Creative Approaches to the Undergraduate Curriculum Part II

Getting It Done: Starting, Leading, and Facilitating Local Review and Action

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NASM Annual Meeting 2010

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"Nothing is deadlier than an unrecognized concentration of risk." – Warren Buffett

"If you think you're tops, you won't do much climbing." – Arnold Glasow

"It is better to know some of the questions than all of the answers." – James Thurber

"We all of us live too much in a circle." – Benjamin Disraeli

"There is nothing wrong with change, if it is in the right direction." – Winston Churchill

"Strong reasons make strong actions." – William Shakespeare

I. Introduction

One of our 2010 NASM Annual Meeting topics is creative approaches to the undergraduate curriculum. This paper focuses on the role of the administrator in starting, leading, and facilitating local review and action.

Our title is "Getting It Done." We need to make clear at the beginning that the "it" we are talking about is opening and sustaining a conversation in each of our institutions. As always, the "it" of curriculum content and procedure is defined by you and your faculty colleagues.

Remember, NASM does not endorse specific management styles, approaches, or plans. Therefore, what we are discussing does *not* constitute a statement about NASM policy, and it certainly does not describe or lead to accreditation standards. NASM is encouraging local discussions but not demanding or requiring them.

Indeed, our message is about local effort. Local consideration, local program development, local action, local evaluation. As you continue to read, you may notice that this paper focuses on several main themes. We will address these themes several times, but each time from a new direction.

Our goal is to facilitate inquiry and creativity in the bringing together of people, conditions, and other resources that are uniquely to be found at your institution. Our goal is to help music schools and departments stay in charge of their own destiny – to help you help your department.

Naturally, when reviewing the undergraduate music curriculum, we are going to focus on the nature of music as a field. However, the nature of our field also has numerous impacts on the ways we manage and facilitate discussion of the undergraduate curriculum.

The nature of our field also includes the goals, traditions, content, and products of various specializations within our field. What types of problems and opportunities are various aspects of our field addressing, for example?

Of course, we have to bring things general into our specific situation. It is impossible to do anything without attending to local environments and contextual issues. Environments and contexts produce various perceptions about reality. It is important to help everyone remember that reality contains opportunities as well as constraints. It is hard to have an exploratory discussion when constraints are the focus.

> *"The only meaningful work that anyone ever does is work that is done while you don't know exactly what you're doing."* – Milton Glaser, *Drawing is Thinking*

II. Openings – Getting Started

As administrators, when we start a project, we seek a positive start. What are some practical ways to do this?

Let's say that you and your faculty and are going to explore the undergraduate curriculum. You are going to explore or inquire into ways you can better serve your students. So this exercise will be an inquiry.

Why is an inquiry important? Because if we knew the answer, an inquiry would not be needed. The inquiry must be genuine, not staged. Nothing lowers trust like the feeling that one is being manipulated in a pseudo-consultation project where the outcome is predetermined.

Establish a productive scope for the inquiry as a whole, and for various aspects of the whole.

Be ready with a list of reasons why inquiry into the undergraduate curriculum is important at the time the inquiry is undertaken.

In our discussions at NASM, many reasons have been mentioned. It is not necessary to list them all here, but they include the fact that knowledge and skill requirements are expanding but time is not. They also include new possibilities from technological advancements, correlations between curricular content and the work of graduates, the development of new specializations and modes of inquiry, and the evolution of relationships among disciplines for artistic, pedagogical, and scholarly purposes. And of course, much is said about innovation. Here is our recommendation. Even though innovation may result from our effects, we should focus first on creative inquiry, not on innovation for its own sake.

Let us remind ourselves that trust is a critical basis for productivity in anything that we do. Our job as administrators is to keep the trust level as high as possible. One administrative challenge stands out. Our colleagues are specialists and our curricula are compartmentalized. But specialization in a discipline does not obviate departmental citizenship. The compartments do not obviate the whole. We are all in this together.

