

James Nixon Curry

STATEMENT OF SERVICE

INTRODUCTION

Through service to UNF, I have been able to aid the School of Music in significant ways that are personally satisfying and institutionally impactful. In particular, my work as Director of Music Scholarships and Coordinator of Music Admissions has made a great difference in recruitment for the department and has helped our program attract higher quality students. My colleagues voted me as area coordinator of the string area in 2011. My work on scholarships and admission led to my appointment as Assistant Director of the School of Music in 2019. I chair committees for scholarship and for student awards. Additionally, I have served on three different University committees in the last three years. My work at UNF and in the community led to an appointment as a Board of Trustee member for the Beaches Fine Arts Series. I have coordinated and organized a massive music symposium on our campus five times and I have served on a departmental search committee and as an external evaluator. I have judged high school students in competitions and have been highly active in educational outreach. Each year at UNF, I am responsible for \$25,000.00 of incoming donations that are made to the music program and I have helped cultivate other donors and frequently attend donor events. The Presidential Leadership award I received in 2018 was partly based on my work in the area of service.

DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE

One of my main goals upon arriving at UNF was to identify ways to help make the music program stronger. In my opinion, each new faculty member needs to seek to make an impact outside of their required teaching. I realized quickly that recruitment was the best way to start. Building relationships with the offices of Admissions and Financial Aid over time created a structure where music is treated in a collaborative and supportive way by Admissions, Financial Aid, and the Foundation Office. In my role as Director of Music Scholarships and Coordinator of Music Admissions, I meet monthly with the Admissions, Foundation, and the Financial Aid offices and offer all of the scholarships to prospective music students. In many cases, I help recruit the students by communicating via email and by phone. I am in constant contact with my colleagues ensuring that I am advocating and doing everything in my power to help the most talented students to choose UNF. Our recruitment and scholarship efforts were much less structured before I took over this role, with minimal communication with anyone outside the program; this is now a highly structured and organized system. The University understands that we are recruiting students for as many as four years and that we are similar to athletics in the sense that the better students we have, the better the music program we are.

In my role with music scholarships, I am responsible for the distribution of \$100,000.00 of out-of-state tuition waiver money. I offer all scholarships for both the jazz and classical areas, which includes thirteen accounts in our program and usually around ten scholarships from the foundation office. I have gone through SMS training and now training for academic works. In many institutions, there is a full-time staff position for this role, as it takes a significant amount of time to recruit for an entire program. It is time well spent because I see the results. In addition to this role, I chair two committees: the scholarship committee and the music school awards committee, which includes choosing the Theodore Presser Scholar. The Presser Scholar application involves reviewing CVs and essays to determine which student should be chosen for this prestigious, one-time \$4,000.00 award.

In addition to these activities, I have helped the music program in other ways. As area coordinator of strings, I attend extra meetings and oversee communication with the adjunct professors. I served on our percussion search committee in 2015, where we had almost 130 applications. I was the coordinator and organizer of the Florida Community College (FCC) Music Symposium for five different years (2008–2010, 2015–2016). This event brought approximately 350 prospective community college music students on our campus each time. I hired the faculty to direct ensembles, give masterclasses, and teach special topic classes for the participants. It was my duty to reserve the rehearsal and masterclass spaces, oversee the budget, and pay the UNF faculty members to provide instruction for the three-day event. Each year this event led to a major boost in the recruitment of talented students.

JACKSONVILLE CELLO WORKSHOP

One of the most important things I have done for my students and for cellists in our region is creating the Jacksonville Cello Workshop. This event brings in elite cello performers and pedagogues from around the country to work with the cello students from UNF and from around the state and region. This event serves Florida residents as well as cellists outside the state of Florida, with the closest similar event located geographically in Knoxville, nine hours by car from Jacksonville. The first four main clinicians for the cello workshop at UNF have been Hans Jorgen Jensen (Northwestern University), Melissa Kraut (Cleveland Institute of Music), Richard Aaron (Michigan/Julliard), and Alan Rafferty (Cincinnati College Conservatory). The event involves masterclasses for each student and group classes on various topics. The guest clinician always comes a day early or stays an extra day to work exclusively with the UNF cello students. In the first four years producing this event, we have had an average of 70 cellists attending each year and the UNF cello students attend for free and help coordinate the activities, gaining critical experience. In addition to the UNF cello students, high school students and college students also attend. The event has already impacted recruiting, as multiple cellists auditioned at UNF this year who first learned about our school through the cello workshop. The Gerson Yessin Professorship that I was awarded underwrote the first two years (\$14,000.00) and helped build an event that is now self-sustaining.

