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WHEN THE ARTS PEOPLE LEFT:
CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE ELIMINATION OF A MUSIC DEGREE

by

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Bachelor of Music, Syracuse University, 1973
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A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Grand Forks, North Dakota

May
2011

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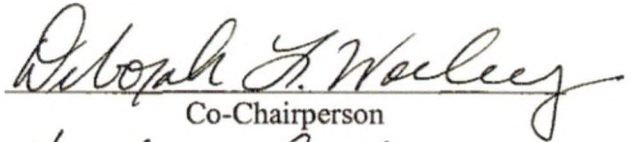
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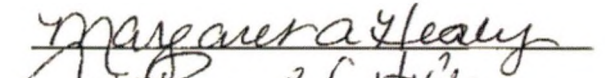
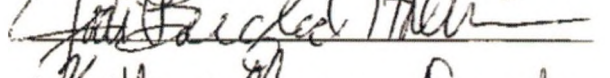
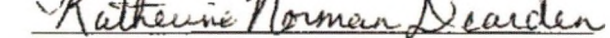


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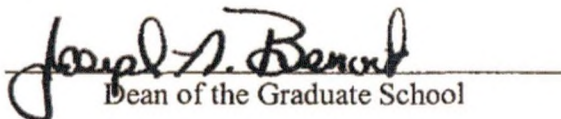
This dissertation, submitted by Beth (Alice) G. Klingenstein in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.


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This dissertation meets the standards for appearance, conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.


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To Kal Klingenstein

ABSTRACT

In economically challenging times, institutions of higher education are often forced to make cuts that would not be considered during times of prosperity. If one such decision is to eliminate the music degree, what factors might contribute to such a decision and what repercussions might be felt after it? How do faculty, administrators, alumni, and members of the campus's host community view the decision? What are the town and gown consequences after the degree is gone? What impact will such retrenchment have on campus and community culture? This case study researches a small, Midwestern university and its host community before, during, and after a decision to eliminate the university's music major was made in 1989-1990. The purpose of this study is to explore how this decision affected community and campus members, community and campus culture, and town and gown relationships. Individual perspectives are viewed through the lens of social capital and are reinforced with research on documents pertaining to the decision, the university, and the community.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the late 1970s some members of a small Midwestern community and university were bursting with pride. The town had approximately 2500 residents, was in a rural agricultural area, and had very little to distinguish itself from hundreds of other small, Midwestern towns. True, the local university added to the quality of life within the community and this town saw the university as an integral part of the community. The campus viewed the community with equal appreciation. The community members were a close-knit group of hardworking, active individuals who functioned well together, knew how to get things done, and maintained a positive, friendly, and wholesome lifestyle for themselves and their families. The campus had equally hardworking faculty, some quite successful in their fields. But all of that was taken for granted. So what was the unbelievable accomplishment of which they were so proud? David had beaten Goliath! The jazz band at *their* college had just won one of the top jazz competitions in the nation, beating out some of the premiere jazz schools in the country. Their university had excelled over the Harvards, MITs, and Stanfords of jazz!

And yet, approximately ten years later, the music degree would be gone. A program that had given so much to the community and the campus, and with which town and gown were happily intertwined, was now gone. How is it that the university would decide to discontinue its music degree? What could possibly have taken this

university/community family from such pride in their unique accomplishment to a decision to actually eliminate the music program entirely? What were the factors impacting this decision? How would the decision affect the members of this small community? Most importantly, what can be learned from this experience?

Statement of the Problem

There is no denying that administrators faced with budget cuts must make difficult choices. Campuses employ a variety of tactics to deal with financial challenges, including suspending employee-retirement contributions, implementing hiring freezes, instigating bond initiatives, cutting programs, borrowing funds, and dipping into endowment funds (Blumenstyk, 2009). If the response to economic hardships is to eliminate an academic program, the arts may be considered for elimination. Within higher education, music programs are expensive (tours, instruments, uniforms, small class size, individualized instruction, and a high number of specialized faculty) and may be viewed as too costly to continue, especially if student numbers are low.

If the decision is made to eliminate the music program as a cost-cutting measure, the institution may face resistance from alumni and other constituents. Soon after Exeter University cut its music degree, Evelyn Glennie, a renowned percussionist returned her honorary degree in protest of the decision (Garner & Cassidy, 2004). Similar to many justifications for elimination of music in K-12, Glennie protested that “Exeter University has justified the move to close music as part of a need to refocus funding on large and more successful departments” (Garner & Cassidy, 2004, para. 9). Such a “bigger is better” mentality may leave music programs in a particularly vulnerable position.

This research will address the circumstances leading up to a university's decision to eliminate its degree in music and the consequences after the decision. Of particular interest is the impact that such a choice had on individuals within the university structure as well as within the university's host community. Towards that end, one public institution of higher education, Widmer State University (WSU), and its small, rural host community, the town of Widmer, have been selected as the site for this case study. For the purpose of anonymity, all names of people, organizations, relevant documents, and locations, including Widmer State University and the community of Widmer, are pseudonyms. For further anonymity, quotes are rarely attributed to individual participants.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

According to Creswell (2007), a purpose statement is a statement "that provides the major objective or intent, or 'road map,' to the study." Following Creswell's guidelines, the purpose of this case study is to describe the circumstances leading up to the decision to eliminate the music program and the impact that discontinuing the music degree at Widmer State University had on university and community members, the university and community culture, and town and gown relationships. This study is a case study and Widmer was chosen because it is a small, rural community where the town and gown relationship is particularly significant. This research explores the reasons for the Widmer State University decision, how members of the community and university reacted, and the consequences since that decision was made.

It is hoped that this research will provide guidance to other institutions of higher education (IHE) that may be considering eliminating music as a major. This research

will help to inform administrators of the impact that such a decision has on both the campus community and host community. In this time of increased interest in town and gown relationship (Cox, 2000), any major decision that impacts the local community must be well informed. This study will aid university administrators who might be considering cutting a music program or eliminating a music degree in the future. It will contribute to the literature on the importance of town and gown relationships as well as the role the arts play in the quality of life and social capital experienced in a university and its host community.

The primary question asked by this research is: What were the causes and consequences of the decision to eliminate the music degree at Widmer State University?

Some additional questions that will inform administrators include:

1. What are some of the political and demographic factors which can lead to a decision to eliminate a music program?
2. If administrators believe the least disruptive cut for the campus is to eliminate the music degree, do they understand the repercussions of their decision in terms of constituents such as faculty, alumni, and members of their host community?
3. How are issues of quality of the program and quantity of enrollments taken into account?
4. How might powerful individuals impact such a decision?
5. What are the implications of such a decision for town and gown relationships?
6. How might this decision impact campus and community culture?

7. What are special consequences to such a decision when the university is part of a small, rural community?

Personal Interest

This topic is of special interest to me for a number of reasons. I have spent a lifetime working in the field of music and feel that music adds greatly to the quality of life available to individuals and communities. I see it as an integral part of any healthy community. Arts advocacy is important to me and I often speak on this issue in an attempt to raise awareness of the value of the arts in our communities. The final chapter of my recent book, *The Independent Piano Teacher's Studio Handbook* (2009), is devoted to arts advocacy.

As an associate professor of music at a state institution, I am acutely aware of the constraints that a tight budget can place on the arts. Music is an expensive program and financial challenges can negatively impact arts spending. Too often, comments on campus such as, "It all comes down to numbers," seem to take precedence over concerns for offering a well-rounded exposure to the liberal arts. Even government is becoming less supportive of the arts. "Government funding for the arts in America dissipates by the hour it seems..." (Bambarger, 1998, p. 46).

My past experiences have also led me to a strong interest in town and gown relationships. I founded a community school of the arts associated with a state university in 1994. Having served as director for fifteen years, I witnessed firsthand the value of using the arts as a tool for building a strong relationship with the community. Positive community relations can be an immense asset to a university, especially when the

university is part of a small, rural community. I understand the power that music has to build bridges between a university and its host community.

Conceptual Framework

Maxwell (2005) states that one function of a conceptual framework is to position research within the context of existing theory and research. Johnson and Farmer (2007) describe it as a means of establishing a shared vision for the readers of the research. Smyth (2004) sees the conceptual framework as a valuable tool for “scaffolding” the research. She goes on to encourage the researcher to avoid allowing the framework to limit research results by forcing too much through the lens of that framework. She also counsels the researcher to realize that real-world experiences inform any conceptual framework.

Understanding that the conceptual framework serves as a tool for informing and organizing rather than limiting insights from real-world experiences, the conceptual framework that will inform this study is that of social capital. Woolcock (1998) describes social capital as a “broad term encompassing the norms and networks facilitating collective action for mutual benefit” (p. 155). In response to concerns about the varied interpretations of the term social capital, Woolcock suggests, “There are different types, levels, or dimensions of social capital, different performance outcomes associated with different combinations of these dimensions, and different sets of conditions that support or weaken favorable combinations” (p. 159).

Putnam’s (2000) groundbreaking book, *Bowling Alone: the Collapse and Revival of American Communities*, addresses trends in civic engagement and social capital, including political participation, civic participation, religious participation, connections in

the workplace, informal social connections, altruism, volunteering and philanthropy, and finally reciprocity, honesty and trust. Soon after the book was published, Putnam (2001) added to the literature by conducting a study of social capital in all 50 states, using 13 measures of social capital. First, he used membership data such as percentage of parents participating in PTA, family church attendance, and numbers of students in 4-H clubs. He also used data from the commercial marketing firm, DDB Needham (Putnam, 2001). The firm surveys samples of consumer choices, but for the last 25 years has collected valuable data from questions addressing areas such as church attendances, volunteering, participation in clubs, and even the number of times the respondent went on a picnic. Another tool Putnam (2001) used is altruism, noting that those who give more blood, money, or time tend to be more socially connected. The article includes figures that demonstrated where each state falls in terms of a variety of social capital indicators. He notes that states close to the Canadian border demonstrated more social capital. Immigration patterns seem to affect social capital; states with higher percentages of Scandinavian ancestry rate higher. States that made use of slavery (where ancestral social capital was deliberately destroyed) rank lower. He also notes a negative impact on crime in states with high social capital and a positive impact on health.

Interestingly enough, in the figures at the end of Putnam's research (2001) the state housing the community of Widmer is one of the strongest in terms of all forms of social capital. Putnam's research provides additional insight into the potential importance of social capital in the community of Widmer. He measures social capital in terms of more effective schools, strong welfare of children, fewer hours of TV watched by children, less violent crime, less pugnacious environment, better health, lower tax

evasion, more tolerance, more economic equality, and more civic equality. Although Putnam (2001) acknowledges the possibility of other explanations for his findings, he offers strong arguments in defense of his use of variables and their causality.

Langston and Barrett (2008) list three forms of social capital: bonding, bridging, and linking. Bonding social capital, according to Putnam (2000), acts like “superglue” for groups with similar traits: the country club, a black church, or a reading group. This can create strong in-group loyalty and solidarity, but out-of-group antagonism. Putnam sees bridging social capital as reaching from one group to another, such as the civil rights movement or an ecumenical religious group. Woolcock (2001) adds, “Bridging is essentially a horizontal metaphor . . . implying connections between people who share broadly similar demographic characteristics” (p. 10). He goes on to describe linking social capital as a means of sharing resources and ideas from institutions beyond the community. Woolcock (2001) summarizes these three forms of social capital as “centered on networks within, between, and beyond communities” (p. 11).

Social capital need not be present only in terms of formal bonds; informal manifestations of social capital can be equally compelling (Putnam, 2000; Woolcock, 2001). Putnam (1993, 2000) recognizes concert attendance and availability as reinforcing informal social connections. Similarly, he views extracurricular activities in and out of school as a “proven means to increase civic and social involvement in later life. In fact, participation in high school music groups, athletic teams, service clubs, and the like is among the strongest precursor of adult participation” (2000, p. 405). He goes on to bemoan the funding cuts of the 1980s and 1990s that “decimated” such activities and their potential for future social capital.

According to Langston & Barrett (2008), informal social interactions with family and friends can be a strong indicator of social capital. Their qualitative study of participation in a community choir measured the social capital experienced by choir members. The results of interviews with 27 choir members suggest that belonging to a community choir is a strong source of social capital, providing an opportunity for fellowship, bonding, and mutual cooperation. Besides providing personal satisfaction to the members, members state that the choir performances generate good will within the community.

It is within this context that the current research will be reflected. Widmer State University at one point (in the late 1970s) had a nationally acclaimed, award winning jazz band as well as other ensembles that performed within the community of Widmer. Faculty members and students performed in church choirs and in annual productions of the *Messiah*, and citizens of Widmer enthusiastically attended university music productions. These events are examples of the bridging form of social capital; the university events provided a bridge from the university to the community. Another way of expressing this is that the concerts had a positive impact on town and gown relationships. If every cause has an effect, then when the music degree was eliminated, it is suggested that some resultant impact on the social capital was experienced within Widmer. It is this story, from before, during, and after the decision to eliminate the degree, that I wish to tell.

Ethical Considerations

A major area of concern to be addressed in research is that of ethics. Ethical issues are crucial to any research and exist in every stage of the research design,

including the research question, purpose, data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Creswell, 2008). One of the most important elements affected by ethical issues concerns participants. DePoy and Gitlin (2005) list three main areas that are important to consider in the research process. First, the researcher must offer participants full disclosure of the research methods that will be used, the basic facts surrounding data collection, and the nature of the research. Second, participants must be assured that the information they share will be kept confidential. Finally, participants must understand that their participation in the study is voluntary.

Providing anonymity is an important goal but is more challenging than just providing a change of name. In some cases anonymity may not be completely possible. “Impenetrable concealment, particularly of research location or of persons in particular roles or positions, is probably virtually impossible to attain” (Rees, 1991, p. 149). Creswell (2008) goes on to caution researchers against suppressing or falsifying information or exploiting others during the research process. He admonishes the researcher to be sensitive to the potential impact that the research results might have on a vulnerable group or person, such as abused women.

Of top priority to this research was the issue of confidentiality. In an initial pilot study, questions such as, “So now you’re just hearing this, right?” “I know you’re changing the names and everything,” “Is the college’s name changing, too?” and “Everything’s changed?” showed that subjects were concerned about the confidentiality of the research. Subjects and organizations are referred to by code names in all transcripts and other written material and the list of real names was kept in a separate location from the list of code names, a location that could only be accessed by me.

Although care was taken to keep the identity of all those involved in this research confidential, as Rees (1991) states, it is virtually impossible to create an impenetrable system of concealment.

The issue of informed consent was also respected. All subjects were informed of their right to refuse to answer a question or to withdraw from the process at any time. All subjects were asked to read and sign a consent form (Appendix A) advising them of their rights. The consent form also outlined the nature and purpose of the study with a clear and truthful description.

Before starting the interview process, it was acknowledged that some participants might have difficulty talking about the loss of the music degree as it might raise upsetting memories. Participants were advised to speak to a counselor concerning their stress, should they experience any distressing reaction to being interviewed.

Study Limitations

The study is subject to a number of limitations, making generalization limited:

1. The research addresses one small, Midwestern community and university.
2. The sample of campus and community members is small and selective.
3. Widmer State University gave permission to interview only six current members of the institution, limiting access to university personnel.
4. The subjects were not selected randomly, but rather through the use of snowballing.
5. The majority of the interview data is anecdotal.
6. The interviews involved recollections offered through the filter of time.
7. The research findings are suggestive.

Definition of Terms

Bonding social capital:	Reflected within groups possessing similar traits.
Bridging social capital:	Reflected in connections and networks formed across social groups.
Campus culture:	The behaviors, beliefs, and opportunities characterizing a particular campus.
Community:	A group of interacting individuals bound together by common qualities such as geographic location or university affiliation.
Community culture:	The behaviors, beliefs, and opportunities characterizing a particular community.
Community arts:	Arts activities initiated by or within a specific community.
Community music programs:	Collaborative music-making implemented by or within a specific community (The multi-cultural component often associated with community music is not a part of this definition.).
Community school of the arts:	An institution, usually non-profit, offering lessons and other arts programs and activities to community members of all ages.

