



University of Colorado **Boulder**

2025 Program Review

College of Music

Academic Review and Planning

Advisory Committee Report

Approved

Signed by:  
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Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs | Date

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## Process Overview

The Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC) review of the College of Music was conducted in accordance with the 2025 program review guidelines. The degree program report and goal setting exercise were prepared and submitted by the unit. An external review committee (ERC), consisting of 2 experts from outside of the University of Colorado Boulder, engaged in a virtual visit and submitted a report based upon review of relevant documents and interviews with faculty, staff, and student unit members and university administrators. ARPAC staff, employing web conferencing tools, facilitated the external review as a remote visit over April 28 and 29, 2025. The ARPAC unit liaisons submitted a summary of findings derived from the goal setting exercise. ARPAC reviewed and considered these materials, met with the dean, and wrote this report.

## Past Reviews

The last program review of the College of Music occurred in 2017. Since that time, the college's home in the Imig building has undergone long-planned renovation and expansion, and the campus navigated the deprivations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Both developments have affected the college's progress (both positively and negatively) with respect to ARPAC recommendations.

- Fundraising: Impressively, in 2021 the college met a \$50M fundraising campaign goal to support construction costs for Imig renovation.
- Improved access to practice rooms: Imig now has 10 new practice rooms, which alleviates competition for these spaces.
- Expansion of offerings in “contemporary music, entrepreneurship, and new technologies,” particularly related to music production and dissemination, and expansion of the Entrepreneurship Center for Music (ECM); the college has made several improvements in these areas, including:
  - Imig renovation included space dedicated to the ECM that supports expansion of entrepreneurial activities. These include the 2020 launch of a graduate Certificate in Arts Administration (although it is on hold in academic year [A]) 2025-2026), an undergraduate Certificate in Music Entrepreneurship, courses in entrepreneurship, and developing an arts administration internship program. These ECM programs involve partnerships with a variety of national and local organizations such as the Carnegie Hall Lullaby Project, Children's Hospital Colorado, and the Boulder Philharmonic Orchestra, among others.
  - A new assistant professor of composition is now directing the Pendulum New Music Series.
  - New degrees were launched, including a Bachelor of Music in Musical Theatre and a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Music with Emphasis in Music Technology.
  - One course in music entrepreneurship is now required for all Bachelor of Music students.
  - Increased live-streaming faculty and student performances:
    - The college purchased audio/visual (A/V) equipment and has made it available for students to check out.
    - The media staff specialist position was increased from part time to 1.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) to support all forms of A/V production.
    - New music halls in Imig are equipped for live streaming performances.

The last ARPAC had several recommendations with respect to student support and student success.

- Carry out improvements to undergraduate advising: the college developed a model in which undergraduate advising is handled by staff members, while faculty handle graduate advising and career mentoring for all.
- Make more course offerings available to non-majors and make music more accessible to students in double majors: The college launched a music minor in 2018 and has added to its offerings of non-major music courses. The minor has grown to the extent that it became necessary in 2020 to impose an enrollment cap of 100 students.

At the time of the last review, ARPAC recommended planning for the pending retirement of the director of the American Music Research Center. A new director was hired to the faculty in 2018, and the center is flourishing and has been hosting residencies of scholars and artists in a wide range of American musical genres and traditions.

Two goals set by the last ARPAC have not been reached:

- Recruitment of a new faculty member specializing in music entrepreneurship was stymied by budgetary impacts of COVID-19.
- Graduate student support is a long-standing problem that has not been resolved. ARPAC recommended finding the right balance between the number of graduate students and the size of the support packages offered and recommended that the college increase appointments from the college norm of 25% to at least 45% to be competitive. After a successful pilot program in musicology offering fewer, larger (40%) teaching assistant (TA) appointments, the college reduced the number of teaching assistantships by 10 in 2021. The reductions have the potential to impact the size of ensembles and, according to the unit response to the 2017 ARPAC report, resulted in insufficient recruitment of graduate students to fulfill teaching needs in music education. However, even at 40% appointments, the college remains out of alignment with other units across campus, which offer 50% appointments.

## Unit Analysis

The campus' standardized description of the College of Music is available on the website of the Office of Data & Analytics (D&A) at <https://www.colorado.edu/oda/institutional-research/institutional-level-data/information-department/academic-review-and-planning>. D&A updates the profile annually in the fall semester. This report cites data posted in August 2024, reflecting the state of the College of Music as of the academic year (AY) 2023-2024.

