry topics are included as required coursework to complete a degree program. For two- and four-year degree-granting institutions, coursework in the area of “general studies” is most often also mandated. (The term “general studies” will be used to represent coursework required outside the major to help students develop the requisite breadth of knowledge in various disciplines.) To further diversify the mix of coursework students must complete to graduate from some institutions offering music industry degrees, courses in what will be referred to as the host discipline (music, business, communication, fine arts, *et al.*), may also be part of the required course load. (The term “host discipline” will be used throughout this article to refer to the academic unit that supports the music industry degree offered.) As a result, the two- or four-year plan of study for many students pursuing music industry degrees may be impacted to greater or lesser degrees by the fact that there are required courses in these three academic areas, and that such coursework may be seen as “competing” for a student’s available units and time.²

For a music industry studies program director at a four-year school considering a curriculum or program review, one of the challenges he or she must face is the competing mandates of the various entities that influence which courses currently comprise such a degree program. This often results in significant coursework in non-major subject areas. This complex situation results from the detailed requirements (or recommendations) prescribed by these various bodies. For example, the author’s program is hosted in the music unit and there are four such entities: the University-wide regional accrediting agency, Western Association of Schools and

Colleges (WASC), the host discipline accrediting agency, the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), the University's own General Studies requirements, and the required courses in the major that lead to fulfilling the music industry program's learning outcomes.³

As a result, students often view the currently offered degree in music industry studies at the author's institution as one filled with compromises with respect to required non-major coursework while allowing little, if any, room for exploration of topics outside the list of courses needed to complete the degree program. Students who have a keen sense of curiosity must either complete required coursework during summer sessions or stay an extra term if they wish to engage in any significant study beyond the required courses.⁴

These factors coupled with increasingly frequent rumblings from the author's students about the perceived usefulness of certain classes in students' hoped-for careers, led the author to consider the question of whether or not the program's attempts to satisfy multiple non-major masters (the host discipline, music industry studies, and University general studies requirements) was an anomaly or actually paralleled what might be the norm for such degree programs across a variety of institutions.⁵ To answer this question, a survey was developed and sent to similar institutions, those offering some type of music industry degree, to learn how, and whether or not, the discipline is addressing this important issue. Stated as a hypothesis, it appeared that the course requirements which exist if a music industry degree program is hosted within an existing discipline, when added to the institution's mandatory general studies classes, may impose a limit on the number of music industry courses offered in a degree program.

The questions the author hoped to answer included:

1. What ratios of course credits exist between these areas:
a) music industry, b) general studies, and c) the host discipline.
2. Had other music industry programs completed recent significant program revisions?
3. What was the number of elective courses offered in music industry studies at various institutions?
4. How were programs coping with the speed of change in the industry and attempting to balance providing students with an understanding of the fundamental rules

and relationships of the industry, while also offering adequate study of emerging theory and practices (e.g., social networking, streaming media, crowd-sourcing, *et al.*).⁶

Method

While the first question listed above was central to this research, the rest of the survey questions were fueled largely by the author's curiosity to learn more about peer programs. Due to the fact that there is great diversity in where music industry programs are hosted and how the degrees are structured, there is no central body of common knowledge on music industry studies curricula. It also seemed that any useful data collected might be shared across the discipline since the existing research was limited.⁷

A list of eighteen questions was developed by the author to provide the basis for this research project. (See Appendix A for the complete set of survey questions).⁸ Simultaneously, the author created a list of institutions that offered some type of music industry studies program to which an email invitation to participate in the study was sent.⁹ At the conclusion of the list development, a total of 114 possible survey participants resulted. An initial email invitation was sent to all the potential respondents, along with two follow-up email reminders, roughly two weeks apart. The invitation linked to an online survey instrument that provided simplified data collection, tabulation, and sorting options. At the conclusion of the data collection period, a total of forty-seven program directors had completed the survey, representing a 41% overall rate of response. The data was consolidated to preserve anonymity, however, the institutions represented among the respondents included those in the United States, Canada, and Australia. They represent two- and four-year degree-granting institutions, as well as a small number of programs that grant certificates in music industry studies in lieu of a degree.¹⁰

Analyzing the Data – From the General to the Specific

To aid in analysis, the survey responses were grouped into three categories:

- General data questions – four questions
- Degree-specific questions – seven questions

- Changes to degree program/pedagogy questions – six questions

Respondents had the option of skipping any of the survey questions. If a respondent chose to leave one or more questions unanswered, the system would still accept the submission. During the design phase of the project, the author made the decision to allow such submissions in order to maximize participation, theorizing that if respondents encountered questions they couldn't readily answer, they might abandon the survey altogether, thereby potentially reducing the respondent pool to some extent. In the following data analysis, for any question that was skipped by ten percent or more of the respondent pool, possible reasons will be suggested.

I. General Questions

Four of the survey's questions were judged to be general program information, designed to help the author understand the differences between various types of music industry programs in the respondent pool. The first question asked in what discipline the music industry degree was housed. The results showed that the majority of respondents are found in music departments, with an assortment of degree programs found elsewhere, including 11% housed within business departments (see Figure 1).¹¹

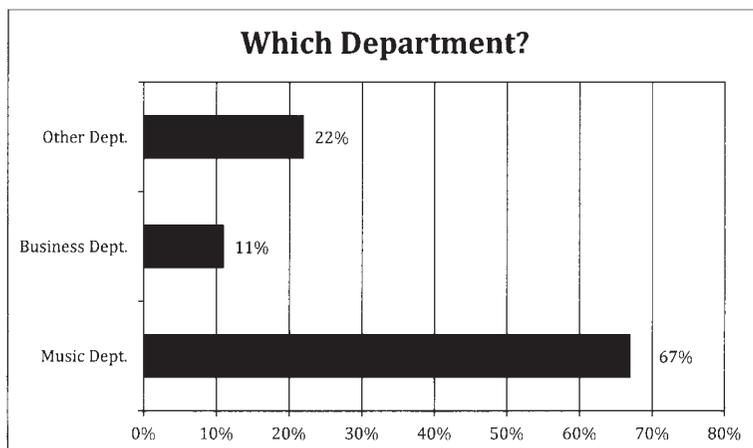


Figure 1. Departments housing music industry programs.

Interestingly, among the “Other” responses, the following distribution was seen.

- Six had established, self-contained departments or centers for music industry studies that were not affiliated with any larger discipline – 13% of respondents¹²
- Two were operating under the umbrella of a creative or performing arts department – 4% of respondents
- One operated in association with a music department – 2% of respondents
- One offered separate degrees in music industry through both the music and business departments – 2% of respondents

The concept of autonomous operation will be addressed in more detail in this article’s conclusion.

The next general question asked for the number of students currently enrolled in the program (Figure 2).

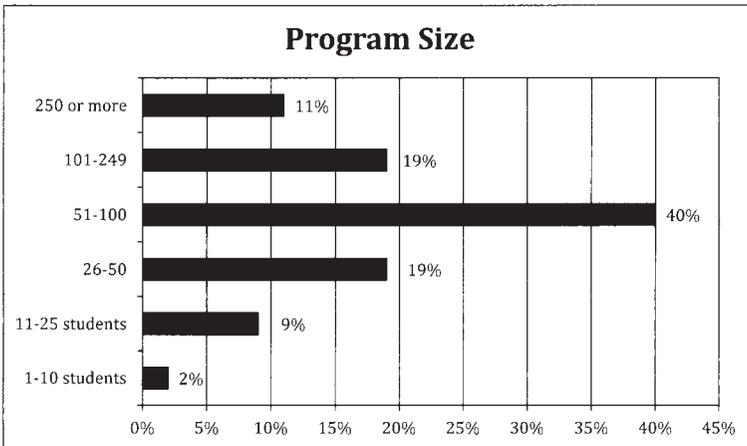


Figure 2. Number of students enrolled in music industry program.

The results confirm that program size is distributed nearly equally around a midpoint represented by programs with enrollments in the range of 51-100 students, with exactly 30% of programs either larger or smaller.

It should be noted that a small number of larger programs (greater than 250 students) service a great number of the overall student population pursuing such degrees, which was not accounted for in the survey design.

The next question confirmed that for the overwhelming majority of respondents, a semester system is used with 91% of respondents operating under a semester system and the remaining 9% on a quarterly calendar.¹³

The final general question asked respondents to provide the discipline-specific accrediting body that reviews the music industry degree(s) offered. Evidently, this information may not be known by some of the respondents as 21% of the total respondent pool skipped this question. The following chart (Figure 3) reflects the remaining 79% of the total respondent pool that did answer.

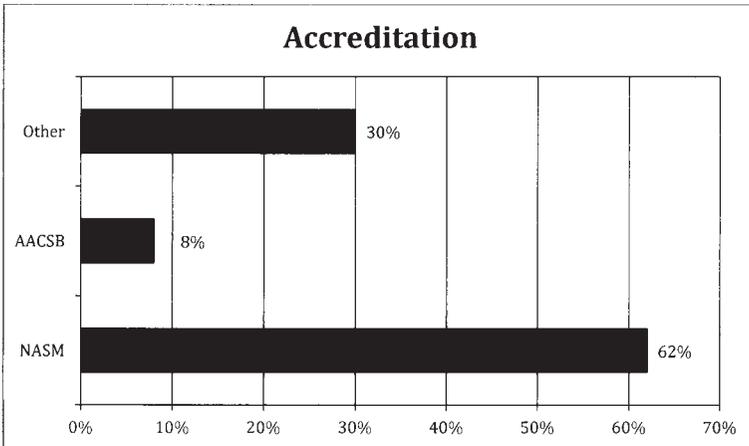


Figure 3. Accreditation of music industry programs.