Cultivated tradition:	Music that must be cultivated intentionally, often rooted in a European tradition (Hitchcock, as cited in Scholten, 1988).
Host community:	The community in which a university resides.
Intergenerational program:	An organized program involving people from more than one generation (Frego, 1995).
Institution(s) of higher education (IHE):	Two year colleges, four year colleges, and universities.
Linking social capital:	A means of sharing resources and ideas from institutions beyond the community (Woolcock, 2001).
Omnivore:	Individual with a broad taste in musical styles (Peterson & Kern, 1996).
Retrenchment:	A reduction of expenditures in order to become financially stable.
Rural:	A broad term pertaining to less-populated, non-urban areas.
Social capital:	A broad term encompassing the norms and networks facilitating collective action for mutual benefit (Woolcock, 1998).
Title IX	A federal bill stating that individuals may not be discriminated against based on their sex in any

educational program that receives federal
funding.

Town and gown:

Community and university.

Vernacular tradition:

Music that can be grown into easily, as with a
native language, and that is appreciated for its
utilitarian or entertainment value (Hitchcock, as
cited in Scholten, 1988).

Young-old:

Individuals between the ages of 60-74.

Assumptions

The following set of assumptions guided this research:

1. Qualitative research provided a rich context from which to tell personal stories suited to this topic.
2. Subjects spoke willingly and honestly of their personal perceptions and feelings.
3. The terms of agreement for interviewing were respected at all times.
4. I acted with integrity at all times during the research process.
5. I possessed the skills required to conduct this research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

Overview

The literature review is focused on three areas of significance: academic restructuring and retrenchment, the benefits of music and community arts programs, and town and gown relationships. Literature on academic restructuring and retrenchment is included in order to better understand how and why decisions for program elimination, such as at WSU, are made. The benefits of music and community arts programs are addressed as a means of framing the presence of music within a community. Town and gown relationships are studied to inform the reader of the connections that are often sought between a university and its host community. Literature on social capital, the conceptual framework for this study, is addressed in Chapters I and V.

Political and Economic Forces Impacting Retrenchment

During the later part of the 20th century, a recession and tighter control over state and federal spending presented financial challenges for public IHE (Ashar & Shapiro, 1990; Eckel, 2002; Gumport, 1993; Hardy, 1990; Kerlin & Dunlap, 1993). Institutions have various methods for coping with times of financial difficulty, including suspending employee-retirement contributions, hiring freezes, new bonding, program cuts, borrowing, and dipping into endowment funds (Blumenstyk, 2009). To this list, Slaughter (1993) adds hiring of part-time faculty. If the decision is made to cut a

program rather than to cut back in other areas, campuses may feel particularly negative repercussions. One dean likened it to making a decision within a family during financially challenging times, “Should we all eat rice this winter and forgo summer camp, or give away the youngest child and oldest family member?” (Gumport, 1993, p. 292).

Since cutting a program can be a difficult choice to make, what criteria do administrators use to make the decision? The literature points to varying criteria: cost, quality, and mission centrality (Eckel, 2002; Gumport, 1993) or quality and need (Ashar & Shapiro, 1990). Eckel conducted a multi-site case study to better understand the criteria used to target programs for elimination. He found that factors taken into consideration when considering which programs to cut and which to keep include contribution to community, demand for program, legislative mandate for the program, uniqueness of the program/duplication, opportunities for distinction offered by the program, impact of the program on the institution and its scholarship, revenue generated by the program, and past investment into the program (Eckel, 2002). Ashar and Shapiro researched the retrenchment decisions affecting 40 departments at a large, public institution, and added external support, research performance, teaching performance, and paradigm development to the list of factors affecting such decisions.

Although institutions may have stated guidelines for a decision to cut a program, in reality other non-stated factors may take precedence. The process that is designed to shape the decision may not be what actually leads the decision (Eckel, 2002). Gumport researched the interview data from case studies of two public research institutions and found that objective data are not always viewed as helpful (Gumport, 1993). Slaughter (1993) used data from selected *American Association of University Professors* cases

dealing with retrenchment and suggests that programs that are without political strength are particularly susceptible to program reduction. Lack of leadership is another un-stated factor that is mentioned as significant when a program is cut (Eckel, 2002). According to Eckel, in one institution “the units that were closed did not have champions among institutional leaders: they were programs where no one would (or did) come to their aid; and they lacked strong leaders” (p. 249). In addition, faculty may be better organized and pro-active in certain departments, leaving others more vulnerable to retrenchment from a lack of will to “fight” (Eckel, 2002; Slaughter, 1993).

Equally important to a program’s security is its position in terms of market value (Slaughter, 1993). Slaughter maintains that the state plays a role in shaping these market values by supporting research and demand in certain programs (aerospace, computers) over others (humanities, fine arts). Her research suggests that programs that are closest to market demands, such as business or engineering, are seen as fostering economic strength on campus. They also draw on a larger and wealthier alumni base of support than some smaller programs in the arts or humanities. By contrast, certain disciplines suffer from a lack of market value. According to Slaughter:

Faculty who were retrenched (education, humanities, social science, fine arts, home economics) were not close to the mission agencies that provided the greatest amounts of money to higher education, did not have powerful constituencies, were not gateways to highly paid careers, and did not have graduates who donated large amounts of money to colleges and universities (p. 273).

State boards sometimes exercise decision making power over public institutions in times of financial exigency, but in the 1980s, state boards eased their guidelines on retrenchment caused by financial considerations (Slaughter, 1993). Slaughter reports two examples of internal decisions to cut programs: in Idaho, the state board allowed campus administrators to make decisions concerning which programs are not viable and should be discontinued, even before a campus-wide state of exigency existed. A similar decision making process exists at Temple University, where administrators are allowed to decide which programs will grow and which will go.

Size and sex seem to matter when it comes to retrenchment decisions. Small programs are particularly vulnerable during times of program reduction (Eckel, 2002; Slaughter, 1993). Larger programs that are considered as worth strengthening are often the beneficiary of government funding through grants or research dollars (Kerlin & Dunlap, 1993; Slaughter, 1993). Because disciplines such as the humanities, fine arts, social sciences, and education are more often targeted for retrenchment, women faculty and students are affected in disproportionate numbers by retrenchment decisions (Slaughter, 1993).

The decision to cut a program is often couched in tough, decisive language by university administrators (Eckel, 2002; Slaughter, 1993). Administrators need to get the job done. Gumpert (1993) reports administrative language that is similar to that in the business world, such as “trim the fat,” “downsizing,” and eliminating “weak” or “non-essential” programs. A case study conducted at the University of Oregon on faculty morale found that reactions from faculty can use similarly strong language, especially

when viewed within the context of the Gulf War of the 1990s: “scud missile attacks,” “direct hits” and “near misses” (Kerlin & Dunlap, 1993, p. 367).

Such language highlights the fact that retrenchment can have a devastating effect on the morale and collegiality of those affected. Kerlin & Dunlap (1993) conducted research at one state’s flagship institution. A series of faculty displacements resulted in a number of bitter reflections by faculty members. They report harsh reactions to administrative choices for retrenchment: “The pecking order between disciplines has been, not so slowly, destroying the collegiality that this institution was once known for” (Kerlin & Dunlap, 1993, p. 360) and “this is like a war zone and we are ground zero” (p. 368). Another comment was equally strong:

They cut programs ranked in the top 10 in the world, and kept other programs that don’t rank in the top 50, and then had the gall to say it was a “quality” question. The result was that women and minority students are out, and so are programs that help people. How “fair” is that? (Kerlin & Dunlap, 1993, p. 368).

Hardy (1990) acknowledges the political framework that often surfaces during the decision making process of retrenchment: “Scarce resources often provide the motivation for political behavior – decision making quickly becomes a zero sum game when there are insufficient funds for everyone to achieve their goals” (p. 308). Bolman and Deal (2003) outline sources of power including position power (as of the president of the institution) and control of rewards, such as jobs or salaries. Political power is often top-down, and in many instances, program retrenchment has been just that; faculty have little or no voice, adding to the stress experienced on campuses due to program reduction (Gumport, 1993; Slaughter, 1993).

At this point, less has been discovered in the literature on the effects of program elimination beyond the confines of the institution. As cited in Garner and Cassidy (2004), Evelyn Glennie addressed this lack of concern for external stakeholders after Exeter University closed its music program:

“However, if they are now allowing leading higher education establishments such as Exeter University to shut down its respected music department, then we are denying a large number of talented individuals their right to a higher education. This would not only restrict career courses in music but also create an imbalanced university campus and deny the local community the artistic benefits created by the university” (Garner & Cassidy, 2004, para.5).

Glennie’s comment on program availability is addressed by Baldwin and Baker (2009) who lament the transformation of many traditional liberal arts colleges into institutions more geared towards professional programs, another repercussion of program retrenchment. Such decisions can impact the very core of an institution’s identity.

Benefits of Music and Community Arts Programs

Numerous studies have been conducted of the transformative and educational benefits of music. Deasy (2002) includes 62 summaries of studies on the academic and social effects of arts learning experiences, 15 of which are specific to music. Included studies highlight the benefits to be gained from exposure to music such as impact on child cognitive development or spatial-temporal reasoning. One well known study prompted the following assertion:

Students who participate in arts learning experiences often improve their achievements in other realms of learning and life. In a well-documented national

study using a federal database of over 25,000 middle and high school students, researchers from the University of California at Los Angeles found students with high arts involvement performed better on standardized achievement tests than students with low arts involvement (National Assembly of State Arts Agencies in collaboration with the Arts Education Partnership, 2006, p. 8).

Research on the educational or wellness benefits of music is not limited to children. In a random sampling of 12,675 individuals, participants were interviewed about attendance at cultural events, singing in a choir, and reading books. The subjects were interviewed between 1982 and 1983 and followed until December 31, 1991. Results of the study suggest that those attending cultural events live longer (Bygren, Konlaan, & Johansson, 1996).

Some researchers, however, disagree with claims of the transformative powers of the arts, feeling that most research has insufficient evidence to claim a causal relationship rather than just a correlation. Dillon (2006) cites studies, such as a meta-study in the *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, that do not support the claim that music has an impact on an individual's health or well-being. The question, then, is does research support claims that music programs have a positive effect on the health of a community?

Koopman (2007) defines community music-making as sharing three characteristics: "collaborative music-making; community development; and personal growth" (p. 151). Anecdotal evidence exists on the value of community music programs. An example of this is an intergenerational choir program called *Interlink* that operates world-wide (Frego, 1995). In 1995, Frego reported on the value of this intergenerational choir program in strengthening a sense of community and well being. The program is

still running today, and according to the Interlink website: “This Interlink program is very magical. It bridges the gap between two generations and promotes emotional well being, mutual appreciation, and enjoyment of music” (Canadian Mental Health Association, 2007, para. 1).

Other researchers wish to base their claims on more than anecdotal evidence. Dillon (2006) conducted three case studies, each researching community-driven music programs. Dillon examined the context within the community for delivering such programs, created a systematic approach to measuring evidence of a connection between cultural health and music making, and found “compelling evidence for the connection of active music making with social health and wellbeing” (p. 278).

Community music programs are sometimes assisted by external supporters who provide direction and assistance. Anderson (1995) counsels supporters of the arts to reach out to the community to help strengthen music programs in the public schools. An example of such external support is highlighted by ACI – Arts Collaborators, Incorporated (a pseudonym), an outside arts advocacy group working to help direct and fund the arts programs in a local public school district (Rademaker, 2003). A case study of the group reveals that they successfully implemented three activities into the River City public school system: a jazz curriculum, a trip to the opera, and an educator’s guide to the arts. Arts Can Teach (ACT) is another example of an external group working in partnership with community and K-12 music (Colley, 2008). A case study of one ACT school reveals that the program assisted with increased arts funding and requests for arts specialists within the school.

Arts advocates contend that community arts activities impact the very uniqueness of a community. Scher (2007) reports on a group of community arts activists and educators who debated the value of community arts, asking the question, “Can the arts change the world?” and who then formulated a list of insights about the value of community arts in transforming a community. Some, but not all, of their insights include:

- Community arts create safe space: “Community arts can create a safe space that allows us to trust and be open to change” (p. 5).
- Through the arts, we create something new: “We are no longer consumers of culture, but its creators” (p. 6).
- Art communicates and envisions: “Surrounding ourselves with beauty communicates that we are important and mean something in the world” (p. 6).
- Art heals and sustains: “The process of creating together can heal and sustain us for the long haul” (p. 6).

The ACI and ACT case studies support the idea that communities can be transformed through the arts. The public schools are not the only entity to benefit from the external/community attention to the K-12 program. As later reported by Rademaker (2007) “one reoccurring theme was that of ACI’s efforts to educate the community about art and to inform the community about available arts experiences” (p. 25). Rademaker reports a positive impact on the social capital of River City (the host community), including an improved quality of life and community self-image as well as an increase in tourism dollars. As a result of ACI’s efforts, the town initiated a 1-800 line for arts

information, a monthly local arts magazine editorial, ticket and gift packs for realtors and businesses, advertisements in local print, radio, and TV media, and the publication of a River City Area Catalog of Public Art (Rademaker, 2007). In the case of the ACT research, there was increased participation in the public music and art activities by community leaders and the status of the arts within the community improved (Colley, 2008).

The experience reported in the ACI case study confirms that the arts can provide economic benefits to a community (Americans for the Arts, 2007; Guetzkow, 2002; McCarthy, Ondaatje, Zakaras, & Brooks, 2004; Rademaker, 2007). Such benefits include revenues from businesses affected by attendance at arts functions, such as restaurants and hotels, and an increase in jobs. Douglas H. Palmer, the mayor of Trenton, New Jersey, commented on the role that the arts have played in revitalizing cities and contributing to economic prosperity: “Besides providing thousands of jobs, the arts industry generates billions in government and business revenues. Additionally, the arts have played an important role in the economic revitalization of many of our nation’s cities” (American for the Arts, 2007).

Large and small communities alike benefit from community arts programs. The McKnight Foundation studied eight small Minnesota towns (populations from 500 to 13,000) that had each been profoundly involved with the arts. Each community demonstrated ways that the arts had provided opportunities for engagement, enhanced community collaboration, helped shape community identity, and assisted with rural economies (Cuesta, Gillespie, & Lillis, 2005). One example is the town of Bigfork, Minnesota, a small logging community of 500 residents, where community members

constructed a \$2 million fine arts center as a means of providing arts opportunities for their community, contributing to economic growth, and building rural arts audiences. Another example was initiated by John Davis, a resident of New York Mills, Minnesota. Davis developed a residency program that would bring to New York Mills artists from different parts of the country who wanted to experience rural America. Each applicant would be required to submit a proposal for a creative project to benefit the community. Although people were initially skeptical that artists would want to travel to this town of only 900, the program is a success. Artists have applied from France, Poland, and New York City (Cuesta et al., 2005).

Those researching the importance of the arts have made numerous claims. McCarthy et al. (2004) address the issue of validity in arts research. They outline two types of studies, those that research the social benefits of the arts to a community and those that research the economic benefits to a community. Although less is argued about the research concerning the economic benefits of the arts, McCarthy et al. acknowledge certain concerns about the validity of research on the social benefits of the arts. Paul DiMaggio (as cited by McCarthy et al., 2004) lists three weaknesses found in research on the benefits of the arts to communities:

1. treatment (that all arts programs have the same effects),
2. homogeneity (that the arts have the same effect on different people or communities), and
3. linearity of effects (that benefits are equal to the level of participation).

These concerns are worth considering when questioning the validity of arts impact studies.

Town and Gown Relationships

Historically, IHE have not always had a positive relationship with their surrounding communities. The earliest IHE were founded for the training of the ministry, and those within the institution were kept separate from the corrupting influences of the community (Mayfield, 2001). Mayfield states that after the passage of the Morrill Act in 1862, land-grant colleges were required to provide public service or lose federal funding. This requirement did not necessarily result in a positive partnership between town and gown; instead universities often treated their host communities as clients rather than partners (Brunning, McGrew & Cooper, 2006). In the second half of the 20th century, communities sometimes resented the lost income from university land that was not subject to taxation and felt community resources were being unduly used for university gain (Mayfield, 2001).

Today's IHE recognize the benefits of strengthening the town and gown relationship, especially since they are often dependent on those communities for activities such as internships, business resources, outlets for research, placement of students, and land use (Cox, 2000). Perhaps one of the strongest indicators of the growing interest in town and gown partnerships is the new Carnegie classification for community engagement. According to Driscoll (2009), "The community engagement classification affirms that a university or college has institutional engagement with community in its identity, culture, and commitments" (p. 5). The new classification acknowledges the importance of community engagement including the manner in which it is addressed through faculty service. Driscoll recommends that institutions give new weight to the service component of faculty loads when considering promotion and tenure, thus giving

further institutional emphasis to improving town and gown relationships through community engagement (2009).