## Teaching and Learning Excellence and Assessment

At the undergraduate level, the College of Music offers, first, a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in Music, with either a general emphasis or with emphasis in jazz, musicology and world music, music production, or music technology and media studies. An emphasis that allows students to earn a double degree in music and an engineering discipline is also offered, and an emphasis in songwriting will be available as of fall 2026. Second, the College of Music offers a Bachelor of Music (BM) degree with specializations available in Brass Performance and Percussion Performance, with and without a secondary emphasis in Jazz Studies; Composition; Jazz Studies;

Jazz Studies (piano); Harpsichord Performance and Piano Performance (piano and keyboard); Musicology; Classical Guitar Performance, Harp Performance, Strings Performance (strings); Voice Performance and Musical Theater (Voice + opera + musical theater); and Woodwind Performance, with and without a secondary emphasis in Jazz Studies. Third, the college offers a Bachelor of Music Education (BME) degree in several areas: Choral General; Choral; Instruments General; Instrumental Band; Instrumental Strings; and Instrumental Jazz. A joint BA/BME dual degree is offered in Brass/BME Instrumental Band, BM Percussion/BME Instrumental Band, BM Strings/BME Instrumental Strings, BM Voice/BME Choral, and BM Woodwinds/BME Instrumental Band.

The College of Music also offers a minor in Music, and many student credit hours (SCH) are generated from both students who take the minor and those who take elective classes offered by the college. The Singing Health Specialist certificate in partnership with the Department of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences offers interdisciplinary training in vocal health and wellness through courses in speech, language and hearing sciences, vocal pedagogy, and musicians' wellness, designed for both vocal music and speech-language pathology majors. Another popular interdisciplinary program is the Music Technology Certificate, which draws many engineering students. Finally, Music Ensemble courses are open to any CU student.

Interdisciplinary teaching is not always easy, of course. In conversations with ARPAC, the dean mentioned difficulties in serving students in the Musical Theater program with appropriate dance curriculum, given that jazz and tap classes are not always available in the Department of Theatre and Dance. ARPAC encourages the College of Music and the Department of Theatre and Dance to collaborate on increasing offerings to serve students' curricular needs.

At the graduate level, the college offers both master's and doctoral programs. The Master of Music (MMus) degree includes tracks in composition and music theory, conducting, performance, performance and pedagogy, and performance and research, each of which includes multiple emphases. The performance and pedagogy track, for example, includes all band and orchestral instruments, guitar, harp, harpsichord, jazz, piano and voice. There are two tracks within the Master of Music Education (MME) degree. Both focus on refining students' teaching philosophy and practices, and one offers degree/certification for kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade (K-12) teaching for students who have completed an undergraduate degree in music, but in a major area other than music education. The two doctoral degrees offered are a Doctor of Musical Arts and a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Music. The first is a professional degree intended for composers, conductors, and performers who possess both creative and scholarly abilities. The latter, with emphasis in music education or musicology, is tailored with faculty guidance to each student's goals and prepares graduates for careers in research and college teaching.

The teaching mission of the college is one that emphasizes intensive preparation for musical performance alongside an emphasis on the underlying knowledge, skills, and creative practices needed for its graduates to thrive in diverse professional, academic, and community contexts. The mission is grounded in a commitment to an intensive and holistic ("universal musician") approach to developing musicianship and scholarship, to collaboration, and the need to respond to changing professional opportunities in the field. This approach is embodied across programs; it is especially evident in the Entrepreneurship Center for Music at CU Boulder (ECM). A commitment to expanding opportunities for students from diverse and nontraditional backgrounds and improving

the relevance and diversity of course offerings is evident in its self-assessment of strengths, challenges, and goals for its programs. The breadth of the teaching mission is far-ranging, as evident in the sheer number of offerings and commitment to providing opportunities for students to become prepared for a wide range of careers in music, whether as performers, educators and leaders in schools and community settings, or scholars.