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

I have also been very active in service at the University level. I have served on the University Athletic Committee for a total of seven years since arriving at UNF (2009–2015, 2019–present). In 2018, I joined the University Student Conduct board and have regularly been on panels to hear cases. It is important for UNF to have a safe campus for all students, so I am proud to be a part of this committee. I served on the Undergraduate Research Review Committee in 2017–2018. In addition to these three University committees, I spent a year on the UNF United Way committee in 2015, which involved fundraising with faculty members and helping to coordinate a fundraising luncheon.

FUNDRAISING

Another way I have aided UNF is through donor engagement. I am personally responsible for a \$25,000.00 yearly donation that funds the Lawson Ensemble concert series and aids the UNF cello program. With donations to the cello fund, I can help students with piano fees, support the cello workshop, and bring in top artists from around the world to work with my students. This year I helped obtain a \$1,500.00 donation to the Lawson Ensemble fund and arranged for a concert for prospective donors who subsequently endowed a music scholarship for a cellist. Last year, a regular concert attendee gave \$300.00 to support the Lawson Ensemble. I helped facilitate a \$10,000.00 donation to the UNF cello fund in 2018. I also regularly attend donor lunches and arrange performances for important donors. I have attended Scheidel banquets, Tonsfeldt lunches, and foundation lunches, and work closely with the University to provide student performers for important events. I produced scholarship fundraising concerts in 2013 and 2014 and raised over \$2,000.00 for the music program. The fundraising, scholarship, and recruitment work is interdependent and feeds the quality of my studio and of the school in which I teach.

ADDITIONAL SERVICE

In the community, one of the most meaningful things I do outside of UNF is my position on the Board of Trustees for the Beaches Fine Arts Series, an elite level chamber music series that provides free concerts in Jacksonville Beach. I have served on their board for two years of part of a six-year term and I have also arranged to have a UNF student board member each year, which provides valuable experience for our students. Since the organization began incorporating student board members, five UNF cello students have served and attended regular meetings. In my role with Beaches Fine Arts Series (BFAS), I also coordinate a yearly performance by UNF music students for their patrons. UNF has a special relationship with this organization as BFAS provides its artists to present free masterclasses at UNF. In addition to this board, I served on the board for the Florida Chamber Music Project while performing as the group's cellist from 2013–2014.

For many years, I was an officer for the Florida American String Teachers Association in charge of special projects. I helped commission a musical composition for Florida All-State and that led to an article that I wrote in the ASTA journal. I attended board meetings around

Florida. This same organization supports my cello workshop by publicizing it to the teachers and cellists in the state.

I have also been dedicated to community outreach. From 2010–2018, I was highly active performing educational outreach programs for the Riverside Fine Arts Association (RFAA). During a typical school year, I would perform approximately ten educational outreach concerts at various elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools. The idea behind these concerts was to educate young people about string instruments and classical music and perhaps ignite a spark to inspire them to take an interest in music.

Adjudicating is another way I have contributed in the area of service. I judged the 2020 Alabama All-State orchestra cello auditions. I judged the Federation of Music Clubs state competition in 2019. Recently, I started serving on the Florida All-State Orchestra music selection committee (through the Florida Music Educators Association) and I also served in the same role from 2013–2016. I also judged two solo and ensemble competitions in the Lake Nona/Volusia county area in 2013. In addition to judging competitions, I was invited to be an external evaluator for University of Manitoba cello professor Dr. Minna Chung.

SUMMARY

My service is highly balanced and incredibly important to the music program. It is a tremendous responsibility to recruit for the entire School of Music. My job includes offering all music scholarships and working with financial aid, admissions, and the foundation office to help our top applicants as much as possible. I attend monthly meetings to make sure talented deserving students are admitted and have as much aid as possible, which has led to the creation of a system of targeted recruiting. I created an awards committee in music so that our award offerings are fair and decisions are made in a democratic fashion. The chamber music series that I established has enhanced the experience for UNF cello students through a generous donor. Currently, I serve on two University committees and have served on three in total in the last three years. I organized and was in charge of a 350-music student community college symposium for five different years which greatly aided recruitment in all areas. My role as string area coordinator started in 2011 and in 2019 my work with scholarship and admission (which I had been doing for many years in addition to my role as cello professor) was recognized with my appointment as Assistant Director of the school. I have created an extraordinarily successful cello workshop that averages 70 cellists attending each year. In addition, I am a Board of Trustee member for a local fine arts organization and have had an active service relationship with Florida ASTA and with the Florida Music Educators Association. In 2018, I was among the first group of UNF faculty members to be awarded the Presidential Leadership award by UNF, in part because of my leadership and service. My mission at UNF is to teach cello at a high level and to deeply integrate chamber music into our string program. I have come to appreciate that service underwrites and lifts up that quality program, making all of these activities more than worth my time.