Indeed, great benefits can come from cooperation across disciplines. There is no down side to connectedness and inclusion.

It may be important to establish at the beginning that the primary purpose of our inquiry as a school or department of music is to seek a positive advancement from our current place. The inquiry may reveal that what we are doing now is very close to what we want to do in the future. Even so, we can always improve what we do. We inquire together because various perspectives and constituencies are important in discovering and implementing improvements. We start with trust in our achievements and in the value of what we are doing. Our purpose is to explore the possibility of something better. Something better for right now and in the future.

In music, such searches are familiar. For example, consider various performances of the same composition by a single artist recorded over a lifetime. Each interpretation may be spectacularly fine, but each is different. It is the same music, the same artist, perhaps even the same instrument. But the results are not the same. The conception and approach have changed. The artist has continuously refined and developed something and judged the result better each time.

If we can get a working situation where those involved see our curriculum as a composition or interpretation that is always evolving and will always be a work in progress, we have a positive basis for making changes in ways that keep a clear distinction between something being different and something being wrong. It is not necessary to devalue what we are doing in order to make things better. Too often, justifications for change based on negative evaluations produce resistance rather than cooperation. Make the justification positive, not negative.

In opening a local conversation, it may be useful to consider purposes from various perspectives. For example, there are artistic, educational, scholarly, research, and service purposes. Each of these purposes and particular combinations of them can produce different lenses for considering what we do. For example, an educational purpose resides behind most of our content and curriculum organization decisions. But what happens if we start asking ourselves about the artistic purpose we have for freshman theory, to choose just one example.

Again, it helps to remember that purposes are interconnected. Multiple purposes are being served in almost every teaching situation. Since most questions of curriculum and course organization do not have a single answer, the search for situation-specific answers may depend on the particular mix of purposes that are being applied to content and curriculum decisions.

What do we do about data? What about data in its various forms—assessment data, data that is longitudinal, institutional, national, and normative data? Although data may be important, we recommend opening an inquiry project by assuring everyone that all forms of inquiry, information, information processing, intuition, and professional judgment are included and welcome.

At times, there is a reluctance to enter into inquiry projects because of a perception that it is futile to work on issues when there is so much that we cannot control, or when financial problems abound. But the music curriculum is precisely what the faculty *does* control.

Given faculty control, the curriculum constitutes a scope of inquiry that can be pursued productively.

If our opening approach is to gather our people around specific problems locally, we set the stage for asking the best possible questions of ourselves. If we focus on finding the right questions, at least at first, eventually the answers will appear.

"If you keep hitting a wall, step left or right and move forward."
– Strategic Planning Adage

III. Elements

"Madame Curie didn't stumble upon radium by accident. She searched and experimented and sweated and suffered years before she found it." – B.C. Forbes

Let us assume that a conversation about the undergraduate curriculum is open, comfort levels are good, and the basis for common effort has been established. Proceeding means addressing specific elements present in the larger curricular arena. Let us look at these elements in terms of issues they raise regarding the conduct of an inquiry.

Let us begin by suggesting a focus that inspires creative thought. For example, what if we suggest looking at curricular elements and their relationship in terms of two things: the future, and content. What will our students need in the future? Obviously the future and content are connected, but most of us are much more secure talking about the content we know than considering the future, which is hard to predict. But just because we do not know details about the future does not mean that we are ignorant about certain long-term probabilities.

In other words, we do not have to know the future in detail to make some highly accurate predictions. As facilitators of the inquiry, our goal is to keep questions of content and the future in the most productive relationship possible, given the purposes of our music unit and the purposes we have set for our undergraduate curriculum review.

Some institutions have found it useful to start inquiries with a clean slate. They question themselves: if we were a new institution and building our curriculum from nothing to something, what would we do about the relationship we see between the future and content? A zero-based curriculum inquiry may or may not be useful in your situation. But it is certainly worth considering as a way of working with the relationship between the future and content.