Programs to strengthen town and gown relationships are not only more common but they are also increasingly creative. The literature is rich with examples of such partnerships. Keene State College and the Keene Public Library have formed a unique and mutually beneficial library venture. Their partnership brings patrons from the campus to the town and visa versa, increases contact among university and community members, and generates an increased good will between community and college (Halvorson & Plotas, 2006). The Rhode Island School of Design is helping to revitalize downtown Providence and has recently started a joint venture that includes a Design & Business Entrepreneurship Center (Mandle, 2005). Ohio Dominion University created a course, *Urban Connections: Columbus Behind the Scenes*, to enhance student understanding of the community of Columbus (Dardig, 2004). The course explores five types of connections: inter-institutional connections, university-community connections, personal history connections, academic and personal connections, and future connections, and was viewed by Dardig as a “concrete way for our university to strengthen the town-gown relationship, as well as to increase our use of community resources and to provide site-based learning experiences for our students” (p. 30).

Another method for improving town and gown relationships is through campus arts programs. The National Foundation on the Arts and Humanites Act of 1965 formally recongized the need for all Americans to “receive in school, background and preparation in the arts and humanities to enable them to recognize and appreciate the aesthetic dimensions of our lives. . .” (Hager, 2003, p. 7). Recognizing the importance of the arts

and the fact that they can build a bond of trust, many IHE choose the arts as a vehicle for improving town-gown relationships. The University of Florida organizes outreach activities including youth programs and arts activities (Smith & Vetica, 2000). The New York University Drama Department offers a community-based theater course which has been expanded through the Tisch School of the Arts (Cohen-Cruz, 2001). According to Cohen-Cruz, the drama programs offer an ongoing system of exchange between university students, artists, and community members that is appreciated by all involved. In addition, college and university arts programs often fill a void in small or rural communities that are located far from culturally active urban centers. Some institutions developed theater and music programs that allow community participation, while others instigated large-scale festivals that draw community support (Fogg, 2007).

At this point, one study has been found that addresses town and gown relationships fostered by music events from the perspective of community members. A 42 question survey of residents of a community near a college was used to measure if attendance at university functions strengthened community members' views of the institution (Bruning et al., 2006). The researcher found that those who spend time on campus have a significantly more positive view of the campus and a strong sense that it is an asset to their community.

Summary

This literature review investigated three areas: academic retrenchment and restructuring, the benefits of music and community arts programs, and town and gown relationships. Literature discussed in this chapter is directly related to all three

categories. Valuable literature leant insight into each of these topics, but shortcomings existed in each as well.

In the first area, the literature reveals that a university's choice to cut an academic program is a major decision usually preceded by financial scarcity. The literature also demonstrates that the decision has potential ramifications on faculty morale, numbers of women employees and students, and the academic make-up of the institution. Further research is needed to examine how program retrenchment decisions affect the social capital of both community and campus as well as how such decisions affect individuals such as alumni and community members.

In terms of the benefits of music and community arts programs, although much research has been conducted on the value of the arts to an individual or within a community, it is not known how a community is affected when part of their musical identity comes from a public institution of higher education. It is also not known how the elimination of the music degree at that institution might impact or alter community music programs or community culture.

Finally, town and gown literature reflects that past town and gown relationships sometimes have been contentious and that universities are becoming more aware of the mutual benefits of fostering positive community relationships (Cox, 2000). The assumption is often made at IHE that community members respond positively to campus offerings, but more research needs to be conducted about the perceptions held by community members themselves. There is also a need to research the unintended consequences of major decisions at the university on the town and gown relationships.

These are the shortcomings in the literature that are addressed by this research.

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY
Research Design

A number of factors influenced my decision to employ qualitative research in this study. First, qualitative research stresses words rather than numbers and open-ended questions over close-ended questions (Creswell, 2008). It seeks to tell a story and to better understand some aspect of society or the human condition. Qualitative research is approached from a flexible standpoint, with the realization that many aspects of the design cannot be fully organized in advance (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Creswell (2007) goes one step further by stating that there is no one way to design qualitative research; rather the design process is emergent.

Bogdan and Biklen (2007) describe five main characteristics of qualitative research. First, they see qualitative research as naturalistic. It takes place where the researcher can best assess what is said within its natural setting. Second, it uses descriptive data, using rich text to describe, rather than numbers to quantify. Third, they see qualitative research as being concerned with process; how and why are as important as what. Fourth, the qualitative study is inductive; it does not set out to prove or disprove pre-conceived hypotheses, but rather shapes inquiry as the research is conducted. The important questions evolve as the study evolves. Finally, qualitative research seeks

meaning, especially from the participant's perspective. The qualitative researcher chooses to tell a story using the voice of those involved.

The current study is well suited to Creswell's flexible, emergent approach to research as well as to Bogdan and Biklen's five guidelines. First, a good deal of the research took place in the town of Widmer. Eighteen of the 28 interviews for this study were conducted in the town and at WSU. Observations of concerts and community culture also took place on site, providing a natural setting for the research. In reporting what was said, I use rich text that is well suited to the voice of those speaking. The research is concerned with how college and community members have been affected by the loss of a music degree, how and why the decision was made, and how the decision influenced community culture and town and gown relationships. I did not have a pre-conceived hypothesis of what to expect from my interviews and was receptive to whatever directions or findings evolved. Finally, I sought meaning from this research and in particular wished to see that meaning through the eyes of those I interviewed.

Both quantitative and qualitative research methods have avid supporters, what Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) call "purists." They summarize that qualitative purists hold the following contentions:

. . . that multiple-constructed realities abound, that time-and context-free generalizations are neither desirable nor possible, that research is value-bound, that it is impossible to differentiate fully causes and effects, that logic flows from specific to general. . . . Qualitative purists also are characterized by a dislike of a detached and passive style of writing, preferring, instead, detailed, rich, and thick (empathetic) descriptions, written directly and somewhat informally." (p. 14)

This preference for rich, detailed description over a detached and passive voice is another reason that I chose to pursue a qualitative research design.

Trochim and Donnelly (2008) suggest that one main reason for choosing qualitative research is when little is known in an area. This is another way in which this research is well suited to a qualitative approach. I was unable to discover another study on the impact that closing a music program has on a college or its host community, demonstrating a potential gap in the literature. The current study will inform the literature on town and gown relationships, arts advocacy, university retrenchment, community culture, and social capital.

The type of qualitative study I conducted is a case study. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) concur with other scholars in their definition of a case study as “a detailed examination of one setting, or a single subject, a single depository of documents, or one particular event” (p. 59). The setting studied is the town of Widmer and Widmer State University and the research focuses on the events leading up to one single decision to eliminate the music degree at Widmer State University as well as the impact felt by members of the community and the university after that decision. The study reveals perceptions from college and community members concerning the times before, during, and after the decision was made.

Finally, case studies allow research to develop over time; the focus and direction of this study adjusted as the research progresses. Initially, I planned only to interview members of the host community who were unaffiliated with the university and to research their unique perspectives. As I researched documents and spoke to community members I had a growing interest in talking to administrators and faculty members of

Widmer State University, as well as WSU alumni. Most of these individuals either are or were community members as well, and as such have a dual perspective. My research has indeed expanded over time to its current form and I have gained a great deal by including interviews, not only of community members, but also of alumni, WSU faculty members, and WSU administrators.

Process of Site Selection and Gaining Access

The town of Widmer is a rural community in a Midwestern state. The population reported in the current census is 1750. One current Internet data site on population, (www.city-data.com, n.d.) indicates that the population fell by 9% since the 2000 census. Widmer's website focuses on the high quality of living offered, the fact that it is a college town with many activities, and the opportunities for personal enrichment through concerts, plays, sports, and the community fitness center. The town is situated within easy driving distance of two larger communities that offer further leisure and shopping opportunities. It is often viewed as a "twin city" with its neighbor town, Dunn, and labeled Widmer-Dunn.

Widmer is home to Widmer State University, a public institution of approximately 800 students, which predictably plays an influential role within such a small community. The institution was founded in the late 1800s as a teachers' school and was part of the initial group of public institutions founded within the state. Currently the institution maintains strong education and business programs and is known for its forward-thinking approach to technology.

The chosen community and university provide an ideal location for the current research. My research covers the role music played at the university and in the

community before the decision to discontinue the degree as well as after. I gained rich information from community members who have lived in this community for a number of years and who witnessed changes in music-making, attitudes towards the university, and the dynamics of community culture that might have been precipitated or exacerbated by the decision to discontinue the degree. Equally strong have been the comments from WSU alumni, faculty members, and administrators. Finally, the decision to discontinue the degree did not happen recently. Enough time has passed to research how people responded to the changing university presence brought about by the discontinuation of the music degree.

Gaining access to Widmer State University was a two-step process. The initial step was a request placed to WSU's Vice President for Academic Affairs. After an amicable conversation, the university's decision to allow interviews on campus was delayed for a number of weeks as university administrators debated the request. On March 6, 2009, I received a letter from Widmer State University which is now on file at the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of North Dakota, allowing interviews of up to six people on campus under the conditions that the identity of all campus participants be kept confidential and that the university's name not be used in the study without further approval.

Human Subjects and Additional Access

On March 10, 2009, I received permission to conduct interviews under the original project title, *Perspectives of Community Members When a University Eliminates Its Music Degree* (Proposal Number IRB-200903-274). Beyond the university's restrictions on numbers of subjects, there were no limitations placed to the number of

community members who could be interviewed. IRB approval was updated on February 9, 2010 and again on December 29, 2010 after progress reports were submitted to the IRB.

In March, 2009, I visited the Widmer campus for an observation of a WSU Pops Concert. The observation gave me an excellent glimpse into the current music activities at Widmer State University. In addition, I attended with the hope that someone at the concert could name potential community members to interview. During the concert's intermission, I approached a fellow attendee, and was fortunate that he was a long-time, prominent member of Widmer. He responded to my inquiry by naming a number of people he felt would be of particular value to interview considering the topic. This man's assistance was invaluable and set me on the path of gaining access to additional community members in Widmer who, in turn, made recommendations of potential interview subjects. By using snowballing as the method of sampling, I developed a list of contacts who offered valuable insights for my research. Subjects of special interest included those who were residents before, during, and after the elimination of the music degree, past music faculty, and current campus administrators and faculty. Access to the participants was based on their individual willingness to be interviewed. Appendix B includes a more complete list of all code names used for individuals and organizations mentioned in this research.

The sample frame is the list of names recommended to me, and the sample consists of those actually interviewed. A total of 28 individuals were interviewed, once each, including community members, WSU alumni, and present and past university faculty and administrators. The interviews were conducted over a sixteen month period

in a variety of locations. Thirteen individuals were interviewed in an office setting, eight in restaurants, three in a church, three in their homes, and one by written communication. During the interviews, which typically lasted one hour, I asked broad, open-ended questions such as:

1. What would you say are some of the strengths of this community?
2. How do you feel the arts impact the community of Widmer?
3. Has the music environment in Widmer changed over the last twenty years?
4. How would you describe the relationship between the community of Widmer and Widmer State University?
5. How did you respond when you first learned that the university was considering eliminating its music degree?

Additional phone calls were used to ask questions that occurred after the initial interviews.

Sources of Data and Data Collection

In-depth interviews were the primary source of data collected for this research and were supplemented by direct observation and unobtrusive measures such as review of written documents. I attended two concerts in Widmer and observed concert attendance and comments overheard after the concert in a public place. I spent time in the community frequenting numerous businesses and restaurants in the downtown area. An extensive amount of unobtrusive research on written data was performed. Research was conducted at five libraries across the state, including the state library, the state historical society, and the historical documents library at a major university. Archives were studied for relevant articles in three different newspapers.

Administrators and staff employees at Widmer State University were extremely cooperative, making numerous files available and allowing me to scan multiple documents. All together, I scanned and studied thousands of pages of documents including newspaper articles, yearbooks, catalogues, alumni magazines, university self-studies, reports to investors, various WSU minutes, WSU records on payroll, enrollments, and budgets, and numerous publications from the Higher Education State Board (HESB).

Newspaper articles added insight into circumstances leading up to the decision to eliminate music, the reactions after the decision, and the overall presence of music within the community. University records gave insight into enrollments and budgets as well as a hint at campus politics. Various state publications offered an understanding of the financial and political climate at the time of the decision to eliminate the music degree at WSU. Concert attendance and the comments made afterward reflected the current flavor of music in the community and the community perceptions about the current music presence.

Data Analysis

Qualitative research does not rely on statistics, but the assumption should not be made that it is therefore easy to analyze qualitative data. When planning a research design, a qualitative researcher must understand that data analysis relies on an organized, systematic process in order to break data down into manageable units (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). During the process of data collection, the qualitative researcher must plan to identify themes and emergent patterns. A system for coding can then be developed that addresses those emergent themes. Bogdan and Biklen address a variety of coding “families” including setting/context codes (general information), definition of situation

codes (subjects' view of a topic within a specific setting), perspectives held by subjects codes (shared perspectives of subjects), subjects' ways of thinking about people and objects codes (subjects' understanding of their world), process codes (words or phrases that assist with categorizing), activity codes (repeated behaviors), event codes (related to specific activities), strategy codes (deliberate ways things are accomplished), relationship and social structure codes (behavior patterns among individuals), narrative codes (reflections of how a story is told), and method codes (research procedures).

Although all of these codes surfaced at one point or another, the code families that surfaced most frequently during my research analysis were setting/context codes, definition of situation codes, perspectives held by subjects codes, subjects' ways of thinking about people and objects codes, process codes, and relationship and social structure codes. Emergent themes and patterns started to make themselves known early in the interview process. Emergent themes surfaced in an early pilot study, continued to evolve over time, and were examined more deeply during the analysis process. During analysis, the literature review was expanded to further address the emergent themes of the research.

All of the interviews conducted for this research were transcribed except two that were deemed to be of minimal value. Of the remaining interviews, the transcriptions were read carefully before coding began, with the goal of further identifying emergent themes and patterns. Important areas were highlighted during the first reading. All transcriptions were then collected into one Word document for coding. Memos and codes were added using "Review → New Comment" in Microsoft Word. Once all the interviews were coded in this manner, the codes were printed separately for further

review. Creswell's system of "lean coding" was followed in this research (Creswell, 2007). First, five major categories were identified and later condensed to three: political and economic forces impacting retrenchment, quality versus quantity, and town and gown relationships: the role of the arts. The categories were then expanded into more specific sub-categories. The significance of this list of sub-categories was verified by conducting a search to ensure a strong presence within the cumulative interviews. Following Creswell's advice, importance was not measured by the number of times a category could be counted so much as the significance of those occurrences since ". . . counting conveys a quantitative orientation of magnitude and frequency contrary to qualitative research" (Creswell, 2007, p. 152).

A similar process was used when conducting analysis of data gained from documents. All documents were first read and important areas were highlighted. A second review resulted in the most important findings being summarized in seven Word documents, organized by topics. A final reading took place when all notes were combined into one Word document. Memos and codes were again added using "Review → New Comment" in Microsoft Word. The memos and codes were printed separately for further review. Once the major categories and sub-categories were defined, the themes that had been evolving throughout this process were finalized. Final themes were attached to each of the three major categories and their associated sub-categories. Figure 1 contains a list of the major categories, sub-categories, and themes associated with this research.

