

USenate Feedback 5/9/17

Music Therapy

Comment: In a recent response to the suspension of the Music Therapy the Budget Committee characterized the program incorrectly. The program was a college priority one week then expendable the next. Most of the courses are not taught by Music Therapy faculty. It is not a small program. It was capped at 50 majors with the potential to grow beyond 100 with the additional faculty member who had been recommended to the Dean. In short the committee's response did not reflect the facts. My questions are: What information went into the response? Was the response essentially dictated by the Administration? Was there a minority opinion among the committee members that was not addressed in the response? Was the response approved by the committee before the response was released? Did the Music Department have a chance to rebut the response before it was released?

Comment: Re: music therapy 5-2-17. The program has not been "suspended " The Dean merely took an "administrative action." There is nothing for the music department to bring to the chairs council. The Dean acted outside established policy and procedure to take her action leaving no procedural avenue to respond. By the committee upholding her action as though it were a normal procedure means that it does not hold administrators accountable. It means the committee agrees with the administration that the policy and procedures of the university and system are moot.

Response to first comment: The SBRRRC spent about a half hour at its April 18 meeting discussing the initial set of Music Therapy questions (see April 18 SBRRRC minutes). The April 18 USenate Feedback response represents the consensus of the committee. There was no minority opinion. The SBRRRC Chair wrote the response which was reviewed by two other committee members. The revised response was submitted to the current and past University Senate Chairs, the former gave it a final read before sending the weekly SBRRRC update through the University Senate email list. The latter posted the Feedback on the University Senate Budget Information web page. The SBRRRC did not solicit input from any administrators and no administrators reviewed the response before it was published. The comments were folded into the regular feedback process permitting maximum exposure while maintaining the established practice of anonymity of commenters. Consistent with this, the commenter did not have the opportunity for private rebuttal. This is the third time the SBRRRC has responded to Music Therapy comments. The May 2 and May 9 comments were given the same due process as the first.

Both of today's commenters appear to be investing an unwarranted level of authority in the SBRRRC. The main purpose of this senate committee is to advise the administration on budget matters. It is not in its charge to resolve programmatic disputes within a college. Nor does the SBRRRC presume to judge the validity of the arguments for or against the Music Therapy program. This public dialog has been possible because the SBRRRC chose to promote the use of the USenate Feedback page in a time of extraordinary budgetary circumstances. It does not claim to have the answers to all of the seventy-odd questions it has fielded since February, but it has at least provided a platform for faculty and staff to air their questions and concerns and provide considered responses, however imperfect or unsatisfying they may be.