One of your most important roles as the leader-facilitator is to keep reminding participants, as necessary, of the need to connect detailed considerations and decisions to larger issues and contexts.

For example, given the overall emphasis in many institutions on curricular structure, process, and procedure, the curriculum can be thought of primarily as a way to manage the delivery of higher education, a kind of pedagogical management puzzle. In these situations, it is easy for curriculum discussions to focus on institutional packaging more than student benefit. In music, we can't think this way entirely because performance in the various specializations is an unequivocal goal.

How do we as administrators keep our local inquiry focused on questions of what students need to work as music professionals in general, and what they need to work professionally in their area of specialization? We understand that professional goals may not apply in exactly the same ways to liberal arts-oriented curricula. However, the basic question still remains: What do we want our students to be prepared to do in, with, and for music, after they have completed their degree program?

As administrators, it is our job to make sure that as discussions proceed, we keep in mind both the fundamentals themselves and their projected uses.

Content is an essential element in answering questions about readiness to work professionally. Essentially, our job in higher education is to bring students and content together. When we are talking about content today, we are including areas such as knowledge, skill, conceptual understanding, and artistic abilities at various levels.

We easily find ourselves gravitating toward the fundamental content areas. The standards, guidelines, and recommendations statements in the NASM *Handbook* represent a broad consensus regarding general content areas and goals. However, as it has been said many times, these standards constitute a framework within which each institution makes detailed, unique, and specific content decisions. Because these details are the responsibility of each institution, they represent a rich framework of opportunity.

Conducting a discussion for any length of time about the undergraduate curriculum will lead naturally to questions of content. The longer the discussion continues, the more content issues are likely to be raised.

As an administrator addressing these questions, it usually helps to keep reminding everyone that there is not a single, universal answer for all content questions. Curriculum content is a problem that has situation-specific solutions. Working with content in actual teaching situations produces problems that are time and situation specific.

These concepts regarding problem types can provide a helpful background when addressing all sorts of probing content issues. Here are some rather challenging questions that are likely to arise:

- For Bachelor of Music degrees, why is our set of core requirements in music so large? Why not a smaller core for all, supplemented with requirements or opportunities for further study in more specialized classes chosen by the major area of study?

- For any specific area of interest such as part writing, 18th Century song forms, or jazz repertory, why is that content important? If that content is important, how much of it is important and for what purposes?

- To the extent a body of content is important, what aspects of that content are most critical?

- Are there areas of content where we need to spend more or less time for all music students, or in relationship to specific majors? Are there ways to use time differently or more efficiently?

- How is specific content connected to what students are expected to do as music professionals? How much content ability is necessary as a basis for specific purposes such as continuing to study in the field, acquiring basic knowledge expected of all musicians, preparing for specific work in music, etc.?

- How is our content in music and music-related subjects related to content in other subjects?

Obviously, these questions could go on all afternoon. However, our task in this paper is not to answer those questions but to speak about facilitation and leadership in an environment where such questions are welcomed. Here are a number of principles that might be helpful.

One primary administrative task is to help the discussion and eventual set of decisions move in a direction where all the parts of the whole are in a productively functioning relationship with each other. We are all aware that passions about specific content provide each of our faculty members energy and deep incentive to pursue achievement at the highest levels. But we also know that passion for content can create imbalances that impede fulfillment of more comprehensive goals. As leaders, we should do everything we can to ensure that all faculty members are invested in the total curriculum.

To work toward optimum functioning relationships among content, it helps to place another concept in the background of the discussions. This concept holds that a particular discipline or specialization in music is two things at the same time. It is a specific area of work with the highest professional aspirations for advanced achievement in that specific area. It is also an area that is in relationship or in service to other work in music. One does not cancel out the other, and one does not become the other. As we lead and facilitate, we should help everyone remember that it does not demean a specialization to place it in service to another purpose, or to teach it from a service perspective.

