

FACULTY HANDBOOK

MFA in Music Composition



VERMONT COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS
36 College Street
Montpelier, VT 05602
www.vcfa.edu

Fall 2014

PART II: MFA IN MUSIC COMPOSITION FACULTY HANDBOOK

FACULTY DEFINITION

1. Core Faculty: Faculty become Core Faculty of the MFA in Music Composition Program at the beginning of their fourth consecutive semester of teaching/advising (faculty may petition to waive the requirement that these semesters be consecutive). Core Faculty members have the expectation but not a guarantee of ongoing employment. Until becoming Core Faculty, there is no explicit or implied expectation of ongoing employment beyond the term of hire. (Founding Faculty automatically become Core Faculty once they begin to advise semester projects.)
2. Visiting Faculty: A faculty member with three or fewer consecutive semesters of teaching (participating in residencies and advising students' semester projects) in the program is considered a Visiting Faculty.

FACULTY TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS

Faculty teaching assignments are made during the residency at the Who Works With Whom meeting, participated in by all teaching faculty as well as the Program Director and Assistant Director. Assignments are made based on students' input, prospective advisor recommendations, as well as input by all meeting participants, all in the context of making appropriate matches between faculty expertise and study focus. Students may work with the same faculty advisor twice. In rare circumstances, a student may be allowed to work with the same advisor three times; an appeal requesting this exception must be included in the study preference form submitted for the Who Works With Whom meeting. The results of the Who Works With Whom meeting are final; only in very extenuating circumstances and with the direct involvement of the Program Director and Faculty Chair will a student be re-assigned to a different faculty advisor.

FACULTY SEMESTER RESPONSIBILITIES

Faculty are expected to participate fully and actively in the entire seven-day residency period plus the pre-residency faculty meeting (day before residency begins) at the beginning of each contracted semester, unless otherwise contracted by the program. Such participation includes:

- arrival on campus one day before the residency begins for faculty meetings;
- offering presentations and/or workshops during the residency;
- participating in master classes;
- attending ensemble-in-residence rehearsals for designated students and attending concerts of student music;
- meeting individually with students for conferences about their semester study plans and program progress;
- remaining accessible to students, other faculty and visiting composers for informal exchange;

- attending and participating in faculty meetings during residency.
- attending and participating as needed in graduation ceremony.
- delivery of all evaluation materials to the MFA office before the end of the residency unless otherwise specified.
- developing and signing off on a study plan with each advisee, due at the end of residency;
- reasonable participation in any other aspect of the residency week.

During the nonresident semester, each faculty member is normally responsible for supervision of up to five student semester studies. Supervision includes helping students plan their projects during the residency, as well as frequent and thorough exchange through correspondence and dialogue. Methods for and frequency of communication between faculty advisor and student will be determined on a case-by-case basis and will be specified in the semester study plan signed by both parties. Such communication will include:

- an exchange with each student at least once every three to four weeks;
- thorough and detailed response to submitted creative and reflective work within a week of receipt of that work. If, because of mitigating circumstances, that is not possible, faculty must alert students as to when they will be receiving the response;
- dialogue with the student about his/her composition(s) and process;
- suggestions for revision of work as well as listening, analysis, and any other appropriate directions for the study project;
- support of the all elements of the Thesis requirements for any advisee in the final semester;

Faculty are required to participate in various evaluative activities with their students. Such evaluation will include:

- a brief written report of the student's performance, due in the Program office at mid-semester;
- a written evaluation of the student's performance, including a description of the student's semester project and an assessment of the quality of the student's work and progress, due in the Program office at the end-of-semester; this evaluation will substantiate a recommendation for or against degree candidacy, the award of a semester's credit, and/or the award of the degree.

OTHER PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

All teaching Faculty are members of the Faculty Committee. The Faculty Committee meets before and during residencies to conduct program business and on an as-needed basis between residencies. Subcommittees of the Faculty will be formed on an ad hoc basis when specific tasks arise.

Faculty Committee responsibilities include the following:

- reviewing admissions applications and making written acceptance recommendations for new students through evaluation of admissions materials and music submissions, with compensation for each application reviewed;
- participating in reviews of student progress at beginning of each residency;
- acting as Second Readers for Thesis projects as assigned.
- coming to a consensus or vote on major academic & policy issues, including as needed;
- electing representatives to serve on the College's Academic Council;
- informing the Faculty Chair and Program Director of issues, concerns, and proposals to bring to the Faculty Committee for discussion;
- participating on ad hoc committees as needed.

