

9 February 2015

Dear colleagues

As Chair of the NAMHE Committee, I am writing to update you on what has been a very active and productive year for the Association and to highlight just a few of the activities we have been engaging in on your behalf.

In the last twelve months we have:

- contributed to a period of **consultation on subject criteria and assessment** with the UK's exam boards, working alongside the Music Education Council, Incorporated Society of Musicians and other interested organisations. This led to the publication of the Department of Education's revised Subject Content for GCSE, AS and A-Level qualifications in Music – for NAMHE's response to this publication, see the Association's website at www.namhe.ac.uk
- contributed to **other consultation exercises**, including the **Department for Education's 16-19 Accountability exercise**, and HEFCE's independent review of the role of metrics in research assessment and Open Access arrangements for monographs.
- become more **activist in outlook and proactive** in support of our discipline and the arts and humanities generally, including responding to funding cuts for music services provision, statements made by the Secretary of State for Education, and the DfE's linkage of the Russell Group's Facilitating Subjects with school performance tables.
- conducted a **programme of research**, via interviews and focus groups, into gender issues in Music HE departments and institutions in preparation for the launch of the Equality Unit's Gender Equality Mark (GEM) scheme, which is soon to merge with the Athena Swan Charter. (A full resource pack, authored on behalf of NAMHE by Dr Dani Bogdanovic, will be available to members shortly from the NAMHE website to provide guidance for departments seeking to address gender-related issues in the music-academic workplace.)
- **surveyed taught postgraduate numbers and provision in music** in the UK, to provide useful comparative data for departments and institutions asked to justify small-class teaching on MA programmes in music and other arts and humanities subjects.
- **updated our External Examiners' database** to assist departments and institutions in identifying suitable and willing candidates for the role of External Examiner.

- continued to **support the Institute for Musical Research**, particularly by offering travel grants to postgraduate students wishing to attend the Institute's training events.
- **filmed and produced three videos on *The Value of a Music Degree***, which will be circulated freely and are intended for use by NAMHE members seeking material to make the case for the importance of music degrees to the cultural and creative life of the UK. (The videos can be viewed at <http://vimeo.com/namhe/videos> - please feel free to 'like', share and link to them to help raise their profile.¹) More *Value of a Music Degree* videos are planned, so please contact us if you would like to help or have ideas for a specific focus.
- begun to **work more collaboratively with our fellow subject associations** – the Standing Conference of University Drama Departments (SCUDD) and DanceHE – beginning with the hosting of a **joint conference** at the IMR on 28 February 2015: 'Survival of the Fittest? Promoting Dance, Drama and Music through UK Higher Education' (to book a place, see <http://events.sas.ac.uk/imr/events/advanced-search>). Due to unforeseen circumstances, the joint conference coincides with Guildhall's Reflective Conservatoire conference, which runs 26 February to 1 March (see http://www.gsmd.ac.uk/about_the_school/research/whats_on/reflective_conservatoire_2015/) so we encourage members to attend both conferences if possible (there are day tickets available for each day of the Guildhall event).
- organised our **next annual conference, *Music – Learning – Technology***, at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland on 5 May 2015. All members of staff in NAMHE-member departments and institutions are welcome. (If you've not attended our annual conference before, then do consider joining us, and take a look at the video we produced from the 2014 event to give you a flavour of these events – <http://vimeo.com/114689441>)
- established a **Facebook group and Twitter feed** as well as expanding and updating our website to enable us to connect more effectively with the membership (you) and to enable discussion of key issues you raise to happen informally between meetings.

In the months ahead we will continue to review the impact and processes of the REF; to consider the restructuring of the HEA; to liaise with and support the Institute of Musical Research; to promote and monitor the health of our discipline within HE; to work with other organisations in the interests of the arts and humanities generally; and to offer advice and support to member departments on matters of concern. We

¹ We have worked hard to ensure the videos work at a generic level and do not identify or promote specific institutions or styles of degree – please respect this when linking to and making use of these materials.

hope you will agree that in the last twelve months we have made significant strides forward in representation and support for music HE departments in the UK, but there is still work to be done. If there are further issues that concern you and you do not see them listed here, then please do not hesitate to get in touch with a member of the committee.

To enable NAMHE to continue its work for our discipline, please ensure your departmental or institutional subscription is up to date and lend your voice to the debate.

With very best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rachel Cowgill', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Rachel Cowgill (Chair, NAMHE)

NAMHE Committee:

Martin Blain
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Peter Manning
Simon Mawhinney
Miguel Mera
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