

AUGUST 2008
USC SCHOOL OF MUSIC
STATE OF THE SCHOOL

Good morning all. Welcome back to most of you and a special first welcome to those of you who are new as students, faculty and staff. We are so glad to have you join the community of folks we have here that are truly dedicated to making a better world in and through music. I am confident that you all will add a great deal to this effort, both with your additional strength for support of existing ideas and with the power of your own new ideas. I look forward to our work together this year and in future years.

Three falls ago this month upon the opening of my first semester as Dean of the School, I delivered a report on how I found the state of the school after being a month on the job. My August 2005 assessment was that the state of the school was strong. It also included my take on what we needed to do to make it stronger still, and to sure up those spots where we were not as strong as we should be and in some cases bolster and defend our places that were vulnerable to decay or regression. Gratefully, there were few of those. And while we were fundamentally healthy and out of debt, we had just begun emerging from a series of budget cut years at that time and had just finished experiencing damage to some aspects of our program hit by the cuts. I inherited a plan in its infancy to begin a process of restoring the budgets cut everywhere we could and to provide for a full restoration should we remain cut-free long enough.

I am happy to report here in August 2008 that we have completed all plans to restore budgets and programs to the pre-2001 begun cuts. And, as seems to be the way in contemporary America now, we have completed this restoration just in time to endure a new cut or cuts. But this time we have some money in the bank and some strategically supported programs so the cuts should not be as regressive as they were from 2001-2004. It remains to be seen how powerful any new cuts in 2008-9 will hit us and how long they may be sustained with recurring reversions, but for now we remain hopeful and ready. Enough about cuts.

In addition to reporting on where we were in 2005, I also laid out an agenda for where we should go—an agenda I articulated, but one that appeared somewhat evident by a unique and distinctive combination of the interests and work of our outstanding faculty, the abilities of our fine students, the capabilities of our staff, and the sensibilities of our central administrators at Carolina. This agenda included a slight refinement to an already-excellent mission statement, which retain to this day, as well as some new goals and a shared vision for where and what we wanted to strive to be.

Today I wish to report on precisely some of the issues I found in 2005 required attention in short order to be restored and supported, as well as provide some reflection on what we have accomplished and what still needs to be done.

Besides budget restoration in ensembles and other programs, we have been able to create a few new budgets—the composition and percussion areas, for example, now have new small line item budgets for their own sustenance.

But even more importantly than that we have been able to address the five large School issues whose necessary financial growth to support School development had been deferred in each case—these five were: 1) graduate assistant support in the form of tuition supplements and stipends; 2) piano inventory maintenance; 3) employee salaries, particularly staff salaries; 4) funds for faculty travel; and 5) Information technology infrastructure. We have made substantial progress on each of these deferred items.

After numerous years of no increase at all in financial support to graduate assistants, we have begun our third consecutive year of augmenting tuition supplements to grad assts to stay current with tuition inflation. In addition, we have just entered into our second consecutive year of attempting to augment them to begin to catch them up against tuition inflation of the years previous to 2006. Though I cannot predict how serious our upcoming midyear 2008-9 budget reversion might be, I hope that we can again in 2009 make progress on our task of making tuition supplements even a higher percentage of tuition costs and begin raising stipends for grad assts as well. We must also add new asstship positions for a variety of strategic reasons—we have added seven new positions since 2005 and have a plan, should we remain consistent with revenue projects and avoid debilitating budget cuts, to add up to 8 more in the next two years.

We have made significant strides in providing for maintenance of our fine piano inventory. Though not without difficulty, we have attended to the three issues regarding piano maintenance that had been long deferred between 1994 and 2005—1) an adequate annual budget for repair, refurbishment, rebuilding, and replacement, 2) more resources for staff help

to sustain our inventory of over 120 pianos, and 3) a competitive wage for our director of piano services.

With respect to other employee salaries, we have experience a good amount of success but still have a ways to go. Though merit pools for faculty annual increases remain low, we have affected recent equity adjustments for some faculty. We have made great progress on our staff salary increase deferment, and have made very positive adjustments in the wages earned by these excellent individuals who make our school work. Though much remains to do on both staff and faculty salaries, it is clear that we have stabilized them and can remain competitive with our peers at this time.

The research and professional development expectations of music faculty at Carolina are high. We are a focused research institution here and our students and stakeholders expect faculty who are active in their fields. For most faculty, remaining active and visible in their field means traveling to deliver the results of their work in one way or another. When I arrived in 2005, the funds that were available for this need were so inadequate to make the amount of professional (and student recruitment) travel necessary, that changing it became my first financial priority in the School. And we met with instant success. We were able to make in excess of 100% more funds available for 2007-8 travel than we had in 2004-5. Though this is a line that the university has already indicated to the legislature we will cut to balance our FY09 budget, I still anticipate being able to give faculty most of what they need to do what they must do in 2008-9.

With respect to bolstering our info tech infrastructure we have achieved enormous progress and will have made a good deal more by midfall or so when the entire music building will be wireless. We have been more able to make substantive desktop refreshes available regularly each summer for our faculty and staff and for our labs and classrooms than at any time in our past, and will have replaced each of our five servers for music school function by summer 2009. We have also converted a part-time day-to-day IT help support person, Paul Wallace, to full-time thereby insuring outstanding daily service to our faculty, staff and student facilities.