The results for music-hosted degrees correlates closely with a similar question asked in Taylor’s 1991 survey, which showed 58% of such degree programs being accredited by NASM.¹⁴ In contrast, significant growth was shown in the number of business-accredited music industry programs.¹⁵ Respondents choosing “Other” provided the following data that shows a range of non-discipline specific regional and international accrediting agencies including:

- Four U.S. regional accrediting agencies – 9% of respondents

- One U.S. national career school agency – 2% of respondents
- Three international accrediting bodies – 6% of respondents
- Three respondents answering that there was no formal accreditation – 6 % of all respondents

Of some concern is the fact that 21% of the survey respondents skipped this question. (All other questions had a respondent yield of 90% or greater.) This may be interpreted as a lack of understanding by the survey respondent as to either a) what accrediting body is relied upon, or b) whether or not the music industry program is reviewed as part of any broader institutional accreditation at all. Another factor may have been that in some cases, educators completing the survey were part-time or adjunct instructors unfamiliar with the processes of accreditation. While the high number of non-respondents may be worth further discussion or research, ultimately, it is outside the scope of the present study.¹⁶

II. Degree-Specific Questions

The second group of questions pertained to the specific degree(s) offered by respondent institutions. The first question in this group asked what types of degrees were offered in the music industry area (Figure 4).

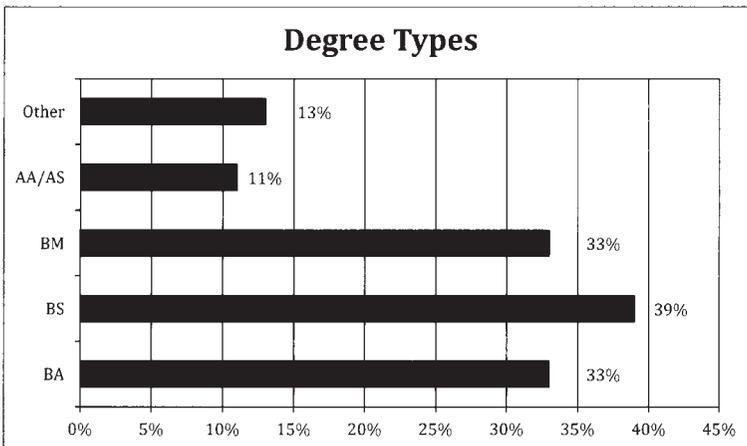


Figure 4. Types of degrees offered by music industry programs.

The Bachelors of Science, Arts, and Music are nearly equal in distribution. It must be noted that the reason that the aggregate responses total more than 100% is that a number of institutions offer more than one degree. Thus there is not only a multiplicity of degrees offered, but a number of respondent institutions offer two or more music industry degree options for students. The six “Other” responses are broken down into the following categories in equal part. Individually, these each represent 4% of the total number of respondents.

- Two programs offer a Minor in music industry
- Two programs offer a Certificate in music industry
- Two programs offer a Bachelor of Business (B. Bus.) in music industry

The next degree-related question asked for the minimum number of credits to grant a bachelors degree in music industry studies (Figure 5).

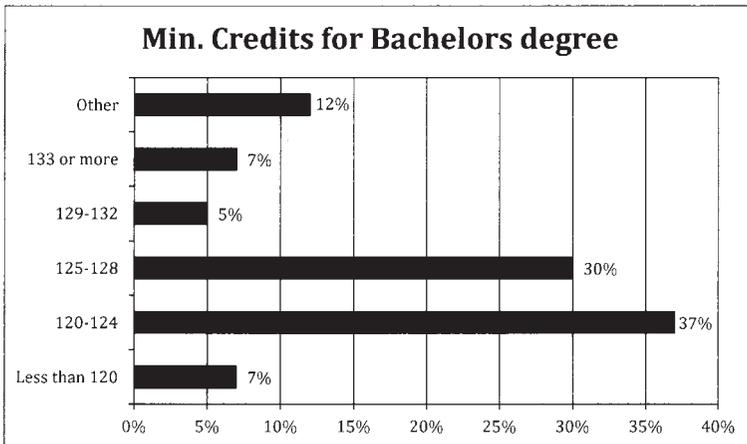


Figure 5. Minimum number of credits to grant a bachelors degree.

Two-thirds of respondents fell into the range of between 120-128 credits. This range would equate to an average load of between 15-16 credits per semester to complete a bachelor’s degree in four years. As to the 12% of respondents that reported 129 or more credits, this may have

been the result of additional coursework, which was likely added to degree program requirements over time. This factor will be addressed more specifically in another question.

The “Other” respondents to this question broke down as follows.

- One program that is a 96-credit Associate’s (AAS) degree – 2% of respondents
- Two programs that require 30 or fewer credits for a certificate – 4% of respondents
- Two programs responded N/A – 4% of respondents

The next set of four questions investigated the number and distribution of course credits falling into the three categories which comprise the central focus of this study. The first asked about the general studies requirements. The majority of respondents reported that general studies makes up a significant portion of the program (Figure 6).

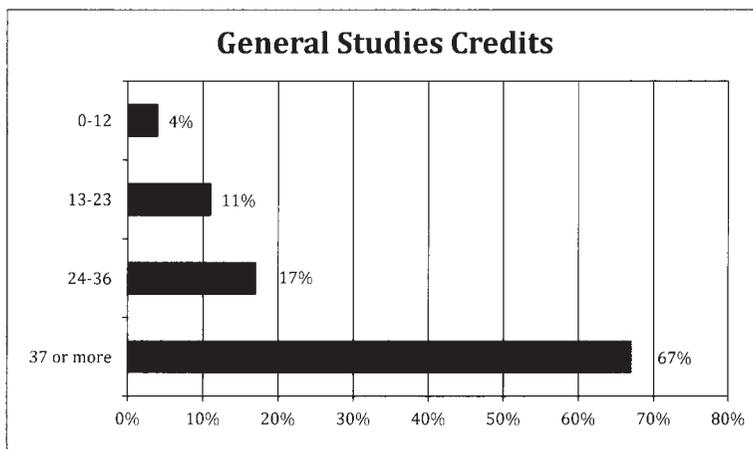


Figure 6. General Studies credits in a music industry degree program.

Using data from those programs that reported more than 120 units to complete a degree, a median of 125 credits was established for four-year degree programs. A conservative analysis of general studies coursework’s weighting in the overall degree program is 30% or greater of a student’s total studies, leaving approximately 70% for all other coursework.¹⁷ A

weakness in this question's design can be seen, in that two-thirds of programs fell into the 37 or more credit category. An additional category, perhaps 44 or more credits, would have been useful to provide greater detail in this data. However, a much broader distribution pattern was found when respondents were asked about the total number of music industry studies credits in their respective programs (Figure 7).

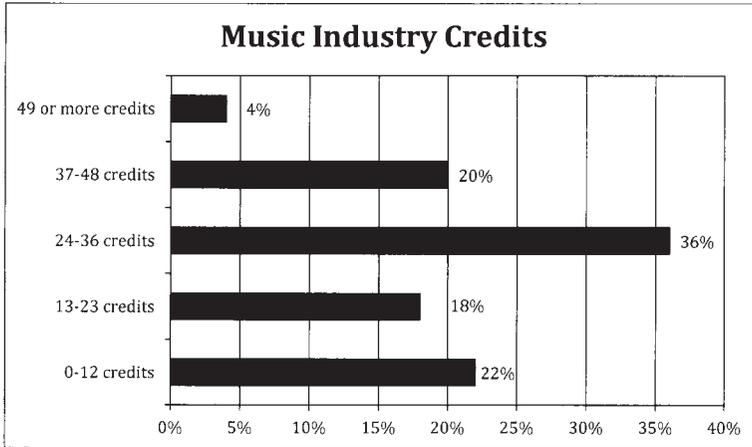


Figure 7. Music Industry Studies credits in a music industry degree program.

It is here, in this data, that some of the first important anomalies appear. The range with the largest number of respondents was the 24-36 credit category, which if one uses a 4-credit course as the basis for interpretation, corresponds to six to nine classes with the music industry subject area. Using the median number of 125 total degree credits derived earlier, this would correspond to a range of 19-29% of student's total studies, slightly less than the number of general studies credits reported in the previous response. And while 24% of respondents exceed 36 units, it is the bottom of the range, programs reporting below 12 credits that likely represent a cause for concern.

Whether or not one uses the four credits per course paradigm, 22% of the respondent pool require twelve or fewer credits, while an additional 18% require twenty-three or fewer credits in the discipline. Framing this issue is the worry that arises when the 125-credit median for four-year respondent degrees is noted. Twelve or fewer credits in music industry

coursework equate to less than 10% of a student's overall course of study.¹⁸ Is this adequate to ensure some level of competency and knowledge in a rapidly evolving discipline? This question will be addressed in greater detail in the conclusion of this article.

The third and final curricular area is the host discipline, which as reported in earlier data, is divided between music, business, and other departments (Figure 8).

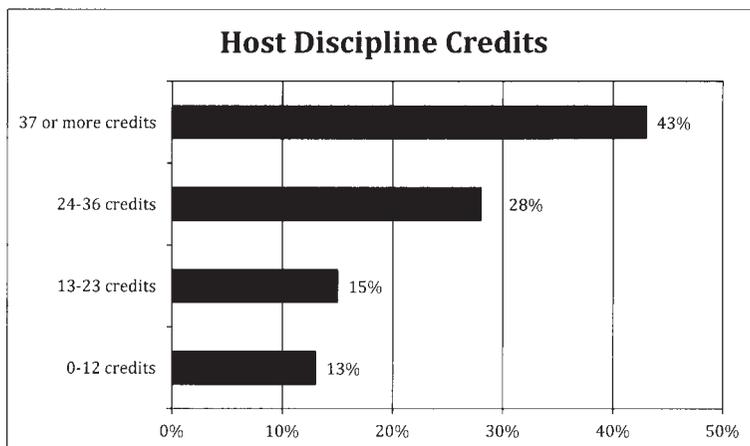


Figure 8. Host discipline credits in a music industry degree program.