The College of Music has developed assessment plans with Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) for its undergraduate and graduate degrees, with the graduate assessment plans being newly developed. For the Master of Music, outcomes focus on accomplishment in students' area of specialization, synthesis, application, and communication of academic knowledge, and for those with a pedagogy specialization, applying knowledge and skills in group teaching and teaching specifically in one's area of specialization. The primary methods of assessment of advanced accomplishment in the specialization area are direct observation of performances and grades from courses, reviewed by a committee. For other objectives, a qualifying examination (with written and oral components) is used, as are assignments that require teaching videos and an annotated bibliography of a student's solo and/or group instrument or vocal repertoire. The MA in Music Education's objectives focus on knowledge of the foundations of K-12 music teaching and learning, demonstrating skill in research, and communication of academic knowledge. The assessments rely principally on traditional measures (tests) of knowledge, with the exception of the research project and the qualifying examination, which are performance tasks evaluated according to rubrics. For the Doctor of Musical Arts degree, students are expected to demonstrate advanced, professional-level accomplishment in their area of specialization; synthesize and apply knowledge of music theory and musicology; communicate and present research to academic audiences; and for those involved in music pedagogy, students are expected to demonstrate skill in teaching and show evidence of their knowledge of a repertoire for their specialization. As with the Master's in Music program, assessment is through a mix of performance, grades, and a comprehensive examination. For this program, there is also a final examination. The pedagogy assessments are like those of the master's program. For the PhD in music, students are expected to demonstrate expertise in knowledge of the discipline, synthesize and critically interpret arguments through academic sources, design and conduct high-quality research, and communicate their research to both academic and public audiences in written and oral form. A comprehensive exam is a principal means for testing knowledge; this exam has both an oral and written component, and a rubric is applied to score it. Other objectives are assessed via the dissertation and defense.

Strengths of teaching and learning opportunities is the focus on the "universal musician" who can apply and further develop their skills in performance to a changing landscape of professional opportunities, as well as the breadth and depth of opportunities for learning provided. Relatedly, there is a relatively new requirement for all majors to take a course in entrepreneurship to be able to adjust to this changing landscape. An opportunity is to consider how best to support graduate student success, possibly through reducing or consolidating degree requirements for some programs. A strength of teaching is the emphasis on having many opportunities for learning and practice and close relationships in teaching between teachers and students. An opportunity is to explore how best to maintain this focus on intensity and close relationships with the needs for the health and well-being of faculty and students and limited space. With respect to assessment, the College of Music has an opportunity to be innovative in assessment in ways other schools and colleges may find challenging, in that it can use creative approaches to evaluating and providing feedback to students that motivate future performance. With respect to interdisciplinary education,



the certificate in wellness is a strength. There may be additional opportunities to strengthen interdisciplinary collaborations with education and with the campus mental health initiative being coordinated by the Renée Crown Wellness Institute.

## Research, Scholarly, and/or Creative Work Excellence

The identity of the College of Music is one that gives strong priority to creative work in musical performance, composition, and publishing at the national level, within an environment where the last element, publishing, has changed dramatically over the past two decades. The research/scholarship/creative work skews toward creative works, with the average number reported by faculty being 71 in calendar year 2021-2022, as compared to an average of 1.4 refereed articles and chapters. Grant expenditures are relatively low compared to other units across the university (rank 49 of 63), at \$153,000 over the 5-year period that ended in 2022. Since the last ARPAC report, faculty have won internal awards for research and scholarly work (e.g., the BFA Award for Excellence in Research, Scholarly and Creative Work went to a faculty member in 2023, and the President's Award for the Humanities went to a different faculty member in 2023), as well as several external awards. These include a Grammy award (2020) for artist-in-residence Richard Michael O'Neill for Best Classical Instrumental Solo; the Centennial Award from the University of Miami for Mary Anne Parkes for contributions to music education; a Faculty Early Career Development Program (CAREER) grant from the National Science Foundation to Assistant Professor Grace Leslie; and the Gaudeamus Award to Annika Socolofsky in 2021.

The college is also committed to supporting the scholarly study of music and music education and has prominence among peer institutions (primarily other flagship public universities) for its creativity and innovation in these areas.

In terms of prominence, output, and scholarly and creative productivity, the college compares favorably to other public, flagship universities that play a strong role in their respective regions and states. Its senior faculty have strong national recognition in a range of areas, including both performance and composition. Its strengths in classical performance are shared by many other universities, though its interdisciplinary focus related to music entrepreneurship makes it stand out, and its breadth of offerings and connection to CU as a research 1 (R1) institution makes it different from more specialized programs among institutions it has, in the past, considered its peers (several large flagship public institutions, for the most part).