It is often important to avoid the trap of letting method or schedule become the substitute for content. One can expect to hear the justifications of tradition: "We have always done it that way." or convention: "Almost all schools of music do it that way." Content should drive method, not the reverse.

The question of achievement levels is also likely to be prominent in any undergraduate curriculum discussion. Looking at it from the student's point of view, the most important achievement standards of all are those set by the institution and by individual teachers. These standards are situation specific, and they are applied in a time-specific manner.

As an administrator, it is important to keep the focus on local standards first. If this is not done, there is a tendency toward fixation on external standards. We should avoid letting external standards become a means to stop discussion or thwart debate about what should be done locally. It is important for administrators to help faculty understand the function and purpose of NASM standards, and especially their framework character.

There is one set of external standards, however, that should concern us a great deal. These are the standards of the profession or aspect of music that a student hopes to enter. We recommend anchoring local inquiry on this point as a means for keeping the focus on basic purposes.

We now come to the various elements associated with the delivery of instruction: faculty and other resources, policies, technology, facilities and equipment, and systems of evaluation. Each of these elements is tremendously important; each is part of the larger whole and therefore must be in a functioning relationship with each and all of the other elements.

For administrators facilitating inquiries related to program delivery, we repeat what we said about justifications based on traditional methodology and history. It is important not to let resource issues drive the curriculum discussion, particularly at first. Begin with questions about what knowledge and skills are essential before focusing too much on questions of how content is structured, taught, and learned. Of course, what and how questions cannot be totally separated, but it is hard to make decisions about delivery and evaluation systems without knowing what needs to be done, how much is to be done, and to what purpose.

For all the reasons we have just indicated, administrators and facilitators are challenged to keep attention focused on the relationships among elements of the undergraduate curriculum discussion. We continue to recommend constant reference to a clarifying question: What will students need to know and be able to do over a span of three or four decades? If this question seems daunting, remember that though some change occurs around us at a very fast pace, many other things stay the same; in 30 years many of our schools will have some of the same faculty members teaching and some of the same pianos in their practice rooms.

> *"Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success."* – Henry Ford

IV. Leading and Facilitating: Suggestions for Administrators

> *"The only things that evolve by themselves are disorder, friction, and malperformance."* – Peter Drucker

So far, we have addressed opening questions and various elements likely to be present in any local discussion of the undergraduate curriculum. We now come to the portion of this paper that focuses specifically on you - the leadership and facilitation of the music executive. In this section we want to talk about seven specific recommendations.

We want to begin by noting that our recommendations may sound somewhat countercultural. They are almost the opposite of many current recommendations about leadership, goal setting, scheduling, achievement, evaluation, and so forth. Instead, we believe our recommendations are based on a number of realities that must be met head on. Unless we are the single individual teaching students in our music program, everything that happens is dependent on what other people do.

Our faculties have deep expertise, experiences, perspectives, aspirations, and so forth. Our school can go through the most beautifully organized inquiry in the world. It can even use such inquiry to talk about or institute certain changes. But the extent to which something happens is dependent on the cooperation of a lot of people on a daily basis.

We are not talking fundamentally about local inquiries regarding curricular structure, but rather local inquiries regarding the content areas of music broadly conceived. Our recommendations are based upon the nature of the issue that we are addressing, and not on any particular management theory or pattern of approach.

1. Create a conceptual frame around the inquiry. This involves a strong internal understanding of why we are doing what we are doing, not just what we are doing. For example, what students are we serving and what are their goals? Establishing a conceptual framework is a critical first step. It establishes a foundation for inquiry that can be especially important in times of financial stress and the weight of other variables.

2. Avoid innovation for its own sake. Foster humility about our knowledge of the future. In fact, humility is a good place to be when working on tough questions. All sorts of future scenarios are put forward as justifications for current action. Sometimes, there can be almost a manic drive to produce innovation for its own sake. Don't do it. Rather, start with inquiry, apply

creative thought, and let innovation grow naturally as it will. Our search is for what works, not just what's new.

