Advising Guidelines

NOTE: The Provost’s Office has printed and distributed advising cards with the logo “Finish in Four” to give each advisor a means of distributing written instructions to students. This is designed to help students stay on track and remember what you have advised them to take. These cards also contain important information about new policies to bring WCU into compliance with new mandates from GA for “fostering undergraduate student success.” Please go over these points with each student.

1. Repeat policy: Students may repeat a class in order to replace the grade for a maximum of sixteen credit hours (up one hour from previous practice). More importantly, the new grade must replace the old one. No repeats beyond 16 hours will be allowed, except by special appeal.

2. Withdrawal policy: A student may withdraw from a maximum of 16 hours of coursework. Any course over 16 hours will result in a WF (withdraw failing), which will affect the semester and cumulative GPAs as if it were an F.

Medical withdrawals will only be permitted in cases where the student is withdrawing from all courses. The student must petition the dean of the college in which the course is taught in order to get a medical withdrawal from only one course. This is sometimes warranted if a music student suffers an injury that conflicts with performance, but is otherwise well enough to continue in other courses.

3. Academic Standing. The rules for academic standing will now be the same as for Financial Aids: a student must maintain a 2.0 GPA and successfully complete 67% of their attempted credit hours to remain in good academic standing.

Please also alert students to the following changes to Music programs:

- Beginning in Fall 2016, MUS 303 will be required of all entering students. If it is used to double-count as P6 Liberal Studies, it does not increase the overall number of credits for the degree. This course does not meet the Upper Level Perspective requirement for music majors.

- BM Commercial & Electronic Music: MUS 181, 182, and 281 are now 2 credit hours each. This also affects the BM Performance concentration. This may affect a few students who started before Fall 2012.

- Beginning in Fall 2016, MUS 418 Music History I will be offered only in the Fall and MUS 419 Music History II will be offered only in the Spring. This is especially important for Music Education majors; they will have only one shot at MUS 419 (in their junior year) unless they are on a five-year track. These courses may be taken in either order, but it is much better to take MUS 418 first. MUS 418 may be taken concurrently with MUS 319.
Common Music Advising Problems:

1. **Large Ensemble Requirement.** This requirement can be met only by taking MUS 371, 372, or 373 in six different semesters. The 0-credit versions do not count toward the degree. Doubling up by taking two ensembles in one semester does not count, except in cases where a transfer student is not going to be here for six semesters.

   The on-line degree check cannot track semesters or the specific sections of MUS 373 that are required for Music Education, so the Music Office has to do this check by hand for each student prior to graduation. If you find a student who has met the six semester requirement with the appropriate distribution of courses (including two semesters of marching band and three semesters of symphonic band or wind ensemble for instrumental music ed. majors), please email Dr. Peebles to get this updated.

2. **MUS 407 Lesson for Commercial & Electronic Music.** One semester of MUS 407 is required of all Commercial & Electronic Music majors, plus one semester of MUS 417. If you and Dr. Frazier agree in advance, you may allow a student to substitute a second semester of MUS 417 for MUS 407. This substitution should be an exceptional practice, not the routine. If you and Dr. Frazier approve this substitution, email the Music Office to get it on the degree check.

3. **Public Recital.** The degree check does not automatically show completion of the public recital; this must be done by hand based on the recital reports. If you see that this needs to be done, please email Dr. Peebles.

4. **Independent Study, Recital Courses, etc.** In general, a placemaker version of Independent Study, Special Topics, Recitals and similar individualized courses is set up for each semester with an enrollment limit of “0.” This is so that students know that they can be set up in any semester. When you have a student who needs one of these courses, or one of the for-credit recitals, notify the Music Office and a course will be set up in your name. Be sure to indicate the title of the Special Topics or Independent Study project.

5. **0-credit Ensembles.** 0-credit ensembles do not meet degree requirements. 0-credit sections for large ensembles are set up routinely, but 0-credit sections of small ensembles are set up only at your request. Just let the office know if your students ask for one. Otherwise, encourage them to sign up for credit.

6. **Liberal Studies.** There are several very common misconceptions about Liberal Studies. Please be very careful that your students understand the following:
- All students must complete 42 hours of Liberal Studies, except for students who transfer 15 or more hours; such students not required to take the First-year Seminar, nor to substitute credits for it.
- **Upper Level Perspectives Course.** One of the Perspectives courses must be at the 300- or 400-level and outside of the major. This means that music students may not use MUS 303 or 304 as the upper level course, although they could use it to fulfill a Perspectives category. If they do, they will still have to take another upper-level Perspectives course outside of Music. Only approved courses count, not just any upper-level course. Beginning in Fall 2016, MUS 303 will be required of all new Music majors, but this course will only meet the P6 requirement, not the Upper-Level Perspectives requirement.

**General Hints**

1. **Take time to learn the degree requirements of the programs in which your students are enrolled.** This will help students avoid registration errors that may delay graduation.

2. **Use the Advising Log.** Record the gist of the advising session and the date. Both the advisor and the student should initial each entry. This will help you if the student later says “my advisor never told me…” This is especially important for any problematic issues, such as course substitutions or waivers. It also helps the Director if the student should follow up on a problem at a time when you are not available to consult.

3. **Use the On-line Degree Check.** While the on-line degree check is very good, it can be especially slow on Advising Day. It can also provide information that is inaccurate, especially if there has been a recent change of degree program (which may wipe out previous course substitutions or waivers). If you find such a problem, please notify Dr. Peebles so it can be addressed with the Registrar’s Office.

4. **Keep the Degree Checksheet up to date.** It is still helpful to keep track of a student’s progress on the paper degree checksheets. Please record which course was taken, the semester, and the grade once the course has been completed.

5. **Freshman and Sophomore Performance Exams (part of jury system).** Please be sure to record the date on which these exams were passed and make sure that a copy of the examination report is in the file (double check to make sure all the jury sheets are there, too). It is also helpful if each semester’s jury sheets are stapled together.

6. **Course Rotation.** A course rotation list is posted on Music Faculty Resources webpage. Using it can save a lot of trouble in planning the final semesters of a degree program. In general, the first and third semesters of music theory, aural skills, and class piano are offered in the Fall, and the second and fourth semesters are offered in the Spring. A student who gets off-sequence by failing or withdrawing from one of these courses will not be able to get back on track until the next academic year. In most programs, this means a delay of graduation by a year.

7. **Return all music student files to the Music Office at the end of Advising Day!**