

## USC School of Music Academic Blueprint 2025-26

### 2025-26 Goals:

**Goal 1. Endeavor to close structural deficits in the School's annual A funds budget by both continuing to develop new revenue streams while enhancing existing ones, and by examining all cost pool metrics to discover opportunities for savings.**

#### **Plans for accomplishment and/or progress:**

Though, as a result of both to the nature of our pedagogical model and our lack of research-based funding opportunities, the School's A funds budget experiences red ink each fiscal year. Given the non-competitive status our costs versus our sources, the provost's office provided us assurance that the complete loss of A fund carryforward and resulting deficit position in FYs 24, likely in FY 25 would be covered by special initiative funding (SIF) for those two years. The goal has been that for FY 26 an increase in our net subvention sufficient to assure multiple years of break-even A fund budgets will be authorized by the provost consistent with the adoption of budget model 2.0. Now that any review of subvention change applied to the budget model 2.0 will be delayed until applying first to FY 27, it is again likely in FY 26 given the "hold harmless" status the FY26 USC budget model 2.0 necessitates, that music's red ink in A funds will be achieved and will require central attention consistent with the commitment to that made in FY 25 such that "hold harmless" is observed. It is important to note that the 59 tenure-stream faculty and 22 staff in the School are aware of this condition and are extremely grateful to Osborne for its understanding of the unique financial position in which this particular budget places the School of Music. Additionally, these same personnel are also aware of the significant care with which expenditures are approved during each fiscal year and planned for the future in the School's dean's office given the nature of these budgetary conditions. Budgeting is profoundly more responsible and prudent, and risks are increasingly mitigated by the Dean since the beginning of FY 23.

While certain tuition revenue gains and cost pool expenses lag by two years and specific calculations and subsequent planning are hard to count, the School continues to support and invest in a multi-faceted approach, over time, to develop new revenue streams while enhancing existing ones, and by examining all cost pool metrics to discover opportunities for savings. On the revenue side, these have and will moving forward include: a. enhancing tuition revenue by growing music major enrollments where they can be grown without problematic student-teacher ratios that increase music's pedagogical costs considerably; b. carefully consider new and raised course/program fees for specialized instruction in music that is particularly costly (applied teaching, one-on-one lessons on an instrument or voice, which make up between 35 and 40% of all undergraduate degree-required instruction for majors in the School); c. direct more of the School's annual endowment earnings, where applicable, to A fund operating costs and not to special projects or other types of student- and faculty-based investments.

With respect to cost pool savings, the School of Music is hit particularly hard in two of the budget model 1.0's 13 SUAC pools: FTE and Facilities: Square Footage, both areas where an abundance of very specialized persons and space is required to conduct the very expensive types of instruction mentioned above. Even with consolidations of budget model of the cost pools in budget model 2.0, the School's goal in FY 26 is make sure that with respect to FTE of faculty and staff, the persons on School of Music rosters are strategically and accurately assigned to either the School of Music where they are taxed in that SUAC cost pool, or to the Koger Center, a support unit arm of the School of Music, where they are not taxed. Secondly, the School's continuing goals in the cost pool of square footage assigned is to make sure that all spaces allotted to the School are indeed aligned with School instructional function and necessary to conduct that function. Most specifically for FY 26, our objective is to analyze space usage of performance and rehearsal halls, as well as classrooms and offices to determine which ones can either be: a. assigned more appropriately to the Koger Center; b. more appropriately assigned to the campus entrepreneurship minor through the McNair Institute for Entrepreneurism and Free Enterprise, an entity of the provost's office, and/or c. converted from "210

rooms” to “110 rooms” where they are owned by the registrar’s office but with music priority registrar scheduling.

It must be noted, however, that these tactics for pursuing a more balanced budget, as in the past, produce only modest increases in revenue, and only relatively small savings in costs relative to the overall size of the school’s A funds budget.