At the same time, we recommend that administrators nurture a climate of discussion about the future that is realistic. Just because we do not know the specifics about the future over the next 30 or 40 years, does not mean that we do not know anything about what is important for our students to learn and be able to do. There is a vast difference in making the best possible decisions based on current knowledge and future projections, and producing images that we know or have determined what the future is for any or all students and are teaching accordingly.

It is also important to question the sources of our information about the future. Those with something to sell are always telling us that the future will require more of what they are selling. The item for sale may be everything from a political ideology to a piece of technical equipment to a body of content. We tend to believe predictions about the future that we ourselves would like to see, or that comport with our ideas of what needs to be changed to avoid difficulties and disasters. It is not necessarily wrong to make decisions based on speculations about the future, but it is best to recognize that they are speculations and treat them with caution.

Another futures-related pitfall here is extrapolation. There is a tendency to extrapolate present conditions in perpetuity – to assume that current conditions will last forever. Reality usually is quite different. Some trends last a lifetime or more, but most conditions occur in shorter time frames. The financial situation is a perfect example. It is important to be careful about the capability of data to predict when data will not provide the basis for projection. For example, no amount of data about an institution will predict what an individual will learn there. It is also important to maintain a healthy kind of skepticism when many are seeing, reporting, and reinforcing the same idea.

3. Structure an inquiry or review project as a service. Our goal is to serve students better. Try to minimize preconceptions and specific goals. Avoid announcing any particular agenda or hoped for result in advance. We recommend an approach to service that is multifaceted. Student capabilities may be first, but there is also the field of music as a whole, specific bodies of content within it, the health and vigor of our music unit, our institution as a whole, and our local community. We are also trying to provide a service that helps all of us do our work better, whatever our role as teachers or administrators.

An attitude of service cannot be maintained under conditions of fear. It is extremely important to minimize tension-producing rhetoric, events, or gestures. Consultation must be real, not symbolic. Meetings and discussions should focus on searching for ways to broaden the perspectives of all involved. A goal is to engage the full capabilities of every individual and to regularly seek ways to foster an environment that is open, encouraging, and safe.

A service orientation can best be maintained by a constant search for clarity about the nature of the problem we are trying to solve. What type of problem is it? Does it have a single answer, a yes/no true/false response? Or is it a problem with several possible answers, a problem that is situation specific, or a problem both time and situation specific?

A service orientation can also be maintained in part by the way that work is structured. Many articles and books suggest specific ways of organizing inquiry. Many formulas are available.

But specific patterns of inquiry must be determined locally. Administrators have a key role in development of patterns that work. Whatever the structure is, however, it will not be perceived as service oriented if there is not a mechanism for consultation, especially with those responsible for implementing any decisions or recommendations.

Finally, everything we do is in service of students. Use that service as your criterion for choosing actions and as your lens for analysis.

4. Focus the inquiry on questions, not answers. Find the best set of questions for your situation. By doing this, you are virtually assured of obtaining better answers.

    One of the major questions we should be asking is what we expect our students to know and be able to do independently when they graduate. Other questions seem to follow. What are our graduates doing in the field? How well do we prepare our graduates to function in music independently in their areas of interest, specialization, or responsibility? Whatever organizing questions you choose to address, focus on student needs and not just our own interests or the ways curricular elements have been packaged in the past.

    Here are some examples. How can we develop the best possible relationship within our undergraduate program among students, content, and our thoughtful best judgments about the future? What about our specific knowledge of conditions that students are likely to encounter immediately upon graduation, whether that be work in the field, or future study? What do we think will improve the body of content our students will carry with them in the future? How can we improve student learning in that content? How can we model what we expect students to be able to do in what we ourselves do?

    Our questions approach also needs to be tied to service and to reality. Our ideas about time and change need to be consistent with resources, but consistency needs to be considered first in terms of content. We need to take special care to avoid tying curriculum decisions solely to budget considerations and other strictures.

