

USC School of Music Academic Blueprint 2023-24

2022-23 Goals:

Goal 1. Offer & award the levels of financial aid necessary to attract, retain, & develop the very best and most diverse & representative student body.

Level of accomplishment and/or progress made:

In 2020-21 Music obtained a substantial amount of new funds from the university, some of which was directed and redirected into student financial aid for meritorious and need-based students. As a result, in 2022-23, we increased our investment in financial aid to our student body thusly:

- A. for undergraduate students, we went from \$763k scholarship expenditures in FY 21 to \$850k in awards for FY23.
- B. for graduate students, we went from expending \$911k in tuition remissions and stipends for assistantships and fellowships in FY 21, to awarding \$1.17MM in tuition remissions and stipends for assistantships and fellowships in FY 23.

Goal 2. Continue development of the School's new vision and goals, post-Vision2025 Strategic Plan, into a Vision2030 plan whose launch will correspond with the celebration of the *100th Anniversary of Music at Carolina* in 2024-25.

Level of accomplishment and/or progress made:

The School of Music has planned a series of three retreats over the course of the period January 2023-August 2024. The goals of these retreats are to: a. take stock of where we are with achieving the specifics of our Vision2025 plan; b. revisit our five core values expressed last in 2015 in the Vision2025 plan; c. establish a new vision statement and goals and objectives for the period 2025-2030, Vision2030, articulating the first 5 years of Music's second century at USC; d. develop a plan for celebrating the *100th Anniversary of Music at Carolina* during 2024-25.

The first of three planned retreats with faculty and staff of the School and the Koger Center occurred on Friday 13, January 2023. The retreat was a success as the faculty and staff participating (81 persons) explored where we have been; where we feel we have experienced successes and failures with our Vision2025 goals and actions, as well as both adhering to and reinforcing our core values from that exercise; and explored initial ideas about how to recognize our anniversary in 2024-25.

Goal 3. Secure both the successful launch of 3 new programs of study (BS in Music Industry Studies, BA in Music w/concentration in Musical Theatre, and the campus-wide Entrepreneurship minor), as well the advancement of an existing programs in the School receiving new investment (Jazz).

Level of accomplishment and/or progress made:

Each of the new programs were launched with success. The BS in Music Industry Studies (MIS) has exceeded enrollment projections for its year 1 (roughly 35% larger than anticipated in 2021-22) and year 2 (roughly 43% larger than expected 2022-23). We projected a total enrollment in the program at the end of year 2 to be 25. That enrollment will at that juncture (May 2023) be 47, including some juniors and seniors who switched over from a similar music industry studies minor program in the last 2 years. Students in the program are involved in research/civic engagement/internship experiences throughout the Midlands, SC, and in 6 states, and have accumulated an average GPA in these first two years of 3.61 in all courses, and in excess of 3.8 in music industry courses.

The BA—Musical Theatre (MT) launch has also been more successful than anticipated, though not with the same magnitude as the MIS with respect to enrollment of students in the concentration. We expected 6 students who would declare the MT concentration in year 1 and 10 more in year 2, to total 16 students in all by the end of year 2. Considering both students newly admitted to the university who have declared the MT concentration, as well as existing Carolina students from other music and non-music majors who have changed their degrees and/or concentration to MT, 21 students are currently enrolled in the MT concentration, a 31.25% larger enrollment than originally projected. The most telling measure of success of the launch of the program, though, has been in student participation by those not declared in the concentration. In FY 23, the MT courses will have cumulative registrations of 66 students rather than the 30 we projected, for a substantial participation rate of approximately 120%. We expect as many as 10% of that “overage” to end up transferring into the MT concentration to supplement newly admitted students each year.

Awarding the School of Music as the home for the USC campus-wide Entrepreneurship minor, in partnership with McNair Institute for E-ship and Free Enterprise in 2021, has been an honor for the School. The minor has experienced enormous success in its first year of formal existence, 2022-23. While official #s of declared minors remains elusive as of the date of this report, enrollment in the three core classes for the minor identified as ENTR courses (201, 301 and 401), has exceeded expectations as well. Our goal for this first year was to enroll 50 students in the four classes by Spring 2023, but the courses have instead enrolled 107 students in this semester. The Living/Learning Community for Entrepreneurship has also been highly successful, meeting enrollment targets more than a year earlier than anticipated. In fall 2023, Dr. David Cutler, Professor of Music Entrepreneurship and Innovation in the SoM, will take over as faculty principal of this LLC.

It should be noted that both MIS majors and E-ship minors were created not only to address unmet student demand in those disciplines, but also to generate new net tuition revenue. Neither program will require expensive one-on-one applied music instruction like all other music degrees, nor will they demand the investment in merit-based scholarship dollars from School of Music accounts that all other music degrees

require. There are also no current enrollment management limits on those two programs like there are all other baccalaureate music programs.