I should add at this point that while the salaries, faculty travel funds, piano maintenance budget, and grad student support have largely been affected with our own dollars, we have received some support for them from the Provost's office specifically in recurring budget additions—I am grateful for their continuing support of our school and its endeavors. But, I must point out that with respect to improving our deferred IT infrastructure, we are deeply indebted to the provost's office and to that of our highly supportive VP for Info Tech on campus, Dr. William Hogue. He has provided us with two very significant one-time grants to make much of what we have accomplished here occur. I suspect some level of support will be sustained by his office and that keeps the School of Music from having to request the levying of a music technology fee upon students for certain music coursework that might be required should we not have a large enough annual IT budget to maintain our infrastructure. We are glad that we have been able to avoid that!

And while not one of the original five deferred issues, it is also critical to mention that our continuing most pressing financial need in the school is to grow our undergraduate scholarship budget. As tuition costs rise, an existing level of scholarship dollars means that even our highest scholarshipped students can afford less of their musical education each year. That is an unacceptable situation for our school and its constituents so I remain focused heavily on augmenting our scholarship dollars in order to do three things:

1. stay current with tuition inflation
2. be able to make larger awards than I currently can not only for the sake of inflation but to continue to compete with our peer institutions for the best students and
3. to make more awards so that we have an even greater likelihood of attracting the most superior star students from the whole constellation of students to whom we offer scholarships.

We simply have not been able to do as much scholarshiping for our undergraduates as they deserve. Though we have raised over 1 million dollars of new scholarship endowment funds since 2005, much of those moneys are tied up in estate gifts meaning the we will not be adding them to our endowment for some time. As it remains one of our highest goals in our annual strategic plan know as the BLUEPRINT FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE, I pledge to you my continuing efforts to raise more funds for our undergraduate scholarship endowment.

It is important for me to indicate to you the progress our physical facilities and the growth and development of our academic programs. At this point is particularly appropriate to report on what we all know is our greatest

facilities need: a second performance hall that can serve all of those aspects of our performance programs not currently as well served as they should be—choral and opera performances, as well as larger ensemble concerts and other events requiring room for an audience larger than 200 but smaller than 1000. While a plan still exists and is being advanced in certain communities for a new hall adjacent to our building in the drive-around at the corner of College and Assembly Streets, I am also pursuing several other possible strategies that will likely not cost a minimum of \$20M, all of which we'd have to raise ourselves. Each of these strategies features a hall that meets our needs and is located in the Innovista campus somewhere, if not immediately adjacent to us. A change in presidential leadership at Carolina and a launch of a new campus capital campaign will help us bring into focus the best plan to follow, but for now I am working in several circles with several ideas and the new concert hall remains a key priority for the School and so for me too.

This past April we opened the new 16,000 sq ft String Project space in the Discovery Block parking garage directly behind the music bldg. This facility is the finest space dedicated to the work of an American university music community outreach program like our nationally-known and award winning string project. We are naturally very proud. Excellent progress is being made on the new Band and Dance Hall and an adjacent field for the band on Sumter St in mid-campus and remains on schedule to open midwinter 2009. This 17,000 sq ft addition to the music facilities footprints on campus will be beautiful and will serve our fine marching band and indeed all of Carolina Bands and the School of Music in exemplary fashion—I am not aware of any facilities designed specifically for college marching bands anywhere that will be superior to that one.

Once we have these two new music buildings up and functional, even if it is before we have a midsized concert hall, it will be time for the USC music faculty to review our School's size and revisit our enrollment management plan to see if we have the room and the resources to actually begin some growth in numbers of music majors, and then if we do, how should we realize it...

Part of determining how to grow, should we decide to pursue that strategy, is to project new academic programs that we should offer given our mission, resources, and circumstances. I should not add any possibilities at this point other than to say that we presently sport numerous strengths, some traditional, some innovative, and however we might decide to expand will be carefully considered with these strengths in mind.

While our new facilities are being developed and implemented now, we are experiencing some growth in academic programs already. We will be bringing on, should all remaining approvals go through, a Masters of Arts in Teaching degree to our graduate offerings in 2009. We have made curricular changes in the undergraduate music history sequence and specific new objectives and methods in our theory and ear-training sequences since 2005. And we have, of course, augmented the distinctive achievements of the Conductors' Institute, Southeastern Piano Festival, Center for Southern African-American Music, New Horizons' Band, Children's Music Development Center, USC String Project, and Community Music Program (renamed the Community Music School) with the nation's most comprehensively conceived leadership program. While we have just begun

to make curricular decisions about how and what to offer and for whom it should be required credit or elective credit, advocacy, entrepreneurship, and community engagement coursework will all be a part of the Carolina Institute for Leadership and Engagement in Music, as I presented it in concept in August 2005.

We are partnering with more and more local and national agencies on behalf of our academic programs and faculty work in the profession. This one of our newly articulated goals from 2005. On the national front, we have helped form a new organization for the National String Project Consortium, hosted the 2008 National Convention of the North American Saxophone Alliance, and will be hosting more events in the coming years, including the prestigious American Bandmasters Association National Convention in 2010 to name just a few.

So, considering the progress we have made on deferred issues, the progress we have made on expanding our endowment and its reach, the progress we have made on obtaining the facilities for our needs, and the current and proposed condition of our academic programs and strategic goals I am gratified to report to you that I find the state of our school in 2008 strong and vibrant and purposeful.

Thank you all for what each of you do to make this School a great achiever and an inspiration to so many.

All best to you for a terrific 2008-9 and let's go eat. Go Gamecocks!