

Tayloe Harding, Dean
School of Music
Dean's Review Committee Report
6th Year Evaluation

May 2022

INTRODUCTION

In January 2022, Interim Provost Stephen Cutler established the Dean's Review Committee (Committee) to conduct the sixth-year evaluation of Tayloe Harding, Dean of the School of Music (hereafter SOM), pursuant to policy ACAF 1.02, Evaluation of Academic Deans. Dr. Tom Reichert, Dean of the College of Information and Communications served as Chair of the Review Committee. The composition of the Committee included: Dr(s). Bruno Alcalde, Man Fang, Serena Hill-LaRoche, Tina Stallard, Ari Streisfeld, Alicia Walker, Scott Weiss, and Quintus Wrighten with administrative support provided by Caroline B. Hulett from the Office of the Provost.

On January 21, 2022, the Committee received, and reviewed information provided by the Office of the Provost, which included a personal statement from Dean Harding describing his accomplishments and future priorities and strategic plans, along with Blueprints covering his tenure as SOM Dean.

In March 2022, the Committee surveyed three stakeholder groups in SOM and the university, using questions tailored to each group, asking respondents to evaluate Dean Harding's performance in a series of areas relevant to this review. In response, thirty-four of seventy-seven faculty, including thirty-one faculty who self-identified their academic rank as Tenured/Tenure-Track, and three who self-identified as Professional-Track faculty, answered the survey (a forty-four percent response rate); fifteen of twenty-three staff responded (a sixty-five percent response rate); nineteen of thirty-four members of the Council of Academic Deans and Executive Council responded (a fifty-six percent response rate). Additionally, all stakeholders groups were given the opportunity to provide open ended comments on the survey and were invited to submit separate anonymous or signed written comments/letter to the Office of the Provost regarding Dean Harding's performance review by the full Committee.

This report summarizes the information received by the Committee from Dean Harding and then summarizes the relevant objective data included in the annual Blueprint documents from SOM and information received from the surveys and other communications from stakeholders group evaluating the following six areas of review:

1. Leadership/Vision
2. Communications

3. Management Performance
4. Human Relations and Workplace Environment
5. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
6. External Relations and Development

Evaluation of Survey Results

Leadership and Articulation

Dean Harding has been an effective and dynamic leader for the School of Music. Shortly after his last review in 2015, Dean Harding launched a new vision and strategic plan, *Vision2025*. The vision statement: *The UofSC School of Music seeks to be a model public higher education music school for America. To be a model public music school our unit must: be the music school that our students and our university require; be the music school that our state requires; be the music school that our art and our society require.* This culminated in a two-year series of retreats by the School of Music faculty, aligning their work with the schools newly defined five core values: *one. Pursue and Achieve Excellence; 2. Define, Re-define, and Ensure Student Success; 3. Foster Music Leaders; 4. Prepare Musicians as Outstanding Educators and Educators as Outstanding Musicians; 5. Develop Diversely Skilled Musicians.* Many of Dean Harding's programs, initiatives, and faculty/staff hires over the past seven years have been aligned with these values. Since 2015, to name just a few of the accomplishments under Dean Harding's leadership, the School of Music has secured merit raises for faculty and staff, hired 17 new full-time faculty (6 new positions), appointed a Director of the Center for Southern African-American Music and an Associate Dean for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, and new undergraduate and graduate degree programs have been established to help our students develop the skills needed to be a successful 21st century musician. New initiatives such as *Bridging our Distances* were established to promote the school's ever-increasing focus on community engagement. One faculty member commented: *Leadership nationally in entrepreneurship and community engagement has been a main focus of the Dean, and he has been exceptionally successful in this.*

Dean Harding's survey results pertaining to leadership questions amongst faculty, staff, and the CAD/EC were excellent across the board. Amongst faculty fifty-eight percent strongly agreed and thirty percent agreed that Dean Harding is an effective leader. Fifteen percent disagreed with this statement while strongly disagreed received zero responses. Support was similar for the CAD/EC: fifty-eight percent strongly agreed, thirty-two percent agreed, with only five percent disagreeing and five percent strongly disagreeing. Support for the dean was even higher amongst staff: eighty-seven percent strongly agreed, and thirteen percent agreed that Dean Harding is an effective leader for the School of Music. These survey results reflect an overall positive work environment at the School of Music. Many faculty commented on

how the Dean supported a collegial atmosphere, with each person receiving encouragement to *'play their strengths.'* One faculty member commented on how Dean Harding *'sets a standard for SOM operations and a cultural and musical organization based on clear organizational structure, transparent communication based on respect and patience, and a spirit of innovation.'*