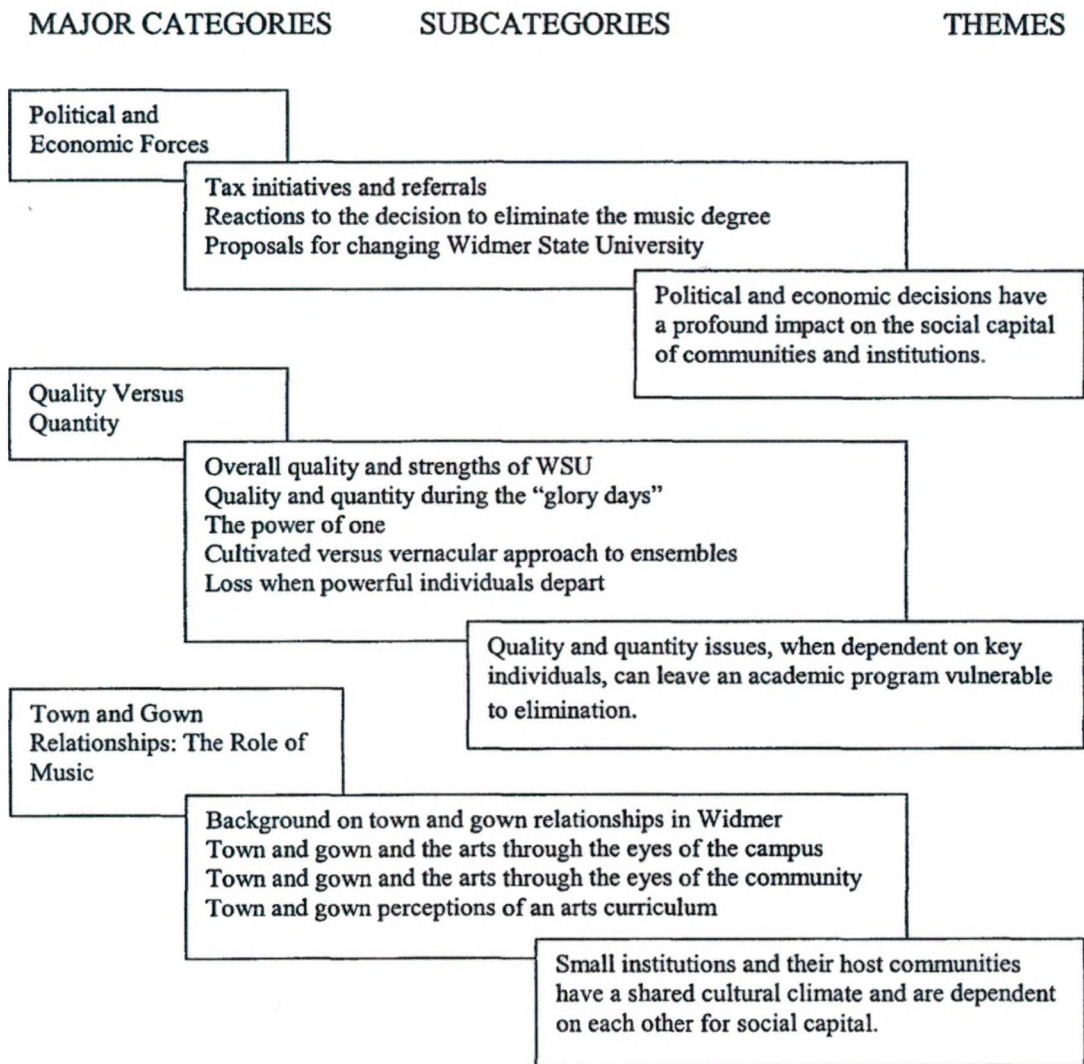


Figure 1. Major Categories, Subcategories, and Themes.

Pilot Study

From the list of names that were received during the first concert I attended, I conducted a small pilot study of four individuals. The first person interviewed was Stan Smithson, the man I spoke with at the concert. He was willing to be interviewed, had lived in the community a long time, had a true interest in the arts, and had memories of

the community from before, during, and after the elimination of the music degree. I then took his advice on who might be the most valuable person to interview next. The second informant, Margaret Bjore, is a community member with a long history of involvement with the arts. She also worked at the university in prior years and possessed a wealth of experiences that were valuable to the research. In addition to interviewing these two community members, I interviewed Dr. Chris Miller, a former administrator at Widmer State University. Dr. Miller proved to be an excellent candidate for an interview since he arrived at the institution soon after the decision to discontinue the music degree was made. He provided valuable information about reactions to the decision, both from within the community and on the campus. The fourth person I interviewed was David Johnson, a former faculty member of Widmer State University's music department. I felt he would be a good resource for understanding what happened at the time of the decision. He did not offer a great deal of insight into the community, but did give me many names of key faculty stakeholders who eventually provided key interviews.

From these initial interviews, some aspects of Widmer's social capital were suggested as were some of the basic reasons for the decision to eliminate the music degree. I was able to identify some possible themes for further consideration. Figure 2 outlines these early themes in a concept map.

Insuring Validity

Another challenge in qualitative research is how to project the perspectives of participants through their own voices. The qualitative researcher must plan to use rich text to present an in-depth understanding of what may be a limited setting. How accurately will the researcher represent the voice of the participants? Can the

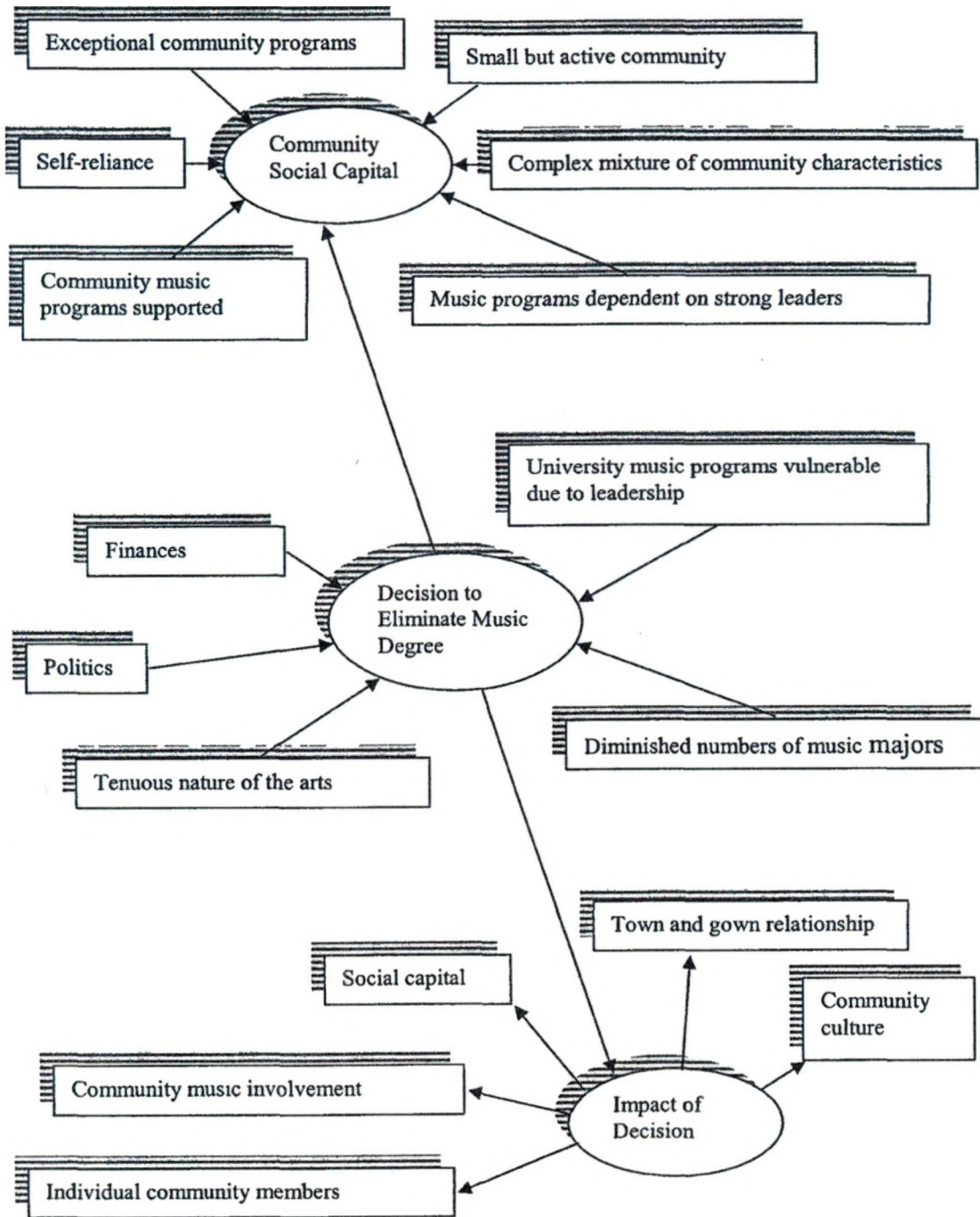


Figure 2. Pilot Study: Concept Map of Emerging Themes.

researcher's voice be present in the text? Bogdan and Biklen (2007) state that a reflective/confession about one's own bias or background can address a researcher's potential impact on a study. In order to ensure credibility, a researcher must ensure that the participants' views have been stated in a manner that reflects their intentions. Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2006) offer a number of checks and balances that can be used in qualitative research to ensure credibility. The researcher can engage in repeated, in-depth work in the field. Multiple sources of data can be sought to confirm information gathered. Member checks can be made where participants are given transcripts of interviews or summaries of research to review for accuracy. Peer debriefing can be used to allow a colleague to review the field notes or writings of the researcher on a regular basis and to offer suggestions on assumptions. Finally, an external audit of the research can be done with the goal of addressing specific questions. Lodico et al. offer the following possible questions as a means of checking credibility:

Are the findings grounded in the data? Is there a clear connection between each finding and some part of the data? Are the themes appropriate to the data? Are all interpretations and conclusions supported by the data? Have researcher biases been well controlled? (p. 274).

Maxwell (2005) offers the following items on a checklist of validity tests for qualitative research: intensive, long-term investment, "rich" texts, respondent validation, intervention, searching for discrepant evidence and negative cases, triangulation (collecting information from a diverse range of individuals and settings, using a variety of methods), quasi-statistics (the use of simple numerical results that can be readily derived from the data), and comparison (particularly in multi-case or multisite studies). Of the

validity threats listed above, the most serious potential validity threat to this particular research is my own bias in the area of arts advocacy and community relations. I am a strong supporter of the arts in higher education and as such, have a natural aversion to the closing of any music program. I recognize this bias and realized before beginning my research that others might have a different reaction to such a closing; perhaps the department would be missed only marginally by some or not at all by others. It is also possible that the funds would be more greatly appreciated in other areas. It is because of my interest in this area that I wished to research what actually did happen after such a closing and any findings would be of interest to me, regardless of the outcome. I knew that if the research showed that the community and campus cultures were negatively affected, a statement would be made about the value of the arts in the social capital of a campus and community. On the other hand, if the research showed that the department wasn't missed at all, an equal amount might be learned about a diminished value of the arts. Either way, I knew that the results would be of value to those of us who work as arts advocates and to those who feel committed to maintaining strong town and gown relationships.

I also understand that in the process of interviewing on this topic I have the power to influence those I interview. Leading questions can result in answers or opinions that may be slanted in a certain direction. Such influence could produce another threat to validity. Seidman (2006) admonishes the interviewer to "limit your own interactions" (p. 89) and "avoid reinforcing your participants' responses" (p. 89), advice which is important to take to heart. Since the participants were not selected randomly, selection bias posed another potential threat to validity.

There are ways I dealt with these threats in order to increase the credibility of my conclusions. First, I interviewed extensively and approached people from many walks of life, including former and present administrators, past music faculty members, former music majors, past and current community members, and alumni. This was not a “quick study” and the amount of time spent assisted in overcoming any preconceived bias I may have had. It was my goal to avoid leading questions, to seek the opinions of others, and to allow subjects to contribute to the conversation as they saw most beneficial.

Secondly, during the interview process, I began to see themes and patterns repeated often enough to confirm that the responses were valid. My interview techniques solicited an in-depth understanding of the point of view of others. Written interview materials were shared with key participants in order to ensure that my writings were valid in their minds. By so doing, I provided a safe-guard against allowing my voice to overtake theirs. Finally, a number of phone calls and email exchanges were made with participants to further verify details related to the research.

Another way I chose to ensure validity in my research was by actively seeking discrepant data. I did not seek opinions that only matched my own. In fact, finding opposing viewpoints was highly rewarding, as they helped me to better understand shifts in community culture that may be working against the arts. Another tool that helped prevent bias was my research of written documents. The types of documents that contributed to the validity of my findings include library records, university records (enrollment, budgets, self-studies), and newspaper articles as well as numerous reports on higher education from within the state. Finally, I reviewed current literature for research that helped to inform my understanding of the subject.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

This chapter includes the findings gained from interviews of participants as well as documents that were researched. The chapter starts with an overview of the community of Widmer and then addresses the factors contributing to the decision to eliminate the degree in music at Widmer State University, the repercussions felt from that decision, and the perspectives of members of the university and its host community concerning that decision. Fluctuations in the quality of the music program at WSU as well as the number of students attracted to the program are addressed as is the impact that powerful individuals had on the success and failure of the program. The importance of town and gown relationships is reviewed as is the role the arts play in both the community and the university. The material for this chapter is thus organized into four significant categories: a community overview, state political and economic forces impacting retrenchment, quality versus quantity, and town and gown relationships: the role of the arts.

Community Overview

This overview addresses the basic community demographics of the town of Widmer such as size, the homogeneity of its population, and the involvement of its community members with church. It also summarizes certain community qualities such as the willingness of community members to care for those in need and to be involved

with volunteer efforts. Finally it describes certain shifts in demographics that have occurred in recent years.

Community Qualities

Homogeneous Community

The town of Widmer is a small, rural community located in a Midwestern state. The population is markedly homogeneous; 94.3% of the population is listed as white in a recent census (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). One participant noted that Widmer is also heavily Republican, having never voted for a Democratic presidential nominee. Religion is equally homogeneous in Widmer; on the community webpage there are thirteen churches listed within a ten mile radius, ten of which are Lutheran. As one participant commented, “All these people are related. They’re all Lutheran; they’re all Norwegian.”

Religious Community

Church is important in the town of Widmer and the predominant religion, as stated above, is Lutheran. Activities such as church services, Bible Camp, and Sunday school all flourish in this community. Church choirs play an active role in worship. One pastor spoke with pride of the quality of the choirs in his church. Individual church Christmas concerts are eagerly awaited, as is a collaborative concert given by the churches together:

Christmastime there’s always cantatas going on in each church and . . . it’s a typical small town, you know . . . 20 different churches, and the 20 different churches each have their own music thing going on, too, with the choirs.

Christmastime there’s always a choir concert at our church . . . where each church in the community brings their one or two pieces from their choir and sings it.

College Town

One factor that distinguishes Widmer from many other small, rural communities is the presence of a public institution of higher education, Widmer State University (WSU). The university was founded in the late 1800s and has gone through a number of transformations, from the initial state normal school to a state teachers college in the 1920s and finally to the current state university in the 1980s (Johnson, 2001). The university and the community have a strong relationship of mutual involvement and the economic health and stability of the university impacts the economic health and stability of the community. Due to various economic conditions within the state which will be discussed later, WSU and the town of Widmer are acutely aware of the importance of the campus to the health of the community. As noted by one community member:

I think we're very fortunate to have the college. And I think the majority of people that I've visited with or hear just in their conversation were really scared with the possibility of losing the college. And I think the college reciprocates from the other end. I think they're very open to the community.

Like the community, the university is small. It is often praised for the personal care given to students and the dedication of its faculty. As noted in one self-study, the university plays an acknowledged role in serving the cultural and educational needs of the community:

WSU is located in a rural community limited in cultural scope and opportunity. Consequently the community looks to WSU as a source of cultural programming, ranging from displays of fine arts to world-class musical performances Academically, WSU offers community interest courses each semester which are

planned and offered as a result of community input. (Widmer State University, 1996, p. 88)

The faculty at WSU displays a marked dedication to faculty development and excellence in teaching. A former administrator described one example of their desire to collectively improve the pedagogical teaching strategies on campus:

. . . they had dedicated it to evidence-based pedagogy. They went through all the literature on what works in college teaching as far as pedagogical teaching strategies. They identified the top ten most effective teaching strategies. And number one was like ten times more powerful than number two. So they spent a year or two learning number one and practicing it throughout the campus and then they started on number two.

Useful Businesses and Health Facilities

Although small, the town prides itself on having many of the amenities needed in a thriving community. The town's webpage boasts of over 200 businesses and excellent health facilities. There is a hospital, a health clinic, and a highly acclaimed nursing home. The webpage lists additional private practices in areas such as chiropractic practice, optometry, dentistry, massage therapy, home health care, Hospice, mental health, public health, ambulance and EMT, as well as a rural education network (Widmer-Dunn Community, n.d.). One walk around town makes it clear that, although there may be 200 businesses in town, they are small, mostly independent, and line the few streets of a modest downtown area.

Small Community

The smallness of the town actually adds to its sense of community, as one former resident noted when comparing it to another small community in the state:

Widmer is an interesting little town in that regard. I have never quite been able to characterize it. One of the, it's about a third the size of . . . [another small town] and you can feel it. There's just fewer of everything. Fewer community leaders, fewer businesses, everything is more tenuous there. . . . I would say a much stronger sense of community.

