

## School of Music Cultural Review

Ithaca College  
Title IX Office

February 8, 2022

This summary is intended to provide an overview of interviews conducted during the summer 2021 with twenty-one School of Music Faculty and Staff.

### Purpose

In an effort to make Prevention Efforts more intentional and offer support to the our community, the Title IX Office set out to conduct Cultural Review across campus. This effort began with the School of Music because the School of Music and the Title IX Office have a long history of collaborating with each other to create environments for students that are conducive to their successful learning. We also know that faculty and staff who can work in an environment that is conducive to their productivity directly relates to the success of our students. The effort we engaged was and continues to be intended to identify preventative measures that can be employed internally to offer an experience that is free of discriminatory behaviors and practices to faculty, staff, students and our visitors. We set out to identify themes, using de-identified information, to collaboratively develop preventative measures.

### Process

Linda Koenig, Title IX Coordinator and Omar Stoute, Title IX Deputy Coordinator reached out to Dean Keith Kaiser to share our thoughts for engaging in Cultural Review for the School of Music. Dean Kaiser offered several names for outreach. Linda Koenig and Omar Stoute made sure that outreach was offered to representative from each department in the School of Music. Everyone recommended was contacted and many agreed to engage in dialogue. During these interviews, many would suggest additional faculty or staff and outreach would be conducted. Each of the twenty-one faculty/staff members who engaged were asked a series of questions (APPENDIX). Following each interview, notes were compiled in a de-identified manner. Once all the interviews were complete, the de-identified notes were shared with Dean Ivy Walz to collaborate on generating themes and overall approach to sharing results with the School of Music.

### Themes

During conversations with Faculty and Staff from the School of Music several themes arose. The themes included the following: Tenure, the School of Music Environment, Race and Gender. Below we will offer examples of how these themes were expressed.

Regarding tenure, faculty noted that the process to earning tenure highlights power differentials between colleagues resulting in junior faculty seeking tenure to feel as they cannot express their own opinions, they need to refrain from demonstrating their expertise to not overshadow senior faculty, and the committee intended to support a faculty's pursuit of tenure often results in an exasperation of the forementioned issues, especially in regard to feeling silenced. The feeling of being silenced was referenced by several faculty working on curriculum development who shared they often hear the words, "that isn't how it's been done in the past" or "We've tried that already and it didn't work". Some faculty shared that they get approached by senior faculty who encourage them to "vote" a specific way to further that senior faculty's agenda. Faculty also identified that part of gaining tenure is to participate in committees to demonstrate service, however many expressed that they often get blocked from joining committees, get saddled with heavy course loads, leaving the most popular courses to be taught by senior faculty.

The School of Music Environment was discussed in detail by faculty and staff. Faculty commonly identified that the School of Music was amid cultural and curricular change. This change has been accompanied by a struggle with acceptance of difference and in part point to the dominance of male white faculty in the School of Music and in the industry which is rooted in conservatory training that the industry has focused and valued. Faculty acknowledged that challenges are faced when trying to recruit a candidate from an historically excluded population because music is a white-privileged industry. Exposure to music education varies greatly, especially as it relates to socioeconomic status. Further, the way music is taught has varied based on identity. For example, young girls are encouraged to certain instruments that fit within the culturally expected norm.

As a result of the tension, stemming from the industry, faculty expressed a need to isolate from each other noting that the places they feel the most comfortable are in the classroom or their offices. Likewise, most faculty interviewed indicated that All Faculty Meetings, break rooms, and other common areas like restrooms are places offering the least amount of comfort due to fear of confrontations with senior faculty. Most faculty noted that All Faculty Meetings are not a place where they can have a voice and in fact, only a few voices are heard at this meeting dominating the space. Further, junior faculty and faculty of color report a fear of retaliation in the industry if they speak up about the bullying they experience at the hand of senior faculty.

On a more positive note, faculty are proud of their relationships with students and alumni. Faculty identify the nature of their 1:1 work as an opportunity to engage in mentorship while offer technical instruction.

Finally, race and gender were a highly commented aspect of these interview. Faculty explained that music, especially classical music is rooted in racism and sexism, with very few women or people of color being celebrated for their contribution to the industry. Racism and sexism as a result thrives in the industry and it is a focus of conversation within the School of Music and nationally with efforts to discuss ways to address the concern and begin shifting focus.

While the effort to address sexism and racism is active, the conversations create tension and fear. There is a small, yet vocal group of white male senior faculty who express fear of change. This fear has presented itself in conversations regarding the Anti-Racism committee with faculty who resist changes to curriculum and culture. Faculty of color, junior faculty and faculty who identify as women often commented on feeling isolated and bullied as they try to push forward changes like teaching about historically excluded populations. Faculty of color describe feeling like "an outsider looking in" and feeling invisible. Faculty of color offered the example, that they are called by the wrong name. As a result of this, many faculty of color shared that they often considering leaving Ithaca College and possibly Higher Education.

During interviews, some faculty expressed their own racist and sexist ideas, seemingly unaware of their own bias. This was predominantly expressed by faculty with privilege who were unable to see or acknowledge that discrimination or bias occurs within the School of Music or within the field.

In summary, a consistent theme is the fact that the music industry is currently in the process of reviewing their culture and this has trickled to our School of Music leaving us with to consider how we want to respond. De we want to educate our students so they can contribute to the transformation or continue to emerge them in conservatory culture? In order to engage in the transformation, we need to closely examine our curriculum and teaching pedagogy.

