



EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

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Memorandum

TO: Faculty Senate Task Force on Priority Registration
Council on Academic Affairs
Faculty Senate
Provost's Council

FROM: Dr. Karin Sehmman, Associate Chair Department of Music with Professor Rob James, Chair
Department of Music

SUBJECT: Priority Registration for Music Students and Non-Music Students in Ensembles at EKU

DATE: 27 October 2008

I was asked to join the Task Force on Priority Registration as a representative of the Department of Music. Music students have been both included in and excluded from some drafts of the Priority Registration over several revisions. The Task Force has made a recommendation to include music students and music ensemble members as part of the group of students allowed priority registration. The EKU policy is an attempt to assist our actively involved students to complete their degrees and improve retention and graduation rates. Priority registration is found at a majority of our benchmark institutions and at a majority of institutions with similar music programs and accreditation. The most recent draft removed music students from the priority registration group, but the current proposal from the Task

Force on Priority Registration, recommends including music students.. I am also the Chair of the Music Ensemble Recruiting & Retention Task Force given the charge by the President to find ways the university can support and promote membership in music ensembles that include music majors and non-majors. Including music students in priority registration would support the students and encourage membership in music ensembles by allowing students to plan for the extra time required to be members while still fulfilling academic requirements. The Department of Music supports inclusion of music students in the priority registration group and finds it important for the success of our student musicians for the following reasons:

- Music majors are enrolled in a Bachelor of Music degree that requires more than the 128 credits required by the university for a degree (138 for music education students). We are accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music and due to that accreditation, music students are required to participate in ensembles. Music students have no choices of when to take classes. Other students who want to participate in ensembles have no choices of when to take classes. Music ensembles involve so many different disciplines, facilities, graduate assistants, faculty, parking, staff, and

university marketing that changing their scheduled times is impossible. Therefore, these students only have specific slots open on their MWF and TTR schedule to take all other academic courses. If allowed to have prioritized scheduling, it will increase student success, graduation rates, and especially it will enhance the ECU image.

- Music students are involved in performances and presentations both semesters including over 100 campus events provided to the campus community.
- Research in higher education has shown that students who are involved in courses and activities involved in campus life have better retention and graduation records. Our own First Year program supports the efforts of the marching band and choral area with funding to assist our Marching Colonel for a Day and High School Choral Festival. Priority registration makes it easier for non-music majors to get involved in music ensembles. We typically lose non-majors sophomore year due to scheduling conflicts. We have tracked the enrollment of the marching band over several semesters.
- Music students and ensemble members are required to spend a large amount of time outside class to travel for the university, host events. We traditionally think of the marching band and pep band as the service groups for the university, but members of the choral ensembles have already hosted 2 day long events on campus that brought 700+ students grades 5-12 to participate in music festivals. As of October, the marching band, orchestra and percussion ensemble have already traveled to present performances to hundreds of public school music students and residents of our service region. These performances are in addition to the numerous events on campus.
- Music ensemble members are considered members of “athletic” bands at some universities and given priority registration with the athletes.
- According to research of accredited music departments, several similar music departments are given priority registration just due to the rigorous requirements of music majors and ensemble schedules.
- President Whitlock stated at the first convocation that University will focus on student success, regional stewardship, and the QEP. He went on to say that there would be a restructuring of support services to focus on recruitment, retaining, graduating and prepare graduates to be successful. By allowing music students priority registration, this improves our ability to recruit new students through visible events/performances that the music department provides. Retention of students is higher in students that participate in an on campus organization. Music students will be more successful in graduating on time. Travel, on campus events, and performing experience also prepare students for success in future careers and offer a large component of regional stewardship.



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