

Request to Establish a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Jazz and Contemporary Music Degree Program at University of North Carolina at Asheville

UNC Asheville requests authorization to establish a B.F.A. in Jazz and Contemporary Music degree program (CIP 50.0910).

Program Description

The Bachelor of Fine Arts in Jazz and Contemporary Music degree program will prepare students for careers in vocal and instrumental performance by providing strong foundations in jazz, popular, and other contemporary styles, drawing from European, African-American, and world traditions. Students will also develop skills in improvisation, composition, arranging, and music business. This performance degree program will enable students to integrate the study of jazz and contemporary music within the strong liberal arts mission of UNC Asheville, gaining an understanding of the dimensions of human diversity while recognizing the common humanity by studying and performing music of diverse traditions. The Department of Music at UNCA currently offers a B.A. in Music with a concentration in Jazz Studies and a B.S. in Music Technology. If the proposed major program is approved, the B.A. in Music with a concentration in Jazz Studies will be discontinued. The proposed B.F.A. program complements the B.S. in Music Technology program, which provides students with the opportunity to undertake concentrated study in the technical and creative aspects of music and recording. A total of 130 semester credit hours will be required to complete the B.F.A. degree program.

Mission Relevance

The mission of the Department of Music is directly linked to UNCA's mission of providing a broad, general education in the liberal arts and sciences. Music historically has been integral to a liberal education. The Department seeks to promote music as an integral component in UNC Asheville's liberal arts curriculum as well as provide high-quality preparation for students seeking careers in the music profession.

Student Demand

The Bachelor of Arts in Music degree program was augmented in 1994 to include a Jazz Studies track. In recent years, proportionately larger numbers of majors have opted for the track in Jazz Studies—indicating a significant shift in student interest toward more contemporary forms of music and a growing understanding that training in these forms will afford the graduate more flexibility when looking for work in the music field. For example, two new assistant professors were hired in Fall 2011, both specialists in jazz and contemporary music, and courses taught by these faculty members in their areas of expertise have been fully enrolled. UNC Asheville is not seeking the B.F.A. in Jazz and Contemporary Music degree program as a way to drastically increase enrollment, but rather to provide a nationally recognizable and more marketable degree for the UNCA students already concentrating in jazz studies.

Societal Demand and Opportunities for Program Graduates

The BFA in Jazz and Contemporary Music is designed to equip students with the diversity of skills required in today's rapidly evolving music industry. Because of the liberal arts focus of UNCA, the inclusion of contemporary music combined with jazz studies, and the diversity of campus musical ensembles with numerous performance opportunities, UNC Asheville's

proposed program will provide students the skills to meet current professional needs in the ever-changing music industry. Locally in Asheville, new venues, a burgeoning tourist and wedding industry, and a thriving music production industry have increased the demand for skilled performers, studio musicians, teachers, arrangers, bookers, journalists and producers. Further, aside from the local performing opportunities, many successful music-related companies are based in Asheville. UNCA has an active and established engagement with these companies that provide internship/employment opportunities for enrolled students and graduates.

Resource Implications

No new resources are needed. Because the new BFA program is an expanded version of the currently existing BA in Music with a concentration in Jazz Studies, very few new courses need to be developed. The proposed BFA degree was designed so that it can be delivered by the current full-time faculty in the UNC Asheville music department, and without any additional resources.

Collaborative Opportunities

Faculty members have established relationships with faculty and ensembles at surrounding area colleges (Western Carolina University, Mars Hill College, Appalachian State University) and are looking to widen the associations to include NCCU and UNCG. Possibilities include shared jazz festivals, collaboration in bringing artists to tour a North Carolina circuit of schools, tours of student ensembles, and exchanges of ideas and students.

Outcome of System-wide Review

Three disciplinary experts representing three UNC institutions responded to the survey questions concerning the proposed Bachelor of Fine Arts in Jazz and Contemporary Music at UNCA. One subject matter expert indicated no major concerns regarding the proposed program, and the other two provided questions or comments regarding student demand, societal demand, program requirements and curriculum, faculty sufficiency and student support, and budget. UNC Asheville responded to the questions and comments to UNC General Administration, and those responses are reflected in this summary.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve University of North Carolina at Asheville's request to establish a B.F.A. in Jazz and Contemporary Music degree program (CIP 50.0910) effective August 2013.