

DBU's Music Business Major

Hitting the Right Notes

by Kristie Brooks

The commercial music industry offers an impressive variety of career opportunities, and the industry's continuing expansion and increasing complexity has created the need for a new professional—one who understands not only music, but also administration, accounting, marketing, entrepreneurship, and law. Music, like many of the arts, provides the nucleus for a great career, whether commercial or classical, but no artistic career can succeed without a strong foundation in business. With this in mind, DBU's College of Business and Department of Music joined forces in the fall of 2002 to create a new, cutting-edge bachelor's degree in music business for students interested in a career in the commercial music industry. Already the degree has been met with great success.

"I tell my students, music is the product, and business is the process used to drive that product," said Dr. Terry Fansler, DBU director of studies in music business. "To

be successful in the music industry, students must clearly understand both the product and the process. This degree offers both—and in the right proportions. A good portion of the courses are in music, but an even larger percentage are in business."

For example, a musical concert requires a promotional team, an agent, a manager and a stage crew (including lights and sound) before the first note of music is played. Similarly, a single CD represents the work not only of the artist and supporting musicians, but also studio engineers, producers, technicians, visual and graphic artists, photographers, lawyers, marketing strategists, distributors, retailers—the list goes on.

"Traditional business degrees emphasize management skills. Because the music industry is changing so rapidly and will likely downsize dramatically during the coming years, we are preparing students to work for themselves as entrepreneurs," said Fansler.

"The focus on entrepreneurship is teaching me how to take what I love to do musically, and apply those skills to my dreams professionally," explained David Gentiles, a music business major. "Even after one year in the program, I acquired skills and information that are going to save me money and heartache as I look forward to recording projects, traveling and performing and ministering in area churches."

DBU's close proximity to the DFW music industry provides students with an excellent opportunity to get a head start by working in the industry while going through the program. During their senior year, music business majors apply for an internship with a local business that matches their area of interest.

In addition to general studies requirements, each degree features studies in music, general business, and specific aspects of the music business while providing a solid foundation for a successful career. Students have the chance to take exciting courses, such as recording, where they learn by working in an actual studio environment. They also study the complexities of music law, including copyright, intellectual property, and music publishing from attorneys currently practicing entertainment law.

"The music business is a tough industry to break into, but students going through DBU's program have a distinct advantage that puts them ahead of the competition," said Fansler. "The students must have the talent, but at DBU, we will prepare them for the business. All indications show this program is going to continue to grow tremendously."

For more information on the new music business program, contact Dr. Terry Fansler at 214.333.5495.



Dr. Terry Fansler gives DBU music business students Justin Brooks and Christine Hand a tour of a professional music studio.

Photos by Jared Ambler