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EVERY ARTIST IS AN ADVOCATE:
An autoethnographic analysis of how higher education imposes artist advocacy

Noah Durnell
Davidson Honors College Capstone
May 3, 2022

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Introduction

In 2017 I chose to attend the University of Montana (UM) to study Oboe Performance in pursuit of being a well-respected, professional musician. Today, as I soon graduate from UM, I have chosen not to pursue music performance as a career, and instead pursue a life of political advocacy. Many of my peers ask me why this is what I've chosen, and I ask myself the same question quite often. The best way to answer is to share my story of being a music student come student advocate at UM. When I began at UM, I saw a sea of capable, confident young freshman musicians like me. Today, I see few made it to senior year, and while many are quite capable, their confidence is gone. They have also chosen not to pursue music. While music students' divestment from their own crafts may be a result of the attitudes UM deployed towards the School of Music, the students' response to these attitudes was quite remarkable.

This presentation is an autoethnographic depiction of UM's proposed budget cuts to the School of Music in 2018 and their lack of pursuit of funding for a new music building, both of which demonstrate waning investment in the arts.¹ I compare these events to those similar at other American institutions to demonstrate the immense instability of funding for music schools across the nation. This comparison also highlights how music students respond to waning institutional support of their programs with student advocacy and discusses how unorthodox and difficult it is for music students to organize in this way. Compared to other national institutions, student advocacy at UM is uniquely successful; music students have not only effectively advocated against budget cuts, but have had success in improving current conditions by advocating for substantial funding for building renovations. These successes indicate that the

¹ Carolyn Ellis, et al. "Autoethnography: An Overview." *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung*, vol. 36, no. 4 (138), GESIS - Leibniz-Institute for the Social Sciences, Center for Historical Social Research, 2011, pp. 273–90.

proactive and often hidden advocacy work intended to improve the current conditions of a music program are more effective than responsive public advocacy work intended to prevent the current conditions of a music program from becoming worse, or advocacy work that pushes back against cuts. This paper proposes that the tight-knit culture of the UM School of Music and Missoula community is what contributed to our unique success in student advocacy.

Budget Cuts

The starting point of my student advocacy stemmed from a significant budget cut abruptly announced to the School of Music in 2018.² After a year of feeling proud of my musical progress and secure as music student at UM, this announcement was shocking; there was previously no messaging to students suggesting the School of Music would ever be considered for such catastrophic cuts. This also came as a surprise to our most esteemed faculty member and Director of the School of Music, Dr. Maxine Ramey. She immediately reacted to the announcement by reaching out to garner public support to push back on the proposed cuts.

Dr. Ramey addressed a letter to the broader Missoula community asking for their support; this community consists of loyal supporters of the arts, countless professional performers in the Missoula Symphony Orchestra and other esteemed ensembles, thousands of alumni of UM arts degrees, parents of current music students, and big-name philanthropists to UM arts programs. These community partners, who had always known UM to be an institution that prides itself on supporting the arts, were horrified at the news of these extreme budget cuts and their potential impacts. Dr. Ramey's letter asserted:

This [budget] cut, in no uncertain terms, would mean a reduction in our faculty to the levels where we would not be able to offer accredited degree programs in

² Patrick Reilly, "University of Montana Provost, dean seek to soothe fears over arts cuts." *Missoulian*, September 24, 2018.

Music Education, Performance, Composition, or a host of our other Bachelor of Arts in Music degrees [...] The potential losses to then [sic] entire CVPA (College of Visual and Performing Arts) would be that the arts on UM's campus would be terminated or minimized to the point of being just service departments. The BME (Bachelor of Music Education), BM (Bachelor of Music) and BA (Bachelor of Arts) degrees would be gone as would all degrees in Music, Theatre & Dance and Art.³

Though she was unable to announce exact numbers, Dr. Ramey detailed how the impacts of budget cuts to faculty levels, program offerings, and degree options to the School of Music could mean extinction of the School of Music altogether.

Student Response

Out of the terror and urgency expressed in this letter arose something spectacular; alongside concerned community stakeholders, faculty members, and the school leadership, music students rapidly organized to change the course of these budget cuts. Every one of us wrote a letter or an email to the Provost and the President to appeal why the music program meant so much to us. I helped create the hashtag: #UMartsmatter (see fig. 1) and began posting all over social media alongside my peers. I also helped organize a performance protest called "Save the Arts" which later became known as "Celebrate the Arts".⁴ The event had 1,700 people express interest, 827 social media shares, and 597 attendees, further demonstrating the depth of support for the initiative. We skipped our classes and postponed our regular practicing (which is of the highest currency to music students) for five straight days to fully invest in preventing a worst-case scenario for our program.

³ Maxine Ramey, "Supporter Letter". September 22, 2018. Letter.

⁴ Isabel Quintero, (Isabel Quintero) "Celebrate the Arts!", *Facebook*, September 24, 2018.