Besides adding to a sense of community, the smallness of the town adds to a feeling of safety within the community, as noted by a local pastor. "All small-town people are hardworking, basically honest. It's a good community in which to live; very little crime, most of that not very serious."

The closeness of the community actually presents one of the biggest challenges mentioned by participants and that is the challenge of "belonging." As one community participant noted, "I've been here 29 years; it's still very hard to associate it at some levels because you aren't really a Widmer resident unless you're kind of born and raised here." Another participant felt like an outsider after 47 years. "It was always, 'You're the outsider.' I've been here for 47 years, but I'm still the outsider." According to one life-long resident, even college students are sometimes seen as just too different from the community. "Sometimes the Norwegian/Scandinavian Lutherans look at some of these kids coming from outside here that look different, that dress different, that sound different, and there's sometimes that fear or prejudice."

Dedication to Education

The town boasts beautiful K-12 facilities which are shared with three other small communities. The high school is located between Widmer and its neighbor community of Dunn, one of the reasons the two communities are often referred to as Widmer-Dunn. The importance of education is reflected in the community's high graduation rates from high school: 92.5% of those ages 25-34, 96.8% in the 35-44 age bracket, and 100% in the 45-64 age bracket (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). One participant spoke of the advantages she felt her children received from the Widmer-Dunn school system:

It was an awesome experience for them. I graduated from [larger schools], and anything that you did there you had to try out for, whether it was music, whether it was plays, anything like that – band, you had to try out for it. Here, my kids had the opportunity to do whatever they wanted to do, which they feel very fortunate about also. . . . I think it was awesome. I don't think they could have asked for a better experience than that they had here. We've got great teachers in the community.

Community members regularly attend concerts and sporting events at the elementary school, junior high school, high school, and university. The support for students was mentioned by a former administrator, "This is a community where everybody is everybody else's grandma and grandpa so they go to all their games. You know, whether it's a blood relative it doesn't matter."

Educating the town's youth extends beyond the school walls and includes extra-curricular activities sometimes initiated by interested parents. One long-time resident listed an impressive number of such activities:

[She started] the _____ School of Dance . . . just lots and lots of kids.

During the summer we have the water park which is very popular. There's baseball for kids of all ages from starting at about five and six years old. There's soccer for the kids in the fall, not associated with the school, just a bunch of parents got together and said, "We need this." There's hockey. Again, not associated with the school, but a bunch of parents got together and said, "Our kids like hockey," and so they have at least four different age groups that play and travel the state. They've had some very successful state championship teams.

A music teacher in town attributed support from the community as one of the main reasons he stays in Widmer:

And it's that kind of the thing, where you get these people that have no affiliation with the school coming and saying, "Wow, this is really good. I loved it." And it's one thing that's kind of kept me here though, too.

Active Community

Widmer is home to an impressive array of community activities, especially considering its small size. Residents frequently initiate activities to benefit the community or the university, often volunteering their time, taking part in fundraising activities, or donating money to community and university events. The following list includes activities mentioned by participants, some that exist currently and others that are highlights from the past.

- Brunch Belle is a popular fundraiser for WSU music student scholarships. One of the most anticipated events in town, this fundraiser sells out early each year.

- The Ag Auction includes a parade and auction and raises scholarship money for athletic scholarships, WSU Alumni Association, and the WSU Foundation for academic scholarships. This event raises thousands of dollars each fall.
- The Art Gallery Gala auctions original art work based on an annual theme and raises thousands of dollars for the art gallery.
- Productions of the *Messiah* have a long history within the town of Widmer.
- The Women's Club organizes a number of fundraisers for groups such as WSU, the high school, the Rape and Abuse Center, Hospice, the town's museum, the United Blood Drive, Relay for Life, and more. Examples of their fundraisers include:
 - The Night of the Arts was started in the 1980s in connection with the public schools. This was organized as a means of enhancing participation in the arts and allows K-12 students to highlight their work in art, speech, and music.
 - An Artist-in-Residence program brings artists to work with students over the course of a week and includes an evening display and demonstration for community members given by the artist.
 - Women's Club Talent Night was another popular fundraiser which last occurred in 1997, raising money for many of the charities and organizations listed above.
 - A Bake Sale and Quilt Raffle is a current fundraiser for community organizations.

- Operation Smile is a program where members of the club make hospital gowns to be taken abroad on medical mission trips.
- The BoMen's Choir is a community choir of approximately 80 men that rehearses about six weeks out of each year, gives one to three concerts annually, and raises money for music scholarships at WSU.
- The Farmers Filharmonic is a group of male brass players that plays for parades and events in the area.
- The Potato Feed Fundraiser raises scholarships for high school students wanting to go to the Northern States Music Camp.
- The Community Concert Series brings professional musicians to Widmer; the concert series is coordinated with other Midwestern towns and cities through Arts Midwest.
- The Prairie Art Gallery is housed on the WSU campus and run by community members from Widmer. Art work from local artists as well as professional artists from out of town is shown.
- Music Study Tours of Europe were organized by Mike Propeck as well as Dr. Brian Reberg, members of the WSU music faculty. These tours were open to students, faculty, alumni, and community members. The tours had between 25-45 participants, lasted from two to three weeks, and took place in the summers from the 1970s through 2000.

- The Community Nights on Broadway is a fundraiser for the WSU theater department that includes high school and college students as well as members of the community.
- A Community Choir existed in Widmer at various points in the town's history. At times the choir has included college students as well as community members.
- A Community Band consisting of community members and some college students existed under different directors at different points in the town's history; Darrell Meyers and George Rhodes are two WSU faculty members who conducted community bands.
- The Community School of the Arts (CSA) was started in the late 1990s, offered private music lessons, and included a community choir as well as additional classes such as drawing, poetry, and dance.
- Patriotic Day is put on annually at the elementary school honoring the veterans in the community. Held at WSU because the crowd is too large for the elementary school, the event includes a slide show featuring the veterans of a specific war.

This list is by no means complete, but highlights some of the unique efforts of the community, often in conjunction with WSU, to make Widmer a vibrant place to live.

Devoted Volunteers

Such events could not take place without an active volunteer base. Community members realize the need to support both university events and community events:

“Nothing happens without volunteers, so, you know, we all work 2,000 hours a year on

volunteer stuff – all of us.” Participants often spoke of their own personal volunteer efforts as well as the extraordinary efforts of others.

Due to the size of the community, there is a small volunteer pool in Widmer, and within that pool, an even smaller number of leaders. One participant commented: “I sometimes feel that we are too small to be big, but too big to be small. You do often have the same people doing the same things all the time, whether it be committees, fundraisers, things like that.”

Caring Community

The town of Widmer has a strong history of caring for those in need. One participant commented on the comfort this community quality gives her:

There’s a lot of positive, as far as if something happens, you can’t count on big towns necessarily coming to your rescue like you can a small town. They’re always there to lend a hand or help out or assist you in any way they can. . . . I think they’re just very giving people, not just of money but of their time. And boy, if I was ever to have a serious injury, a medical health issue or something, I think that, small towns, that’s what they’re really known for is just – even a fire in your house. They’re always gonna come to your rescue.

This spirit of caring for others is not new. An alumnus from the class of 1900 wrote a book on his experiences at WSU and observed that same sense of caring over a hundred years ago: “I met many fine people during my stay of four years in Widmer. The whole population was much interested in the school and made every effort to make the students feel at home, and quite frequently helped them financially” (Lance, 1954, p. 20).

Perhaps no story summarizes the caring nature of this community better than its reaction to a regional natural disaster that occurred in 1997. A neighboring community was hit so badly that thousands of people needed to be evacuated. WSU actually closed its campus a month early in order to make room for evacuees who had no place to stay. “Over 2,000 evacuees registered at WSU, nearly doubling the area’s population in four days” (Miller, 1997, p. 8). The town immediately sprang to life with a comprehensive volunteer effort that included providing all meals for the evacuees during their stay. The citizens of the community and their exemplary volunteer efforts were highly praised by disaster officials and by the president of the university.

In that first week, they volunteered enough hours to equal one person working full time for nearly two years – and that’s only what we were able to get on the record. . . . Entertainment, child care, pet care, and free or discounted business services appeared instantly to help soothe anxieties and make person-to-person connections. Dozens of people made hundreds of wise decisions every day that they had no training or experience to make – just their good sense and open hearts. (Miller, 1997, p. 8)

Shifts in Demographics

Shifts in Population

Two of the major shifts in the town’s demographics have been in the age of its residents and the size of its population. The current American Community Survey states that approximately one fourth of the population of Widmer is over the age of 65 with fewer than 225 students at the K-12 level living in Widmer. In addition, the town is diminishing in population as evidenced by the census information shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Population of Widmer.

Census	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Population	2554	2255	2100	1953	1779

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2010)

Thus the town's population has declined by approximately 30% since 1970. The latest figures show only 12 students are enrolled in preschool, a further indication of the aging of the community (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009).

Various age groups within Widmer impact the community in their own unique ways. Participants made comments on the difference between the older and younger generations. Two community members expressed concern over the changing demographics, implying that the older generation reflected a more educated, "upscale" population. For example, one participant commented:

Widmer is now an extremely blue collared community. In the old days when we were sort of the bonanza farming capital of the [area], we had the farms located right there in Widmer. And we had bankers from the east coast who had huge mansions that are no longer in Widmer, they're all gone. We were a very wealthy and upscale community. That has all died off with the generations and now what we have are a lot of blue collar workers, uneducated. And that is reflected in the way they do not support the college.

Another mentioned:

Now, the old, old generation, the folks that were my husband's family, his uncles, aunts, and so forth, many of those people in Widmer when I came here, had been to [Ivy League] schools. They'd been east; his three cousins were at Vassar and Wellesley. . . . Now that has died out.

The older and younger generations seem to possess a different sense of commitment to helping the community as well. One participant sees this reflected in a lack of leadership on the part of younger residents. "And perhaps it's the same in many other towns, too, that it seems to be an aging volunteer group. That people in their twenties and thirties are too busy with their own stuff." The aging population of Widmer brings other concerns as well. One younger participant, who was extremely happy to have raised her children in Widmer, expressed concern that the town might become a retirement community:

One thing I have noticed is that people will say, "Yeah, we retired and decided to move back here because you've got a hospital, you've got a clinic, you have a grocery store, you have a pharmacy." You know, so they don't necessarily have to go to town to buy their groceries or their medications, and they can see a doctor right here. I'm hoping that it doesn't end up being just a retirement town.

Whereas she registered concern that Widmer might become a retirement community, others were concerned that older residents were leaving. According to one pastor, "When I first came here, people who had lived their lives and made their lives here and retired *stayed* here. They no longer do. They pack up and leave when they retire."

Even as there is an apprehension about older community members leaving the community, concern was voiced regarding those who choose to stay:

The bubbas stay here: the one who tears around on his bicycle when he's five, the one who rides his motorcycle through your yard when he's 15, the one who takes his snowmobile in every place that he's not supposed to go. The one who works at the bean plant throwing bags because, "Well, it's a job, I get money for it."

And the ones who go to college and they want to be in the fine arts, or they want to be a doctor or a lawyer or an architect . . . when they leave here and they go to college, they don't come back because there isn't anything for them to come back to.

A community member bemoaned the fact that the younger generation has no choice but to leave due to the lack of jobs available in Widmer:

Most kids have to move on . . . primarily because the farms continue to get bigger and bigger so you can't farm if you want to. We only need one pharmacist, so anybody else who goes into pharmacy can't stay here unless they happen to graduate when the previous pharmacist is ready to retire.

One participant did offer a ray of hope: "What I like best is I see some young professionals that are here . . . an eye doctor and a young lawyer and wife coming back. You know they're the people, the developing – the leaders in the community."

Shifts in Mobility

Whereas Widmer had at one point been a fairly self-contained community, the 1970s brought greater mobility to its residents. One strong factor that influenced mobility was the building of a nearby interstate highway in the 1970s. The highway now facilitates travel to larger, neighboring cities that offer more shopping and entertainment

opportunities. A former faculty member at WSU commented on the change in mobility that evolved since the 1970s:

[The interstate] opened completely in the early '70s sometime. This made for a more mobile society, I think. Also, getting back to what I said earlier, the focus on something outside of the community was a bigger deal . . . if you look at sort of those landmarks, opening up [the interstate], people being more mobile, college kids looking for a place that's bigger, looking for a community that will offer them more opportunities than a small little inland campus town.

There is a somewhat generational view of the value of the increased mobility. Whereas an older participant was concerned on the impact the interstate had on Widmer, a younger community member commented on the value of having easy access to neighboring cities:

Not enough [to do]. We're fortunate that we're kind of between Clarksdale and Holben so there isn't that huge difference as far as driving. For example, my daughter, she goes up quite often and goes to movies, and, of course, does her shopping there.

Shifts in Business Sector

There has been a change in the number of businesses in town since the 1970s, perhaps due in part to the increased mobility of the townspeople. A number of larger businesses have closed, leaving a smaller, quieter downtown district. One long-time community member commented on the change:

And I think I sort of noticed people started commuting out of town. We became more of a bedroom community than a business community. The service stations started to disappear. We ended up with one grocery store rather than three. We

had three car dealers; now we have sort of one as far as I know. When you start looking at the losses of the implement dealerships, the car dealerships, restaurants, grocery stores, there was a clothing store – those are all gone.

Summary of Community Overview

In summary, Widmer is a small yet impressive community. In spite of its population of only 1750, it boasts a strong commitment to education, a rich heritage in the arts, and an extraordinary spirit of volunteerism. The fact that it is a college town brings cultural and educational advantages that are greatly appreciated by many of its residents. That said, the residents are aware of shifting demographics and the impact they are having on the community.

Part I: Political and Economic Forces Impacting Retrenchment

Political and economic forces had a powerful impact on Widmer State University's decision to eliminate its music major and minor during the 1989-1990 academic year. The music department had experienced much success in prior years, and the year started with no forewarning that such a decision might even be considered. Political forces such as the economic challenges of the 1980s, the State Legislature's attempt to provide extra tax dollars at the end of that decade, and the rebellion against those higher taxes all had a huge impact on the decision to eliminate the music degree at Widmer State University. Added to those external forces were the perceptions of WSU administrators that the music department was faltering as well as a diminished support for the department on campus. This section addresses the profound impact that political and economic forces had on Widmer State University, its faculty and alumni, its host community, and the demise of its music program.

The 1989 Tax Referral Vote

In the 1970s, the state experienced a strong economic boom due to high prices for its natural resources. A special 6½% tax was passed related to one such natural resource, with the full revenue from that tax allocated to higher education (Indrum, 2007). By the early 1980s, the market for the state's natural resources shifted, resulting in a huge decrease in the tax revenue that had been helping to fund higher education. The governor at the time, Governor Taylor, needed to make a number of tough decisions related to the economy:

In July 1981 Taylor requested state agencies aim for a 5 percent reduction in spending, including a hiring freeze and restrictions in travel. In November 1981 the reduction was made mandatory and a hiring freeze was imposed on approximately 500 vacant positions. On May 27, 1982, Taylor ordered the Office of Management and Budget to freeze the 8 percent pay raises scheduled to take effect on July 1, 1982 (Indrum, 2007, p. 23).

As the 1980s progressed, political and financial pressures on the state level led to continued financial challenges throughout the state, including at all IHE. The state experienced a further weakening of the major markets on which its economy depended and in 1985, the governor at the time, Governor Floyd Wilson, asked the legislature to make substantial cuts in the state budget. One report from the state's Higher Education State Board (HESB) mentions the drastic effect that the budget cuts of the 1980s had on the state:

The following data show that . . . [state in this study] supports more students with fewer dollars than nearly any other state. The budget cuts of the 80s have taken . .

. [state's] higher education from a state of efficiency to a state of crisis. All of the traditional belt tightening techniques have been exhausted, such as: no salary increases, reducing administrative costs, adding workload, and deferring maintenance. (HESB staff, 1988, p. 1)

A series of measures followed to deal with what the governor called a “devastating” regional recession, including a special session in December of 1986 where income tax, sales tax, and motor vehicle taxes were all raised (Evans, 2006). An additional half-percent sales tax went into effect in 1987, with an expiration date set for 1989. Although there was some grumbling concerning the 1986 and 1987 taxes, they went into effect with general voter support (Evans, 2006).