5. Prepare to nurture the faculty through the hardest kinds of questions. We have already mentioned some of these questions. We offer some specific kinds of problems here because failure to negotiate these difficult areas successfully can harm the chances for continuing inquiry and productive conclusion. It is probably useful to think long and hard about how you will be ready to facilitate and work through such potentially divisive questions as priorities among musical genres, including western and non-western forms.

    Genre battles can result from territorialism where specific specializations or individuals take an overly protective stance to one or more aspects of their work. How do we prepare for discussions and arguments based on "last chanceism"—the view that if this material is not taught here and now, it is the last chance that a student will have to learn and experience it. If we reflect on our own individual backgrounds, we realize that we learned a great deal after graduation on our own. We certainly did not graduate knowing everything, or even what we would like today's graduates to know. We know we can't do it all, so we should stop trying. Our task is to establish a foundation for lifelong learning, critical thinking, quality, scholarship, and activity.

    Other extremely difficult questions revolve around decisions regarding ensemble, music history and literature, theory and aural skills, private lessons, keyboard skills, and pedagogy.

In all these areas, questions will arise about priorities among multiple purposes in each area. Questions will also arise about how much time or experience is needed for students to fulfill those purposes in terms of numbers of classes or concerts, hours, semesters, and so forth. Why do we have the requirements that we have now? What are the reasons behind these requirements? What is the priority order among these reasons? Is one kind of experience among areas more important than another?

Generally, the more time we spend on something, the more important it appears to be. Therefore, when time issues are raised, one of the greatest fears is marginalization. Try to frame the inquiry so that the focus is on what might be done better rather than in terms of more or less time.

For example, is large ensemble experience more important than chamber music experience, or vice versa? How much of each is needed given the major area of study for the projected field of work? What level of competence is necessary to graduate and how are our graduation requirements correlated with our expectations of students beyond graduation?

We recommend that music executives focus primarily on creating environments and conditions that will nurture thoughtful attention to these kinds of issues, the hard questions about what specifically should be taught and for what purposes. These questions are best seen as ongoing, never completely put to rest, and met with answers that are truly malleable; to be revisited over and over.

6. Think locally and act locally. Yes, it is important to attend to issues in the larger world of music and to make all kinds of connections beyond the local situation. And yes, it is important to learn from what others are doing. But the most important thing of all is to remember that we must make the best possible decisions locally. Our situation is not the same as anyone else's, and therefore we need to recognize that all our connections start from us, and come back to us. Other things may influence us but we ourselves make the decisions. They are our decisions, and they function in our situation.

   We recommend extreme caution with regard to imitation. Imitation of others is not usually the best rationale for inquiry or change. We recommend minimizing use of jargon and buzz concepts. We advocate an inquiry culture that seeks simplicity and clarity, difficult as this may be. Clarity is usually essential to successful implementation.

   We also strongly recommend that music executives calibrate the nature, intensity, and timing of any inquiry process according to the specific decision-making conditions in the institution as a whole. In other words, it is important not to put the music unit at risk by opening the wrong kind or level of inquiry at the wrong time. Above all, opening of an inquiry is not and should not be construed as an admission of guilt or failure.

   We highly recommend that administrators strive to nurture the most productive possible relationship among inquiry, aspiration, and reality. Obviously, there are many problems associated with the time and resource investments in studies and planning if there is no possibility of paying the costs of change. These costs are not just in terms of tangible resources. Intangible resources are necessary as well. For example, if will and commitment are not present, even the most brilliant and sensible plans will not be bought to fruition.

7. Be patient, and nurture a culture of patience in deliberating these questions. Specific time frames are local matters of course. What does it matter if it takes three or four or five years to

produce a significant result with significant buy in and participation? Take as much time as is needed for consensus to develop. Let faculty members get to know each other's views, and give them enough time for their own views to evolve and change.