When one considers that 43% of respondent programs require 37 or more credits (interpreted in this study as nine or more classes) in the host discipline, the concern mentioned in the analysis of the previous question regarding the potential paucity of music industry coursework is put into sharper focus. With nine or more courses required in the host discipline and 37 or more credits (nine or more courses) required in the general studies area, students are theoretically left with roughly 40% of their studies for their music industry major, as well as any enrichment or elective coursework. While on the surface this balance seems reasonable, the author will address certain constraints that such a system imposes on degree programs shortly.

The final question in this area looked at the number of courses (rather than credits) required in the host discipline outside of the music industry subject area (Figure 9).¹⁹

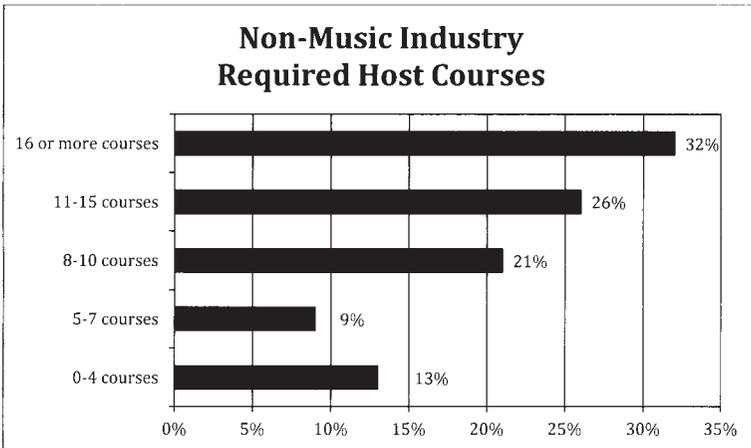


Figure 9. Courses required in the host discipline outside of the music industry subject area.

In large part, it is likely that the number of respondents at the upper end of the scale, that is eleven or more courses, is influenced by the fact that two-thirds of the respondent pool are housed in a music department, which historically has required a great many one- and two-credit classes as part of a traditional music undergraduate degree at NASM-accredited institutions. For instance, at the author's university, students pursuing the B.M. in Music Management must complete the so-called music core (rep-

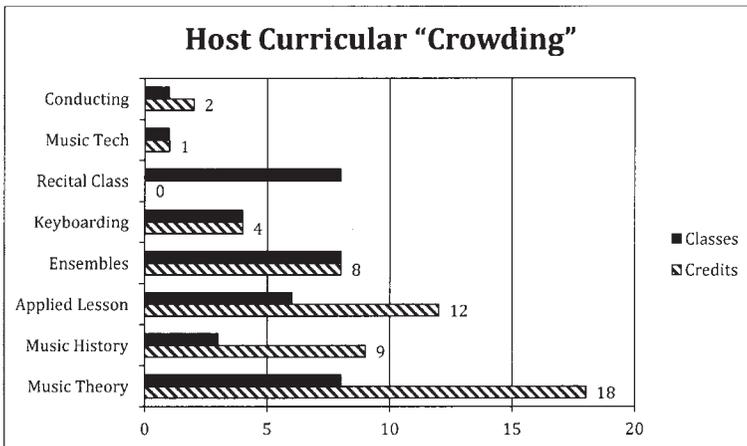


Figure 10. Required host discipline courses at author's institution.

resented in Figure 10), comprised of thirty-nine classes, each with an average value of 1.38 credits per class.

Thus for the author's program and other similar programs, the impact of such a substantial music core is that it further reduces the number of classes in music industry that students may fit into their degree programs.²⁰

Furthermore, alumni perceptions of the value of the music core in degree programs such as the author's own were the subject of two previous studies.²¹ McCain (2001) found that her graduates rated just two of the required music courses, *Computer Applications in Music* and *Music Theory*, as "Very Important." She wrote,

"It is interesting to note how much lower the graduates rated the importance of the general music core. Graduates recognize the importance of understanding music and being able to discuss music but they also recognize that adequate preparation in business and music business are important in preparing them for their employment."²²

Marcone's 2004 research, while based on McCain's previous study, added some significant variations including polling graduates of his program on the perceived value of general studies coursework. Marcone found that three of the required general studies courses, a common syllabus course taken by all students titled *Communication in Action*, and general studies courses required in the Social Science and Humanities areas were all rated by graduates as "Very Important." His study also reported little perceived value from the required courses found in the music core. Marcone's data showed only a single required music class, *Music Technology*, as being rated "Very Important" by graduates.²³ A less formal survey conducted by the author of his program's alumni in 2001 found that they rated none of the core music coursework as "Important," tracking almost identically with the two previously cited studies.²⁴

The final two degree-specific questions relate to the number of non-required (elective) music industry courses that are offered by respondent's programs and the level of interest expressed by music industry majors in taking such elective courses. Respondents were asked to state how many music industry elective classes were regularly offered (Figure 11).

Nearly half of the respondent's programs offer one to four non-required elective courses, although one-third offered no electives at all. The

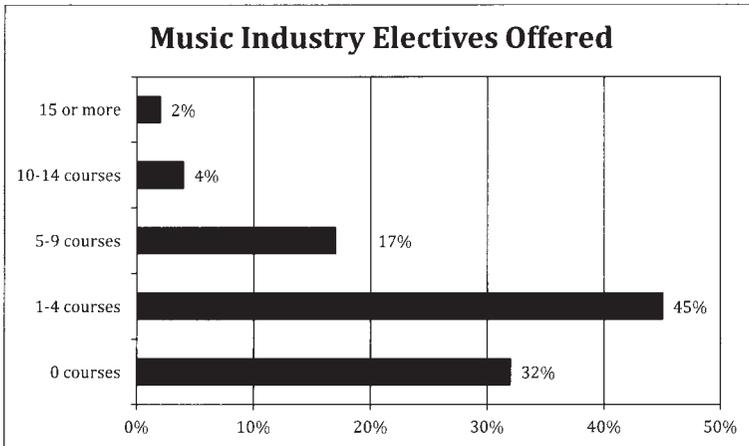


Figure 11. Number of music industry electives offered.

author believes that for some programs, the combination of substantial course loads carried by students in non-music industry areas of the host discipline and general studies may restrict how many classes a student can fit into a normal workload. The other limiting factor may be one of resources, as the capacity of music industry faculty members to teach anything other than the most necessary classes may be constrained by their own teaching load and/or departmental funding issues.

The final degree-specific question asked respondents to state the level of interest among their current students to take such non-required music industry elective courses (Figure 12).

An overwhelming majority of respondents (93%) stated that student interest in such non-required studies in the major had been observed. While this reported student interest might be dismissed, at least in part, by the common millennial student's desire to "have it all," the previously cited research of McCain and Marcone clearly indicated that alumni of their programs that were working in the music industry rated their music industry curriculum and internships as being the most important curricular elements in helping prepare them for their profession. Thus, there would seem to be a troubling disconnect between the type and number of music industry elective offerings and the evidence available regarding both current student interest in exploring such elective studies as well as alumni perceptions about the value of such coursework.

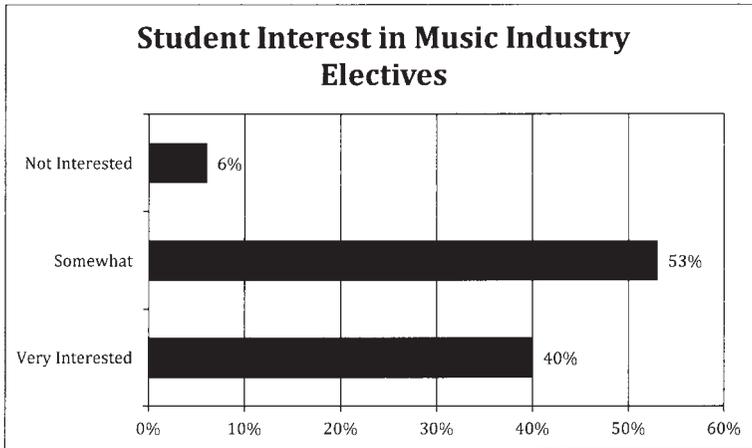


Figure 12. Student interest in non-required music industry electives.

III. Changes to Degree Programs and Pedagogical Issues

The five remaining questions in the survey addressed changes that had occurred within the music industry degree programs and what opinions exist as to educators' efforts to balance the competing needs of providing adequate depth and breadth in fundamental music business knowledge, while addressing the rapid pace of change the industry has experienced.

The first of these questions inquired whether or not a substantial revision to the music industry degree program had been undertaken, represented by a change to 25% or more of the curriculum, within the past five academic years (Figure 13).

While a slight majority of respondents have undertaken substantial changes to their degree programs, an almost equal number of programs have maintained the same curriculum over the five-year period surveyed.

The next question surveyed the number of required classes in any discipline that had been added to the degree program in the past nine academic years (Figure 14).

The results show that for more than three-quarters of respondents some required coursework has been added to their programs, although the range of credits that had been added, which was explored in a follow up question, was substantial (Figure 15).

While a comparison of the responses to these two questions relating to the addition of required coursework seems at odds, it's likely that once

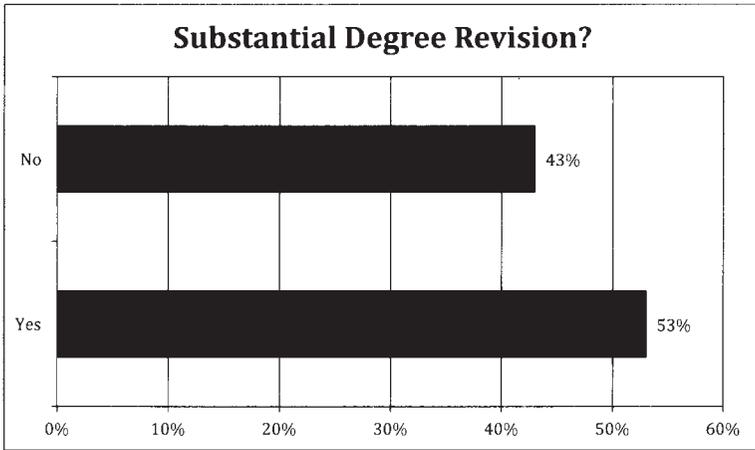


Figure 13. Percentage of institutions with a substantial revision (25% or more) of its music industry curriculum within the past five academic years.

