



News & Events

University News & Information

California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, California

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Cal Poly Music Department Receives National Accreditation

SAN LUIS OBISPO – The Music Department at Cal Poly recently received an unqualified five-year accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM).

The award of accreditation culminates nearly two years of preparation, including departmental deliberations, a preliminary review, a thorough self-study, and a site visit by an accrediting team in May 2003.

The reviewers visited academic classes, rehearsals and a student recital. They met separately with faculty members, alumni and current students.

"This puts Cal Poly's music program in the company of the finest programs in the country," said Department Chair Clifton Swanson. "Ever since the establishment of the major in music in 1991, our graduates have continually demonstrated the quality of our program when they go off to major graduate school programs, public school teaching and industry," he said.

The accreditation process requires meeting rigorous standards in the areas of program philosophy, program design, excellence of teaching, performance opportunities, equipment, facilities, faculty and general education.

"The Cal Poly Bachelor of Arts degree in music is a general degree designed to maximize the personal abilities and goals of each of its majors through personal attention and excellent opportunities," Swanson said.

The lengthy self-study was prepared by the entire music faculty with specific members responsible for assigned areas. The final document was refined by faculty member Alyson McLamore and Administrative Support Coordinator Druci Reese. It was the responsibility of the visiting two-member team to assess the quality of the program firsthand and to verify the information found in the self-study, including the department's own determination of areas for improvement. The accreditation notification made note of the excellence of the self-study.

Although Cal Poly's Music Department has been a part of the university since its inception, it began to offer a bachelor's degree in music in 1991. The department was initially urged to design a program that was unique and complementary to Cal Poly and its mission. As a result, the existing program offers traditional courses found at most universities plus a variety of courses in research methods,

music technology, non-Western music and America's music.

"Because of a long tradition of maximizing the involvement of non-music majors from all across campus, the current program still prides itself on the inclusive nature of its offerings," Swanson said.

The accreditation notification complimented the department on designing a program that worked well at a highly competitive university.

"The department is delighted with the results of its first application for accreditation," Swanson said. "Not only was the entire process informative for our own reflection and planning, but it was actually an enjoyable experience. It was a pleasure talking with the visiting team and was mutually beneficial as we discussed our common strengths and challenges."

"The successful accreditation is especially satisfying because," McLamore said, "most first attempts at NASM accreditation are routinely met by at least a temporary postponement plus a list of areas to be addressed before accreditation is granted."

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