The faculty and students showcase their work through public concert series to the university and through a range of outreach programs to the university in music, opera, and musical theory. The college's students and graduates of their programs play significant roles in local schools and community arts organizations. At the heart of the college is a commitment to integrate creative output with community engagement.

The external review committee report highlights the strengths in research and creative production as including "a breadth and depth of excellent faculty output, a supportive physical infrastructure and current funding mechanisms, and their community engagement efforts." The ERC also calls for attention to increase incentives for creative productivity in the face of competing administrative and teaching demands, and for potentially leveraging partnerships with other units in the university and community organizations. Should greater emphasis be placed on collaborative work and partnerships, tenure and promotion policies may need to be adjusted to align with this emphasis. The college notes a desire to support faculty in identifying internal sources of funding support, as well, and the ERC notes that there are concerns about shrinking funding.

## Hiring and Mentoring (Faculty, Staff, Postdoctoral Fellows)

The D&A profile for AY 2022-2023 shows faculty personnel in the College of Music consisted of 61 tenured and tenure-track (TTT) faculty (24 full, 30 associate, and 9 assistant professors), 11 teaching-track faculty (including 6 assistant teaching professors, 3 associate teaching professors, and 2 teaching professors), 30 lecturers, 3 artists in residence, and 1 adjunct professor. This contrasts with the previous ARPAC report, using data from 2016, which lists 58 TTT faculty (12 full, 33 associate, and 13 assistant professors) and 39 “instructors and other adjuncts,” without differentiating instructors (now teaching-track faculty) from lecturers. The TTT faculty numbers have ranged from 59-62 since 2017. The number of teaching-track faculty positions has varied but seems to be on an upward trend.

Although the size of the TTT faculty has been stable since 2017, the number at full professor has increased considerably and the assistant population has declined slightly since that time. Data provided by the college in October 2025 shows 11 new hires in 2025 (5 assistant, 1 associate, and 1 full professor; and 4 assistant teaching professors). Collectively, the number of new faculty hires in 2025 is much higher than any year since the last ARPAC report, and the high proportion of hires at the assistant level will rebalance the population.

On average, faculty salaries are at 90% of the Association of American Universities (AAU) public peer average. Full and distinguished professor salaries are 86% of the AAU average. Assistant professor salaries are essentially at the AAU average (98%). This suggests that the college hires faculty at salaries that are competitive but fall further below AAU averages with each promotion, a situation that is typical across disciplines at CU Boulder.

As described in the college by-laws, faculty mentoring is coordinated by the faculty affairs coordinator (FAC) to provide support and mentorship for all faculty, including orientation and mentorship for new faculty. Mentoring of pre-tenured faculty by department chairs and colleagues is presumed, but particular mentors are not assigned. In addition to the presumed mentors, faculty members may invite others to serve as their mentors. Pre-tenured faculty meet annually with the Dean. Tenured faculty may meet with the Dean and/or FAC annually to discuss their goals. Teaching professor-track faculty (non-tenured) are expected to invite faculty members to serve as mentors on teaching during their initial term of appointment.

The ERC found hiring and mentoring systems (both formal and informal) generally effective and improved since the previous ARPAC review. However, they noted workload concerns for the associate dean for faculty affairs (faculty affairs coordinator) and noted some other weaknesses in the mentoring program. The pathways for non-tenure track faculty are unclear, and their mentoring scheme requires the faculty member to find their own mentors. Teaching professors are not assigned mentors, and do not automatically receive support from department chairs. Mentoring is expected only in their initial appointment period, and not beyond.

ARPAC also notes that overlap in the statistics of years in the unit for tenure-track faculty ranks suggests that progress through the ranks is impeded for some. Associate professor “years in the unit” range from 0-38 years (mean 14 years), and nearly half of these associate professors have been in the unit more than the 14-year mean.

## Student Success and Mentoring (Undergraduate and Graduate Students)

### *Undergraduate Education*

Overall, enrollment across programs as of 2024-2025 at the undergraduate level ( $n = 327$ ), has been stable, with some differences across degree programs. Degree programs whose enrollment was similar to the previous 4-year average were for the Bachelor of Music Program ( $n = 67$ ; previous four year average = 63.5); Bachelor of Arts in Music ( $n = 202$ ; prior  $M = 205.5$ ); the Bachelor of Music Education ( $n = 67$ ;  $M = 60.5$ ), and the PhD in Music ( $n = 14$ ;  $M = 13.75$ ).

