

## USenate Feedback: 4/11-4/18

### Music Therapy

**Comment:** *[The SBRRRC received this comment through email. It is presented here in its entirety and unedited except for formatting]*

Return on Investment – ROI is a measure of profitability calculated by comparing the cost of investment to its return. At a recent University Senate Meeting, a slide titled, “ROI for Strategic Marketing Investment was shared. It shows that over the period of four years 50 students bring a \$1,286, 481 return to the University. Last spring, Music Therapy had 48 students in the program and there was certainly potential for more, as Music Therapy is a growth area and the UND program is the only one in North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, Montana and northern Minnesota. The cost of music therapy instruction (i.e., salary and benefits of the two music therapy professors) over the same four-year period of the Marketing Investment ROI is \$664,221. This means that for the Music Therapy program there was a return of over \$600,000 over four years. ***How then, can its current plight be attributed to budget cuts and fiscal responsibility?***

Beyond this, the reputation of the Music Department has been so damaged by the action against Music Therapy that recruitment in its other degree programs has been severely affected. Conservative projections for Fall 2017 are that there will be 120 Music Majors at UND; in Fall 2016, there were 180. Projected Fall 2017 enrollment includes 20 Music Therapy majors. A best-case scenario is that by the time these music therapy majors graduate (in Fall of 2020), the Music Department will have lost 80 majors. A more realistic estimate—which takes into consideration the negative impact on the other music degrees—is that by Spring 2020, Music will have lost 100 majors, as a direct result of the action against Music Therapy. With fewer students, there will be noticeable differences in the quality of all ensembles, including the marching, basketball and hockey bands. ***Beyond the damage this does to music on the campus, how is it good for the University to lose this many students? Does it contribute to the perception that UND programs are unstable, even those, like music therapy, which have significant numbers of majors? How much has the reputation of the University been damaged by the situation imposed on the Music Department?***

Last spring, we all thought that the Music Therapy program had been cut. Then, the word “suspension” was used. Now, the administration says that the program is not cut, nor is it suspended. Instead, they have taken an “administrative action” to no longer accept new students and “teach out” the remaining students. Both UND and the NDUS have specific policies and procedures for the suspension and termination of programs. These involve faculty input at various levels. This “administrative action” does not; it is program termination by fiat. ***In truth, the administration is strangling this healthy and well-regarded program, which served the state and region well, to the point where its termination is feasible under NDUS policy. Why is this being allowed? Does it set precedent for the suspension and termination of other programs at UND?***

Another widespread belief is that the instructional budget for Music Therapy was a part of the budget cuts last spring. This is not the case. It was also not a part of the budget cuts this spring. Incoming and current students were informed of the administrative action in mid-March of 2016, a month before Interim President Schafer made his final decision on what was to be cut. And in fact, the money for the two music therapy professors was not cut. It still remains in the College of Arts and Sciences where it can be reallocated to unnamed priority areas once the current music therapy faculty are no longer needed to teach out the students. ***What is higher priority than a growth area that addresses health and social needs in the state and region? What is***

***higher priority than a program with a graduate placement rate of 100%? Why was the campus led to believe that Music Therapy was part of the budget cuts to the University when it was not? What is really happening here?***

The URL for the University Senate Powerpoint presentation containing the Strategic Marketing ROI is <http://und.edu/university-senate/usenate-april-2017.pdf>.

**Response:** The SBRRRC expressed diverse perspectives with regard to this series of comments and questions. First and foremost, the SBRRRC recognizes the loss to the music department, not only in terms of students, but also of excellent faculty and an innovative program that was growing. With regard to the cost-benefit of the program, it was suggested that more accurate accounting would strengthen the argument that the program is actually a net revenue gain. This would include assigning tuition generated by credit-hours of instruction rather than the full time tuition of majors. True costs should also factor in support services. The current limbo status of the program is a concern and highlights inconsistencies in processes for the formation and termination of programs. Faculty have a voice in program formation and termination through the Curriculum Committee, but in this case a request has not been forwarded to that committee for either inactivation or termination. The Curriculum Committee, however, does not control program funding. That is the purview of the Dean of the College. Administrative decisions to stop admitting students without notifying the SBHE have happened on other campuses. This action, which eventually leads to inactivation, while not popular from a faculty governance point of view, is possible because of limitations in SBHE policy 403.1.3 on program inactivation (<http://www.ndus.edu/makers/procedures/sbhe/default.asp?PID=94&SID=5>). The issues were highlighted in the May 24, 2016 SBHE meeting (listen and watch the 3:53:30 to 4:09:47 segment of the meeting video at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nVDUp3uB1\\_w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nVDUp3uB1_w)). The board has not revisited the policy since then. This brings us back to the college where, if there is any hope left for redress, one avenue may still be available. Some SBRRRC committee members suggest the Music Department bring its grievance before the College of Arts and Science Council of Chairs where it can at least receive a fair hearing. This body has the ability to lodge a protest with the Dean if it sees fit.