There is a way to structure any operation so that it sustains intensity and shows forward movement, but without producing a sense of urgency to conclude. We in music are familiar with long preparation times in service of outstanding results. We are willing to practice for 30 hours to perfect a three minute performance. We recommend bringing the same value to questions of inquiry and action regarding the undergraduate curriculum.

> *"Wisely and slow; they stumble that run fast."* – William Shakespeare

V. Thinking and Acting: The Individual Administrator

> *"Finality is death. Perfection is finality. Nothing is perfect. There are lumps in it."* – James Stephens

This paper focuses on getting a conversation started from several perspectives: opening a discussion, curricular elements, and leading and facilitating the work of others. But what should we think about as individual administrators? What are some things that we might keep in mind? What are some things we might do?

Obviously, reviewing the undergraduate curriculum or aspects of it is a large and complicated project at any institution. We are all extremely busy already. The immediate future is clouded for many of us. There are challenges that we can see, but we know that there are challenges ahead that we do not see. Each of us is working in a different situation, and each of us has a different set of personnel. Each of us has a different set of time opportunities and constraints.

So why should we invest time, energy, and resources? Why should we incur the risks involved in opening a conversation? Why should we as individual administrators care about the undergraduate curriculum in terms of an inquiry that looks at the foundation of what we and our faculties are doing?

Let's answer this question by looking individually at the essence of who we are as musicians. We came to our positions because we love music deeply. We love music so deeply that most of us are dedicating our entire lives to the cause of music. We are particularly dedicated to doing everything we can to help young musicians become capable and proficient. We care about this so much that we are dedicating our lives at the moment to higher education in music. We also care about the future of music and the future of our students. We care about the relationship of our students to the future of music.

The undergraduate curriculum provides the most immediate and profound relationship connecting music students to the future of music. It is our greatest point of contact with the future for our schools and departments, and it's all based on *content*.

Many in music are worried about the future. We hear all sorts of statistics and arguments attempting to prove that the profession is in deep and perhaps in permanent trouble. The following concepts may be helpful: If you are worried about the future, interact with it where you are. Interact with it in areas where you have direct responsibility. The environment for musical action and study will not become better by refusing to look at the undergraduate curriculum.

It helps also to return to the concept of our students working over the next forty years. We know the profession will change. Many of the careers in music that we have at present will surely be present forty years from now. It is most likely that there will still be orchestra positions, school teaching, university professorships, private teaching, church music, music therapy, and so forth. All of these career areas will evolve. At the same time, new career areas will be added. We already see developments in multidisciplinary multimedia, new compositional concepts, new perspectives in scholarship, and so forth.

Changes, whether evolutionary or immediate, will occur. The individual administrator knows this. Each of us here wants to do the best possible job in helping our students prepare for future effectiveness, whatever they do in music. In working on curricula, all of us are perplexed by the ever-increasing spread of types and varieties of careers in music. We worry because we cannot create a specialty for every possibility in our curriculum. But we should not let this worry bother us if we are satisfied that our undergraduate curriculum can prepare musicians with a strong foundation that can support their effectiveness in any reasonable music future.

Obviously, we believe that a local inquiry concerning the undergraduate curriculum is worth doing everywhere. But we do not believe that it should or can be done in the same way or at the same time or on the same schedule at individual institutions.

This means that the administrator usually has to make the call about the specifics of opening the inquiry issue. Administrators know the set of conditions in their music program. They know their faculty members. They know upper administrators and trustees. They know what is possible and what approach to take.

If these things are not clear, thought is needed to clarify them. Some efforts need preparation or preliminary efforts. In some situations, the time is absolutely right for an inquiry. Each of us has to ask ourself, what is likely to happen if we approach the inquiry issue in one of several ways, on one or more timeframes, in one or more styles, using one or more structures?

Initial decisions about these matters are primarily the responsibility of the music executive. The executive has to make the initial call about timing, perspectives, styles, and review structures.

The music executive does not bring these issues forward to promote self-generating reasons for avoiding inquiry or postponing it indefinitely, or to search for the path of least resistance.