In 1989, the State Legislature again responded to the growing needs of education, the elderly, and social services by instituting moderate tax increases, including slight increases in income tax, sales tax, and motor vehicle fuel tax (Hendricks, 1993). The state income tax increased from 14% to 17%, the sales tax increased from 5% to 6%, and the motor vehicle fuel tax increased from 17¢ to 20¢ per gallon (Voters Guide, 1989). These tax increases were passed with bi-partisan support in the legislature; the income tax and sales tax actually passed with more than a 2/3 majority of both houses (Andrews, 1989). The date of these tax increases and other significant dates are listed in a chronology in Appendix C to assist the reader with better understanding the sequence of events. The state legislators' actions demonstrated their receptivity to the claims that more funding was needed for higher education. The 1989 tax increases led state campuses, WSU among them, to mistakenly presume they had a sound financial basis for the coming biennium. Their biennial budgets were based on higher expectations for

funding due to the recently increased tax dollars allocated by the State Legislature. The 1989-1991 budget increases provided much needed relief to universities struggling with the issue of underpaid faculty and unfilled faculty positions. The HESB commented on the excellent effort made by the legislature to assist higher education, even though it did not completely solve all challenges:

The 1989 Legislative Assembly made an heroic effort to stem the losses, using both general-fund and tuition increases. . . . Support for faculty and staff positions in the 1989 legislature was also good, but restored fewer than half of the positions cut in 1987-89 to respond to budget crises in the state (HESB Staff, 1989, p. 15).

Although the state legislators and the governor had worked to develop a fair plan of taxation to meet state needs, there were those who were not happy with the new tax laws. It was not long before a grass-roots movement developed to rescind the taxes that had already been put into place. Bob Simonson, a businessman from the state's capital city, initiated a campaign to gather the 13,055 signatures needed for a statewide vote to overturn the 1989 tax increases. His group, the Citizens for Fairness Coalition (CFC), reflected criticisms from conservative citizens that the tax laws were excessive and unnecessary (Hendricks, 1993). The coalition acquired the necessary number of signatures by July, 1989, and a special election was set for December 5, 1989 (Hendricks, 1993). All in all, eight different measures appeared on the December 5th referral, three of them having to do with taxes.

The December 5th vote was preceded by heavy campaigning from both sides of the tax issue. Governor Wilson emerged as the spokesperson for the State Legislature

and absorbed the strongest negative press from the CFC (Hendricks, 1993). The governor later reflected on the difficult battle he faced:

Of all the things that are important in state government – care of the sick and assistance for all manner of human need – the future depended upon how well we did in education. And everyone who was thinking knew that, but few would stand up and fight and say the tough stuff that you have to say to get new taxes. . . . It's weird; this obsession with cutting taxes obliterates every other kind of rationality in public policy (Evans, 2006, p. 35).

Governor Wilson canvassed the state highlighting the important benefits of the taxes. He warned that recent tuition hikes in higher education made it difficult to obtain needed funds through additional increases in tuition. The governor also warned citizens that if the taxes were overturned, there would be a resultant decrease in much needed services and increase in property taxes to offset the lost sales tax and income tax dollars.

The CFC argued that there was waste in the state government and that the latest tax increases did not reflect the wishes of the citizens of the state. Allegations of the governor painting a darker picture than necessary were made and numerous pamphlets were distributed throughout the state by the CFC (Hendricks, 1993). They attacked the governor as having “gone too far” and for “crying wolf” with predictions of drastic cuts in the budget (Hendricks, 1993). Members of the CFC campaigned statewide on the perceived waste within state government. In Widmer, the efforts of the CFC were not well-received. In one letter to the editor, Arnold Wasserman, a representative to the State Legislature counters the claims made by the CFC, stating that “Proponents of a ‘no’ vote

. . . have chosen to blanket the state with flyers filled with fabrications, half-truths and conclusions that defy even an approximation of logic” (Wasserman, 1989, p.4).

On the other side, there was strong support for the tax measures expressed by those in the public schools, higher education, social services, and the state highway department. A campaign of support included TV commercials, flyers, brochures, letters to the editor, and a statewide tour by the governor (Hendricks, 1993). One participant commented on the minimal impact that the three new taxes had on the residents in the state. “In each instance, they were very minor amounts, and no one, I swear, would have felt the difference, even 21 years later.”

Perhaps nowhere was this controversy felt stronger than in Widmer. The citizens of Widmer knew they had much to lose if the tax initiatives were overturned. An energetic campaign of letters to the editor in the local newspaper was started, reflecting the passion with which university and community members viewed the upcoming December 5th vote. There are three letters to the editor in the November 8th issue, one from the CEO of the local hospital, the second explaining the impact on the county social services, and the third discussing the impact on local businesses. The December vote was obviously a concern for many facets of the Widmer community. A front page article on November 22nd outlines the importance of a “yes” vote and offers an impassioned plea to invest in the future of the state (Roberts, 1989a).

Dr. Dale Richland, the university’s president, addressed his concerns in the newspaper, the Faculty Association minutes, and the alumni magazine on a regular basis throughout the fall of 1989. The September 25 and October 30 minutes of the Faculty Association reflect President Richland’s concern, including his statement that if the tax

increases were overturned, WSU would lose over \$600,000 in funding already allocated to the current 1989-1991 biennium (WSU Faculty Association Minutes, 1989a, p. 1).

Later minutes speak more strongly of the potential cuts:

The cut would eliminate faculty raises for next year, tuition would have to be increased and monies would be cut from operating, equipment, and capital improvements. All those cuts would not equal the total amount needing to be cut so existing faculty/staff positions would have to be eliminated. These cuts would be devastating to our institution. (WSU Faculty Association Minutes, 1989b, p. 1)

The president's language demonstrates the seriousness of the potential consequences of the December 5th vote. For the first time, a mention of cutting faculty positions appears.

The university's September 1989 alumni magazine gives further insight into the serious stance WSU's president adopted concerning the tax referral. The president addresses the December 5th referral with a strong plea to support the tax measures and VOTE YES! The word "devastating" is used again here and will be used numerous times in the coming months. The president once more mentions the over \$600,000 which would need to be cut from WSU's current budget and the \$27,258,979 cut that would be felt by higher education across the state. He mentions program and staffing cuts and tuition increases that would follow a "no" vote, with the possibility of terminating as many as ten positions looming in the future (Richland, 1989a). President Richland closes with a powerful statement on the consequences of diminished funding in recent years:

Once we lose key faculty and staff, it takes years to rebuild departments that were once strong. We cut the fat in the late 70's and have trimmed the meat of higher

education for the last six years. We are now chipping away at the bone – the very foundation of our universities and colleges, and our state’s future and as [*sic*] the individual futures of our younger generation” (Richland, 1988, p.3).

Considering what would soon happen to the music department, President Richland’s warning about taking years to rebuild damaged departments is ominous.

On November 29th, one week before the December 5th vote, the Gully County Gazette devoted multiple pages to the impending vote. A front page plea from the governor reminded the citizens of Widmer that their state ranked 49th in terms of state dollars spent on higher education, and would drop to last if the December 5th referral did not pass (Wilson speaks, 1989). An additional front page article was devoted to the referral vote; the issue also included a two page outline of the complete wording of the eight measures up for a vote, a voter’s guide, and six letters to the editor in support of the taxes. As evidenced by the November 29th newspaper, the tax referral vote was viewed as extremely important to the citizens of Widmer and there was a strong effort to keep the taxes on the books.

Impact of the Tax Referral Vote

So how did the vote turn out? The state voted overwhelmingly against all three tax measures. The tax measures all passed in Widmer’s district, but statewide the voters spoke against what they saw as excessive taxation (Pearse, 1989). Governor Wilson commented later on his thoughts after the taxes were rescinded, “Those who didn’t support the tax didn’t see how disastrous the loss would be” (Evans, 2006, p. 36). He lamented over the impact the vote had on state economics: “But the fact is we were in fair shape after increasing the sales tax 1 percent in 1989, but we fell a long way after we lost

it” (Evans, 2006, p. 38). One participant commented on the impact felt in Widmer: “I think we were the only county in the state that supported the higher taxes and we took the biggest hit because of the loss.” Although the pre-vote letters to the editor had been in support of a “yes” vote to maintain the tax increases, the December 13th paper had only one letter about the vote, a rather interesting and convoluted letter to the editor that seems to support the “no” vote:

The NO vote should be a message to our legislators that our taxpayers are sick of being sick of our government run by lobbyists who represent the big money special interests Do they have a new name called “problem creators” or are they “gutless” legislators? (Kraemer, 1989, p. 4)

Regardless of the despair felt by higher education, the whole state now needed to decide how to deal with the budget cuts that resulted from the vote. A state representative wrote of the impact that negative feelings about government, the federal income tax system, and taxes in general had on the referral vote. “Federal policy affected us – the belief that government is too big and too wasteful” (Pearse, 1990, p.1).

The “devastating” consequences of a successful no vote were now being realized at WSU. The December 1989 Alumni Magazine offers strong language from President Richland:

The No Votes victory on December 5 may well be . . . [state’s] “day of infamy” that may be remembered as is December 7, 1941. Elementary and secondary education, human services, and higher education will all need to cut back services. This torpedoing will have more casualties than just the personnel

reductions needed to meet a cut of . . . [over \$600,000] at Widmer State
(Richland, 1989c, p. 2).

It is noteworthy that the main cut he mentions is personnel reduction, thus setting the stage for the upcoming cut of music and art faculty that WSU would experience. He goes on to explain that WSU had experienced a 17.2% increase in enrollments and a 21% decrease in real dollars since 1979 and berates Mr. Simonson and the CFC for labeling the budget as “out of control” (Richland, 1989b).

The Faculty Association minutes from December 11th outline the grim picture that WSU faced. All salary increases for the coming year were frozen and the minutes offer guidelines from the HESB for dealing with retrenchment: “The directive from the Board was that no across-the-board cuts were to be made that would hinder quality – low-enrollment/high-cost programs are to be cut” (WSU Faculty Association Minutes, 1989b, p.1).

This “directive” from the state board is mentioned repeatedly at WSU as a guideline for how to proceed after the December 5th vote. A few state documents that were written before 1989 do make reference to eliminating low-enrollment programs, including the *Faculty Salary Committee Report* written in 1988 and the *Plan for Progress in the State System of Higher Education* written in 1989, but these references are not in the form of a directive. Nonetheless, low enrollments serve as the major justification for the eventual decision to eliminate music at WSU. Some would see this decision as a politically motivated choice based more on the wishes of the president (which will be addressed later) than on any directive from the state concerning low-enrollment programs.

Politics of Enrollment

Since enrollments were eventually held up as one of the main reasons to eliminate the music degree, how did the enrollments in music look at the time of the referral vote? Music had a healthy presence on campus in 1989. Enrollment in music classes was solid. The total number of students enrolled in music classes in the fall of 1988 was 275, making it the fourth largest enrollment area at WSU. Only business, education, and Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (HPER) enrolled more students. In 1989, total music enrollments stood at 234 with the same three areas coming in ahead of music while mathematics was basically a tie (Office of Academic Records, 1989).

When considering the possible elimination of music as a major, rather than looking at enrollment in music classes, it is more likely that the administration at WSU looked at the number of actual graduates from the program. The number of graduating music majors was never high at WSU, even during the '70s when the program was at its strongest. Nonetheless, by 1989, the institution had experienced two years without graduating any music majors. Information provided by the Director of Academic Records at WSU shows the numbers of graduating music majors by academic year, from 1974 and leading up to the December 5th, 1989 vote (Table 2).

Table 2. Total Music Major Graduates (All Music Degrees).

Year	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88
Music Graduates	13	6	8	4	9	9	7	4	2	2	1	5	8	0	0

(Office of Academic Records, 2010)

The issue of low numbers of graduates does not take into account the fact that one of the department's strengths had always been the number of non-majors who participated, not just the number of majors who graduated. As one alumnus noted:

I would say that we had a very, very good program when I was here [in the 70s]. . . . I think probably part of our success back when I was in school was the number of people who participated who weren't music majors or minors.

During the course of this research, more than one participant commented on the fact that there was "no one in the program" at the time of its elimination. This statement is misleading. As stated above, enrollments were actually high in music classes although the number of music major graduates was down. Even though the enrollments in music classes were among the top on campus in 1988 and 1989, the perception of low-enrollments, along with the fact that the department employed a relatively high number of fulltime faculty, put the department in a vulnerable position. As observed by one faculty member:

The numbers were falling and falling for majors, and they couldn't justify having all these professors in music and the program, and so you met with hardly any – if you don't have a music major, how do you justify having five people on the music faculty? So this kind of happened to coincide with these attacks on the college by the legislature to close us down.

One final enrollment statistic of importance that the administration may have reviewed is that of credits generated. Credit hour generation is used by administrators to measure gross efficiencies for academic departments, especially when paired against the cost of the instruction. According to WSU enrollment data, in the fall of 1989, the

number of credits generated by the music department was 347. This was approximately 3% of the total 11,654 credit hours generated on campus that fall (Widmer State University, 1989a). In contrast, the salaries for all music department faculty (including adjuncts) totaled over \$125,000 or approximately 7.5% of the total budgeted instructional salaries of over \$1,700,000 (Widmer State University, 1989b). If President Richland looked at the credit production he may have been concerned about the disparity between the number of credits produced by the department in relation to the cost of the faculty salaries.

Actions Taken at WSU after the Referral Vote

Discussion began immediately after the December 5th vote concerning the best way to address cuts at WSU. The December 11th Faculty Association minutes outline the process for financial exigency and termination of faculty contracts:

The process for financial exigency includes the Curriculum Committee studying statistics and determining which departments will be affected in program terminations. They will then forward their report to the Finance & Plant Committee who will make it's [*sic*] recommendation to the Dean of Academic Affairs who will forward it to a special ad hoc committee which determines which faculty are to be separated. The recommendation of the adhoc [*sic*] committee is forwarded to the President for a final decision (WSU Faculty Association Minutes, 1989c, p. 1).

The minutes then state that a contractual obligation exists to give one year's notice to fulltime faculty who will be terminated. It is noteworthy that any savings from such cuts would not be realized until the end of the biennium and yet each university needed to tell

the HESB how it would immediately cover the funds lost due to the lowered taxes. The December 11th minutes acknowledge that immediate temporary cuts needed to be made to offset the one-year waiting period needed if fulltime faculty were to be let go (WSU Faculty Association Minutes, 1989c). One final item of significance states “The directive from the Board was that no across-the-board cuts were to be made that would hinder quality – low enrollment/high cost programs are to be cut” (WSU Faculty Association Minutes, 1989c, p.1).

If termination of contracts were to take place, the choice needed to be made by January 11th and submitted to the Higher Education State Board, leaving very little time for such a major decision. The Curriculum Committee met on December 14 and the minutes are markedly ambiguous about the discussion that took place. It is noteworthy that no mention of eliminating the music degree actually appears in the minutes from December 14th and yet that is exactly what was discussed, as is obvious from the December 15th minutes which include specific responses to the previous day’s meeting. It is evident by the fact that the meeting was recessed for only one day that the committee members were told that this decision must be addressed immediately.

Dr. Brian Reberg, a fulltime faculty member who served as chair of the music department, received his first notice that music was being considered for elimination at the December 14th Curriculum Committee meeting. He wrote a letter that evening to present when the committee reconvened the next day, on December 15th. (Appendix D). The letter is strongly worded and makes a number of key points for the curriculum committee to consider:

- Music is indeed the highest cost program at WSU, but that has always been true, due to the cost of one-on-one applied lessons.
- All non-teaching aspects of the institution should be cut (not to impact the functioning of the institution) before curriculum, which should be the last to be cut.
- Two of the music faculty members being considered for elimination receive such low salaries that the full cuts needed won't even be realized.
- It will be impossible to get the program back once it is dropped.
- Other areas will be affected, including music for graduation ceremonies, basketball games, community events, church services. The point is made that "Widmer State University does not exist as an island."
- Losing music will negatively impact recruitment efforts.
- The music graduates of WSU have been some of the finest in the state.
- Such a step could be "the beginning of the end" for WSU.
- No other cuts in personnel, such as in administration, have been discussed.
- The music faculty and program are "sacrificial lambs" being delivered "to the altar of Bob Simonson," the man who initiated the tax referral vote (Reberg, 1989).