And finally, with 2021 hires of three new faculty (one retirement replacement, one new position, and one conversion of a temp position into a permanent professional track Instructor), the Jazz faculty is now a full complement to meet the goals of the long-standing but long-not-fully-supported major programs in the SoM of Bachelor and Master of Music in Jazz Studies curricula. Two new GA positions have been established, and new facilities are being renovated for the Jazz programs (Greene St Church, see Goal #5 below).

Goal 4. Obtain successful Re-accreditation in Good Standing from NASM following the re-accreditation visit scheduled for Feb 2022.

Level of accomplishment and/or progress made:

With its Commission Action Report of December 2022, the National Association of Schools of Music granted the USC SoM “re-accreditation in good standing” with no deferrals, an action that occurs less than 10% of the time such decisions are made. This action came as a result of a self-study authored by the faculty and staff of the School in Dec 2021, an April 2022 Visitors’ Report (VR) authored by three music executives from other institutions (Univs of Michigan and Arizona, and FSU) who conducted an on-site with that Self-Study at USC in Feb. 2022, and the August 2022 School’s Optional Response to that VR. The decision was one of only 3 “re-accredits in good standing” out of 57 institutional cases at the November 2022 NASM Commission meeting, and the only one of those 3 not to require a progress report. USC’s SoM is the only institution among the 643 NASM members to achieve “re-accred in good standing” in each of their last two re-accreditation periods, 2000-2022.

Goal 5. Secure the renovations required in School of Music and Koger facilities, including the Greene St Church.

Level of accomplishment and/or progress made:

Demolition and renovations included in Phase 1 of the now-three-phased project to renovate the Greene St church properties for the School of Music to be home for its jazz programs and to be programmed in some cases by the Koger Center began in fall 2022. The \$2.5MM Phase 1 is projected to be completed in August 2023 when the facility will be ready to house four jazz faculty and support rehearsals, some classroom and studio instruction, and individual student practice for Jazz and for some of the School’s Musical Theatre enterprise.

Koger Center has witnessed the following progress on its renovation goals: a. phase 1 of the two-phased outdoor *Plaza Stage* was completed in the summer of 2022, and phase 2 is nearly completed as of this March 2023; b. each of the individual 2200 seats in the Koger Center’s main facility, Gonzales Auditorium, will be replaced in the summer of 2023, a project that has been more than 15 years in the making and that will cost nearly \$1MM; c. newly re-finished backstage floors and lighting and flooring renovations to the Large Rehearsal Hall were completed in 2022.

2023-24 Goals:

Goal 1. Offer & award the levels of financial aid necessary to attract, retain, & develop the very best and most diverse & representative student body.

Plans for accomplishment and/or progress:

This goal, always our #1, is one upon which we make annual progress, but one which we must continue to develop every year. Higher Ed Schools of Music in America are more like football teams than they are other academic departments with respect to student recruitment, financial aid, and enrollment. Music schools require appropriate balances of instrumentalists and vocalists to populate curricular ensembles required for music study at the baccalaureate and graduate levels. Achieving this balance demands an infrastructure and financing model that is practiced similarly to populating a football team with the appropriate balance of lineman to skill players, just like strings to brass players in an orchestra—too few of these, one relative to another, negatively impacts all. Our discipline-specific and peer-designed accreditation pays close attention to this balance.

Our progress from FY 21 through FY 23 designed to raise more philanthropic dollars resulting in both offers of an increased # of awards as well as awards with more substance has been excellent. But to remain competitive recruiting the best and necessary numbers and diversity of students at the ugrad level, and the very best and most diverse graduate student body we can, we must endeavor always to be raising new merit-based financial aid to keep pace with inflation and competitor offers. In FY 21, 81% of ugrad majors in music were on some sort of School of Music merit-based scholarship. With the advent of the BS-MIS program, where students are not-scholarshipped by the Music School separate from whatever merit or need-based aid they might get from the university, our FY 22 percentage of ugrad majors in music on SoM scholarship was down to 74%. Enrollments across the board were strong enough in all areas in fall 2022 (FY23) to raise that # back to 75%.

Our goal for FY 24 is to raise \$250,000 in scholarship funds through philanthropically--some to contribute to endowments, some to be awarded in one-time amounts--such that our total amount awarded would be: \$1MM in FY24, up from \$850k in FY 23 for ugrads, and \$1.25MM in graduate funding, up from \$1.19MM in FY 23.