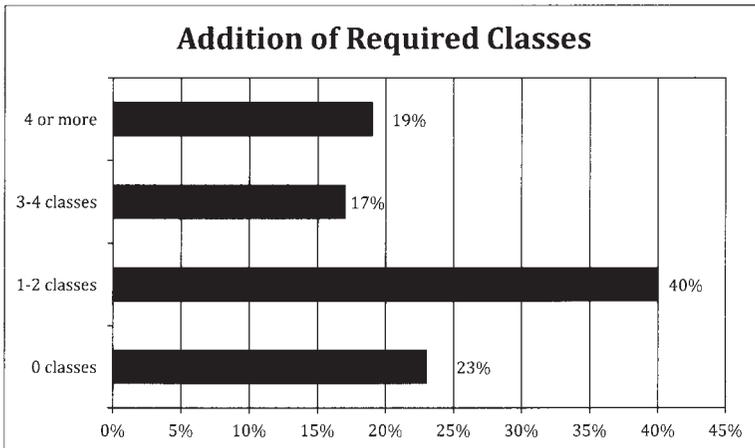


Figure 14. Number of required classes (in any discipline) added to the degree program in the past nine academic years.

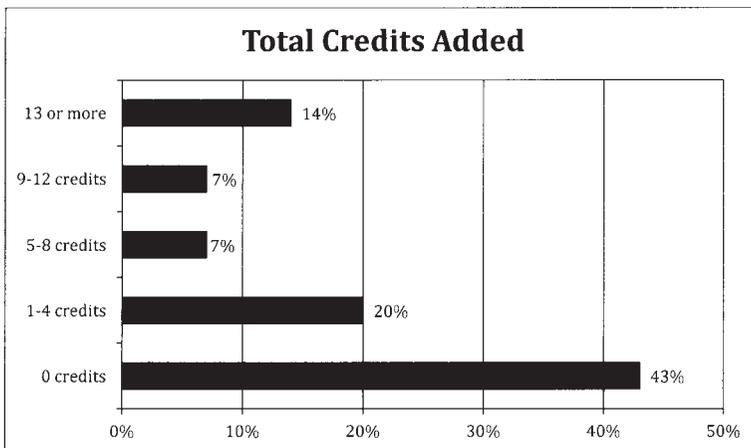


Figure 15. Number of credit hours (in any discipline) added to the degree program in the past nine academic years.

again, the extreme variability in the credits offered for various classes, especially those in music may account for the differences. Tellingly, 43% of respondents noted no additional credits had been added to their degree program, however, only 23% in the previous question stated that no required classes had been added. This is likely due to so-called “zero-credit” classes, which are sometimes used by music departments for required courses as a means to avoid placing students in an academic overload with regard to their total credits. Of course, such classes still require attendance, participation, study time, and in some cases, examinations that place further demands on student time. Such practices should be reexamined in light of the data presented in this article which it can be argued demonstrates how the competing interests from various academic areas serve to tightly pack a student’s schedule.

The final two questions addressed pedagogical approaches within the discipline, inquiring as to how respondents attempted to integrate current practices into their curriculum (Figure 16) and finally, an open-ended question asking how program directors attempted to strike a balance between fundamental music industry knowledge requirements (copyright, publishing, finance, marketing, *et al.*) and the need to critically study the latest developments in the industry in the limited time available.²⁵

Based on the data presented earlier in this article, it’s not surpris-

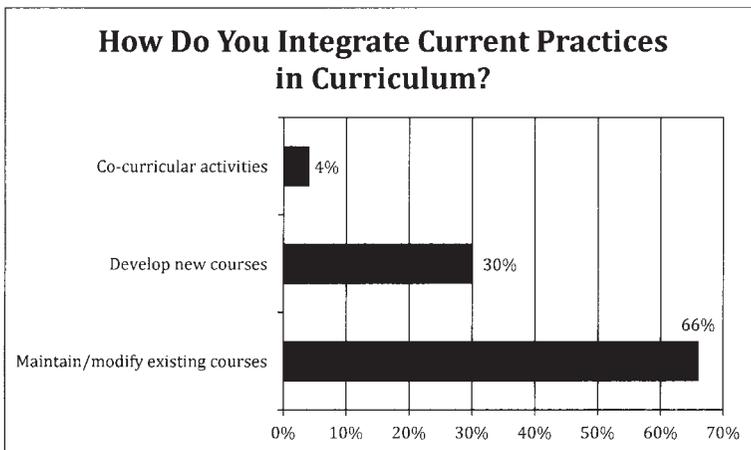


Figure 16. How do institutions integrate current practices into the curriculum?

ing that two-thirds of respondents have chosen to modify their existing courses to address, in the time available, new practices that have had a dramatic impact on the music and entertainment industry. Once again, this may reflect resource limits that music industry program directors face, in part due to crowding from non-major required coursework.

However, the author believes that such limitations may need to be evaluated with a critical eye by educators, as using the approach favored by the majority of respondents, only a limited amount of time can likely be dedicated to meaningful investigation of important new topics. At the time of writing, these might include the most effective implementation of social networking applications, paradigm shifts in music promotion and distribution, and the range of new provisions for royalty calculations and payments across an expanding range of media outlets. Any one of these seems potentially ripe for further study or even a special topics class devoted primarily to any one.²⁶

Finally, respondents were asked to discuss their views as to how program directors might balance the competing needs between ensuring adequate depth and breadth among the previously mentioned fundamental music industry knowledge requirements and the moving target of evolving information and skills students must also master. Table 1 shows the five-most frequently mentioned “Balancing Strategies” from all responses

to this question. (See Appendix B for a representative sampling of anonymous quotes from respondents.)

Balancing Strategy	Frequency Count
Modified curriculum	14 mentions
Co-curricular activities (partially funded in some cases by general student fees)	7
Internship, practica, experiential learning opportunities	7
Contact with practitioners/site visits	6
Consultation with alumni & practitioners re: industry's preferred learning outcomes	4

Table 1. Leading strategies reported for balancing fundamental and evolving industry knowledge.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study revealed a range of relevant and thought-provoking data with regard to the current structure of music industry degree programs. A look at the results may prove helpful to any music industry educator considering the delicate balancing act of overall degree program design in higher education. While it may be argued by some that the existing relationships between studies in the music industry major, general studies courses, and required courses in the host discipline can and are somehow painstakingly molded into a workable degree program, the data reported leads to the conclusion that in fact, the actual number of music industry courses that students can complete is very often a compromise between powerful and competing curricular agencies.²⁷ Such compromises are evidenced most tellingly for those respondent programs hosted in a music unit. The necessity of completing core music curriculum often required to gain discipline-specific accreditation, actually results in a greatly reduced number of music industry studies credits that can be taken by a student.²⁸ This results in a less than optimal situation for students faced with the need to complete a degree that requires them to do the majority of their academic work outside their major of music industry studies. Instead, they must concentrate the greatest number of credit hours in host discipline-required core music curricula.²⁹

Two other factors should be considered in the broader discussion of music industry curriculum. First, students are graduating into an increasingly complex and inter-related world where business, personal, and ethical decisions need to be made by informed and engaged practitioners. Traditional host discipline studies may not provide sufficient training to prepare students for these types of challenges.³⁰ Second, the ability of the public school systems to adequately prepare the majority of students for the rigors of higher education has not been sufficient to ensure students are in fact always ready for college-level work.³¹ Surely, in areas like music technology and computer applications, skills demonstrated by incoming students sometimes exceed that of their instructors. However, effective secondary learning with regard to reading, writing, and most importantly, critical thinking has often not occurred for many college-bound students.³² Thus, admitted students not ready for college-level learning most likely need to complete remedial work to make up this lost ground.³³ Achieving satisfactory learning outcomes in these areas for those undergraduates in need requires credit hours, along with classroom and co-curricular experiences to support improvement of the aforementioned skills. Even in cases where such students complete remedial reading and writing courses, the author's experience has shown that additional time within the major courses will still need to be devoted to help such students succeed in the major.³⁴

Finally, a growing trend among music industry programs adds weight to the argument that preparing students for their careers may be realized most readily through the creation of a student-centered learning community focused on understanding and practicing the actual type of work graduates will do in their areas of interest, rather than a historical ideal of what host discipline training should incorporate. University of Miami's Cat 5 Publishing and Anderson University's Orangehaus Records serve as excellent models of such pedagogy.³⁵

The implications of the foregoing data and analysis lead to the argument that in order to properly prepare tomorrow's music industry leaders as knowledgeable, effective, and ethical practitioners, it is likely time for the academy to undertake a thorough reassessment of the basic structure of music industry degrees and curricula. This is particularly true for institutions like the author's own, hosted within a NASM-accredited music department at a liberal arts university. While housing music industry degrees with existing disciplines such as business or music has in the past provided some efficiencies, a number of these degree programs may not have modi-

fied curriculum or rebalanced credit hours between the competing entities discussed in this paper to have addressed the paradigm shifts which have occurred in the music and entertainment industry. As a direct result of this problem, such programs may not prepare students as fully as others mentioned earlier that operate with some level of interdisciplinary autonomy.

An additional recommendation is that based on a student's intended career arc, a greater range of options with regard to host discipline studies would provide needed flexibility, allowing students a greater say in what pre-professional training they believe will be most efficacious.³⁶ Such a change would likely also reduce enrollments in some host discipline core classes, potentially resulting in a smaller, more focused and motivated group of learners. One example might be to replace a four-semester music theory sequence with two semesters of fundamental theory classes followed by additional elective courses in areas such as arranging, orchestration, production, jazz improvisation, MIDI programming, etc.