In terms of degrees awarded, looking across programs in the college, a similar number of degrees were awarded in 2024 as in the previous years, though these numbers varied by degree program. The number awarded a Bachelor of Music degree was nine in 2024, below the range of 12-20 between 2020-23. Fifty students earned a Bachelor of Arts in Music degree, up from a range of 34-47 during that same period. The number awarded a Bachelor of Music Education degree was 12, similar to the range of previous years (8-16). The time to degree was the fastest among peers, 3.67 years on average.

In 2022-2023, a total of 24,769 student credit hours (SCH) were taught in the College of Music, an increase of 44% in the last five years. Seventy-five percent of those hours were taught to non-majors, indicating greater service teaching. Fifty-six percent of those hours were taught by TTT faculty; 18% by teaching-track faculty; and 11% by a graduate part-time instructor (GPTI)/teaching assistant (TA). The remaining 15% are taught by lecturers hired on a course-by-course basis. An honors program is not offered to the undergraduates in the major.

Undergraduates throughout the music major have ample opportunities to prepare for careers in different aspects of music, with the greatest numbers of hours being devoted to performance for most majors. In 2021, 52% of graduates of the undergraduate program said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the college's preparation of them for the job market. Ratings of the program overall varied by dimension, with high marks (and ranks) for faculty concern for individual students, preparation for employment, advising, and clarity of degree requirements. Lower marks were given for the overall curriculum (48% were satisfied or very satisfied) and preparation for graduate school (57%). It should be noted that the response rate for the survey was low ( $n = 23$ ; 43%). The unit report shows 52% employment for 2021 graduates.

One factor that likely influences the student experience is the intensive coursework requirements and high costs. The unit's own analysis highlights that the time required to earn credit far exceeds contact time, and that there are many requirements that squeeze out opportunities for electives. In addition, there are too few electives in some areas of great student interest, such as ethnomusicology. Limited resources mean that undergraduate ensembles leave with fewer touring experiences, and restricted technology access has costs as well, according to the external review committee report. Due to limited out-of-state undergraduate scholarship availability, it is difficult to attract students from other states. At the same time, the ERC report does highlight strengths of the certificate programs and music education in developing "real world readiness."

Some strengths in terms of the approach to undergraduate student success and mentoring are its preparation of students for a wide range of professional opportunities, intensity of mentoring, and specialized interdisciplinary programs. In terms of what might be improved, some streamlining of

requirements may be necessary, as well as the addition of courses that support the goal of the college to offer, and the interest of students in studying, more diverse forms of music. In addition, given the possibility that there will continue to be gaps between what time is required and what students expect, it would be useful to increase clarity of communication to students related to time commitments for the undergraduate major.

### *Graduate Education*

Programs at the graduate level varied in terms of how steady they were in enrollment in 2024, though overall enrollment ( $n = 167$ ) was similar to what it had been in the previous four years. In 2024, the PhD in Music Education's enrollment ( $n = 5$ ) was above the average of the previous four years ( $M = 3.5$ ). The master's in music education ( $n = 12$ ;  $M = 14.75$ ) and Doctor in Music Arts ( $n = 65$ ;  $M = 73$ ) had enrollments slightly lower than in the previous four years.

At the master's level, the number of Master of Music degrees awarded ( $n = 32$ ), was at the low end of the 2020-2023 range of 32-47. In Music Education, 15 master's degrees were awarded in 2024, above the range of 8-13 during the 2020-2023 period. For all three doctoral degrees, the number awarded was similar to the range between 2020-2023: for the PhD in music, that number was two; in music education, no students were awarded the PhD in 2024; and 17 were awarded the Doctor of Music Arts. The time taken to earn a degree is impressive: 1.7 years for a master's degree (rank 2<sup>nd</sup> out of 34 units) and 2.7 years to the doctoral degree post-master's degree (rank 3<sup>rd</sup> of 41 units).