The minutes from the December 15th meeting state that Dr. Reberg's letter was presented, followed immediately by a motion from the Dean to "approve a contingency plan to drop the music major/minor at the conclusion of the academic year 1990-91"

(WSU Curriculum Committee Minutes, 1989, p.1). The comments that were summarized reflect unwillingness on the part of the committee members to eliminate music:

Each member expressed their reluctance to drop the music program. The opinion was expressed [that] the music department added much more to the University than their low enrollments and high costs signify. Our institution has already suffered a loss of cultural activities by dropping the Art major and Speech/Drama minor; dropping the music program will magnify this loss. Once a program is dropped, the University will never get it back (WSU Curriculum Committee Minutes, 1989, p. 1).

The December 15th minutes go on to say that division chairmen stated they would rather see across-the-board cuts than lose a whole program. The dean countered this with the argument that across-the-board cuts would affect campus quality because of larger class size and teaching loads. The dean then brought in the big guns, stating that: (a) across-the-board cuts would impact NCATE accreditation; (b) the Higher Education State Board would not leave them any choice, as the board was targeting duplication of programs within the state; and (c) the Higher Education State Board was insisting that high-cost/low-enrollment programs be targeted. Thus, the dean gave a strong impression that the decision was imperative, in part, because of outside forces that were beyond the control of the school.

A few more questions were asked and the concern that the decision was being made too fast and without enough information was registered, followed by the words, "Motion carried." The dean then made a similar motion to eliminate the art minor, followed by what appears to be less discussion and fewer objections, and the words,

“Motion carried.” In both instances, there is no record of how many votes were cast for or against the motions or if the vote was private or public.

The next step that needed to be taken was for a similar motion to pass in the Finance and Plant Committee. The minutes from the January 8th meeting register minimal discussion followed by a motion to concur with the curriculum committee’s recommendation (WSU Finance and Plant Committee Minutes, 1990). The motion was passed with one person voting against the motion; in his interview, Dr. Reberg confirmed that he was the one dissenting vote on the committee.

The January 29, 1990, Faculty Association minutes contain a president’s report that outlines WSU’s decision: \$150,000 would be cut by eliminating the music major and minor as well as the art minor. Three fulltime, tenured faculty members were given notice that their contracts with the university would be terminated (two in music and one in art) along with one other fulltime, non-tenured member of the music faculty. Dr. Reberg’s contract was not terminated, and he continued to teach the music and art humanities courses that were part of the General Education offerings at the university (WSU Faculty Association Minutes, 1990). The minutes do not contain a Faculty Association vote to approve this decision, so it is likely that Faculty Association minutes from between December 11, 1989, and January 25, 1990 (when an emergency meeting for a different issue was called), are missing from WSU’s files. One administrator recalls a campus vote of 2 to 1 in favor of the action taken although others could not verify that figure.

A faculty member described the mood during that vote. “There was no support [for music].” To many outside of music, the decision to eliminate music seemed

inevitable. A non-music faculty member blamed it squarely on the shoulders of the tax vote:

That's what killed it completely. We had to cut a lot of money from our budget, well, the weakest part was the music and art. . . . I'm sure anyone who was looking at enrollment figures . . . we had more faculty members in music than we had music majors. The minors, we had quite a few of those, of course.

One music faculty member described his feelings during these meetings as one of desertion:

I can remember sitting in . . . meetings when these things were coming up, and I would be shivering, because you know, it's a nervous response. Your body's responding, and this is horrible because you're losing everything that you've worked at and for. You're losing your allies and friends. You're losing students. And what can you do about it? And there's nothing. I mean that feeling of deserting and being deserted at the same time. It's a horrible feeling.

More than one participant referred to the fact that the institution, and the president in particular, was between a "rock and a hard place." A decision needed to be made quickly. One administrator suggested that there seemed to be very few options for the institution:

We didn't feel that we had any flexibility in those support operations or leadership operations. So, I think the decision then became "we'll need to reduce our academic offerings and what impacts the least amount of students and yet also has a significant financial savings to us."

Actions Taken at Other Institutions After the Referral Vote

After the referral vote, the governor was faced with the difficult task of asking all public institutions of higher education in the state as well as other state agencies to cut their budgets. As stated by Daniel Baker (2008), this was a daunting task for the governor: “While referral advocates celebrated and their opponents recovered from the shock, Wilson and his staff were left to determine how to slash \$98 million from the state budget that would run for another eighteen months” (p. 38).

Each campus within the state system was left with the task of how best to address the cuts brought about by the rescinded taxes. *The Report on Proposed Annual Budgets 1990-1991* outlined the decisions proposed by all institutions of higher education within the state following the December 5th vote. On many campuses, faculty salary increases were adjusted downward or frozen while faculty loads were increased. A number of campuses commented on the disadvantage they were experiencing due to lower faculty salaries, thus making it even harder to recruit quality faculty members.

The language in the *State University System Summary of Proposed Annual Budgets 1990-91* is often emotional, with the word “devastating” being used by three campuses (HESB Staff, n.d.). Interestingly, in spite of the HESB’s “directive” to cut low-enrollment programs which is mentioned so frequently by the administration at WSU, no four-year institution other than WSU cut a program or appeared to release fulltime tenured faculty members. One two-year institution cut vocational programs in carpentry and automotive technology due to the tax referral (HESB Staff, n.d.). See Appendix E for a campus-by-campus summary of the proposed changes precipitated by the December 5th vote.

The elimination of the music major at WSU was one of the most drastic measures taken by any campus in response to the December 5th vote. The perception expressed by one former faculty member was that WSU took a particularly strong hit. “All of the colleges were supposed to do some cutting. And it’s my understanding that our programs were the only ones that were cut in state.”

Reactions to the Decision to Eliminate the Music Degree

Anticipated Reactions

A decision to eliminate a once thriving program cannot be made lightly and yet WSU records show very little discussion on campus prior to the decision to eliminate the music major and art and music minors. Administrators who were interviewed made reference to discussions that took place on campus, although there is not a consensus on when and where those discussions occurred. One administrator offered a number of areas that were taken into consideration before the decision was made:

But some of the considerations were obviously the livelihood of the people you’re impacting. This involvement for long-term faculty. . . . And also extracurricular from an alumni and donor perspective, extracurricular activities are near and dear to your alumni, which obviously is your donor base. So, we definitely were aware of the fact that by dropping such a significant activity associated with the campus and the alumni, that that could have financial repercussions for donors also, regardless of the rationale to do it. It gets to be an emotional issue. And emotions play – are significant in what people contribute. So those considerations were made. . . . I don’t really remember this clearly, but as we looked at impact

on the campus, I'm sure that we considered other areas, too: administration, support staff . . .

There are two areas worth noting from this last quote. First, the administrator refers to extracurricular activities even though the areas being eliminated (music and art) were not extracurricular, but rather major and minor programs. Second, there is no mention of how the decision might impact the host community, especially the decision to eliminate music. When asked if the tax referral was the key reason or just one of a number of reasons, the above administrator responded:

I think that was a key reason. And this is my opinion, our music program had not been as strong as it had been in earlier years and as a result of that plus the fact that there was now going to be reductions in state support forced our hand to look at, from a programmatic standpoint, how to accommodate reductions.

He goes on to state that the decision to eliminate music was not made lightly: "It was very difficult. I'm gonna say it was probably the first major academic correction, I would call it, that the school had experienced in a number of years." Another WSU administrator implied that discussion had taken place on campus for three months concerning the best way to proceed with budget cuts related to the referral vote:

Any changes, additions or deletions are considered by the Curriculum Committee of the Faculty Association representing all Divisions and their recommendations go to the Faculty Association for a final vote. The Faculty Association which includes all faculty as voting members take final action on all curriculum additions and deletions. Over a three month period the committee reviewed all program costs per major and minor, service course loads (courses for support of

other programs outside the majors or minor), enrollment trends, and placement opportunities.

Minutes from the Faculty Association and from the Curriculum Committee do not reflect the thorough discussion mentioned above, nor is that process supported by others who were interviewed including an administrator present during the discussions. Many participants commented instead on the quickness with which the decision was made.

One alumnus commented on the top-down nature of this decision and questioned whether President Richland truly understood what would be lost if music were eliminated: "I am absolutely, in my mind, 100 percent sure that he didn't think this through before he made the decision . . . don't think he realized the drawing card that the program had. He didn't realize that."

Campus Reactions

What was the reaction from those on the WSU campus to the news of losing the music degree? There is a surprising lack of written commentary in the university records concerning the decision, making official reactions from the university difficult to discern. No mention of this decision was found in the alumni magazines nor was any direct mention of it found in the local paper in the weeks following the decision. Considering the multitude of articles that existed before the vote, the absence of articles outlining how WSU chose to deal with the budget cuts is curious. In the year following the decision, no article or letter to the editor appear in the local paper supporting or criticizing the decision. Faculty Association minutes from 1990 to 1993 make no mention of the decision other than the singular statement in the January 29, 1990, that the music and art programs would be cut.

One participant, when told that few university records of the decision existed, smiled and commented, “You can’t find the eight-minute gap in the Nixon tape.” Three current employees at Widmer State offered the same possible explanation for the gap: In 1993, a new vice president for academic affairs came to the university and apparently purged numerous files of useful records during her brief employment at WSU. Whether this accurately explains the “eight-minute gap” in WSU’s records or not, files related to the decision to eliminate the music degree are now lost, including letters of support or complaint, a number of university reports from that time period concerning the decision, and a number of pertinent minutes and attachments to minutes.

Although written documents give very little indication of circumstances surrounding the decision, interviews offered a rich variety of viewpoints. Many participants felt that this was a top-down decision with faculty having a vote, but little choice. A former faculty member placed the decision squarely on Dr. Richland’s shoulders:

You know, I’m absolutely fully convinced – and it’s gonna take some hard documentation to convince me otherwise – it was his [Dr. Richland’s] doing, and he may have talked to two of his cronies on campus, (inaudible), faculty members, and just sought their advice, which was way out of line anyway because of many things. But now push comes to shove, he said, “That’s what we’re gonna do,” and the dean was given the direction.

The feeling that there was no choice, coupled with a “better them than us” mentality was noted by another former faculty member:

Richland did not support the arts. They were told in a very angry meeting that you will vote for this, and it was almost threatening. If you do not vote for this, your jobs will be ended. And of course their jobs were ended anyway by voting for the cut. . . . I would guess that maybe the athletic department chairs voted for it thinking that better them than us. So that was probably the case. But for the English department, for the arts department, for the humanities, for all those people, it was a no-choice decision. They were told they would vote for this. So they did.

One community member blamed the decision on a lack of individuals willing to oppose the president, stating that there did not seem to be strong leadership opposing the decision to eliminate music.

Now see, my feeling is that neither Widmer State College or Widmer High School had a basic foundation of members of the board, members of the faculty, members of the community that said, "We cannot have education without music." That was not there. So you didn't have a leader in a position of authority who said, "This is what we have to do, and this is what we're going to do."

Although most participants put Dr. Richland squarely behind any administrative strong-arming, comments were made that the dean had to do the president's "dirty work" by presenting the motions at the meetings. According to a former member of the music faculty, the dean was merely being used by the president as a front man:

Yeah, it was a devastating thing, and it was very hurtful for a lot of people. And we were under the impression that it was the dean that had made the decision, and in a private conversation that I had with the dean, he told me that it was the

president that made the decision, and that it was the dean that had to tell everybody.

Suspicious existed concerning the choice of the music department for elimination. Participants offered the conjecture that there had been strained relations between President Richland and the music department for quite some time and that perhaps the December 5th vote gave the president a chance to eliminate a program he had long wished to see gone. The former music faculty strongly criticized Richland's role in the decision. One stated "I just felt this was a hatchet job, a witch hunt hatchet job, and the vote only gave this whole idea only impetus." Another asserted "I had a feeling that he wanted to get rid of the music faculty, and some of the other faculty had the same suspicion. He was vindictive about the things he did." One felt that cost might have been an important factor, but that the vote offered an excuse to eliminate the arts. Another felt strongly that Richland wanted to see music gone; "We felt it was a good out for him to get rid of us." Another argued against Richland's contention that the decision was based on the tax cuts and enrollment figures:

It was an excuse for him to do it. He used the tax cut as his reason to end all the arts programs. There was no reason to end the arts programs. . . . I don't think enrollment in the arts programs were declining any more than they were declining campus-wide. But his excuse was that they were declining in the arts programs.

Naturally members of the music faculty were particularly affected by the decision, some harder than others. One faculty member recalled the reaction of a colleague. "He told me at that time that he wrote a very bitter letter to the college saying he never wanted to see another one of their newsletters or anything." A community member described the

experience of one member of the music faculty. “He was the only one that would stand up and say something and, of course, he got practically run out of town.”

Although the above quotes reveal the anger and betrayal felt by some in the music faculty after the decision to eliminate music, other emotions were also experienced. A long-time member of the music faculty felt a strong sense of loss. “I thought it was just the most awful thing that could happen to something you worked so hard to build.” That sense of loss was echoed by another member of the music faculty:

I don’t think that anybody, any department benefited directly. I think we all sort of lost as a result. When you lose that kind of diversity on campus – theater, visual arts, music, and all that those arts bring to a community – there’s a huge loss. And you can’t quantify it, but you can feel it in the quality.

One former member of the music faculty, after expressing anger about the decision, also expressed a level of understanding:

As difficult as it was, and as strange as this may seem, I think I understand why they did it that way. . . . We’re a small department. We’re a very expensive department. And at that particular time, with the time given, I think it was the easiest thing to do.

One music adjunct even offered, “Well it was going downhill. . . . I mean of course I needed the pay. But uh, I probably thought it wasn’t a bad idea, because it wasn’t going anywhere.”

Although some faculty seemed to understand the need for the decision, one former music faculty member wished that the administration had just “weathered the storm” rather than taking such Draconian measures:

Everything swings on a pendulum. All the way from music programs through the stock market, and there's gonna be good years, and there's gonna be bad years.

Just because, I've thought, "Well, that's being selfish because you were involved in it when it was good." And maybe it swung the other way. But I think every program has better years and worse years.

Outside of the music department there was a willingness to accept a target cut so that others would not be hit. As one administrator reflected, "My guess is that it spared everybody else . . . it was a target cut. Rather than across-the-board, we took a target cut." Referring again to the quote mentioned in Chapter II, "Should we all eat rice this winter and forgo summer camp, or give away the youngest child and oldest family member?" (Gumport, 1993, p. 292), the decision at WSU was that they would *not* all eat rice; Uncle Bob had to go. A "there but for the grace of God go I" sentiment seems to have surfaced on campus and one former member of the music faculty mentioned that the decision "spared everybody else":

They were scared. They thought that maybe they'd be next. I think many of them were very, very reluctant to say anything. . . . "If they could cut that entire program out in one fell swoop, then what is stopping them from taking me out?"

So I'm quite convinced that's why there was very little backlash from the faculty.

To some outside the department, the decision seemed inevitable, as expressed by one long-time professor: "Oh, we knew it had to happen. You can't fight the inevitable. We are, I think, a realistic faculty." Others supported the decision as necessary or logical. Two administrators empathized with the tough choice Richland had to make. One stated:

It was a very rational decision on the part of the president. . . . I don't know how gut wrenching it was for him, but I have to admit I might have done the same thing. . . . The decision was local and it was financial.

The other added:

Eight percent cut, though, on a small campus, is still unbelievable. Maintaining a major with that many faculty and that much overhead. . . . I mean, what else do you cut on campus? How do you justify that? He had a tough job. I can't imagine a much tougher decision.

In addition to the strong responses felt at the time, the decision to eliminate music had a long-term effect on the campus. According to one administrator, hard feelings related to the decision still existed years later:

When I first got there, it was quite evident that people were very upset about, especially alumni and of course faculty who were in the humanities, arts and humanities, which there were precious few by then because art also left. So it was a fact, it was an upsetting fact that was kind of part of the background of the institution.

Although this administrator was sympathetic to the difficulty of Richland's decision, an observation was made on the continuing impact the decision had on the campus culture:

Well, my guess is that no one who has been president of an institution without a music program, especially with a lost music program, would ever allow that to happen. . . . There was a hole in that university and it was more than just people missing it. It was the culture of the campus was bereft.

Alumni Reactions

According to one WSU administrator, at the time of the decision to eliminate music it was understood that there might be a negative reaction from alumni to the decision to cut the program. And yet it is doubtful that those making the decision fully grasped the potential depth of the reaction from alumni or the many years that the negative impact would endure. The word “devastated,” that appeared in so many documents at the time of the vote, resurfaced in a number of alumni interviews to describe how many of them felt then and still feel today.