The survey's six autonomous program respondents represent what may become the leading edge of a significant new trend among music industry programs. Through either the establishment of a truly autonomous interdisciplinary department, or the elimination of much of the traditional host discipline coursework in favor of a greater range of music industry courses, such approaches may provide a glimpse of a more effective learning model for the discipline.³⁷ In either approach, the reduction or removal of significant degree requirements from the same area(s) of study that McCain and Marcone reported as being the least relevant to working (alumni) professionals would seem to be a reasonable first step for programs to consider.

Furthermore, it seems that such analysis may be overdue by some music industry program directors, as the data below from Nepkie's twenty-year-old study are nearly identical to the data (samples of which are in Appendix B) reported in the present survey.

“Too few music industry courses...too many required music courses.”

“Our liberal studies [general education] component is a 44-hour requirement that provides students with a broad-based education, however, it limits the number of

music industry electives...”

“We have a burdensome music core curriculum which hinders exposure of students to [music industry] areas of study which are more central to the curriculum.”³⁸

If such problems are to be effectively addressed, one of two alternative solutions might be recommended. The first would be to consider a newly-conceived degree within the host discipline that in essence does away with much of the historically required host subject courses and allows the music industry faculty to build a universal set of competencies, skills, knowledge, and experiences that are valued by both employers and proven as effective by music industry educators. Students and recent alumni should also be invited to participate in such a redesign process. A greater range of relevant elective studies in the major should also be a choice for any student pursuing such a degree. Examples of such programs exist at institutions including Middle Tennessee State University, Loyola University New Orleans, University of Southern California, and Belmont University.

The second path would be to follow the prescriptive advice of long-time music industry educator Don Cusic who argued in 1991 that music business programs should not be housed in music departments at all, because of the fact that in traditional music schools, “the world of theory and performance remains inviolably apart from that of the world of business.” He suggested that the best and most practical solution was to set up “a separate department for a university program which teaches the music industry.”³⁹ Although the adoption of Cusic’s recommendation has been slow, 13% of this survey’s respondents do manage programs operating within an autonomous department or interdisciplinary center. Such a model also allows the greatest flexibility in how a program may respond to ensure the curriculum remains pedagogically sound, responsive to industry shifts, and in tune with the hiring needs of employers.⁴⁰

Another persuasive argument put forth on the subject has come from Robert Garfrerick who reported that host discipline accrediting standards and resultant non-music industry required courses in the host discipline, “sometimes are not in the best interest of the music industry program ... which creates limited options for new courses and revised music industry

curriculum.”⁴¹ He also suggests that in some programs, music industry student tuition may serve as a subsidy to fund other non-music industry host discipline programs, a consideration made more troubling when the lack of resources reported by many music industry program directors is considered.⁴² This fact may have been what led his institution, University of North Alabama (UNA), to establish an Entertainment Industry Center that coordinates programs, teaches classes, and advises students from three disciplines: music, business, and mass communication. Therefore, any student seeking a music or entertainment industry career can tap into UNA’s Entertainment Industry Center’s resources.

Delta State University has also established the Delta Music Institute, an independent center offering a B.S. in Interdisciplinary Studies and a B.A. in Music with Emphasis in Music Production, while Columbia College Chicago has six related concentrations available under the broad umbrella of its Arts, Entertainment & Media Management (AEMM) Department. While there is a 30-credit common core across the AEMM disciplines at Columbia, students also complete 12 credits of specific coursework in each concentration to assure that the curriculum is adequately specialized to help students complete appropriate preparation for their careers. The remainder of a student’s credits is made up of the institution-wide 42-credit general studies component, and finally, in what is likely designed to encourage greater breadth of study and curiosity, the remaining 36 credits to complete Columbia’s 120-credit degree requirements may be taken college-wide, in any subject or discipline for which the student has interest and fulfills the prerequisites. In essence, the AEMM umbrella serves as both the host discipline and the concentration-specific course provider, similar to UNA and Delta State. Students also have far greater say in their degree program’s construction since their own interests and pre-professional educational goals solely determine 36 credits.⁴³

For practitioners of music industry education who have yet to enact a solution such as those cited, it may be time to roll up one’s sleeves and reconsider how the discipline is training its students. Based on the findings of this study, it would seem advisable to initiate efforts to re-balance course distributions in many programs to allow greater study in the music industry major, thereby better preparing students for the evolving music industry, and to challenge the teaching and learning limitations imposed by the Music Industry + General Studies + Host Discipline model. Additionally, it is the author’s suggestion that each program should establish a

period of time, perhaps five-year intervals, for what might be termed “relevance testing” for all host discipline coursework. This could follow the methodology developed by McCain and Marcone to weed out host studies that are not helpful for career preparation or advancement. This would help ensure that a curriculum continues to remain in step with industry’s evolving needs.⁴⁴

Directions for Future Research

Considering the diversity of program type, duration, final outcome (degrees vs. certificates), schools that offer multiple “tracks” in the discipline, *et al.*, reported in this study, it may be worth an investment of time to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the number and types of programs that exist, perhaps via a survey sponsored by MEIEA or another interested body.⁴⁵ Results from such a study would likely provide every program director with a more comprehensive context to see one’s own program in relationship to the broader discipline. In part, this diversity, evidenced by the range of data collected from the forty-seven respondent programs, led to a few small anomalies in the data that might be addressed more completely in a follow-up study.⁴⁶

Additional areas for further research may include a consideration of how this study’s data could be used to evaluate and influence curricular structure with both discipline-specific accrediting agencies (AACSB, NASM, *et al.*) and regional accrediting bodies (WASC, *et al.*) Pursuant to such discussions, the author believes that, as a discipline, we may benefit by taking a look at emerging areas of interdisciplinary study such as social entrepreneurship for new models of more flexible undergraduate curricular structures. It appears that such programs are already attracting some of the most highly qualified and entrepreneurially focused entering college students who are reticent to trust their education to models that existed when their parents went to college.⁴⁷ Next, what might the MEIEA faculty, as educators immersed in an inherently interdisciplinary field founded nearly a half century ago, contribute to the growing body of research and thought on such interdisciplinarity? And finally, for non-autonomous programs, how might career focused, outcomes-based assessment be used to further refine curriculum to better balance the need for a reduced level of host discipline studies with the relevant skills and requisite knowledge needed for a 21st-century music industry career?⁴⁸

The evolving skill set required for graduates to successfully compete

in today's music and entertainment industry appears to be mismatched to the curricular designs existing in a significant number of music industry studies programs. The research presented here continues the lines of thought evidenced as early as 1991 and continued since then in a series of essays, MEIEA conference presentations, and frequent dialog between fellow educators. Whether or not an institution determines that some type of autonomous department of music and entertainment studies should be inaugurated, the research data presented here provides ample evidence of curricular imbalances that are resulting in less-than-ideal training for students aiming for a career in the music industry. Addressing these imbalances should be a priority for program directors who wish to provide the most complete music industry studies education possible.⁴⁹

Curriculum Survey in Music Industry Program Course Distributions

Instructions: Please answer the following questions using data for the specific degree program for which you are responsible.

Thank you in advance for your sharing your time and insights.

1. In which department is your degree housed?
 - Music department
 - Business department
 - Communication department
 - Fine Arts department
 - Other department (Please specify) _____

2. Undergraduate degrees offered (please check all that apply).
 - BA
 - BS
 - BM
 - AA/AS
 - Other (Please specify) _____

3. Discipline-specific accreditation agency under which your degree is reviewed.
 - NASM
 - AACSB
 - ACBSP
 - ACEJMC
 - Other (Please specify which one) _____

4. Does your program utilize a semester or quarter system?
 - Semester
 - Quarter

5. Number of undergraduate students currently enrolled in music industry program:
 - 1-10 students
 - 11-25 students
 - 26-50 students
 - 51-100 students
 - 101-249 students
 - 250 or more students

Appendix A. Curriculum survey in music industry course distributions.

6. Minimum number of total credits that must be completed to earn bachelor's degree in music industry studies.

- Less than 120 credits/units
- 120-124 credits/units
- 125-128 credits/units
- 129-132 credits/units
- 133 or more credits/units
- Other (Please specify) _____

7. Total number of general studies/general education credits required to complete the music industry degree.

- 0-12 credits/units
- 13-23 credits/units
- 24-36 credits/units
- 37 or more credits/units

8. Based on the department where your degree is housed, how many courses in that subject area **excluding** music industry courses are required in the degree program. *(For example, if a program were housed in a Business department, that department would likely require a certain number of so-called "core" business classes such as accounting, marketing, law, management, etc., exclusive of courses taken in music industry studies.)*

- 0-4 courses
- 5-7 courses
- 8-10 courses
- 11-15 courses
- 16 or more courses

9. Using the number of classes in the previous question, how many credits do these classes represent?

- 0-12 credits/units
- 13-23 credits/units
- 24-36 credits/units
- 37 or more credits/units

10. How many total credits/units specifically in music industry studies are **required** to earn the degree?

- 0-12 credits/units
- 13-23 credits/units
- 24-36 credits/units
- 37-48 credits/units
- 49 or more credits/units

Appendix A. Curriculum survey in music industry course distributions (continued).

11. Has there been a substantial revision to the music industry degree program in the past five academic years? (Substantial revision is defined as a change of 25% or greater to the degree.)

- Yes
- No

12. For the academic years 2000-2009, how many required classes (in any discipline) were added to your degree program?

- 0 courses
- 1-2 courses
- 3-4 courses
- 5 or more courses

13. How many total credits, if any, did the courses referenced in the previous question add to your degree?

- 0 credits
- 1-4 credits
- 5-8 credits
- 9-12 credits
- 13 or more credits

14. Based on your experience advising all your students, please generalize their overall interest in taking elective credits (electives are defined as any courses not required for your degree).

- Very interested in taking electives
- Somewhat interested in taking electives
- Not really interested in taking electives

15. How many subject-specific (i.e., music industry) elective, or non-required, courses do you list in the catalog and teach on a regular or rotational basis?