The COVID-19 Pandemic has posed many challenges to the School of Music. Comments from faculty and staff revealed that Dean Harding has been an effective leader during these challenging times. One faculty member commented: *COVID really hurt us, as everything we do is together and in close quarters. However, Tayloe convened a summer committee (two years ago) to ask for faculty collaboration and ideas on how to navigate this trying time, and I think we have done a good job.* While another faculty member commented: *COVID was certainly a challenge, and the Dean was very effective in setting up strategies to keep students, faculty, and staff safe.*

According to comments from faculty, Dean Harding has been successful in articulating his vision. Most faculty members reported feeling excited to be part of Dean Harding's vision and appeared optimistic about the future of the School of Music. One faculty member commented: *We are consistently on the forefront of innovation across music schools nationally, with a focus on areas like community engagement, advocacy, entrepreneurship, EDI, and leadership.* However, some faculty members were less enthusiastic about the Dean's vision. One commenting: *The school suffers from a lack of coherent vision. There was a faculty retreat a number of years ago in which the faculty was basically told 'from above' what our core and distinct values were and that those values would guide the SOM's vision.* Another faculty member commented: *For many years, the Dean has invested heavily in the notion of 'music entrepreneurship,' and his priority remains 'rebuilding' and 'rebranding' what our School of Music is. I have always felt this is a vague and poorly defined concept, more about trendy buzz phrases than substance.*

Effectiveness of Communication

In the arena of communication, Dean Harding's feedback from other deans, School of Music faculty, and the School of Music staff was overwhelmingly positive. In each case those who responded to the survey questions dealing with communication agreed, or strongly agreed, that Dean Harding's methods and clarity of communication were effective. The deans surveyed had varying amounts of contact with Dr. Harding but found his connection to the university to be positive and his advocacy for the School of Music to be impactful through his communication efforts.

Among the faculty, almost sixty percent strongly agreed that the dean communicates effectively and clearly. Another ten to twenty percent responded that they agreed with these assessments. There was an individual comment that expressed a desire for more clarity about

procedures related to administrative hires in the School of Music. Less than ten percent of the survey responses from the faculty reflected concerns in the arena of communication.

The School of Music staff who responded to the survey found the dean's communication to be highly effective. Almost eighty percent of the responses *strongly agreed* that Dean Harding's communication is clear and useful.

Based on Dean Harding's personal statement, it is apparent that he has a clear vision for the School of Music and the paths he sees to accomplish the goals associated with that vision. He has communicated these goals in written and verbal formats and has led the SOM faculty and staff to connect their work to these goals. Dean Harding is intentional about sharing insights about the budgetary process as it develops in the School of Music, as well as how it is, or will be, impacted by actions and plans of the larger university. He has also made concentrated efforts to communicate about hiring procedures and other types of administrative actions in the School of Music.

Across the spectrum of individuals with whom Dean Harding interacts, his communication efforts are positive and successful. Sharing his vision, goals, and procedures with those he leads is a particular strength of his administrative efforts.

Management Performance

Faculty responses to seven questions regarding Management Performance were overwhelmingly positive. Ninety-four percent agree or strongly agree that the dean maintains an effective group of administrative support staff; ninety-one percent agree or strongly agree that he has developed and implemented effective faculty search processes; eighty-eight percent agree or strongly agree that he has been effective in developing and administering the budget; eighty-seven percent agree or strongly agree that he has implemented enhancements to the graduate program; and seventy-six percent agree or strongly agree that his management of the School of Music is open and transparent.

Written comments regarding faculty searches were incredibly positive and were included among the strengths of the school. Representatives of those are the following:

We have had numerous faculty searches in the last several years. Those that I have been involved in have been effectively managed and all have yielded good hires. It is also wonderful to see the school growing in this way, with lots of new faculty faces to support our growing programs.