PROGRAM SUBCOMMITTEES

Ensemble Committee

The Ensemble Committee meets as needed to identify appropriate ensembles-in-residence for upcoming residencies. Instrumentation for ensembles-in-residence will be recommended by the Ensemble Committee to the Faculty Committee and, once a decision is made, members of the Ensemble Committee will assist the Faculty Chair in identifying specific musicians.

The Ensemble Committee consists of the Faculty Chair, the Program Director, and at least two faculty members representing a breadth of genres.

Ad Hoc Committees will be created as needed to address specific program issues and concerns.

FACULTY HIRING PROCESS

The Faculty Chair oversees the hiring of faculty, in consultation with the Program Director and an ad hoc Faculty Hiring Committee. Membership of the Faculty Hiring Committee will be appointed by the Faculty Chair and will be based on the genre(s) of the vacant position. The Hiring Committee will interview and recommend the hiring of faculty whose qualifications in terms of demonstration of creative and professional activity and excellence, teaching experience and expertise, and degrees held, are in keeping with the high level of accomplishment of current faculty. Program recommendations for hiring are made to the Academic Dean for review and final approval and the Program Director is responsible for coordination of all final employment arrangements for new hires.

The Program will advertise as needed for applications for potential positions. Faculty members may nominate individuals for consideration for future openings.

When a faculty opening occurs, the Faculty Chair and the designated Hiring Committee, in consultation with the Program Director, will review the nominations and applications and assess the potential faculty using the following criteria holistically, in no particular order:

1. Genre(s) in which a faculty member is needed, recognizing that the ability to teach across multiple genres is expected;

2. Teaching experience and effectiveness;
3. Professional and creative activities (such as performances of applicant's work, recordings, commissions, film scores, etc.).
4. Gender, ethnic diversity;
5. Excellence in varied skill sets within music composition and including music performance.
6. National reputation;
7. Collegiality;
8. Likelihood of succeeding in a low-residency model.

Upon narrowing the field to a limited number of qualified candidates, the Faculty Chair, the Program Director, and member(s) of the Hiring Committee will conduct interviews with each candidate. Following interviews, the interview team will discuss the candidates, then either come to a consensus or vote on a recommendation. The recommendation for hiring will be forwarded through the Program Director to the Academic Dean for approval, prior to the offer of a position.

FACULTY CHAIR

The Faculty will elect a Faculty Chair for a three-year term (contingent upon the Chair's continuing employment). Faculty Chairs may not immediately succeed themselves. As head of the Faculty Committee, the Faculty Chair works in collaboration with the Program Director on the following areas of academic responsibility and supports the Program Director, as needed, in other areas of program oversight as required by the College:

- oversee the work of the Faculty Committee;
- planning for academic residencies, particularly the identification of and communication with ensembles-in-residence (in conjunction with the Ensemble Committee);
- oversee the Faculty Committee's discussion and vote on any proposal, petition, appeal or probation process with which it may be charged;
- oversee Faculty Hiring Committee discussion and consensus or vote on the election of new faculty for hiring recommendations to the Academic Dean;
- act as final arbiter in any recommendation with which the Faculty Committee is charged;
- oversee and coordinate the work of faculty, including the apportionment of teaching assignments and advising responsibilities;
- maintain oversight of the academic components of Program residencies, including workshops, lectures, and panel discussions;
- participate in regular Growth Team Meetings as well as provide regular input for marketing

strategies;

- chair or co-chair with the Program Director Faculty Committee meetings;
- review admission applications and recommend acceptance decisions;
- represent the Program to prospective students as needed, in conjunction with the Program Director and/or Admissions Counselor;
- address any issues that arise out of the Program Director's review of students' academic progress;
- mediate and resolve major student/faculty issues throughout the semester and during the residency, generally at the request of the Program Director;
- conduct the Graduation Ceremony at the end of each residency;
- communicate and meet with College administration as needed in regards to relevant Program issues;
- serve as one of the Program's representatives on the College's Academic Council;
- travel to major College functions that require the presence of a Faculty Chair;
- serve, when required, as Program representative at appropriate internal and external functions;
- maintain a highly visible profile in music composition.

FACULTY REVIEW AND RETENTION

TBD

Vermont College of Fine Arts reserves the right to change any provision, requirement, statement of policy or procedure, service or facility detailed in this handbook