- 0 music industry elective courses
- 1-4 music industry elective courses
- 5-9 music industry elective courses
- 10-14 music industry elective courses
- 15 or more music industry elective courses

16. Which method best describes your effort to integrate current practices into your student's education?

Appendix A. Curriculum survey in music industry course distributions (continued).

- Maintain existing courses but modify course content to better reflect new and/or current practices
- Develop and offer new courses to specifically address new and/or current practices
- Offer non-credit bearing opportunities such as symposia, workshops, co-curricular events, etc., to help students learn about new and/or current practices

17. Considering the limits of a two- or four-year degree program, please discuss your philosophy as to how music industry program directors might most efficiently balance the competing need to **a)** insure that fundamental coursework is of sufficient breadth and depth to provide students proper background and training while **b)** adequately address the need to constantly reconsider how the industry continues to fundamentally change resulting in a “moving target” of what knowledge and skill sets are needed by students to navigate this evolving landscape.

(Open text box for commentary)

Thanks you for taking the time to provide data for this survey.

18. Optional: If you provide your email address you will receive a copy of the aggregated data from the questionnaire responses.

Email address: _____

END

Appendix A. Curriculum survey in music industry course distributions (continued).

Appendix B

Sampling of Open-Ended “Balancing” Question Responses from Music Industry Curricular Survey

Question 17. Considering the limits of a two- or four-year degree program, please discuss your philosophy as to how music industry program directors might most efficiently balance the competing need to a) insure that fundamental coursework is of sufficient breadth and depth to provide students proper background and training while b) adequately address the need to constantly reconsider how the industry continues to fundamentally change resulting in a “moving target” of what knowledge and skill sets are needed by students to navigate this evolving landscape.

“With limited faculty course instruction time, the best efforts produce curricular adjustments to current courses. Additional subject matter in other departments suggested to students to enhance knowledge.”

“In our view the business fundamentals remain essentially unchanged (accounting & financial management principles, basic licensing & royalty structures, general entrepreneurship & business administration processes, management & leadership skills, etc.), so these can remain relatively static, i.e., core courses. For those areas of the business where specifics have evolved (particular revenue models, promotion & distribution channels, marketing tactics relative to new media, etc.), these are handled within our program by rewriting the curriculum as required. We start with the “high level” basic courses and gradually delve into specifics as the program unfolds, allowing students to experience the breadth of business disciplines at a constant fast pace while zeroing in on more specifics incrementally in the later stages of the program. This also allows us to substitute or develop new course content on an ongoing basis. This approach can be conceptualized as a series of concentric circles of decreasing size or a spiral track, beginning at the outermost edge with “big picture” concepts and universals, with each successive level becoming more detailed. The latter “rings” contain the most specific and detailed, and thus most recently

updated, content.”

“We try to keep lines of communication open with our alumni in the industry, periodically seeking their advice and input regarding the changes they are seeing in the industry, and the resultant changes in skill sets required of our graduates. Our curriculum is a combination of courses that address “common denominator” business skills, applications, and general knowledge, which don’t change much over time, and those that are more specific to current practices, which are routinely tweaked and modified, or even replaced with new courses. We also digest feedback from our student interns, related to the preparation necessary for success at the particular internship site.”

“I include current events and marketing trends as class assignments. Also, I ditched the textbooks and have gone to an all web-based curriculum.”

“We strive to teach strong social, community and business fundamentals. Ideally, these personal foundations are able to sustain and inform our graduates as to how to apply themselves into new and emerging business scenarios. If students possess a sound understanding of marketing, asset management, and creative business administration, they should be able to perform and learn in almost any industry sector. Furthermore, we believe that in many ways, ‘the music business is not that special’ - there are very few industry sectors today which have not been affected by the ubiquitous distribution of digital content and the mass affordability of content development. As such, informed decision making and an understanding of the need for continuing self education can help mitigate many of the factors pressuring today’s ‘music business.’ From a technical standpoint, in order to foster an ethos of continual learning, we require that our students use RSS Readers in order to follow a variety of industry and general news information sources. Current events are constantly analyzed within our courses and applied towards previous lessons and learning.”

(Continued on next page.)

Appendix B: Sampling of open-ended “balancing” question responses from music industry curricular survey (continued).

“We are moving to a more liberal arts, general approach to our curriculum. Our new major is a 36 hour major, a required, related minor, general studies and electives. I am of the opinion that the specifics of what to teach our students is not as important as the broader concepts, and the ability to adapt, and keep on learning. We stress good communication skills, written and verbal, and a strong work ethic.”

“We make extensive use of our Registered Student Organization to serve as an ongoing [learning] lab - this group functions as a model production company. Membership requirements include GPA, participation, service to community.”

“1) You can’t teach everybody everything. 2) There are fewer ‘fundamentals’ than we think. 3) It is easier to adjust course content than to revise a program at the course level. 4) It is impossible to keep ‘current.’”

“We use a 32-credit core for all students which includes Music Fundamentals, Intro to Business, Intro to Media Communications and Internship credits. Then students concentrate in business, music, graphic arts or sound production. We will be doing a major update next year. We’ve developed quite a few new courses and some have been included in a new major – Arts Management.”

“The industry program must focus on fundamental business practices and acumen that can be applied to new and evolving business models. It is foolish to structure a program exclusively around new technological or business developments/models which (as in the case of the ‘dot com’ era debacle), prove to be quickly obsolete and irrelevant.”

“I find incorporating industry developments and updating class content is the easiest way to tackle the problem. Offering different courses that are not in the standard schedule to take as an elective certainly can balance things out as well, but moving quickly and addressing current events plays well to current topics of the course. If core courses are in place that address the fundamentals of the industry, it is much easier to update as you move forward.”

(Continued on next page.)

Appendix B: Sampling of open-ended “balancing” question responses from music industry curricular survey (continued).

“Currently undertaking a significant revision of entire music curriculum to better integrate with technology, education, and performance.”

“Look for content areas that can be telescoped [compressed] to cut credits so new courses can be added – consider completing courses in shorter time frame.”

“Rather than adding or subtracting courses, my upper level courses adapt to the industry changes every time they are offered, and have open-ended titles like ‘Advanced Studies in the Music Business.’ Otherwise, you spend too much time just getting curricula approved, let alone researching and actually teaching the course.”

“With the rapidly growing body of knowledge and practices, one must choose carefully how to balance the competing interests of fundamental knowledge and new information. One tactic we use is to have frequent contact between students and practitioners, allowing students to query working professionals about current practices. More reliance is also placed on reading weekly trade magazines and online industry sources in our curriculum. Our ability to modify our music business curriculum is severely limited by the requirements of our host unit to take specific music courses. The time seems right at our institution to reconsider from the ground up what skills and competencies tomorrow’s graduates need to excel [at] in the entertainment industry and hopefully craft a new type of degree that would better serve the student’s needs.”

“Our program is designed to be interdisciplinary and entrepreneurial in nature. As an independent center, we have a bit more flexibility in adding to or modifying our courses to meet changing needs. But there are certainly challenges in the industry being a moving target.”

“We are a multidisciplinary program in a large institution. We constantly ‘shop’ outside programs for relevant new or updated courses. We hire young faculty, engage practitioners from our community of experts and stress experience learning.”

(Continued on next page.)

Appendix B: Sampling of open-ended “balancing” question responses from music industry curricular survey (continued).

“We make use of a lot of real world externships and internships as well as guest speakers from the music industry to keep up with the constant change the industry is going through.”

“I can think of nothing more valuable than internships . . . in my experience the best indicator of [future] success has been the number of internships the student has done and the quality of the relationships they have created interning.”

“Given our geographic location, we have taken the approach of incorporating guests from the music industry into our courses as often as is possible/reasonable. We also make a strong effort to have our students do internships in locations where they have more hands on experiences and/or interact with industry professionals.”

“Read the trades (*Billboard*) and constantly research new textbooks for possible inclusion.”

“Ongoing revision of course content and curriculum [is necessary.] Frequent guest lecturers and adjunct faculty that are active in the industry also help.”

“You have to stay current yourself and constantly change course content.”

“Be active in the industry and make sure current trends are discussed with students. We added a MIO (Music Industry Organization) made up of students sponsored through Student government association and they bring in guest speakers, attend workshops, and try to stay on top of things.”

(Continued on next page.)

Appendix B: Sampling of open-ended “balancing” question responses from music industry curricular survey (continued).

“As educators/program directors we need to be constantly communicating with the music industry leaders and find out what skill sets they require from our students. After gaining that information, we are given the responsibility to teach our students those skills. We need to have courses that reflect the needs of the industry. This can be delivered [through] live lectures, via internet feed, internet course, webcasts, etc. With all the new technology, every institution that teaches music industry courses could collaborate together to develop a global/ international music industry curriculum. This would require the institutions, the educators and the music industry to work collaboratively together to develop courses that would meet everyone’s needs.”

“Since our institution is not in a major city we bring guest lectures, musicians, and leaders in the Music Industry to speak to our students. We also travel to various places to make contact with people who are currently working in the Music Industry. The more the students can speak and/or have contact with leaders in the music industry the more current the information will be. This also provides them a chance to network with these leaders in the industry. Using every possibility to network will give students a better opportunity to connect within our industry. By interacting on a personal level the students will also gain more knowledge from the source.”

“All courses should be reviewed annually to assure the inclusion of the new knowledge and skills; and the curricula should remain ‘liquid’ enough to accommodate this. Instructors need to keep abreast of new developments and integrate them successfully (not always so easy, I know).”

“Read professional mags, books, etc. Utilize guest speakers, field trips, and class projects. Give the students opportunities to input what they want to learn, and/or give them a chance to teach/share info/experiences with the class.”

“Hands on experiences such as practicums, apprenticeships, intern programs, etc., are very important for the student’s success and employment in this field.”

(Continued on next page.)

Appendix B: Sampling of open-ended “balancing” question responses from music industry curricular survey (continued).