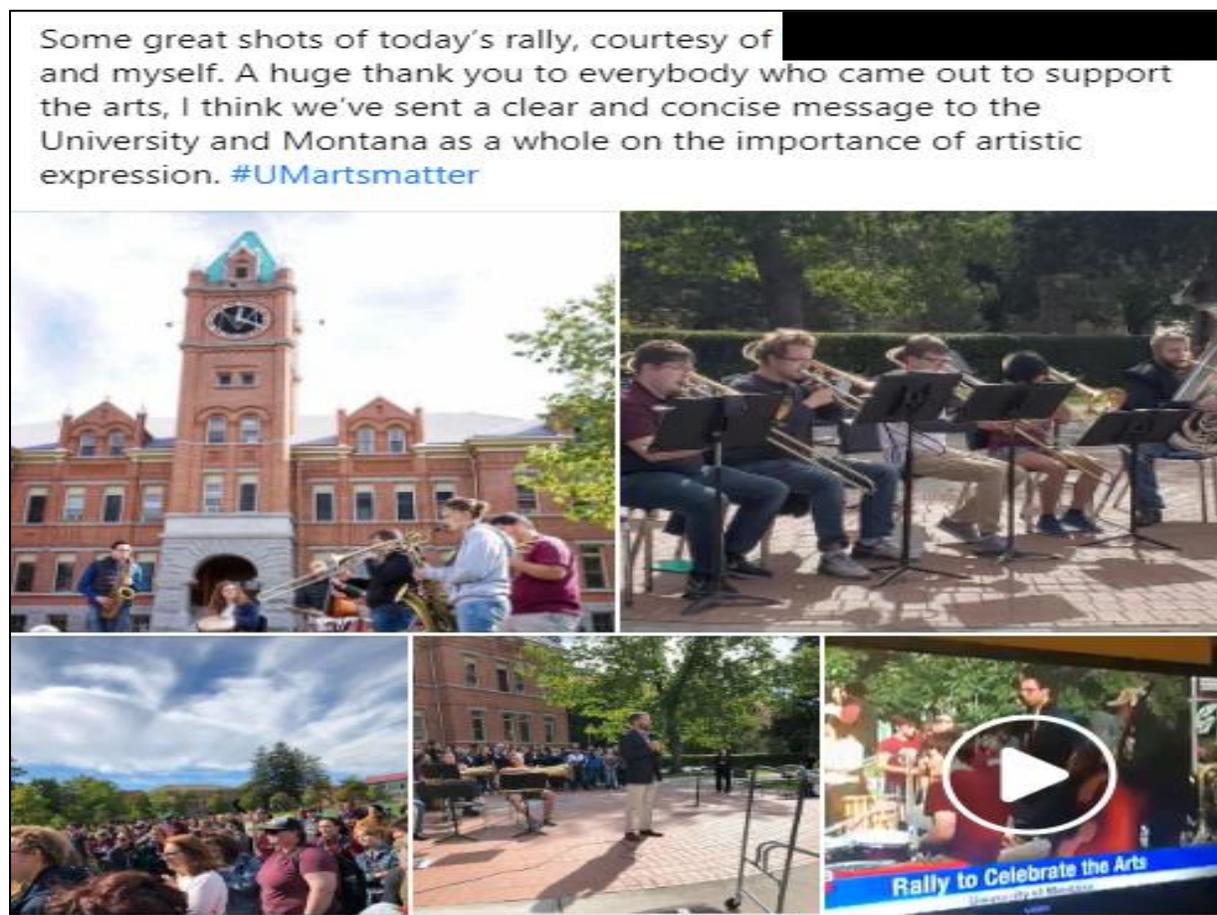


Figure 1. A screenshot of a Facebook post with images from the “Celebrate the Arts” Rally held at UM in 2018 to combat looming budget cuts.⁵

Following those five days, our efforts were answered by the Provost: “the university will release new budget targets, then give deans and department heads a month to decide how to fit within those figures”.⁶ The budget cuts were not dropped, just reduced. The music school still suffered significant fallout—many adjunct faculty were let go from their positions, and retired positions were not renewed. While music students felt the effects of the budget cuts that still pursued, we were well aware that our advocacy efforts helped prevent things from being much

⁵ Josh Hungate. 2018. “Some great shots of today’s rally...” Facebook, September 29, 2018.

⁶ Reilly.

worse. However, I did not want to just prevent worse case scenarios — I wanted to proactively make positive changes for the School of Music.

Music Building Condition

My major goal towards enacting positive change for the School of Music was to successfully advocate for renovations to the Music Building. The Music Building was constructed in 1953, and had never received a major repair or renovation since its inauguration. When I started my pursuit to secure renovations in 2019, the building had minimal space, forcing faculty to share offices or remodel closets into “quaint” office spaces. The school had no adequate technology lab, making our profound composition program difficult to pursue in — house. The ensemble and practice rooms were not sound-proof and were deemed unsafe for human hearing by the fire marshal.⁷ Frequently, there were not enough practice rooms to house all students, and they could often be found practicing in the freight elevator (see fig. 2). This elevator was wheelchair inaccessible and characterized the music building as out of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Accreditor Concerns

In 2012, the School of Music’s accreditors, The National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) reaccredited the School of Music with flying colors, with one major exception: the poor and inaccessible conditions of the Music Building needed to be resolved before our next accreditation review in 2022.⁸ For the next decade, UM requested that the Montana State

⁷ “The University of Montana School of Music.” *The University of Montana School of Music*. Missoula, MT: National Association of Schools of Music, 2012. Print.

⁸ “The University of Montana School of Music.” *The University of Montana School of Music*. Missoula, MT: National Association of Schools of Music, 2012. Print.