### Recommendations

We recommend that themes are shared with all faculty and staff in the School of Music in small meeting settings so that we can engage in dialogue about the themes discovered and possible solutions/interventions to employ. It is recommended that once these interventions are identified, faculty and staff make a commitment to engage intentionally and work to incorporate findings in their day-to-day endeavors.

It may also be helpful to consider creating Personal Improvement Plans for faculty who demonstrate bias, bullying, and other behaviors that work against an environment conducive to learning and working. We believe there needs to be a place for faculty to share reports and for those places to have authority to address the concerns informally. Faculty need to feel empowered to make formal complaints without fear of retaliation.

**Appendices:**

Appendix A: "Interview Questions"

Appendix B: "Outreach Template"

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Koenig, Title IX Coordinator & Ivy Walz, Dean for the School of Music

## **Interview Script**

### **Questions for Interviews:**

Pre-Amble –

In an effort to offer support to the School of Music we are engaging in a confidential review of the culture that exists within the School of Music. The effort is intended to identify preventative measures that can be employed internally to offer an experience that is free of discriminatory behaviors and practices. Our plan is to take all the information we receive and use it to develop themes, using de-identified information, to support our recommended preventative measures. That said, if you disclose something to us that is sexual misconduct as an official with authority we must follow up on that information.

Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin?

1. How would you describe the culture of the music industry with regard to gender discrimination, race?
  - a. Performance?
  - b. Education?
2. How would you describe the culture of the School of Music?
  - a. Supervisory relationships
  - b. Peer relationships
  - c. Faculty-student relationships
3. What are your experiences within the School of Music?
  - a. Would you say you feel comfortable within the School of Music? Why/why not?
  - b. Where do you feel uncomfortable within the School of Music? In which settings do these feelings tend to arise?
  - c. When do you feel comfortable within your role at the School of Music?
  - d. When do you feel uncomfortable within your role at the School of Music?
4. What types relationships exist between faculty, staff, and students?
5. How do those relationships impact group dynamics?

- a. Are there any types of relationship you would classify as inappropriate?
  - b. If so, why?
6. Do you think you would recognize discrimination if you were witness to it? What training, books/articles, or experiences etc. may have informed your ability to recognize discrimination?
7. Have there been any instances of discrimination within the School of Music that you have discussed with your colleagues or students? Can you describe the discrimination and your conversations about? Any other instances of bias or micro-aggressions that you can describe?
8. Do you have a place or person where you can report concerns related to discrimination? To whom or what office? Micro-aggressions?
  - a. Do you think your report would be taken seriously?
  - b. How can the Title IX office make reporting easier?
9. Do you know of any instances of discrimination that were reported to College officials? Outcome?
10. Do you feel you are able to describe and communicate discrimination?
11. What discriminatory behaviors have you experienced personally?
12. What discriminatory behaviors or practices have you witnessed personally?
13. What discriminatory behaviors have you heard about?
14. Have you reported discrimination to leadership or colleagues in the School of Music, how was it received?
15. Have you learned of any instances of bullying within the school?
16. Do you feel opportunities for students and/or employees distributed fairly within the School of Music?
  - a. College
  - b. Music Education Industry
17. Do you feel you are afforded professional development opportunities that support your professional growth? Why or Why not?
18. Do you feel there is diverse representation in leadership?
  - a. School of Music

- b. College
  - c. Music Education industry
  - d. Broader Music Performance industry
19. What voices are missing from your internal policies and procedures?
20. To whom would you report instances of discrimination or concerns regarding bias related matters?
- a. Are you confident that your report would be taken seriously?
21. Now that we have discussed discrimination, bias, and microaggressions, do you feel like there is anything you feel you need to report?
22. Is there anything I haven't asked that you thought I would?
23. Is there anything else you want me to know or that you think I should look into?

Dear

My name is Linda Koenig and I serve as the Title IX Coordinator for Ithaca College. I am contacting you on behalf of the Title IX Office to inform you that the Title IX Office is conducting a climate review.

This confidential effort is intended to offer support to the college. We are beginning with the School of Music but intend to conduct similar investigations with schools across the campus. We very much appreciate you beginning this initiative. Our goal is to identify preventative measures that can be employed internally to help support a learning and professional environment that is intolerant of discriminatory behaviors and practices. We plan to take all the information we receive and use it to develop themes, using de-identified information, to support our recommended preventative measures. Please be aware as Officials with Authority, any direct disclosures of Sexual Misconduct will need to be followed up with in a separate process.

*Please use the survey below to send schedule an interview with us.* You do not have any obligation to meet with me or talk with me at this point, but I would like the opportunity to learn more about your experiences within the School of Music. If you wish to provide a written statement prior to or after your interview, you may do so by going [here](#).

**Important Disclosures**

If you ever feel unsafe on campus, please contact the Office of Public Safety so they can assist you immediately. They can be reached at 607-274-3333 at any time.

Please feel free to contact me in whatever way is easiest for you: by email ([lkoenig@ithaca.edu](mailto:lkoenig@ithaca.edu), [ostoute1@ithaca.edu](mailto:ostoute1@ithaca.edu)) or by calling my office at 607-274-7761

We hope to meet you.

Sincerely,