As for diversity, the School advances its student body diversity goals in three ways: a. achieving a more representative population; b. recognizing a richness of cultures in actual musical programming; c. engaging more persons of color in audiences, support boards, and in community engagement partnerships. For a. above, we stand currently at 31.75% persons of color among our student body, with the vast majority of this reflecting persons identifying as Asian. While that # is notable, the % of the music student body that is African-American is 17.73%, a number we wish to raise. Our FY 24 goal would be to hit 19% African-Americans enrolled. With respect to metric b. above, the School's student and faculty soloists and ensembles programmed roughly 3917 different pieces of music in FY 23. Of that #, approximately 34% were composed by either female composers or persons of color. Our goal for FY 24 would be to hit 37%. As it relates to c. above, it is difficult to measure levels of participation by persons of color in our various Music For Your Life community programs, and among our partners. But, it is not difficult for us to increase our attention to organizations, corporations, foundations, and families that feature more persons of color among their boards and management. Though determining an actual metric for this is not possible, our goal is to engage at least 5 more such entities in FY 24 than we did in FY 23.

Goal 2. Secure the renovations required in the Greene St Church.

Plans for accomplishment and/or progress:

The renovation of the three properties comprising the Greene Street Church is on-going and completing each of the 3 phases of the project will likely take at least three years (FY 23, FY 24, FY 25) and perhaps beyond. Fully-funded Phase 1 will be completed at the start of FY24, and the School will begin basic usage of portions of two of the three buildings there (the church proper and the parsonage), and complete usage of one of the facilities (the Education Bldg). It is the goal of the School to obtain the pricing for a full renovation of the church proper that can be funded by dollars currently under the authority of the SoM, and to secure the Board approval required for it to pursue the construction of Phase 2 in FY 24.

The School's Dean and its Development team will also be pursuing funding for Phase 3 in FY24, which could be as high as \$2MM, all with the intent of determining whether the funds required and the Board approvals necessary could be granted no later than FY 25.

Goal 3. Continue development of the School's new vision and goals, post-Vision2025 Strategic Plan, into a Vision2030 plan whose launch will correspond with the celebration of the *100th Anniversary of Music at Carolina* in 2024-25.

Plans for accomplishment and/or progress:

The School of Music has planned a series of three retreats over the course over the period January 2023-August 2024 (See Goal #3 from 2023-24 above). The goals of these retreats are to: a. take stock of where we are with achieving the specifics of our Vision2025 plan; b. revisit our five core values expressed last in 2015 in the Vision2025 plan; c. establish a new vision statement and goals and objectives for the period 2025-2030, Vision2030 articulating the first 5 years of Music's second century at USC; d. develop a plan for celebrating the *100th Anniversary of Music at Carolina* during 2024-25.

The second of the three planned retreats with faculty and staff of the School and the Koger Center will occur in January 2024. Our goals for that retreat are:

- a. to revisit our 5 core values and see if any require edit or removal, and author any new ones as a result of the revisit;
- b. draft a new vision statement for the School to guide its next 5-year period of planning and implementation, *Vision2030*;
- c. develop a final draft of the contents of a *100th Anniversary of Music at Carolina* year of celebration in 2024-25.

Goal 4. Increase the School's retention and graduation rates.

Plans for accomplishment and/or progress:

We did not list this as a goal before this 2023-24 Blueprint because we knew we were bringing new degree programs on-line at the time and that both our retention and graduation rates would be impacted by our classes of new and transferring students for those programs and the uncertainty regarding the initial success of those programs. Now that those programs have matured and are growing, it makes sense for us to conduct a thorough analysis of our retention and graduation rates and articulate goals for raising them.

Pertaining to graduation rates, it should also be noted that the School of Music pays more attention to 5 yr graduation data than it does to 4 yr data, as the most commonly awarded undergraduate degree in music is the Bachelor of Music Education (BME) that requires 138 credits for graduation and students occasionally require into a 5th year of study to finish it. As the School awards merit-based scholarship dollars to BME students for a 5th year if necessary, and though more students finish the degree in 4 years with each passing cohort, it should be further noted that because of accreditation and state licensure requirements, the BME degree is often considered a 5yr endeavor in the industry of school music teacher training programs in higher education institutions.

As specific 5yr graduation data is not available, we will use 6yr data as it is more indicative of the success of the SoM than is a 4yr rate. Using that as our metric, the School's rate attained with the 2016 cohort (the last one of the 6yr variety available) was 79.37%. Professional advising that began in 2016 and would be reflected in the School's grad rate for the first time in 2018-19, has helped us retain more ugrads through the end of their degree programs--we expect that, when available, the data will show that our 6 yr rates for the 2019 and 2022 cohort is higher than it was in 2018 and certainly higher than it was during the COVID graduation years of 2020 and 2021.

With respect to our SoM retention rate, the fact that it plummeted in 2019-20, the pandemic year, and remained low in 2020-21 while in excess of 5% of our students simply did not return to school, was alarming. The increase in 2021 from 2020 is significant, and it reflects not only a more stable realm for music study post-pandemic, it also reflects the import of professional ugrad advising for all four years offered in the School of Music. Our retention rate in 2021-22 was 81.67%: we are hopeful that when available, our 2022-23 rate will be higher than that one, and that positions us to set the goal of a retention rate for the 2023-24 year that will be simply higher than the one achieved in 2022-23.