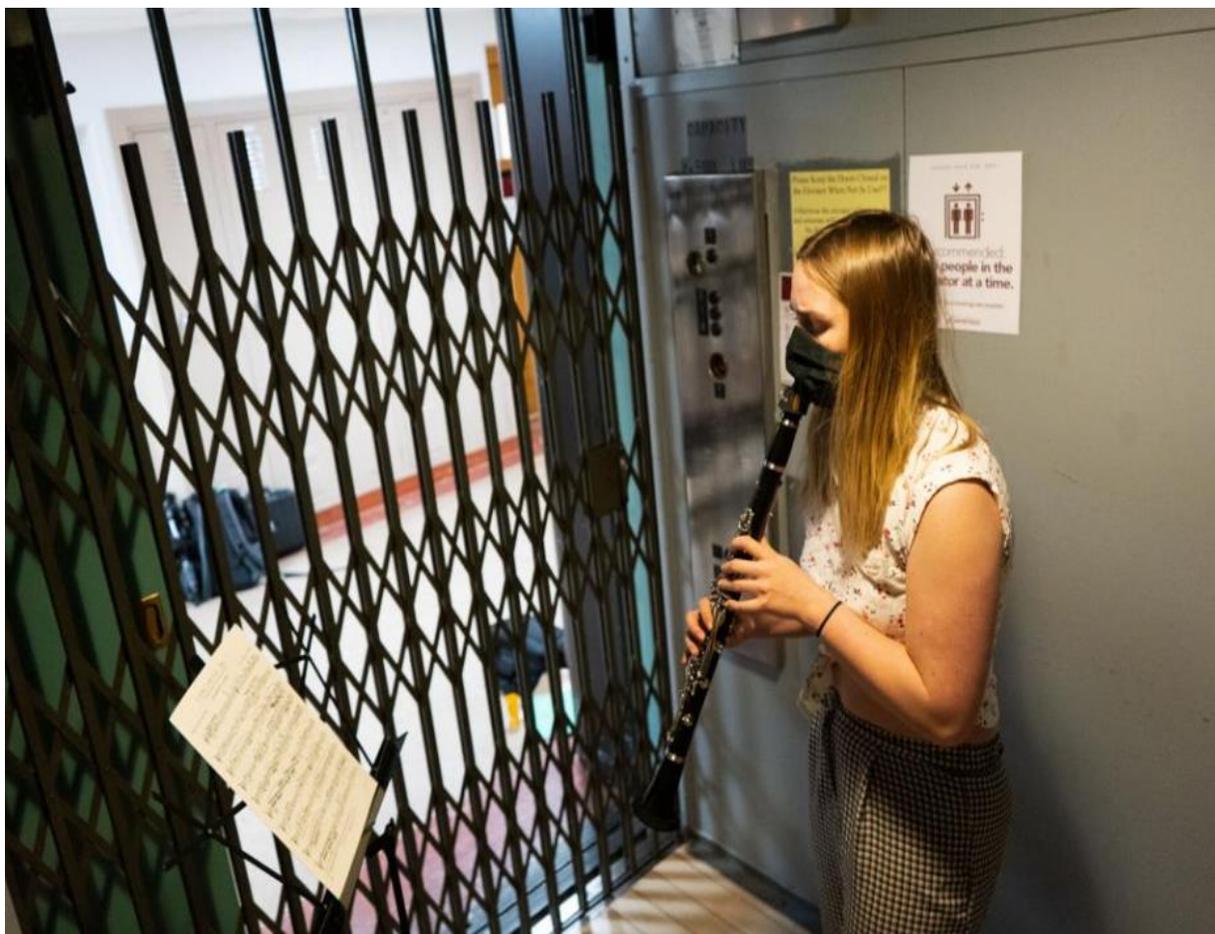


Figure 2. Image of UM Music student, Kennedy Payne, practicing in the UM School of Music Freight Elevator.⁹

legislature (referred to hereafter as “legislature”) allocate ten million dollars to renovate and expand the music building. Over the next few years, the request received “high priority” status for the legislature.¹⁰ With multiple universities across the state of Montana competing for infrastructural funds from the legislature, it often takes years to become a priority, and projects that are prioritized are much more likely to be approved for funding. It was in UM’s best interest,

⁹ Liam McCollum, “Every Artist is an Advocate”. Image. The Montana Kaimin. February 16, 2021.

¹⁰ “Long Range Building Program Project Status and Funding - All Projects”. *Montana University System*, June 30, 2014. Print.

then, to capitalize on the prioritization of this project because it was a small window of assured success for funding Music Building renovations.

Elected Positions

After the budget cuts in 2018, my plan was to make sure this decade of work to renovate the Music Building would be reinforced by student advocacy to ensure its success, since these significant budget cuts suggested the School of Music's infrastructural needs would no longer be a priority for UM. In the spring of 2019, I was elected the President of the Student Music Union (SMU) by music students to represent their interests to the student government, the Associated Students of the University of Montana (ASUM). I was also elected by the student body as a Senator with ASUM after running a last-minute write-in-campaign, thanks to the music students who flooded the polls to support me. As an ASUM Senator, I was positioned to advocate for students' concerns, and it became my first platform to advocate for funding to renovate the Music Building.

Initial Advocacy

In my first four months as ASUM senator, I crafted a resolution (which is a student government document equivalent to a legislative bill). This resolution cited the results of a university-wide survey conducted in the fall of 2019 that detailed how the student body wanted UM to prioritize its financial investments to campus.¹¹ In the survey, 12.1% of respondents reported that instructional spaces should be prioritized for investment in the near term to address deferred maintenance issues, and 11.8% of students reported that renovating instructional spaces

¹¹ ASUM Senate. "Campus Improvement Feedback Form". Oct. 16 2019. PDF

would improve the UM student experience (see fig. 3). For both of these categories, “instructional spaces” was the number one priority of the student body; even more significantly, in the qualitative responses to this survey, 45.7% of responses specifically requested Music Building renovations. This data demonstrated a clear desire from both music students and the broader student body to renovate the UM Music Building. I portrayed this desire in my resolution titled *SB50-19/20: Resolution Regarding the Renovation and Expansion of the Music Building*, to request that UM once again ask the legislature to fund Music Building renovations at ten million dollars, and to keep it as their priority.¹²