Dean Harding has done wonderful work in hiring truly outstanding faculty to the school. I feel we have a better reputation nationally than when he started here because of these hires.

Several comments regarding the low graduate assistantships in the school were made. However, many noted that the dean has and continues to take steps forward in this regard:

Our main challenge at the graduate level has been the small stipends in our GA positions and the dean has increased the budget for this substantially.

The administrative staff's assessment of the dean's Performance Management was universally positive with one hundred percent of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that the dean keeps the administrative staff informed of issues affecting the SOM, he provides sufficient supervision of administrative staff, and his office runs efficiently. Eighty-six percent agree or strongly agree that he provides sufficient resources for administrative staff to perform their jobs.

Workplace Environment and Employment Matters

Faculty responses to two questions regarding Workplace Environment and Employment Matters were quite favorable. Eighty-five percent of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed to the first question: *This dean has a good understanding of the interrelationships among the units and program.* Fifteen percent either disagreed or strongly disagreed. The second question: *This dean treats faculty fairly and equitably across all ranks and statuses,* garnered seventy-six percent strongly agree or agree, while twenty-five percent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

In general, the vast majority of faculty agree that Dean Harding fosters a positive workplace environment. One negative comment regarding Workplace Environment involved a perceived lack of accountability for faculty who underperform relative to recruitment and retention of students. While Dean Harding addresses the reduction of applied faculty loads in his statement, there is evidence of inequity of teaching loads among some applied studios. Regardless of the difficulty of recruiting for some instruments or the quality of the students and the instruction they receive in those studios, such inequity can have a negative influence on morale.

Other than these few negative comments, remarks regarding Workplace Environment were overwhelmingly positive. Below are a few examples:

- *The collaborative spirit is rampant throughout the SOM. It is infectious and it comes from the dean. It is also an incredible environment for fairness and hard work. It all trickles down from TH. He is an incredible leader and makes even junior faculty feel included and bolsters confidence*
- *The faculty operates with profoundly collegial intent that is modeled by the dean. He sets a standard. . . based on organizational structure, transparent communication based on respect and patience and a spirit of innovation atmosphere of reaching high for life-changing goals for learning in music.*

- *One of the strengths is the top-notch faculty and the collegial support amongst the faculty; I do believe that this environment stems from the Dean's collaborative approach to the decisions and needs of the SOM as a whole.*

Staff responses to survey questions regarding Workplace Environment and Employment Matters were overwhelmingly positive. Staff answered seven questions in this area. Ninety-three percent of staff strongly agreed or agreed with the statement: *This dean provides opportunities for staff development*, while seven percent disagreed. The same percentages applied to the statement: *The dean encourages professional development for staff members*. Eighty-five percent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed to: *This dean is discreet in discussing personnel problems*. Seven percent disagreed, while one respondent indicated the statement was not applicable. All participants strongly agreed or agreed: *This dean demonstrates concern for the welfare of administrative staff. This dean, either personally or through his staff conducts annual evaluations and provides timely feedback*; received ninety-three percent who strongly agree or agree, with seven percent indicating the statement did not apply. Sixty-seven percent strongly agreed to the statement, *this dean acknowledges contributions made by administrative staff to the mission of the SOM*, while thirty-three percent agreed. Finally, ninety-three of respondents strongly agreed or agreed: *This dean is accessible to discuss work responsibilities, issues, and/or concerns of administrative staff*. One respondent indicated the statement was not applicable.

As indicated above, the survey results demonstrate a high degree of satisfaction among School of Music staff pertaining to Workplace Environment and Employment Matters. The only negative comment pertained to lower staff salaries compared to other units on campus, as well as a lack of opportunities for advancement. As outlined in his statement, the Dean provided the first staff merit salary increases in many years in 2021. More regular merit and/or cost-of-living increases will undoubtedly aid in retaining our outstanding staff.