One final word on this goal...while it is clear that the provost’s office understands and supports in what unique annual operating budget predicament this budget model puts the School of Music, it is not clear that the annual budget reports to the Board of Trustees engenders the same understanding and support from those Trustees. The Dean of the School of Music is indeed profoundly grateful to Provost Arnett for securing a place on the BoT’s Dec 2024 meeting agenda where the School of Music presented on these and other matters pertaining to the exceptional excellence and reach of the USC School of Music as information on their BoT’s portal. Not only did this presentation include an analysis and explanation of these budgetary realities for the school, it was also the first time the Dean of Music has presented to the BoT on its national-quality School of Music in at least 20 years.

**Goal 2. Close major philanthropic gifts that will impact the School’s national distinctiveness and quality in Public Music; Music Industry Studies; Merit-based financial aid; facilities upgrades; and other programming**

**Plans for accomplishment and/or progress:**

This goal, always our #1 for fundraising, is one upon which we make annual progress, but one which we must continue to develop every year.

As we have discussed before, higher ed Schools of Music in America are more like football teams than they are other academic departments with respect to student recruitment, financial aid, and enrollment. Music school’s require appropriate balances of instrumentalists and vocalists to populate curricular ensembles required for music study at the baccalaureate and graduate levels. Achieving this balance demands an infrastructure and financing model that is practiced similarly to populating a football team with the appropriate balance of lineman to skill players, just like strings to brass players in an orchestra—too few of these, one relative to another, negatively impacts all. Our discipline-specific and peer-designed accreditation pays close attention to this balance. It should also be noted that responsibility for such student recruitment activity on the part of School faculty, lies primarily with the applied and ensemble faculty. Further, expectations for the quality and quantity of students recruited in each area are significantly more likely to be achieved by tenure-stream faculty than by professional, track or adjuncts as a part of the former’s promotion, tenure, and post-tenure review criteria in ways that could never be expected of non-tenure eligible faculty.

Our goal for FY 25 is to close the year having raised no less than \$350,000 in scholarship funds through philanthropy; some to contribute to endowments, some to be awarded in one-time amounts--such that our total amount awarded for the new year, 25-26 would be: \$1.1M, up from the approx. \$1M we awarded in 24-25 for undergrads, and \$1.35M in graduate funding, up from \$1.25M in 24-25.

The renovation of the three properties comprising the Greene Street Church remains on-going. Funding in the amount of \$1.2M was secured in calendar 2024 such that the BoT was able to authorize the School’s request to spend that funding in calendar 2025 on Phase 2 of the three-phased renovation plan for the church properties.

The School’s dean and its development team also began pursuing funding for Phase 3 in FY25, a plan that may now cost as much as \$3M, all with the intent of determining whether or not the funds required and the Board approvals necessary could be granted no later than FY 26.

**Goal 3. Increase the School’s retention and graduation rates.**

### **Plans for accomplishment and/or progress:**

Our goal for our 2023-24 retention rate is 85.7%.

As stated in earlier Blueprints, it should also be noted that the School of Music pays more attention to 5 yr graduation data than it does to 4 yr data, as the most commonly award undergraduate degree in music is the Bachelor of Music Education (BME) that requires 138 credits for graduation and students occasionally require into a 5<sup>th</sup> year of study to finish it. As the School awards merit-based scholarship dollars to BME students for a 5<sup>th</sup> year if necessary, and though more students finish the degree in 4 years with each passing cohort, it should be further noted that because of accreditation and state licensure requirements, the BME degree is often considered a 5yr endeavor in the industry of school music teacher training programs in higher education institutions. Our goal for our 6yr graduation rate measured in spring 2025 is 84.0%.

### **Goal 4: Execute the “*Sing Thy Praise: 100 Years of Music at Carolina*” centennial celebration and complete the School's new vision and goals, post-Vision2025 Strategic Plan, into a Vision2030**

#### **Plans for accomplishment and/or progress:**

The School of Music’s 2024-25 academic year season of activities was announced in August 2024. Entitled *Sing Thy High Praise: 100 Years of Music at Carolina*, the 2024-25 installment celebrates the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of music instruction for credit on the USC campus. The brochure attached indicates all of the performance events of the year including those identifies as official CENTENNIAL events. In addition, oral histories, new awards and recognitions, increased marketing story telling about the School’s integral, programs, with increased communications, web-presence, advertising, and publicity are also emphasized, all to establish a focus not only current faculty and students, but also on staff, alumni, and emeritus personnel all over the US and in Europe.

