

February 18, 2021
Proposal to the Westmont Academic Senate
From the Music Department

As part of our NASM accreditation process we have been asked to change the name of our Bachelor of Music Education Degree to "Bachelor of Music (Pre-Teaching Credential)." The NASM Commission on Accreditation has found our current title for the degree to be out of compliance with current NASM Handbook standards as revised in November 2020, and has recommended the amended name as a way to bring that into compliance.

As a bit of background this degree was formally named and approved by NASM in 2014 and affirmed by the Commission in our subsequent accreditation review. However, the Handbook was changed this past November to require that degrees titled Bachelor of Music Education must include state licensure or credential components. Our degree does not, instead choosing to offer that as a 5th year program through our Liberal Studies Department, or through any other collegiate or graduate program that our students choose to pursue. The alternative for us would be to require the 5th year credential program and keep the current title. Our intention in not doing so originally was to give our students the maximum flexibility in completing both an undergraduate degree and then choosing how best to pursue their credential work, if they still wished to do so at that time. To date all of our BME graduates have chosen to pursue 5th year programs elsewhere that include the granting of a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree. There are several professional advantages in following that path, including steps up in entry level pay scale, and the ability to obtain licensure in the state of their choosing rather than just California.

Given the choice between requiring the 5th year for the undergraduate degree and changing the name of the degree, I recommend that we change the title and keep the 4-year degree plan for our students. If we can make the formal name change prior to May 1 and include it in our 2021-2022 catalog we will be able to inform the Commission of that action and hopefully conclude the current accreditation review which began in 2018. The next and required window for reporting our action on this matter would be November. Several factors, including a midwestern tornado delaying our accreditation visit team and the cancellation of some Commission review meetings due to the Covid 19 pandemic have all contributed to this extended review period which opened up the issue of the naming of this degree in the current cycle. The pending nature of the review does not, however, have any impact on our standing as a fully accredited institution by NASM. We do, however need to make this change or amend the degree requirements to stay in compliance at this time.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Michael Shasberger
Adams Chair of Music and Worship