Staff included several positive comments pertaining to Workplace Environment. Examples include:

- *I think the sense of community within our school is extraordinarily strong, and while the dean is not the only person who contributes to it, he certainly is a major player.*
- *A main strength is that faculty and students feel supported and appreciated by the Dan and by other faculty for their work and creative activities.*
- *The School of Music is a wonderful place to work. The Staff and the Faculty, for the most part, are hired and stay for many years. People enjoy their jobs and enjoy working together.*
- *It is well known nationally that we are a wonderful place to work and learn. Faculty and staff have autonomy here to do the work that they love and to serve the students, the university, and our communities.*

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Dean Harding's efforts in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the School of Music were rated as generally positive across faculty (eighty-eight percent agreeing or strongly agreeing) and CAD/ED (eighty-nine percent agreeing or strongly agreeing) surveys, with an even more positive evaluation from the staff (one hundred percent agreeing or strongly agreeing). In his report, Dean Harding mentioned specifically working on his behavior in this area, and the results from the surveys show clear improvement.

The trend in hiring faculty who come from diverse groups and backgrounds was noticed and praised in staff and faculty comments, as exemplified in the following comment: *Our dean has done a wonderful job bringing in highly qualified faculty from different ethnic backgrounds. I believe this will help further diversify our student body who often are looking for representation.*

Dean Harding's commitment to DEI actions and positive general sense of community within the school was also a recurring point in comments by faculty and staff alike, such as the following comment by staff: *In recent years, the college has prioritized more diverse programming and implemented community engagement initiatives which have resulted in performances reaching new audiences, especially underserved and diverse communities.*

As points for development, there were some concerns mentioned in faculty comments of isolated cases dealing with racial and ethnic identities. While these cases were clearly not ill-willed, leadership of such a diverse workplace as the School of Music need to be wary of navigating discourse subtleties. These specific situations aside, there is a clear consensus across faculty, staff, and CAD/EC that Dean Harding is actively and positively working toward diversity, inclusion, and equity.

External Relations and Development

Faculty responses to one question regarding External Relations and Development were quite favorable. Seventy-two percent of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed to the first question: *This dean is effective in raising external funds for the SOM.* Twenty-five percent either disagreed or strongly disagreed with three percent answering as non-applicable.

Responses from members of the Council of Academic Deans and Executive Council to two questions regarding External Relations and Development were overwhelmingly positive. One hundred percent agree or strongly agree that the dean is cooperative in working with the other schools and colleges regarding curricular matters, research, and service efforts. Eighty-nine percent agree or strongly agree that he has encouraged collaboration with other colleges and campuses regarding curricular matters, research, and service efforts; six percent disagree with almost six percent answering as non-applicable.

Executive Summary

Due to Dean Harding's interim position as provost for the university (2019-2020), his third dean review was extended to the Spring of 2022. Dean Harding has done an excellent job leading the School of Music. He has successfully navigated the challenges of the pandemic, and beyond that, he communicates a clear vision and fosters a positive work environment. There are occasionally specific situations that generate difficulties, or conflict, whether these are administrative, or personnel related. In general, Dean Harding works to resolve such situations in as positive a way as possible. His efforts to be increasingly transparent about budgetary and personnel processes are well received. The dean review committee was able to highlight the dean's strengths and areas of opportunities listed below:

Strengths

- Fosters and encourages a collegial and collaborative environment within the School of Music
- Communicates his vision for the School of Music to faculty/staff/community well
- Through his presence and allocation of resources, he encourages and supports outreach efforts, which are critical to recruitment.
- Leadership style enables faculty and staff to work autonomously within a culture of support.
- Remarkably effective communicator and since his last review, he has made a concerted effort to be more transparent regarding budgetary issues.
- Fosters a positive work environment for faculty and staff.
- Hired national and international renowned faculty; encourage and create opportunities for research and creativity.

Areas of Opportunities

- Inequity (perceived or actual) among applied faculty loads may need to be addressed.
- Increase in graduate assistant stipends for recruitment purposed. [The Dean is aware of this and has already taken steps in the right direction.]
- Increase in staff salaries (to be equitable with other units on campus) to retain our exceptional support staff. [First increase in many years was given this year.]
- Improve the awareness among faculty of the dean's involvement in raising external funds.
- Continue to recruit faculty and students from diverse ethnic backgrounds