The School of Music finished its three retreats in August 2024 and has arrived at a new vision statement and articulation of its core values. These will be announced in the summer for 2025 for adoption beginning in the fall of 2025 as VISION2030. These new statements are:

#### **Our Vision Statement**

The University of South Carolina School of Music aspires to be a national leader in modeling the joys of a musical life. We demonstrate this by our commitment to musical and academic excellence, artistic independence and collaboration, curiosity and exploration, mentorship and leadership, and service and community.

#### **Our Values**

##### **We develop potential**

- Students arrive with limitless potential. Our goal is to help them define their own career success
- Musical expression exists in many forms. We challenge members of our musical community to broaden their creative and intellectual horizons, develop new skills, and express themselves using what they’ve learned
- We value critical thinking as well as musical excellence and mastery, understanding that musical study is a lifelong pursuit
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##### **We collaborate and help each other grow**

- Everyone is welcome in our community. We believe that curiosity and diverse talents adds richness and benefits all
- We provide students with many curricular and experiential choices
- We recognize that music-making and health are interdependent, and have committed resources to support physical and mental wellness
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##### **We are devoted to education in all forms**

- We believe musical citizens should be well rounded. Preparing excellent performers, composers, conductors, scholars, and industry professionals also means preparing them to be excellent teachers and mentors
- We seek to inspire and empower our students to be musical leaders and advocates in their own communities
- We know that refining and expressing our musical and intellectual gifts requires time and attention. Our mission is to foster that process
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### **We expand our musical community beyond the walls of our institution**

- We believe in the power of music and its ability to transform lives no matter one's place or circumstances
- Society and music are changing rapidly; we adapt, innovate, and embrace the unknown
- We are committed to the principle that music can unite us
- We seek opportunities to take music anywhere people want to experience it

### **2024-25 Goals:**

**Goal 1. Endeavor to close structural deficits in the School's annual A funds budget by both continuing to develop new revenue streams while enhancing existing ones, and by examining all cost pool metrics to discover opportunities for savings.**

#### **Progress made:**

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While certain tuition revenue gains and cost pool expenses lag by two years and specific calculations and subsequent planning are hard to count, the School does have a multi-faceted approach, over time, to continuing to develop new revenue streams while enhancing existing ones, and by examining all cost pool metrics to discover opportunities for savings. On the revenue side, these include: a. enhancing tuition revenue by growing music major enrollments where they can be grown without problematic student-teacher ratios that increase music's pedagogical costs considerably; b. carefully consider new and raised course/program fees for specialized instruction in music that is particularly costly (applied teaching, one-on-one lessons on an instrument or voice, which make up between 35 and 40% of all undergraduate degree-required instruction for majors in the School); c. direct more of the School's annual endowment earnings, where applicable, to A fund operating costs and not to special projects or other types of student- and faculty-based investments.

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## **Goal 2. Close major philanthropic gifts that will impact the School's national distinctiveness and quality in Public Music; Music Industry Studies; Merit-based financial aid; and facilities upgrades**

### **Progress made:**

This goal, always our #1, is one upon which we make annual progress, but one which we must continue to develop every year. Higher ed Schools of Music in America are more like football teams than they are other academic departments with respect to student recruitment, financial aid, and enrollment. Music school's require appropriate balances of instrumentalists and vocalists to populate curricular ensembles required for music study at the baccalaureate and graduate levels. Achieving this balance demands an infrastructure and financing model that is practiced similarly to populating a football team with the appropriate balance of lineman to skill players, just like strings to brass players in an orchestra—too few of these, one relative to another, negatively impacts all. Our discipline-specific and peer-designed accreditation pays close attention to this balance.

Our goal for FY 24 is to raise \$250,000 in scholarship funds through philanthropically--some to contribute to endowments, some to be awarded in one-time amounts--such that our total amount awarded would be: \$1M in FY24, up from \$850k in FY 23 for ugrads, and \$1.25M in graduate funding, up from \$1.19M in FY 23.