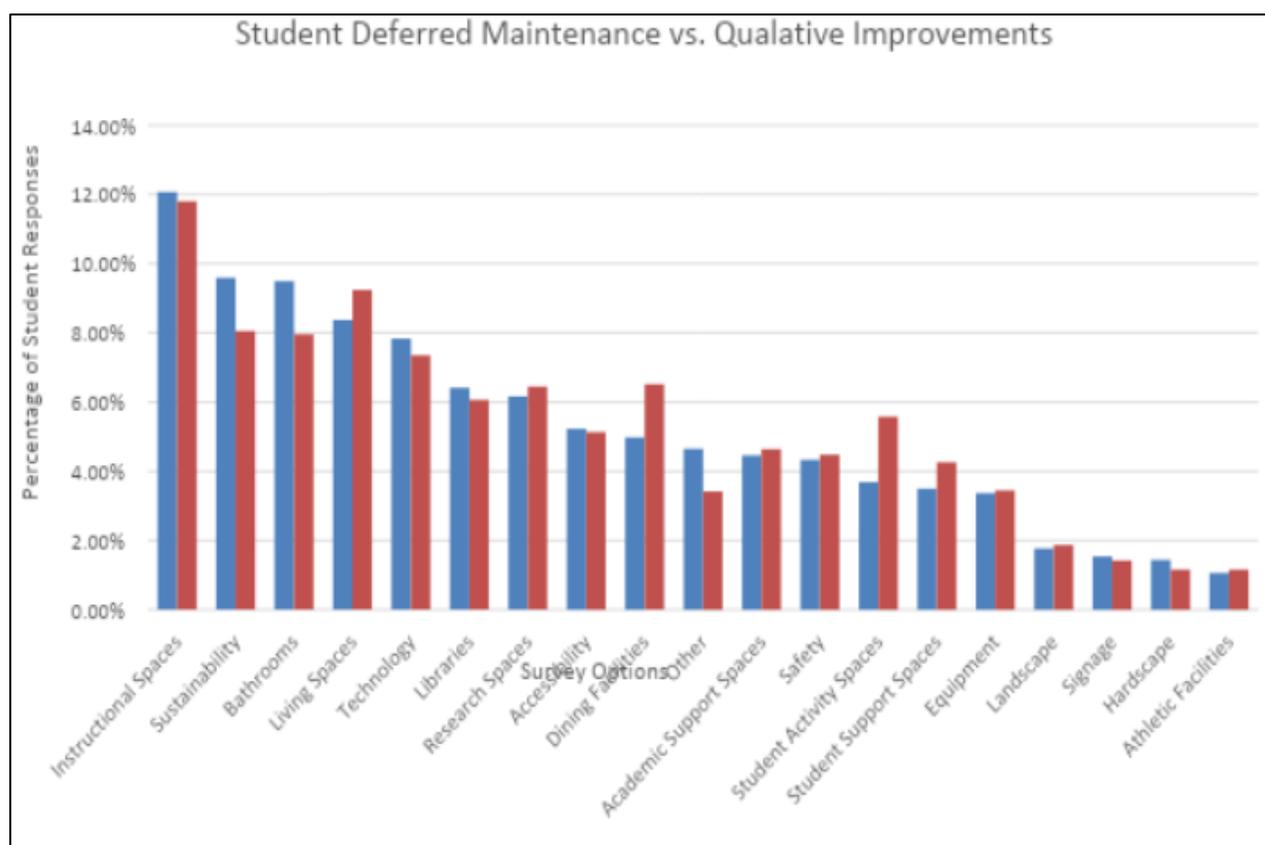


Figure 3. Snapshot of the quantitative results of the student survey – the majority of student responses requested investment in instructional spaces.¹³

¹² Noah Durnell, “SB50-19/20 Resolution Regarding the Renovation and Expansion of the Music Building.” *Associated Students of the University of Montana*, January 4, 2020.

¹³ ASUM Senate. “Campus Improvement Feedback Form”. Image. Oct. 16 2019. PDF

The initiative unfortunately failed: UM changed its priority from Music Building renovations to the construction of a brand-new Forestry Science Complex for thirty-four million dollars. Additionally, they reduced the ask for Music Building renovations from ten million dollars to seven-and-a-half million dollars. By doing this, not only did UM demonstrate they valued another department and their infrastructure needs over those of the music department, they put our NASM accreditation on the line since it relied on the approval of legislative funds for renovation.

As we entered the Spring semester of 2020, my new goal was to use my Student Music Union President position to lobby the state legislature directly for the now seven-and-a-half million dollars we had to work with. To do so effectively, I pulled in the perspectives of music students who could create personalized and evocative lobbying materials that would demonstrate the need for a new building.

SMUPA

In the fall of 2020, I formed the SMU Political Action Committee (SMUPA), a group of music students that could directly lobby the legislature for Music Building renovation funds, bypassing the reliance on UM to lobby for us as a priority. While our 2018 advocacy against budget cuts was very public, energetic, and flashy, this work was less visible, bureaucratic, and very tedious. It was an undertaking that would push music students far beyond the comfort of their music studies to be successful, and place significant additional responsibilities on their already overloaded schedules. Due to this, it was initially difficult to form, but the committee eventually grew to be about seventy-five members strong and became very active. We wrote another resolution, *SB43-20/21: Resolution Endorsing the Inclusion of Major Repairs Funding*

for “Music Building Infrastructure Project under HB05”, which provided explicit student support for the Music Building renovation itself directly to the legislature.¹⁴ We created infographics (see fig. 4) so the information we were presenting to legislators was more palatable, recorded performances to send to legislators, invited legislators to our performances, and created a lobbying video that highlighted all of the crumbling and outdated infrastructure of the building that would benefit from renovations (see fig. 5).