The vast majority of graduate students report having opportunities to teach, and four-fifths are satisfied with their opportunities to teach; 94% reported it increased their interest in teaching. About half (50%) reported receiving formal preparation for their teaching role, a much higher percent report feeling confident in their abilities to perform the different activities of teaching, though this was higher for introductory undergraduate courses than for upper-level undergraduate courses. Graduate students' experience of advising was mixed (though similar to other units), according to the 2023 graduate student survey. The percentage who rated their advisor in key areas of teaching "Helpful," "Very Helpful" or "Extremely Helpful" ranged from 37% (helping write/revise my dissertation/thesis) to 56% (preparing for oral and written qualifying exams). About two-thirds (65%) were satisfied with the feedback they received on their teaching. At the same time, 79-80% rated their advisors highly with respect to research and scholarly creativity support. They rated nearly all aspects of the program's climate as high, except for having a say in departmental decisions, and in the transparency of those decisions.

About two-thirds of the graduate students reported being funded through teaching opportunities at some point in their program, and only 4% were being funded for research. Despite limited opportunities for funding through research, three-quarters to four-fifths of graduate students reported feeling prepared to engage in different aspects of the research process and research ethics through the college, according to the 2023 graduate student survey. Students reported fewer opportunities to prepare their own grants (33%) or support from a faculty member in doing so (19%).

In terms of preparation for the future, about two thirds of students rated communication high about employment and research opportunities while in graduate school, while about a third said their program helped them with finding connections and options for after graduate school. According to the college, it does not formally track any detailed information on where students go after

graduation. Broadly, they say that those who graduate with an undergraduate degree from the College of Music will either enter the profession immediately, as with BME (Bachelor of Music Education) graduates who are beginning music education careers (99% job placement rate); or they will often go on to graduate music study and pursue their master's degree. There are some who pursue careers in non-music fields and may continue with music on the side. Jazz graduates in particular will often continue or deepen their gigging work (playing with a variety of groups in various settings).

On the graduate side, master's in music students typically either secure employment in a variety of fields including performance with regional professional ensembles, studio-based teaching, and/or working with an arts organization. Master's in music education students typically secure K-12 public or private teaching positions, with a few choosing to continue study at the doctoral level. Doctoral-level (DMA) students secure employment in a variety of fields including performance with national regional professional ensembles and University level tenure-track/adjunct positions. Doctoral-level (PhD) students secure University level tenure-track/adjunct positions or school district administrative/leadership positions.

With respect to cost, high costs make living expenses difficult to meet for graduate students and often result in them needing to seek a second job. Fifty-nine percent were satisfied by their level of financial support, but only 20% said their stipend covered the cost of living. Fifty percent of graduate students reported food insecurity, and 75% reported worrying about being able to meet their monthly housing expenses. About half of the students reported financial reasons for why they faced difficulties with degree completion. Notably, of all the dimensions graduate students rated for program satisfaction in the 2023 survey, satisfaction with their stipend was lowest, with 48% being satisfied or very satisfied.

Strengths of the graduate program include the opportunities for teaching that are provided within the program. At the same time, weaknesses are opportunities for research and for support for exploring job opportunities post-graduation. A big threat is the high cost of living in Boulder, which makes it difficult for students to survive on their stipends and likely contributes to a sense of food and housing insecurity that is reported on student surveys.

ARPAC also calls attention to these financial difficulties being connected to the lower-than-normative percentage of graduate student appointments in the College of Music. While the percentages of graduate appointments have been raised since the previous ARPAC review, the college must strive to reach the campus norm of 50% appointments for doctoral students. Establish a norm of 50% appointments for doctoral students. The need to spread graduate students across various ensembles in their teaching appointments is not a good reason to stint on adequate student support. The college should consider creative approaches to building community partnerships and internships into research assistant positions and should continue to pursue external funding to be able to support these additional graduate student appointments for both research and teaching.

## Inclusivity and Unit Culture

In February 2022, a collaborative group met and identified the following [five goals to advance diversity, equity and inclusion](#) at CU Boulder: (1) employee skills and development; (2) student

achievement outcomes; (3) community building; (4) employee recruitment outcomes; and (5) preparing students to participate in a diverse democracy.

The college has aligned itself with these goals through an overarching goal of developing “universal musicians” who can operate sustainably and flexibly as compassionate world citizens, and through its Musician’s Wellness Program. The external review committee highlighted the universal musician approach as a unique aspect of the program at CU Boulder. The ERC extols the inclusive programming, diverse course offerings, guest artist diversity, and diverse new hires.