At this point, we would like to summarize the information into thirteen practical suggestions for individual administrators. This baker's dozen is intended to help each of us think about our roles, whatever the stage of inquiry we are in.

1. Focus everything on one primary goal: How can we serve our students best?

2. Test everything against one primary criterion: What content will our students need to be effective over the next three or four decades?

3. In working on inquiry issues yourself, and in leading faculty discussion, seek to formulate questions rather than answers. Resist the temptation to give yourself and others answers before the inquiry has had a chance to work.

4. Be realistic about the small part of the future we as administrators can see, and humble about the large part of the future we cannot see. Be humble and realistic about the future but stay oriented to it.

5. Keep your own goals for student learning consistent with what can actually be accomplished in the time available. We can't teach students everything they need to know in four years of undergraduate studies. But we can help them to gain capabilities with basic knowledge and skills. We can give them the tools to connect the things that they know and to learn other things on their own. Use your administrative knowledge and skills to think about relationships among content, connections, and potential student needs for future learning.

6. Think locally. Act locally. Remember your uniqueness. As we said before, don't simply imitate what others are doing. Lead yourself into a quiet zone where you are building primarily from knowledge of content rather than knowledge of procedure. Help others to do the same.

7. Include, as equal partners, younger faculty as well as seasoned veterans; applied faculty and classroom teachers; conductors along with academic researchers. We all have a stake and offer valued input and perspective.

8. Remember constantly that you and your faculty are all in this together. You are all invested in the future. Your goal is to help consensus evolve productively.

9. When organizing the structure of your inquiry, consider your location situation. Whether you decide to work with your faculty as a committee of the whole, or whether one or more smaller groups are responsible for initial proposals, the structure must fit two things. First, the size, scope, and nature of the department or school. Second, the capabilities of available personnel to carry out the tasks for which they are responsible.

10. If the issue of assessment is brought up, we recommend the following. First, try to change the terminology to evaluation. The term "assessment" has become a conversation-stopper for many faculty members. Second, indicate that evaluation comes from content and not from assessment theory. Tell questioners: "Our project centers on inquiry and decisions about content. Once we make our decisions about content, evaluation mechanisms to support those decisions will be obvious."

11. In your own mind, and as you lead the inquiry, try to remain jargon-free, slogan-free, and label-free. Jargon, slogans, and labels too often are a means for substituting rhetoric for thought. It is also too easy for such rhetoric to become the basis for jokes, plays on words, and criticism about lack of seriousness. A focus on content does wonders to reduce the temptation to rely on jargon, slogans, and labels.

12. Manage risk by exercising your professional judgment and that of your faculty. Use whatever information and data is useful, but do not let information, data, or bogus jargon override your professional judgment. Local professional judgment is essential.

13. Be extremely patient with yourself. Let your own patience be an example to others involved. Keep the work moving, and let deadlines evolve from the progress of the work. If you have an overall timetable in mind yourself, think carefully before disclosing it at the beginning of the inquiry. Remember that timetables announced in advance give any naysayers advance information about how long they have to stall the process or build an opposition.

> *"When eating an elephant, take one bite at a time."* – Gen. Creighton Abrams

VI. Conclusion

In conclusion, let us return to our students. Our job in facilitating inquiry into curriculum matters is to make the best decisions possible about a starting point for a process that will occupy our students for a lifetime.

Our job is not only to provide a viable and productive foundation in these areas, but also to do it in a way that inspires lifelong commitment and energy.

Our job therefore is not simply about management or applying the techniques of meeting facilitation. It is not simply about finding a new arrangement or package we seek to deliver. It is not simply about running a procedure of consultation. It is truly about the substance and essence of musical action. It is about how our curricula provide our students with an understanding of and the capabilities to work with musical possibility.

> *"Creativity is allowing yourself to make mistakes. Art is knowing which ones to keep."* –Scott Adams