“We wanted all musicians to be able to hear and understand the music they were playing. We wanted musicians to have creative skills — composing, arranging, improvising. We wanted them to feel that they were creators of music. We wanted musicians to understand the technology and business of being a musician.”

Shelly Berg, Dean
EXPERIENTIAL MUSIC CURRICULUM

- Active learning by direct experience
- Integration across disciplines
  - theory
  - aural
  - history
  - performance
IMPLEMENTATION

- Skills ensembles
  - start in large group for 20 minutes
  - move to small ensembles of 6-8
  - grouped in like instruments, voices, and styles: classical, jazz, contemporary instruments
  - 4 semesters for mus ed; 4-8 for all majors
Large Group
DIRECT EXPERIENCE

- Small groups, similar to classical chamber or jazz combos
- create music within the group
- knowledge and skills (and attitudes) developed
- performance with understanding: what part of the chord are you playing?
- develops ability to play by ear as well as read
Small Group
EMC

- Immediate and direct application of the concept to the instrument (or voice)
- Immediate feedback
- Reflection
- Relevancy
BENEFITS

- Deep knowledge of music
- Playing from the inside out and full understanding
- Strong ears
- Confidence and ability to move between genres
- Total musician, not just “half a musician”
- Joy of making music, not just replicating & perfecting
EXPERIENTIAL MUSIC CURRICULUM

- Creating
  - Composition
  - Improvisation
  - Arranging
  - Performing

- Technology
  - all ProTools
  - Entrepreneurship and business skills
FUTURE OF MUSIC

- Where will music be in the future?
- Gives students the tools to follow their passion
IMPLICATIONS FOR MUSIC EDUCATION

- National Standards for Music Education:
  - Create
  - Perform
  - Respond
Performance-based ensembles is the norm in secondary schools.

How to break the cycle?

Give future music educators the skills to compose, improvise, arrange and model effective methods for teaching.
You teach what you know. Students learn how to compose, arrange, improvise. Provides role modeling for how to teach.
For Berg, where music education is — or should — be going is in a more creative, versatile and inclusive direction, more focused on understanding and less on the perfect rendition of centuries-old repertoire. It should produce graduates, he says, who are better versed in how to make a career in a world where traditional jobs with orchestras and opera companies are disappearing as fast as opportunities in new media and crossover genres are springing up.

Shelly Berg, Dean