Overall, the college is committed to building a diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture. Their universal musician goal embodies these values. The college supports study and performance of a wide range of musical genres, from electronic music to early music, opera to jazz, non-western music ensembles to marching bands. The American Music Research Center promotes research and performance of all types of American music. A challenge to the integration of these diverse components of the college is posed by space limitations. Geographic separation between the Imig building, Carlson gym (where the Jazz program is housed), and Macky keep programs and faculty separated and inhibit collaboration.

The College’s commitment to inclusivity and community contributed to the ERC’s assessment of the college as “modern, student-centered” and “responsive to a changing arts landscape”. For example, the Musician’s Wellness Program, which offers classes on physical and mental health and counseling support, was among the unique aspects of the college identified by the ERC. Music, by its nature, is a community building and inclusive enterprise. The college hosts diverse guest artists and offers community engagement programs through CU Connects.

The 2021 campus culture survey shows a high level of inclusivity and community togetherness among all groups, along with some areas of needed improvement. Amid the generally high levels of satisfaction for friendliness and community, undergraduate students in the college report difficulty in getting to know other students in their classes (50%). Although respectful treatment is overwhelmingly the norm in the college, staff report witnessing tolerance of angry outbursts (39%) and of rude behavior (30%) at twice the rate of all respondents within the college combined (faculty, students, and staff). Among several forms of incivility behaviors and consequences experienced by respondents to the campus culture survey in the college, one that stands out is the high rate (40%) at which graduate students report non-responsiveness or slow responsiveness to emails or requests (compared with 24% for all graduate students across campus). Of graduate students in the college who experienced identity-based incivility, 73% attribute the behaviors to sex or gender identities, a rate that is 6% higher than reported by graduate students across campus.

The college is to be commended for their commitment to the “universal musician” approach and the inclusive nature that it embodies. The college is striving to break down silos and increase collaboration between departments, a goal that could be supported by addressing the geographic separation among faculty. Particularly problematic is that the Jazz program is housed in Carlson gym, apart from most programs in Imig or Macky.

Overall, the ERC found a commitment to collegiality and a supportive culture in the college. Further work on community building can help fully realize the college’s goals for developing a welcoming and respectful culture. Analysis of the 2023-2024 progress on the [Campus Action Planning for Community Building](#) shows that several planned actions in the college were incomplete, including surveying community needs, expanding the Diverse Musicians Alliance, and [creating an internal self-assessment template to facilitate community building](#). Acknowledging that people have limited

“bandwidth” or time for new activities, an approach might be to build new practices into existing events. With respect to increasing respect among all groups, some easy targets for short term gains are improving civil behaviors around staff, and responding promptly to emails and requests from graduate students.

## Unit Planning and Governance Structures and Processes

The College of Music is redefining its identity by balancing its traditional strengths with innovation—updating its curriculum to reflect the changing realities of today’s musical careers, expanding interdisciplinary opportunities with other CU Boulder colleges, and introducing new programs such as degrees in Music Production and Songwriting. It is committed to student success through strengthened advising, increased scholarship support, and a focus on wellness and belonging. Faculty and staff development is a parallel priority: the college plans to improve orientation and mentoring, expand diversity of perspectives and experiences, and foster workplace and musician wellness. The college is seeking to advance research and creative excellence through greater collaboration across departments, campus partnerships, and national reputation-building. Governance structures will emphasize transparency, inclusion, and long-term planning for faculty and leadership succession. The process by which these goals were set appears to be extensive and inclusive.

Taken together, the steps the college is planning to take have the potential to meet students’ evolving needs, cultivate an inclusive and innovative community, and secure a strong future through strategic investments in faculty, staff, and student support. Given the large number of senior faculty, succession planning is an important strength. It is unclear how the college will address the demands for clarifying and strengthening assessment, and the cost of living will remain a threat to the success of the college that requires focused attention, both in terms of student support and in mitigating reported risks of food and housing insecurity. The campus administration can help with both facilitating interdisciplinary research opportunities and through coordinated efforts to improve student financial well-being, as a key dimension of overall health of graduate students.