The renovation of the three properties comprising the Greene Street Church is on-going and completing each of the 3 phases of the project will likely take at least three years (FY 23, FY 24, FY 25) and perhaps beyond. Fully-funded Phase 1 will be completed at the start of FY24, and the School will begin basic usage of portions of two of the three buildings there (the church proper and the parsonage), and complete usage of one of the facilities (the Education Bldg). It is the goal of the School to obtain the pricing for a full renovation of the church proper that can be funded by dollars currently under the authority of the SoM, and to secure the Board approval required for it to pursue the construction of Phase 2 in FY 24.

The School's dean and its development team will also be pursuing funding for Phase 3 in FY24, which could be as high as \$2MM, all with the intent of determining whether or not the funds required and the Board approvals necessary could be granted no later than FY 25.

## **Goal 3. Increase the School's retention and graduation rates.**

### **Progress made:**

We did not list this as a goal before this 2023-24 Blueprint because we knew we were bringing new degree programs on-line at the time and that both our retention and graduation rates would be impacted by our classes of new and transferring students for those programs and the uncertainty regarding the initial success of those programs. Now that those programs have matured and are growing, it makes sense for us to conduct a thorough analysis of our retention and graduation rates and articulate goals for raising them.

Pertaining to graduation rates, it should also be noted that the School of Music pays more attention to 5 yr graduation data than it does to 4 yr data, as the most commonly awarded undergraduate degree in music is the Bachelor of Music Education (BME) that requires 138 credits for graduation and students occasionally require into a 5<sup>th</sup> year of study to finish it. As the School awards merit-based scholarship dollars to BME students for a 5<sup>th</sup> year if necessary, and though more students finish the degree in 4 years with each passing cohort, it should be further noted that because of accreditation and state licensure requirements, the BME degree is often considered a 5yr endeavor in the industry of school music teacher training programs in higher education institutions.

As specific 5yr graduation data is not available, we will use 6yr data as it is more indicative of the success of the SoM than is a 4yr rate. Using that as our metric, the School's rate attained with the 2016 cohort (the last one of the 6yr variety available) was 79.37%. Professional advising that began in 2016 and would be reflected in the School's grad rate for the first time in 2018-19, has helped us retain more undergrads through the end of their degree programs--we expect that, when available, the data will show that our 6 yr rates for the 2019 and 2022 cohort is higher than it was in 2018 and certainly higher than it was during the COVID graduation years of 2020 and 2021. Our 6yr graduation rate in as measured last spring of 2024 was 82.8%.

With respect to our SoM retention rate, the fact that it plummeted in 2019-20, the pandemic year, and remained low in 2020-21 while in excess of 5% of our students simply did not return to school was alarming. The increase in 2021 from 2020 is significant, and it reflects not only a more stable realm for music study post-pandemic, it also reflects the import of professional undergrad advising for all four years offered in the School of Music. **Our retention rate in 2021 to 2022 was 81.67%, and in 2022 to 2023 it has been 84.93%.**

**Goal 4: Execute the “*Sing Thy Praise: 100 Years of Music at Carolina*” centennial celebration and complete the School's new vision and goals, post-Vision2025 Strategic Plan, into a Vision2030**

**Progress made:**

The School of Music has set aside \$140,000 into a budget that would provide for a vast array of special concerts and other events all over the country that would feature current students and faculty, as well as alumni and emeritus faculty. The School had also planned a series of three retreats over the course of the period January 2023-August 2024 (See Goal #3 from 2023-24 above). The goals of these retreats are to: a. take stock of where we are with achieving the specifics of our Vision2025 plan; b. revisit our five core values expressed last in 2015 in the Vision2025 plan; c. establish a new vision statement and goals and objectives for the period 2025-2030, Vision2030 articulating the first 5 years of Music's second century at USC; d. develop a plan for celebrating the *100th Anniversary of Music at Carolina* during 2024-25.

The second of the three planned retreats with faculty and staff of the School and the Koger Center will occur in January 2024. Our goals for that retreat were:

- a. to revisit our 5 core values and see if any require edit or removal, and author any new ones as a result of the revisit;
- b. draft a new vision statement for the School to guide its next 5-year period of planning and implementation, *Vision2030*;
- c. develop a final draft of the contents of a *100th Anniversary of Music at Carolina* year of celebration in 2024-25.