MidAmerican Center for Contemporary Music
Program Review

Response to the report by the director

Strengths and Issues (page 3)

I affirm that it is a priority of the Center to identify external funding sources, but acknowledge that the Center is understaffed and that its primary function is to carry out scheduled activities. External funding has always been scarce for the arts compared to the sciences but this is particularly true today. None-the-less, the Center will work to identify possible external grants to support Center activities and apply for these funds.

Center summer activities require the attention of the Director, even though the Director’s position is an academic year appointment:

1. special activities, such as the completion of this report
2. attend festival poster meetings and approve the final result
3. approve the file festival schedule
4. approve Center brochures
5. organize the final festival schedule

While several projects assigned to the Center’s Technician, Recording Engineer were not completed in the expected time frame, most of these projects have now been finished. Stricter time requirements will be imposed on future in-kind service awards for the engineer’s time.

New Music & Art Festival (page 4)

Radio Show:

The Center produced a radio series for several years. Analog tapes of the Festival was bicycled from radio station to radio station over the period of a year. This activity was stopped because it was inefficient. The preparation of the tapes required a lot of the Center’s engineer’s time and the activity attracted the interest of only a few stations. The Center is considering placing Festival recordings on its website and feels that this will ultimately reach a larger.

Venues for Festival:

Reproducing the entire Festival at other venues is beyond the present resources of the Center. An alternate activity worth pursuing is a select performance that would be marketed regionally and nationally. We support this goal.

Grants for Research and Creative Activity (page 5)
The external reviewers state that similar funds at other universities are not set aside exclusively for musical arts. The fund pool is small and to be effective the use of the funds must clearly carry the mission of the Center, which is to provide new music. I do not see how making these funds available outside the college would better carry out the mission of the Center.

The Future (page 6)

The review states that the call for submissions for the New Music & Art Festival does not seem to be prompting established composers to submit work for the Festival. There are many different levels of established composers and the Festival has attracted composers from all levels. Festival 23 (last fall), in addition to our special guest Paul Lansky from Princeton, Chicago composer Shilamit Ran (recipient of the Pulitzer Prize) was in attendance, along with noted University of Texas composer Dan Welcher.

Festival 24 (this fall) has as its special guest Bright Sheng, recent recipient of the McArthur Prize. In addition, Bernard Rands (recipient of the Pulitzer) and Harvey Sollberger (founder of the famed New York New Music Ensemble) both will be in attendance to hear their music.

The Festival already attracts high profile composers. The BGSU New Music & Art Festival provides composers who are early in their careers the opportunity to meet and interact with these professionals. Their music appears on the same programs with our distinguished guests. For example, MacArthur Prize winning composer Bright Sheng first appeared at the BGSU New Music Festival over ten years ago.

Program Review Committee Findings

3. Audience development.

MACCM aspires to seek external funding that would allow BGSU composers to serve residencies in area high schools. These participating school students would attend performances at BGSU, and this is an important audience development strategy for the future.

4. Resources

The document states that one year should be enough time for the Center to show increased funding. Timelines for grants are often two to three years. We propose that a three-year window would be a more appropriate timeline for this benchmark.