



The University of Vermont

September 16, 2018

Professor Paul Besaw, Chair
Department of Music and Dance
University of Vermont

Dear Paul,

On September 7, 2018, I observed David Feurzeig teaching his section of MU 109 Harmony and Form I.

It is clear that one of David's priorities is to involve students actively in what could otherwise be a course taught entirely in a lecture format. For example, at the beginning of class he had all the students stand and, after introducing the names of three Czech composers, sang a long melody that he asked students to sing back. It was a wonderful idea to first model what he was asking his students to do. He had the students sing the melody several times and sang along with them. This did not appear to be a melody with which students were already familiar. I think David would have had greater and more confident participation from the students if he had either broken down the melody so students could fully comprehend it through smaller segments or provided the notation along with the lyrics on the document projector. He didn't appear to notice that the majority of students were faltering and uncertain in their singing. Although he had the students return to the melody later and did provide the notation, he never directly pointed out the rhythmic and metric interests in the melody that were referred to in his lyric. He also had students participate in call-and-response performances of rhythms using the "takadimi" system. He then called on a student to act as the leader. Although this individual's rhythms were inexact, it was clearly fun for all the students.

The class period was dedicated to rhythmic topics and David worked through a handout he had assigned. He did not collect this assignment, but used it as a way to review what had already been taught and expand upon the topics by contributing new details and deeper explanations. From my perspective in the back row of the classroom, I could see that students had completed the work and were prepared for the day's discussion. His explication of beats, divisions, beaming, and beam groups was excellent, and he continued to actively involve students through performances of the materials.

David's style is fast-paced and at times he does not complete a thought because he has moved on to the next idea. In one response to a student question, he mentioned "hypermeter" and then sang

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a fragment of “My Country Tis Of Thee” with unexplained emphases as he sang, followed by a passing mention of strong and weak measures. He then moved immediately into another topic. Although he advised against using the syllables “1 and a, 2 and a” for compound meter divisions, he defaulted to those as he spoke syllables aloud while briskly notating answers on the assignment at the document projector.

In Spring 2018, David redesigned a course that he has taught several times: MU 009 Music Theory Fundamentals. He did not complacently rely on materials and approaches he used in the past but instead investigated new ways to deliver the course content. Redesigning MU 009 was a tremendous undertaking of developing and tailoring online drills to facilitate student practice and achievement and incorporating piano and recorder playing. The website he put together for this class is packed with information plus highly interesting and instructive links to video, audio, and pages he has developed to supplement the class.

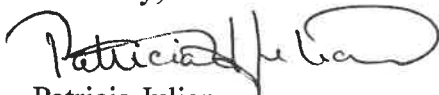
David is a confident and caring teacher. He invests a tremendous amount of time in and detailed attention to designing assignments and exercises to support each student’s continuing development in music theory and composition. His assignments are excellent—targeted, thorough, and thought provoking. David has constructed a website for each course he teaches and has been sensitive to creating a user-friendly design while also providing copious resources for his students. His course planning materials are clear and thoughtfully organized.

I have heard many performances of compositions written by students under David’s tutelage, in end-of-semester composition class performances and in the work of individual students whose senior projects he has mentored. Through these student compositions, it is clear that he has inspired and guided students in creativity and technical execution. I think it is also worth noting that students have a choice in who might supervise their composition/theory senior project and students choose David far more frequently than any other faculty member.

I also have witnessed evidence of David’s excellence in advising. As the new area head of Music Technology and Business (MTB), he is dedicated to keeping track of curricular offerings and enrollments to ensure that there will be seats available for students who need particular courses to advance in their concentration. He audited a studio production class taught by a colleague over the summer so that he might better advise MTB senior projects.

As a pianist, he has begun to accompany students in performances. This is another tremendous way to support students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patricia Julien". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Patricia Julien

Professor

Music Theory/Composition & Jazz Studies