“I try to bring in fresh examples to illustrate this idea of blending tried and true concepts with new situations while always stressing the fundamental business concepts that apply, regardless of economic or other factors that can constantly affect the music industry. Fundamental thought processes are still sound in evaluating new situations and solving new problems.”

“Have faculty remain involved in the industry.”

“Once a regimen of core MI courses is set (this core is the principal consideration, and should be modern/future-looking), they should also be flexible enough to allow for absorbing ongoing industry developments.”

“Our approach is to have a balance between full-time academic teachers and industry adjuncts co-delivering courses. This requires constant revision of curriculum to ensure business fundamentals underpin contemporary issues as the appropriate context within which to frame the business curriculum.”

“Here are some of my thoughts on this:

1. Just like music students need a strong foundation in basics of theory, ear training, keyboard skills, etc., so too music business students need to understand basics such as copyright, contracts, revenue streams, etc. These areas are foundational and remain fairly constant even as business models change.
2. It is important to design courses that won't quickly become obsolete and can evolve with the rapidly changing landscape of the industry. The key here is to come up with course titles broad enough to accept substantial content revisions, but still keeping a focus on the topic. (e.g., “Music Technology 101” as opposed to “Pro Tools 101”...)

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Appendix B: Sampling of open-ended “balancing” question responses from music industry curricular survey (continued).

3. It is important that students have access to individuals currently active in the music industry. This is not a problem for programs in music cities, but a big problem for those in smaller areas. For those students a partial solution is participation in as many conferences as possible.
4. Students need to get involved in organizations such as MEISA and Grammy U. Networking isn't just for finding jobs, it's a crucial part of their total educational experience."

"We offer a certificate program, not a degree program. [It has] lots of case studies, guest lectures, and internships that reflect actual job opportunities."

Appendix B: Sampling of open-ended "balancing" question responses from music industry curricular survey (continued).

Endnotes

1. The author will use the term “music industry” throughout this article to describe any degree program that has a goal of preparing students for careers in any of the non-performance areas of the music and entertainment industry.
2. While it is the author’s belief that the completion of carefully selected coursework in disciplines outside music industry studies is essential to the proper development of students pursuing careers in the music and entertainment industry, since there is an upper limit to how many units students may take in a given term as they pursue their degrees, there is a very real perception in the mind of some students that the various subject areas discussed in this article do, in fact, “compete” for a student’s time and units as they work towards their degrees. Thus, the author has chosen to adopt this student phraseology as part of the arguments embodied in this article.
3. At the author’s institution, the music industry program learning outcomes were developed in consultation with alumni and practitioners.
4. Although the existing curricular design scholarship available in our own discipline will be referenced in this article, the amount of such research is small considering the discipline will soon mark its half-century anniversary. As a result, the author decided to look outside music industry studies for possible alternative solutions to some of the challenges noted above. The field of Communication appears to offer a greater degree of latitude in how institutions may construct degrees than the music industry degree programs reported in this study. Some of the current research in Communication, along with a comprehensive literature review pertaining to the field, may be found in Dale A. Bertleson and Alan K. Goodboy’s informative “Curriculum Planning: Trends in Communication Studies, Workplace Competencies, and Current Programs at 4-Year Colleges and Universities.” *Communication Education* 58, no. 2 (April 2009): 262-275. The authors argue that a “standardized [national] curriculum...would be inconsistent with the continued growth and development of the communication discipline.” Likewise, they acknowledge that institutional strengths and constraints be considered in each institution’s degree design, rather than a central core curriculum to

be followed by all such programs. They advise a general set of curricular guidelines, reflecting what coursework is found at the majority of peer institutions offering Communication degrees be consulted and then adapted to best suit the multiple stakeholders involved in each institution's program. The method employed by Bertleson and Goodboy, which collected data on specific course offerings from 148 National Communication Association colleges or universities offering Communication degrees, and mapping their courses offered provides an excellent approach to determining national trends in curriculum in the discipline. They then compared their results to a similar study done ten years earlier to detect specific courses that were being offered at either a growing or declining number of institutions. While such a detailed course-level analysis was beyond the scope of the author's study, Bertleson and Goodboy's approach may merit consideration for possible duplication within the area of music industry studies curricular research.

5. Due in part to the scope of this research project, the author determined to exclude any study of institution-wide external accreditors and their ultimate influence on the issues presented here. This may represent a potentially fertile area for future study.
6. This last question gained added importance to the author, as a number of the most capable graduates from his program's class of 2011 voiced regret that their course of study had not included more time focusing on recent industry trends and practices and a little less time on theory and case studies rooted in the 20th-century industry models.
7. The only other similar data were reported in Frederick Taylor's "Academic Characteristics of Music Business Programs." *Tracking Popular Music Studies* 3, no. 2 (1991): 1-7. Taylor's research is currently available online at: http://www.icce.rug.nl/~soundscapes/DATABASES/TRA/Results_of_a_survey.shtml (Accessed September 18, 2011); and Janet Nepkie's "The Development of a Theoretical Basis for Four-Year Undergraduate Programs in Music Business Education." (Unpublished Ph.D. Diss., New York University, 1992). Therefore, a more detailed and updated set of data seemed due. While not addressing the detailed curricular structure of music industry degree programs, a number of other articles considered the issue of housing music industry degrees within a music unit versus

autonomous operation. These articles will be referred to later in this study.

8. Only seventeen of the survey's questions will be addressed in this article. The final question was an opt-in field for survey respondents to provide their email address in order to receive an aggregated copy of the survey data.
9. This list was primarily made up of institutions and/or educators who are or have been members of MEIEA. The 2009-2010 MEIEA Board graciously allowed use of the list for this study.
10. As the author conceived the methodology and data collection plan, it became clear that the discipline of music industry studies is one that has a great variety in approaches to degree construction, length of study, admission requirements, curricular goals, etc. Due in part to this variety of approaches, additional avenues for possible study will be suggested in the conclusion.
11. Due to the majority of respondent programs being hosted in a music department, including the author's own, special attention will be paid to such music-hosted programs in this analysis.
12. The idea of an autonomous music studies department or center has been discussed at some length in at least two prior articles. David Sanjek's critical appraisal of such an option was titled "A Department of Their Own: Modest Proposals for Designing Music and Technology Programs," published in the now defunct *NARAS Journal* 6, no. 1 (1995): 95-115. More recently, Robert Garfrerick's excellent essay revisits the question. "Music and Entertainment Industry Curricula: A Case for Autonomy?" *MEIEA Journal* 6, no. 1 (2006): 93-106.
13. Both quarter- and semester-systems generally comprise an academic year of 32-33 weeks composed of three eleven-week quarters or two sixteen-week semesters.
14. Taylor, Table 19, 7. Taylor reported only 1.4% relying on AACSB, 8.8% cited "more than one" accrediting agency, and 13% reporting no formal accreditation. The same study showed 76% of music industry programs housed in music units, somewhat higher than the 67% reported in this study. Based on this differential, it appears that non-music hosted music industry programs have grown at a greater rate than music hosted programs in the intervening years.
15. Such degrees may be accredited under the guidelines of The Asso-

- ciation to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).
16. Since the survey instrument did not include “Program is not accredited” as one potential response, one or more of the non-respondents to this particular question may also have fallen into this category.
 17. To provide some continuity in the reporting and analysis of the number of credits in each area, the author chose to use four credits as being equivalent to one course. This may not be accurate for music units, as will be pointed out later in this article. Based on this decision, questionnaire thresholds were set at multiples of four credits, i.e., 12, 24, 36, and 48 credits.
 18. For NASM-accredited music units, a review of the *National Association of Schools of Music Handbook 2009-2010* (December 2009 Edition), states that for Liberal Arts (B.A. or B.S.) degrees in music with a discipline specific emphasis (i.e., music industry studies), “coursework in the emphasis normally occupies at least 10% of the total curriculum,” 76. It should be noted that NASM uses 120 credit hours as the basis for evaluating four-year degrees, although this survey’s data shows that the actual median for credit hours is 125. This disparity likely reflects credit hour inflation in many music industry programs over time.
 19. See Appendix A, Question 8, for the precise wording. Autonomous programs were not excluded from the analysis, so it may be useful at a future date to look at what comprises so-called core curriculum for such degree programs.
 20. The *NASM Handbook* notes that to qualify as an “Emphasis” area within a Professional degree (B.M.), at least 15% of a student’s total credits should be in the emphasis area, 78. Using the data in this study, that would equate to no less than 18.75 credits based on the aforementioned 125-credit median. The respondent data with 12 or fewer units in the major may or may not meet this requirement if they are NASM accredited. Also, one might pose the question whether 18.75 credits is, in fact, optimal preparation for a career in the music industry.
 21. Claudia McCain. “A Model Music Business Curriculum,” *MEIEA Journal* 2, no. 1 (2002): 14-27. Stephen Marcone. “The Opinions of Music Management Graduates on Music Management Curriculum,” *MEIEA Journal* 4 (2004): 43-59.
 22. McCain, 23.