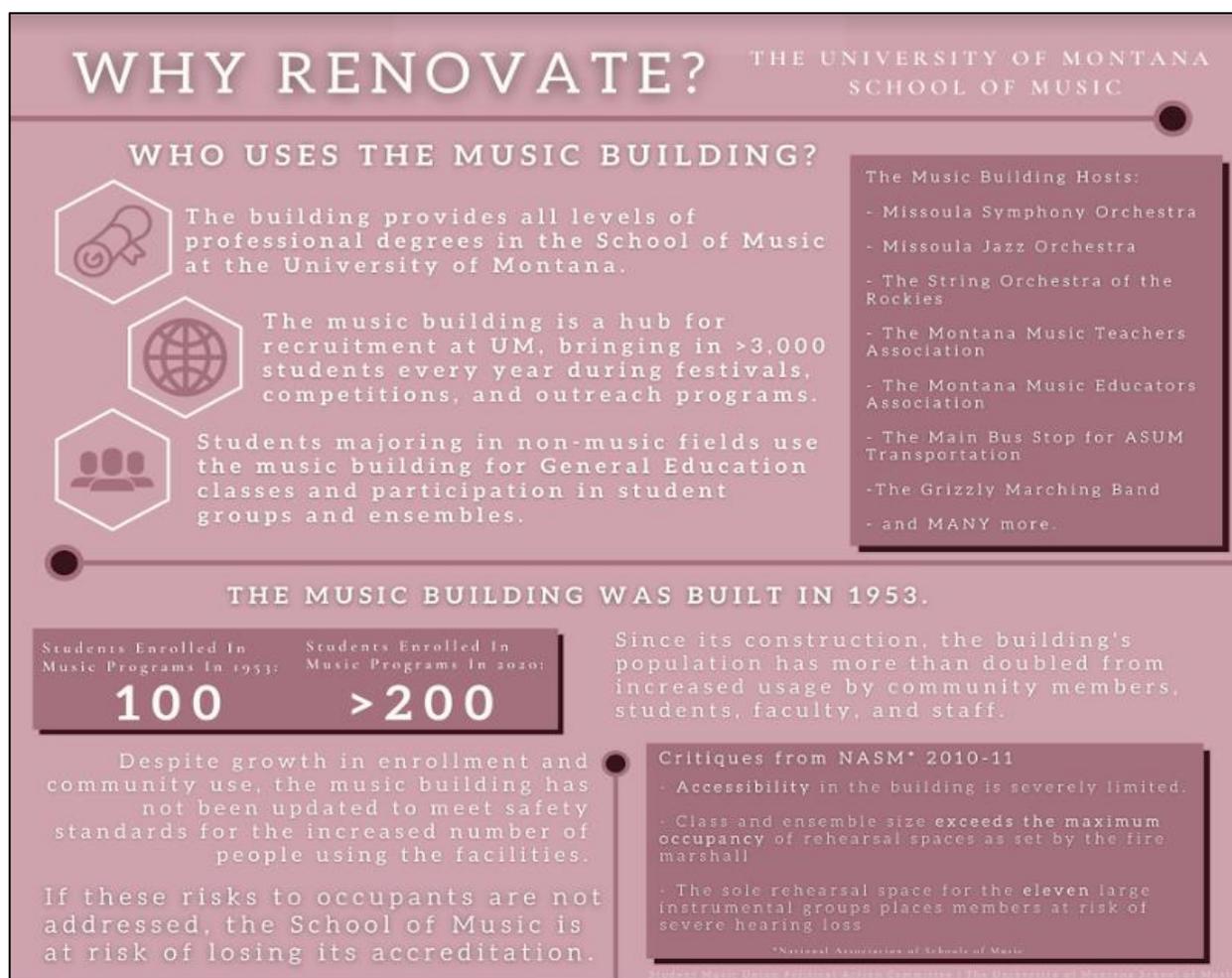


Figure 4. Example of an infographic SMUPA sent to the legislature in an effort to lobby for funding for the UM Music Building.¹⁵

¹⁴ Noah Durnell, “SB43-20/21 Resolution Endorsing the Inclusion of Major Repairs Funding for “Music Building Infrastructure Project under HB05.” *Associated Students of the University of Montana*, October 4, 2020.

¹⁵ Cooper Jurasin, “Why Renovate? The University of Montana School of Music”. Infographic. 2020.



Figure 5. Three screenshots of the lobbying video prepared by SMUPA to highlight the UM Music Building's crumbling infrastructure.¹⁶

Volley with the Legislature

Despite these efforts, the legislature reduced the proposed amount of Music Building funding from seven-and-a-half million dollars to six million dollars. In response to this, the SMUPA committee pivoted all of its lobbying material again to ask for that one-and-a-half million dollars back. We wrote another resolution, *SB55-20/21: Resolution Regarding Lobbying Efforts to Include Major Repairs Project "Music Building Infrastructure" in HB5*, which requested that the one-and-a-half million dollars be reconsidered for Music Building renovations.¹⁷ We sent in fifty written testimonies from students to the legislature and I prepared a verbal testimony to provide in person as the SMU President and as an ASUM Senator. After repeatedly asking the UM for their support, we were assured that university leadership would spend six minutes lobbying on behalf of the Music Building. The fifty written testimonies were received and my verbal testimony went well, but when it came time for UM to dedicate their six minutes of time, they spoke solely to the new Forestry and Science complex, once again

¹⁶ Lizz Dellinger, "UM Music Building Lobbying Video". Screenshots. 2021.

¹⁷ Noah Durnell, "SB55-20/21 Resolution Regarding Lobbying Efforts to Include Major Repairs Project "Music Building Infrastructure in HB5." *Associated Students of the University of Montana*, January 19, 2021.

devaluing the need for Music Building renovations. Our lobbying efforts were unsuccessful, and we walked away from the legislative session with approval to use just six million dollars of *fundraised* money on renovations. This was money that the music department would have to fundraise itself from donors, rather than funding allocated from the State of Montana's budget. I was deeply disturbed by the UM's departure from committing to Music Building renovations and disregard for our accreditation concerns, so I shifted my priorities away from advocating directly to the State of Montana legislature, back to regaining support from UM.