The College of Music has a central administrative structure led by the dean, who oversees personnel, budget, fundraising and public relations, and student concerns. There are three associate deans that lead several important functions within the College of Music: associate dean for undergraduate studies and enrollment management; and associate dean for graduate studies. There are also assistant deans for advancement, budget and finance, concerts and communications, and strategic initiatives. A staff member serves as director of community support + programming. Other staff and administration within the dean’s office include a faculty member who receives a teaching release for service as faculty affairs coordinator, an executive assistant to the dean, an operations manager, and director of admissions and recruitment.

The college is organized into several “departments,” which are not formal departments approved by the Board of Regents but which correspond to academic areas, centers, and specialized programs (e.g., the wellness program). Departmental chairs make recommendations to the dean related to priorities for budget and hiring. A Dean’s Cabinet comprised of the associate and assistant deans, along with the director of community support, operations manager and executive assistant to the dean, serve in an advisory capacity to the dean. A separate leadership council, which advises the dean on faculty and student matters, and includes the dean, associate and assistant deans, and others as nonvoting members and the department chairs as voting members.

The college bylaws were updated and approved last in spring 2024. They articulate voting rights for faculty and outline procedures for faculty appointments, including search committee processes. The bylaws outline merit review standards and procedures and includes reappointment, promotion and tenure criteria and procedures that are highly detailed and differentiated for different departments. It includes procedures for grievances related to merit evaluations, reappointments, and compliance issues. However, there appear to be no specific grievance procedures for students and no mechanisms for student participation in planning or decision making within the college.

The unit may need to consider updating its policies and procedures to give a stronger voice for students, as well as to outline procedures for grievance. As more faculty retire and since many new faculty have joined the college in the last year, incorporating additional guidelines for group-level faculty mentoring may be beneficial to include in revised bylaws.



## Recommendations

The members of the Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee address the following recommendations to the College of Music and to the offices of responsible administrators:

### To the Unit:

1. Establish a norm of 50% appointments for doctoral students.
  - a. Consider being creative about building community partnerships and internships into research assistant positions.
  - b. Consider raising external funding to be able to support these additional appointments for both research and teaching.
2. Update the bylaws to include mechanisms for student grievance.
3. Consider adding roles for students in planning and/or decision making in the college.
4. Add ongoing mentoring at all levels of TTT and teaching faculty.
  - a. Focus especially on helping faculty who have been in rank for a long period of time, leveraging newly revised promotion and tenure guidelines.
  - b. Given that there will likely be new hires as faculty retire, consider adding some group-level mentoring for new faculty.
  - c. The bylaws could clarify how mentors are assigned or decided upon jointly by mentor and mentee and formalize the role of the faculty affairs coordinator.
5. Conduct inquiry with undergraduate students related to their perceptions of the curriculum and about their needs to feel more prepared for careers post-graduation.
6. Institute norms and agreements regarding faculty email responsiveness, particularly to students.
7. Establish norms and agreements related to faculty-staff relations, to address the higher-than-average level of complaints related to staff treatment and follow mechanisms through the PRR (Professional Rights and Responsibilities) for addressing harms.
8. Revisit the goals from the Campus Action Plan for Community Building and work to make progress on these initiatives.
9. Collaborate with the Department of Theatre and Dance to support one another in meeting their overlapping needs for dance instruction and other curricular offerings.

### To the Dean of the Graduate School:

10. Guide the College of Music in creating mechanisms to increase doctoral student appointments to the campus-wide expectation of 50%.

### To the Vice Provost for Academic Resource Management:

11. Explore ways to support integrating the Jazz program, now located in Carlson Gymnasium, in space closer to the College of Music.

## To the Provost:

12. Consider instituting cross-departmental gatherings that bring staff and faculty together and that provide opportunities to see people as whole people.

13. Support proposals for integrating the Jazz program in space closer to the College of Music.

14. Emphasize and support the important role that the College of Music—and the creative, visual, and performing arts and the humanities disciplines as a whole—play in CU Boulder's mission when communicating and advocating to university administration, the local community, and the state of Colorado, including in central campus (SRC) communications and storytelling.

## Required Follow-up

The dean of the College of Music shall submit two follow-up reports—one due on the first of April 2027 and one due on the first of April 2029. The follow-up reports shall focus on the implementation of the recommendations from ARPAC detailed herein. The provost and other relevant central campus leadership will also respond to all outstanding matters under their purview arising from this review year's recommendations. The provost and relevant central campus leaders will submit one follow-up report due on June 1, 2030.