23. Marcone, 43-59. Additionally, based on the results of his research, he replaced the required Conducting class with a class in Record Company Operations.
24. The only exceptions were alumni that had gone into music production or composition-related careers.
25. The 2009-2010 edition of the *NASM Handbook* contains a revised Appendix 1.D., which expands the suggested elements of music industry degree programs hosted in music units, and which was developed in consultation with MEIEA faculty, 152-164. However, one may also see that the breadth of core knowledge and competencies recommended for inclusion in such degrees is substantial, leading the author to question whether or not such an extensive range of knowledge may effectively be taught and assessed within a music-hosted music industry degree.
26. At the time of this writing, the author is developing a course plan for a one-credit class for the coming year to be team taught with a colleague from the Communication Department addressing best practices and current trends in viral marketing and social networking pertinent to the entertainment industry.
27. Any detailed consideration of the tension within the academy between the so-called “fine arts” and the business, production, and economic issues that surround such an arts milieu is beyond the scope of this article, however, such discourse is likely to be an important consideration in addressing the concerns which this research brings to the fore. As such, music industry educators would be wise to consult with a mix of stakeholders as part of their efforts to analyze and potentially adapt their degree programs. These might include alumni, current students, other music industry program directors, and forward-thinking administrators at their own institutions.
28. Notably, the discipline-specific accrediting agency, which encourages such extensive study in the host discipline, may at times provide some credit relief with respect to the area of general studies credits. At the author’s own institution, the university-wide regional accrediting body suggests 45 credits of general studies, while NASM suggests only 30-35% in general studies (equating to as little as 36 general studies credits), offering some possible relief to the credit overcrowding issue. However, rather than using such a prospective

- net reduction in units to expand studies in music industry, students in the author's program pursuing the B.M. with Emphasis in Music Industry are faced with the 54-credit core music curriculum.
29. As a practical matter, it must also be noted that so-called "non-professional" music degrees suggested by NASM do allow for less of the traditional musicianship core curriculum and greater breadth of study. As a result, the author added a B.A. in Music with Emphasis in Music Management to his program's offerings in 2004. However, many students studying in this degree program (which reduced the core musicianship credits from 54 to 40) have still voiced a preference to replace a portion of this area of study with more music industry coursework.
 30. Music industry educator Theo Papadopoulos of Victoria University has been part of a team at his institution to adapt their curriculum to include what has been termed "integrative learning" strategies. These included incorporation of complex problem-solving and team-based learning into his curricula, within a three-semester unit of study called Professional Development. This was to help address the gaps in the knowledge, problem solving, and critical thinking skills that Papadopoulos and his colleagues had observed many students lacked. (Conversation with author, March 2010). To view the course modules they developed refer to: <http://www.vu.edu.au/units/BFP1100>; <http://www.vu.edu.au/units/BFP2001>; and <http://www.vu.edu.au/units/BFP3001> (Accessed September 15, 2011). For more information on the topic of integrative learning see "Learning That is Greater Than the Sum of Its Parts: Efforts to Build and Sustain an Integrative Learning Model in Music Management." Chase, David M. and Keith Hatschek, *MEIEA Journal* 9, no. 1 (2010): 125-147.
 31. Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa, *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses* (University of Chicago Press, 2011). The authors state, "Although growing proportions of high school students are entering higher education many are not prepared for college-level work," 33. They cite a 1992 government report prepared by the National Center for Education Statistics which stated that 44% of students expecting to graduate from college were either marginally qualified or not qualified for college, based on their secondary school GPA, high school rank, test scores and academic coursework, 34.

32. George L. Wimberley and Richard J. Noeth, "College Readiness Begins in Middle School," *ACT Policy Report*, <http://act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/CollegeReadiness.pdf> (Accessed September 10, 2011). In this 2005 study, the authors suggest that there may be a misalignment between college expectations held by students and their families and those students' actual high school programs of study, likely leaving students unprepared for the rigors of the academy, viii. Another factor affecting student readiness for college study may be the shift among some secondary institutions to require college prep coursework for all, which may not be effective in unilaterally addressing many students actual learning needs, thereby ironically, leaving them less prepared for college. See Valerie E. Lee and Douglas D. Ready, "U.S. High School Curriculum: Three Phases of Contemporary Research and Reform," *Future of Children* 19, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 135-156 for a discussion of the potential pitfalls of this approach to secondary curriculum.
33. For the increasing numbers of first-generation college students, added challenges may include poor time management and study skills, which potentially have a tremendous impact on learning outcomes in college. See Jeanne M. Reid and James L. Moore III, "College Readiness and Academic Preparation for Postsecondary Education: Oral Histories of First-Generation Urban College Students," *Urban Education* 43 (2008): 240-261.
34. While many institutions, such as the author's own, attempt to identify such students at the point of admission and route them into basic reading and writing skills classes during their first two semesters on campus, the author's own experience has been that such programs, at best, produce somewhat uneven results. This problem can be exacerbated further if transfer students are admitted who may have earned passing grades at another institution but are poorly prepared to satisfactorily complete more rigorous work at their current (four-year) institution. Students for whom English is a second language make up yet another subset that may need additional attention to become successful generally in college and specifically in their major. For more on the outcomes of so called "remedial" college courses consult Paul Attewell, David Lavin, Thurston Domina, and Tania Levey's article, "New Evidence on College Remediation," *The Journal of Higher Education* 77, no. 5 (Sept.-Oct., 2006): 886-924.

35. For more information on Cat 5 Publishing, visit <http://www.cat5music.com/about.html> (Accessed June 1, 2011). For more information on Orangehaus Records, visit <http://www.orangehausrecords.com/> (Accessed June 1, 2011). A so-called student-centered learning community focuses, at least in part, on pedagogies that result in exceptionally high levels of engagement by a particular group of students. Both curricular and co-curricular elements can help support such pedagogies. Examples might include on campus production companies, live sound services, booking bureaus or any student-led business venture, which draws on previous studies in the program. See the Intercollegiate Record Label Association for more information on such models, <http://studentrecordlabels.com/default.htm> (Accessed May 20, 2011). A more formal approach can be seen in recently added curricular programs focusing on popular songwriting, such as those found at University of Miami, which initiated its Minor in Creative American Music, and the University of Southern California, which has added a B.M. performance degree in Popular Music.
36. A hypothetical case makes this point clearly. If a music industry student were only to study classical musicology, then be hired by a recording company that specialized in jazz or world music, would she be able to operate with agency in that environment? Conversely, studying only popular and jazz music history would likely leave a gap in one's knowledge upon hire by a classical orchestra. The point is, based on regularly available course offerings, students should have some say in determining how best to prepare for their own intended career path.
37. Another interesting development is the creation of a Minor in Music Industry, as was reported by 4% of respondents. The author's own institution recently added such a twenty-credit Minor and has already seen interest for this course of study from music performance majors as well as students outside the music unit.
38. Nepkie, 119. In the same study, the author noted that established programs not housed in music departments, such as those then found at Belmont University and Middle Tennessee State University mandated far less music study, thereby allowing for more music industry coursework, 126.
39. Don Cusic, "Why Music Business Programs Should Not Be in

Music Departments,” *Popular Music & Society* 15, no. 3 (Autumn 1991): 117-122.

40. Such programs also hew more closely to the philosophical approach cited earlier that has been adopted to some degree in the field of Communication.
41. Garfrerick, 97.
42. Garfrerick also states that the rise in music industry program enrollments over the past thirty years has “in some cases created a cycle of perpetual poverty for music industry programs...since they attract [more] students faster and more easily than traditional music programs.” He also states that music industry student tuition dollars may “go disproportionately to other programs in the department, especially those programs that are expensive to run and do not have a high payoff in student enrollments,” 94. This argument may help explain why the current study identified a large proportion (40%) of programs that have a limited number of music industry courses required in their degrees.
43. For more information on Delta State’s program, see <http://www.deltastate.edu/pages/1290.asp> (Accessed February 1, 2011). For more information on Columbia College Chicago’s programs, see <http://www.colum.edu/academics/aemm/index.php> or the advising guide at: http://www.colum.edu/Academics/AEMM/PDF_Folder/AEM-M2011AdvisingGuide.pdf (Accessed May 23, 2011).
44. Based on the foregoing discussion, advocating for significant changes to music industry degrees is likely to result in varying degrees of friction at various institutions, in large part because music industry students often make up significant enrollments in host discipline courses, e.g., ensembles, which are reflected in institutional reports that are used to determine resource allocations. While such dialog may result in spirited disagreements, it is the author’s hope that the majority of educators and administrators can agree that considering what will best prepare students for post graduate success, based on a thoughtful and comprehensive analysis of evidence and facts, not historical ideals or protection of the status quo, will be used to help foster changes where needed to best serve students and to the degree required, the needs of industry.
45. In an effort to provide greater clarity for consumers of such degree programs, and in light of the documented growth of music industry

related degrees, minors, certificates, diplomas, and such, it seems reasonable to suggest that in the discipline's own self-interest, music industry educators should strive to provide better differentiation between the various types of programs, in part through publication of each program's intended learning outcomes. Doing so would not only help to better inform consumers about such higher education programs but could also be used to guide effective program assessment and possible future research.

46. For instance, the current survey was not designed to disaggregate respondent data by any parameter. As an example, two-year vs. four-year programs self-identified in a single question, and then continued with the rest of the general survey. A future survey design might offer a "trunk" with a few general questions and then specific "branches" for similar types of programs or degrees (e.g., recording industry, music merchandising/products, music entrepreneurship, etc.) thereby providing more detailed segmentation for further analysis.
47. For an overview on the emerging field of interdisciplinary studies see Ilana Kowarski, "Newly Customized Majors Suit Students with Majors All Their Own," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 5, 2010, http://chronicle.com/article/Newly-Customized-Majors-Suit/124284/?sid=at&utm_source=at&utm_medium=en (Accessed May 20, 2011). Note the similarity in this article's title to Sanjek's, "A Department of Their Own..." previously cited, showing that this thread of thought pertaining to strategies to give faculty and students more "ownership" of their programs is not in fact, entirely novel.
48. Ironically, tracking longer-term outcomes of program graduates is an area that may offer the best evidence of efficacy of undergraduate training, yet few schools as of yet appear to invest in such research. Furthermore, at the 2011 MEIEA Conference, a three-part workshop on assessment best practices shared insights into best practices for assessment in higher education.
49. Garfrerick ended his 2006 article with the thought-provoking question of whether or not music industry had finally attained the critical mass necessary to stand alone as a discipline. He then concluded that all music industry programs deal with the issues that he addressed to greater or lesser degrees (and which issues are expanded upon in this article). He suggested program directors consider his

questions with urgency. Five years afterwards, the challenges for many music industry educators outlined in this study seem at least as compelling as Garfrerick's and certainly worth an attempt to answer.

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