“Every Artist is an Advocate”

For three weeks I reached out to our administration to discuss prioritizing donor funds for the music building, yet every attempted contact was left without response. This continued until our student newspaper, the *Montana Kaimin*, gave me the opportunity to publicize these concerns in their paper's headline story. I told the story of our committee and our music building, and I told the story of how the administration was ignoring my emails and phone calls. The article, titled after one of my quotes, “Every Artist is an Advocate”, was published with two significant promises from university leadership.¹⁸ UM President, Seth Bodnar stated that “while we would have liked to receive more funding from the state this session, campus leadership is committed to finding a path to the full funding needed to renovate the music building”.¹⁹ Dave Kuntz, UM's director of strategic communications and the spokesperson for President Bodnar also stated that renovating the Music Building was a “top priority” for the university.²⁰

¹⁸ Mariah Thomas, “Every Artist is an Advocate - Music Students Fight for Building Renovations” *The Montana Kaimin*, February 23, 2021.

¹⁹ Thomas.

²⁰ Thomas.

After the article was published, UM's leadership apologized for not responding to my previous attempts to contact them, and finally agreed to meet. In meeting with them I reminded them of their now public commitment to fund and prioritize Music Building renovations. Finally, following two years of intense student advocacy, the Music Building renovations were pursued as a priority by UM's leadership. Some of those renovations were completed in the fall of 2021 just in time to demonstrate to our accreditors that we are making the improvements they asked for. These renovations did not however demonstrate that UM was any more committed to the arts. If anything, the past two years indicated a trend of waning institutional investment in the School of Music which prompted the question of whether this was occurring elsewhere.

Institutional Support Waning

There is an absolute national trend of waning support for schools of music in higher education. In 2015, George Washington University (GWU), a well-funded and esteemed American college positioned right next to the national Kennedy Center for the Arts, announced a 5% budget cut across the campus, with 50% of that total cut applied to their School of Music.²¹ In 2020, Eastern Washington University (EWU), one of few campuses in the northwest region to hold the same prestigious NASM accreditation that UM holds, announced a proposed budget cut of ten degree programs, seven of which were music programs.²² In 2021, University of Hawai'i Hilo's (UHH) arts programs, the most robust arts programs offered statewide, were the primary

²¹ Jessica Krash, "Adjunct Professor: GW's Cuts Will Crush Music Education Here." *Washington Post*, April 16, 2015.

²² David May, "Eastern Washington University Program Review President's Recommendations" *Eastern Washington University*, May 21, 2021.

target of budget cuts to nearly fifty faculty positions following the Hawaii state legislature's approval to cut thirty million to higher education across the state.²³

GWU claimed their cuts to music programs were part of a curriculum change; however, administration declined to disclose any new curricular strategy that would subsidize the immediate loss of their programs.²⁴ EWU's proposed rationale for their budget cuts was to keep "providing access to exceptional educational opportunities to produce a highly educated and diverse workforce for the region and the state".²⁵ EWU's justifications for budget cuts demonstrated they believed that cutting entire degree programs (most of them music programs) would somehow aid in creating a more diverse workforce. UHH did not release justifications of the budget cuts to their arts programs, but they did endorse an increase of over one-hundred thousand dollars from the Hawaii state legislature to UHH's athletics while simultaneously witnessing the loss of four-and-a-half million dollars to its academic programs.²⁶ The proposed cuts and justifications from each of these colleges sent a message to music students that their degree is not worth studying, and that their career does not add value to the world. The student responses to these cuts were profound attempts to organize music students to advocate against administrative decisions.

Student Advocacy Trends

²³ Kalbert Young, "2021 legislative recap: UH's overall budget cut by almost 10%". *University of Hawai'i News*, May 6, 2021.

²⁴ Krash.

²⁵ Randle Kinswa, "Budget Changes for 2021-23". *The Easterner*, June 3, 2021.

²⁶ Young.

Across the nation there is a trend of budget cuts to university music programs. Just like at UM, the students' reaction to budget cuts has consistently been student advocacy to oppose or reduce the effects of the budget cuts on their music programs.

Like UM music students utilizing social media and holding performance protests outside of our Main Hall, GWU students launched a social media campaign and planned a twenty-four-hour non-stop performance protest to their administration.²⁷ Their twenty-four-hour performance protest unfortunately only held firm for sixteen hours. Their student government got involved, and designated a greater percentage of their student activity fee funds to help fund the courses that would be cut by administration.²⁸ These courses were of such significant value to the students that they were willing to subsidize tuition dollars with fee money meant for student activity funding, though this would prove to be unsustainable against the tide of budget cuts.

EWU faculty held a vote of no confidence against their university President amidst these cuts.²⁹ Although they chose to step down from their position, the interim President proposed the same budget cuts as announced prior. In response, EWU music students reached out directly to SMUPA and asked for our help because they witnessed the success of our advocacy against UM's proposed budget cuts and they wanted to take the same approach. We provided all of our material, our strategies, and continuous support, but they failed to organize effectively enough to get their feet on the ground.

UHH students launched a twitter campaign to share their high regards for their programs, share footage of performances, and notify the public of their robust events offerings, but the

²⁷ Eva Palmer, "Student Association Finance Committee Helps Fund Music Groups After Cuts to Department." *GW Hatchet*, April 27, 2015.

²⁸ Palmer.

²⁹ Eleneo Dao, "EWU community speaks out about budget cuts, 'no confidence' vote". *KXLY Spokane, Couer D'Alenei*, June 23, 2020.

campaign failed to receive significant traction.³⁰ In 2022, UHH created a video highlighting their successful alumni of the arts on Broadway, in radio, and as touring professional musicians in hopes of garnering national support against budget cuts.³¹

Music students chose to advocate against budget cuts through similar methods, including performance protests, the involvement of student government bodies, social media campaigns, and the creation of letters or videos to express appreciation for the current music program. Despite these efforts, GWU and EWU still experienced very severe budget cuts, and UHH's proposed budget cuts may still pursue.

UM Student Advocacy Successes

In contrast, UM music students were successful in organizing, were successful in reducing budget cuts, and were successful in pursuing additional advocacy with the Music Building. I suggest this is largely due to the strong culture of the UM School of Music. Music students are generally some of the busiest and most overscheduled students on campus. They hold full time schedules with little flexibility, often taking upwards of twenty credit hours per semester. What little flexibility they do have, they use to practice, join new ensembles, and work. Their free time is consumed by music and is an extension of their degrees. It is very difficult to break music students from their routines, especially to do something so far outside of their wheelhouse, like political advocacy.

While this is especially true for UM Music students, we also had the advantage of proximity. The UM School of Music is quite small for being such a highly accredited music

³⁰ Dayva Escobar, "Solidarity in Social Distance: Budget Cuts to the Arts Inspire Community to Speak Out". *University of Hawai'i Hilo, Ke Kalaheia*, 2022.

³¹ Escobar.

program having just over 200 students. It is so small that everyone knows everyone; I never walk past a stranger in the music building. UM music students go to the same classes, share lockers right next to each, eat lunch in the hallways as a group, and perform in many ensembles together. And, our relationships extend well beyond the School of Music. We become roommates and neighbors, create bands together and attend each other's gigs, and even go to the same party at the same house on the weekends. UM is also a small institution, meaning music students and their values carry fast across the campus. The Missoula community is similarly small and unified, contributing to the strength of their commitment to the UM School of Music. This is why when budget cuts were proposed in 2018, UM music students organized so quickly and effectively, because we were already in each other's circles. This is also why I was able to form the SMUPA committee; even though there was not an immediate threat like budget cuts to react to, the foundation of trust and camaraderie we had built together was enough to dedicate ourselves to this project. This is why I was able to engage music students in the tedious, bureaucratic work, because we were invested not just in the School of Music, but each other.

Conclusion

It is clear that around the nation music programs are experiencing a trend of decreasing financial support, and music students are consistently responding through grassroots student advocacy to combat budget cuts. Using autoethnographic research methods, I compared similar student advocacy against budget cuts and in pursuit of funding for Music Building renovations at UM, to the advocacy efforts music students at other institutions pursued. I found that reactive advocacy efforts against budget cuts, although paralleled at all the institutions discussed in this study, were not effective anywhere but UM. I suggest that UM music students were successful in

reactive efforts to combat budget cuts because the tight-knit culture and small size of the music building made them uniquely capable of strong grassroots organizing. I also propose that these factors allowed UM music students to expand their advocacy from reactive measures, to proactive advocacy to build a strong program through legislative advocacy for Music Building renovation funds. The success of these efforts further highlights the need for music students at other institutions to pursue the hidden, tedious, and proactive advocacy efforts necessary to strengthen their music programs.

This study prompts a number of important directions for future research. Despite understanding that budget cuts are trending for music programs in institutions of higher education around the nation, there is a need to determine if these budget cuts are more severe or common than that of other academic programs. An additional inquiry is to what extent the trend of decreasing support for music programs is value informed, versus informed by COVID-19, high inflationary rates, and decreasing funding support from their respective legislatures. The greatest question begged by this study is if stories like this one currently exist. For future research, it is necessary to understand whether it is due to the hidden nature of proactive advocacy work that there are few stories of music students successfully advocating to strengthen their music programs, or if this type of work is actually rare, unique to UM, and needs to be pursued still by other music institutions.

These future research directions, coupled with an understanding of waning institutional support for music programs and the similar nature of students' responses through reactive grassroots advocacy found in this study, may lead to a stronger sense of what kinds of student advocacy are occurring and which examples of student advocacy are successful. This information will prove to be invaluable for any aspiring music student advocates in future

generations who will lead the cause to advocate both against certain budget cuts, and for stronger music programs.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Acronyms & Abbreviations

ASUM	Associated Students of the University of Montana
EWU	Eastern Washington University
GWU	George Washington University
HB	House Bill
Legislature	Montana State Legislature
NASM	National Association of Schools of Music
SMU	Student Music Union
SMUPA	Student Music Union Political Action Committee
UHH	University of Hawai'i Hilo
UM	University of Montana, Missoula

Appendix 2: Organizations Referenced

Associated Students of the University of Montana (ASUM)

- Student government of the University of Montana

Eastern Washington University (EWU)

- Public, American 4-year institution containing an accredited School of Music, undergoing controversies surrounding the budgeting and prioritization of the School of Music.

George Washington University (GWU)

- Public, American 4-year institution containing an accredited School of Music, undergoing controversies surrounding the budgeting and prioritization of the School of Music.

Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Long Range Planning

- The committee of the legislature that approves the draft of House Bill 5, including prioritized building renovations, such as the University of Montana Music Building.

Montana State Legislature

- The governing body of representatives and Senators who represent Montana State constituents.

Student Music Union (SMU)

- Student group representing the interests of Music Students under the Associated Students of the University of Montana.

Student Music Union Political Action Committee (SMUPA)

- Committee of the Student Music Union to focus specifically on lobbying the legislature to secure funding for Music Building Renovations.

University of Hawai'i Hilo (UHH)

- Public, American 4-year institution containing an accredited School of Music, undergoing controversies surrounding the budgeting and prioritization of the School of Music.

University of Montana, Missoula (UM)

- Public, American 4-year institution containing an accredited School of Music, undergoing controversies surrounding the budgeting and prioritization of the School of Music.
- The setting of my own experiences as an undergraduate music student and student advocacy against budget cuts and for building renovations.

Appendix 3: Positions Held Referenced

Student Music Union, Treasurer

(Fall 2018 - Fall 2019)

- I oversaw the budget of the SMU, assisted the President in recognizing new members into the SMU.

Student Music Union, President-Elect

(Fall 2019 - Fall 2020)

- I shadowed the SMU President for one year prior to assuming the Presidency.

Associated Students of the University of Montana, Senator

(Fall 2019 - Spring 2021)

- I served as a representative of the student body by voting in University committees, passed resolutions to push forward initiatives that are important to students, interacted closely with university administration and other state officials to advance student interests, and delegated the student budget to different student organizations, like the Student Music Union.
- As a Senator, I wrote resolutions to advance the Music Building renovations priority at the Montana State Legislature.

Student Music Union, President

(Fall 2020 - Spring 2021)

- I represented the Student Music Union as their spokesperson, organized the Executive members of the Student Music Union, served as a liaison between the student organizations and the Associated Students of the University of Montana Senate, and organized committees to execute new Student Music Union functions, such as the Student Music Union Political Action committee.
- As the Student Music Union President, I organized music students to create lobbying materials and spearhead lobbying efforts for Music Building Renovations to the Montana State Legislature.

Student Music Union Political Action Committee, Chair

(Fall 2020 - Spring 2021)

- I organized members of the committee and delegated out the work of the committee.

Associated Students of the University of Montana, President

(Spring 2021 - present)

- I represented the UM student body as their spokesperson on all administrative committees and on the President's cabinet, represented the ASUM organization, oversaw all personnel as the chief executive officer, approved all student committee assignments, and approved the student activity budget following executive recommendations.

Appendix 4: Timeline of Events Referenced

Date	Event	Position(s) Held
September 2018	Elected Treasurer of the Student Music Union.	SMU Treasurer
Friday, September 21st 2018	Budget cuts were announced to Deans.	SMU Treasurer
Saturday, September 22nd 2018	Director of the School of Music, Maxine Ramey, addresses a letter to the Missoula community to ask for help in contesting announced budget cuts.	SMU Treasurer
Sunday, September 23rd 2018	Students mobilize against proposed budget cuts, launching #UMartsmatter, organizing the <i>Save the Arts</i> protest, and engaging in a community letter campaign.	SMU Treasurer
Monday, September 24th 2018	Missoulian article is published, where Dean Stephen Kalm redacts previous statements about budget cuts.	SMU Treasurer
Wednesday, September 26th 2018	Provost Jon Harbor releases a new budget reflecting the changes expressed on Monday, September 24th by Dean Stephen Kalm. Reflection on community outreach indicates a massive network of support for the School of Music.	SMU Treasurer
October 2018 - May 2019	Dean Stephen Kalm Resigns, School of Music Director Maxine Ramey retires	SMU Treasurer
Friday, September 28th 2018	University of Montana students hold <i>Celebration of the Arts Rally</i> in front of Main Hall.	SMU Treasurer
April 2019	Elected ASUM Senator.	SMU Treasurer ASUM Senator
August 2019	Elected President-Elect of the Student Music Union.	SMU President- Elect ASUM Senator

September 2019	Student survey is released to assess the allocation of funds from the university's debt consolidation. A majority of students requested renovations to Music Building instructional spaces.	SMU President-Elect ASUM Senator
January 15th 2020	Plans for the use of debt consolidation is announced, The School of Music and Music Building are not included in these efforts.	SMU President-Elect ASUM Senator
January 22nd 2020	<i>SB50: Resolution Regarding the Renovation and Expansion of the Music Building</i> passes the ASUM Senate.	SMU President-Elect ASUM Senator
February 2020	Announcement for Music Building's inclusion in legislative asks is announced. It is moved to different categories and significantly reduced from ten million dollars to just seven-and-a-half million dollars.	SMU President-Elect ASUM Senator
July 2020	Began Student Music Union Presidency.	SMU President ASUM Senator
October 2020	Created the Student Music Union Political Action (SMUPA) committee.	SMU President ASUM Senator
November 5th 2020	<i>SB43-20/21 Resolution Endorsing the Inclusion of Major Repairs Funding for "Music Building Infrastructure Project under HB05</i> passes the ASUM Senate.	SMU President ASUM Senator
	EWU reaches out to SMUPA for help advocating against their own budget cuts.	SMU President ASUM Senator
December 2020	"Major Repairs" funding is not included in the draft HB5, Music Building infrastructure requests is reduced by one-and-a-half million dollars.	SMU President ASUM Senator
December 2020	SMUPA pivoted its efforts towards lobbying for the inclusion of our Major Repairs funding in HB5.	SMU President

		ASUM Senator
January 27th 2021	<i>SB55-20/21 Resolution Regarding Lobbying Efforts to Include Major Repairs Project "Music Building Infrastructure" in HB5</i> passes the ASUM Senate.	SMU President ASUM Senator
Days prior to testimony	UM assured SMUPA that they would designate six minutes of speaking time to the need for Music Building infrastructural improvements.	SMU President ASUM Senator
February 2nd 2021	Testimonies are given to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Long Range Building Planning, no testimony is given from the university.	SMU President ASUM Senator
February 2nd 2021	Following executive session, no one from the committee amended the bill to include Music Building infrastructure. SMUPA's efforts to get back the one-and-a-half million failed.	SMU President ASUM Senator
February 2021	Started reaching out to President Bodnar and other administration with no response.	SMU President ASUM Senator
February 2021	The <i>Montana Kaimin</i> reached out to report. I detailed the events of SMUPA's actions and told them President Bodnar would not respond.	SMU President ASUM Senator
February 2021	The <i>Montana Kaimin</i> Article "Every Artist is an Advocate" was published.	SMU President ASUM Senator
March 2021	The President's office issued an apology and scheduled a time to meet.	SMU President ASUM Senator
March 2021	President Bodnar assured that the UM's infrastructural fundraising priority would be the Music Building.	SMU President ASUM Senator
April 2021	Elected ASUM President.	SMU President

		ASUM President
June 2021	Renovations to the School of Music begin.	ASUM President
October 18th 2021	First phase of renovations is completed.	ASUM President

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