At the time of the decision to eliminate the music program, the alumni were not consulted nor were they apprised in any way that the department was in jeopardy. A comment that was made over and over by WSU music alumni participants was that they just “didn’t see it coming.” The alumni from the 60s and 70s had belonged to a strong, thriving department and when news of this decision reached them, there was a feeling of incredulousness and helplessness. As one alumnus from that era noted, “Well, I didn’t think they would cut it because it was such a successful program. I really didn’t think that they would do that. But after they did, of course, it was pretty disappointing. I couldn’t believe it, really.” Another alumnus questioned the magnitude of the decision:

I was so proud of what we had, and then we lost it. And it seemed – and I’m not saying that a lot of thought didn’t go into it, but it’s always easy to just get rid of a humanity or a counselor . . . and it was so permanent. I mean, they could have at least kept the minor.

Comments were made that there did not seem to be any effort to “rally the troops” concerning the decision to eliminate music, especially since alumni found out about it

after the fact. Some alumni voiced concern that the music faculty, and in particular the chair at the time, Dr. Reberg, did not fight hard enough to save the department. A former faculty member came to Reberg's defense, stating that he was in an untenable situation: "And I have to say I think Brian, because he was department chair, got a lot of the blame for that. But the alumni doesn't [*sic*] realize the pressures that he was under." This feeling that the music faculty could have done more may be one reason why the faculty did not feel a discernable sense of support from the music alumni.

Regardless of how the faculty perceived the alumni response, negative sentiments were felt then and are still felt by alumni today. As one current faculty member noted, "There's still some resentment from music people, majors that have left here, that the music degree was given up – a lot. And they're pissed off." He went on to further emphasize his point: "And there were a lot of angry, angry people. That decision was made and the music majors are out there now that – the alumni that we'd try to contact – there's so much animosity."

To this day, many music alumni will not contribute to the university and still respond in a hostile manner when called. "I know the kids who do the phone-a-thon, music alumni say 'heck no, I'm not giving money until you bring back music.' So there's still a lot of people who are not happy." As one alumnus declared, he no longer gives to the university, "Honestly, for several years after that, when they would call and they'd want support and stuff, I mean, we always supported the college, but I don't anymore. I totally lost interest because it was upsetting." A former faculty member talked of the difficulty of making the calls to disgruntled alumni:

We decided we were going to do a telethon to raise money for this effort to restart the music program. So Brian Reberg and I were assigned the task of calling all alumni of the music program and the college to try to solicit funds from them. And you would not believe the responses we got from them: yelling and screaming and hanging up on us on the phone to reading us the riot act as if we were the ones that cut the program. . . . It was, they were very angry.

As one community member observed, “It was a very bad PR thing in connection with music alums – they kind of roped the college off for having done that dastardly deed.”

Community Reactions

The reaction of the community to the decision to eliminate music at WSU is of special interest to this research. Some community members reacted quite strongly to this decision, recognizing that it would negatively impact the culture of their community. Cutting music was far different for the community than if WSU had eliminated an academic department such as chemistry. Music was something that was experienced by community members and its loss affected the town immediately.

One of the strongest repercussions felt was the loss of the town’s beloved *Messiah* concerts. According to one community member, “Well, people were pretty upset, as you can imagine, again. Not going to go to see the *Messiah* at Christmas. . . . They were used to coming to a concert with a hundred people in the choir.” The town’s churches also suffered, as church musicians were depleted. A pastor in town recalled that the church organist had come from the music program and was no longer available. In addition, university participation in his church choir diminished:

On average we'd have two or three college students singing in our church choir. . . . Well, after the music program was gone, there weren't people who wanted to either share or develop their musical skills and so they didn't come to sing in the choir. We lost that.

Another community member commented on the amount of work the college musicians did in the community, a contribution that was no longer there once the music faculty and music majors left. "They would participate in things and do gratis sort of stuff, and be part of their church membership, you know." Pre-1989 music majors also contributed greatly to the successful elementary and high school music programs in Widmer. One local music teacher from the 1970s commented, "The high school music department at that time was huge – [it] couldn't even have operated if they hadn't had the assistance of the very talented music ed majors at Widmer State."

The community also appreciated the music that had been played at athletic events at the college; one community member even asked President Richland if the pep band would continue when the music department discontinued in 1990. He assured her that it would, but in fact that was another change experienced by community members. There was no music for them to enjoy at university games until Darrel Meyers started a pep band again around 1994.

The decision to eliminate music also altered the feelings some community members had towards the college. Community members, some of whom felt a sense of ownership when it came to the university, expressed a wide range of emotions concerning the elimination of music at WSU. Many of these emotions parallel what was expressed

by faculty members. As with faculty, anger towards the university was one of the strongest emotions expressed by those in the community; for example, one person stated:

But I think what it did the most, was it angered the people. The community up to that point had been reasonably supportive of the college's arts programs. When they lost it all, the community was pretty angry about it.

Another community member explained:

Yeah, there was a great, I won't say among everybody, but a lot of people were really angry that the music program was being cut out, because a lot of people had invested a lot of time and energy and a lot of people around here had gone to school up there and been a part of the musical program that was at the college, so there was a lot of anger over that decision and the president at that time who made the decision was not a very popular person in town!

Although anger was the emotion most often mentioned, for some community members, sadness and resignation were more of what was experienced. One long-time Widmer community member observed, "It was a very important department. Oh, yeah, I think the, maybe, the rest of us were more sad and dismayed rather than angry." Another community member agreed: "There was a lot of resentment and sadness, because here is something you've know for a long, long time and all of a sudden, the way you knew it was gone." One member of the community was more philosophical: "When they took out the music major, I mean, they really eliminated the whole department. We lost the heart of the college. I don't think it's ever been the same."

Although the loss was hard for some community members to swallow, others felt the decision was necessary or justified and that there was "no choice." Comments were

made that the decision reflected a combination of budget constraints and diminishing numbers of music majors, or even a lack of interest in music. One community member felt people saw it as financially necessary: "Most people just saw it as 'we need to cut expenses, we don't have that many music kids here anymore, you know, so that's a good place to save, as long as they don't cut our football team.'" Another community member offered understanding for the decision President Richland needed to make:

I understand why President Richland had to do it. At that time, they had, I think, three or four fulltime music instructors, professors, and I think they had two majors at the time. . . . Fewer people were taking music majors at then.

Certainly, women could go in other things, and maybe not so many into music or teaching.

Regardless of their initial reaction, to this day, members of the community continue to send the WSU administration the message that they want music back. One administrator commented, "I didn't expect to hear the same message year after year after year. It didn't fade away." A former faculty member who retired in the community reflected on similar comments from friends in the community: "And I don't know for how many years after this, I kept hearing, 'They should have never cut that. They should have never cut that.' . . . So it left a bad taste in the mouth a long time." A former administrator was lobbied continually by community members to reinstate music:

There were some very prominent people in the community who loved the arts and made sure to let me know that my job was to get music back and get art back.

And, we systematically tried to do that over the years. The finances were very tough.

Proposals for Changing Widmer State University

One final impact that state politics and economics have had on WSU is the constant threat that the university would either be closed or altered in some significant way. Widmer State University responded to numerous political and financial pressures throughout the years, some of which threatened its very existence and all of which have lead to a pervasive feeling of vulnerability. Since WSU was the little kid in the neighborhood, the institution had good reason to feel picked on when system-wide finances were tough.

Recommendation to Change to a High School

Governor Wilson made a recommendation in 1985 to alter WSU drastically. The tough finances of the 1980s prompted the governor to recommend that WSU be changed into a residential High School for the Gifted and thus abandon its mission as a four-year liberal arts college. President Richland addressed the governor's "desire to seek alternative uses for small colleges in an attempt to cut \$100 million dollars from the 1987-89 state budget" (Richland, 1985, p. 2). He emphasized the important role the institution played within the state and argued caustically against the claim that changing the institution to a high school would give the state the funds they were seeking:

If some state leaders feel that they can balance the state's \$1.19 billion dollar general fund in 1987-89 on the back of WSU and its one-half of one percent of the total general fund budget, they are not very realistic (Richland, 1985, p. 2).

The university and community banded together to fight this proposal, which was ill-received by both. President Richland's efforts on behalf of WSU were seen as heroic by one participant employed at WSU at that time:

And then that half-witted governor, Floyd Wilson, wanted to close the smaller colleges. President Richland outfoxed him completely. . . . Floyd Wilson was trying to turn . . . [another IHE] and Widmer into two-year schools. Or maybe turn Widmer into a special high school or something, but that blew up in his face and Richland had a lot to do with it. . . . Richland did an awful lot to organize support for the college. He was a hero then.

The 1985 visiting North Central Association of Colleges and School (NCA) team commented on the stress that the proposal to turn WSU into a high school had on the campus:

The recent comments from key figures in the state create a tremendous burden on recruiting efforts and retention of students. These utterances highlight speculation, increase the difficulty of raising funds and breed uncertainty and instability in the institutional staff. It would be more productive to discuss problems without reference to particular institutions until appropriate studies or decisions are proposed and completed (Widmer State University, 1996, p. 7).

Recommendation to Convert to a Two Year Institution

Another threatening proposal for change at WSU appears in print in January of 1990. The HESB staff report, *A Changing Educational System*, projects an estimated savings of \$1 million if Widmer State University and another small four-year institution within the state were changed to two-year colleges (HESB Staff, 1990, p. 9). WSU was suddenly in the position of not only having to cut hundreds of thousands of dollars from its budget due to the December 5th tax referral vote, but also of defending its very existence as a four-year institution.

A special meeting of the WSU Faculty Association was called to discuss this issue and a report was submitted to the HESB on January 19. In that report, President Richland argues effectively against such a change:

We see no logic in the suggestion that a century of responsibility for the preparation of teachers and, more recently, for the preparation of students for a place in the business world should be suddenly replaced by a totally new and untested foreign mission which has no precedent in American higher education (Richland, 1990, p. 2-3).

The report asserts that the estimated \$1 million in savings is not only arbitrary, but inaccurate. Although the HESB minutes from February 1990 include an appendix justifying such a change, the minutes also include a summary of the board's decision *not* to convert Widmer State University to a two-year school (Higher Education State Board Minutes, 1990). Once again, WSU dodged a political bullet.

Recommendations to Eliminate Redundant Programs

Another area of vulnerability for WSU has been the HESB's frequent discussions concerning elimination of small or redundant programs. The state board has encouraged institutions to consider redundant programs for elimination if enrollments are small:

Over the years, the Board has periodically explored two major approaches to program reduction, eliminating "wasteful" duplicate programs and eliminating programs that produce few graduates each year. It has had great difficulty defining "wasteful," but ultimately the definition typically turns to the size of the program. That is, if the system has two programs in field X, and one or both of them is operating at less than capacity enrollment, one or both of them is not cost

effective. In 1985-86, the Board and campuses terminated 34 small programs (HESB Minutes, 1990, p. F1).

Such discussions have taken place since the mid-80s and administrators at WSU felt that their programs might be targeted due to the smallness of their school.

The suggestions to alter WSU listed above left many in Widmer feeling a sense of concern for their school. As one community member commented, "I worried forever about this college. It seems we went through a long period where every two years someone was trying to shut this little school down."

Efforts to Reinstate Music

Ever since Dr. Richland's departure in 1993, administrators at WSU felt pressure to reinstate a music minor at WSU. Presidents were lobbied strongly by alumni and community members wishing to see the program back on campus. Even when an administrator was sympathetic to this request, economic challenges prevented any such action.

Dr. Miller was president after Dr. Richland and spoke of the constant questioning from alumni and community members who wanted music back at WSU. "Every time I went to an alumni event, someone would talk to me about it. 'When are we gonna get music back? How are we gonna get music back?'" Having worked at another institution, Dr. Miller commented on the financial challenges involved with running a music department.

Getting to know the music program at [another institution] made me much more aware of the cost factor in any music program which I really did not understand

beforehand, and it probably made me much more cautious about trying to start anything because I had a fuller sense of what it took to do it right.

Darrell Meyers, a former WSU band director, and Angela Rizzo, the chair of the education department, worked on a proposal to reinstate the music minor when Dr. Miller was president, a proposal that stalled for lack of financial support.

The February 1998 issue of the alumni magazine outlines another approach to regaining a music program initiated during Dr. Miller's presidency. The article highlights a new community school of the arts (CSA) and its programs, with an eye on a long-range goal of reinstating the music minor. Michael Heath, the newly hired CSA director declared, "Perhaps the most important long-range goal we have is to implement enough courses for academic credit in music-related areas, so that we will be able to offer our elementary education majors the option of a minor in music" (Heath, 1998, p. 13). Heath was overly optimistic about reinstating a music minor at WSU in an article he wrote a year later for the alumni magazine:

A course of study leading to a music minor degree has been planned out and will be made available to students beginning in the year 2000. This will be the first offering of a music degree at WSU in almost a decade. (Heath, 1999, p. 10)

A NCA self-study written during Dr. Jones' presidency, the president who followed Dr. Miller, reveals how strongly the individuals at the university wished to reinstate music at WSU. By this time, the institution had budgeted funds for a fulltime music faculty position:

Low enrollments and budget cutbacks forced elimination of WSU's historically outstanding music program in 1990. Those who honored the history and heritage

of WSU worked to reinstate the program and managed to re-establish a university choir in 1998, the choir director initially funded in part by private support. In 2004, a newly restructured music instructor position, funded totally from state-appropriated funds, was added to the Division of Liberal Arts. The instructor is responsible for choir, band, voice lessons, and instrumental lessons. (Widmer State University, 2005, p. 58-59)

The above wording, as it describes the “forced elimination of WSU’s historically outstanding music program,” is worth noting. In the *Summary of Strengths, Challenges and Proposed Recommendations for Change* section of this self-study, the wording again reflects the sense that the WSU campus had been forced to drop its music program and now wished to combat the negative effects of that decision:

Financial considerations and low enrollments forced WSU to drop its music program in 1991, but since the Roundtable calls for well-rounded students who can both contribute to society and benefit from the humanities and fine arts, WSU has added a newly restructured music program to its Division of Liberal Arts. Instrumental and vocal ensembles are again performing on the WSU campus. (Widmer State University, 2005, p. 150)

A strong supporter for the reinstatement of music at WSU is the current president, Dr. Robert Clarkson. Although Clarkson came from the WSU business department, he understands the value of having music on campus. His earliest support came when he was a vice president under Dr. Miller:

Well, I had a little slack when I was vice-president . . . in the budget finally, one year, and the president, Dr. Chris Miller at the time, said, “What shall we do?”

And I said, “Couple months, let’s add a music division back. Let’s start getting music back.” No one really knows that, but that’s what started it, and we had our first music position in, I’ve worked on that ever since.

One major financial challenge delayed President Clarkson’s early efforts to reinstate music at WSU. When he took over as president, the university was “a million dollars in debt” and reinstating a music program had to take back seat to getting the university out of debt. If the financial challenges to maintaining a music department were big in 1989, the challenges to reinstating one later were even greater. One community member described the difficulties of raising funds for a program that no longer existed: “Well, to ask for money when you don’t have a music degree anymore. . . . Well, right there you’ve got a problem.”

Under Dr. Clarkson, there was a strong move on campus to increase enrollments in the ensembles and to make music a significant presence on campus once again. When asked if he were working to get a music program back at WSU, Dr. Clarkson replied, “All the time.” Dr. Clarkson commented further on the value of reinstating a music minor at WSU:

A thriving music minor would be excellent. Far less overhead than the major, it would serve well for elementary ed majors, people that study music, people that participate in music. . . . And given the chance that that really grows and catches fire and you get the right people involved, then you can start looking at a major again, but you have to take one step at a time. It’s very, very hard to get something back. That’s why those decisions are really critical.

Dr. Clarkson's current support for music is firm and as this dissertation reached completion, a new proposal for a music minor was written, submitted to the required committees and HESB, and approved. Some of the courses were initiated in the spring of 2011 with the full minor planned for implementation in Fall 2011.

Part II: Quality and Quantity

Two issues surfaced on a regular basis during this research: the desire for quality in the music program and the need to maintain enrollments within the department. Although these issues often go hand-in-hand, the ability to maintain high numbers in a program may not always run parallel to the concept of a quality education, with quality faculty and students. In the case of WSU, the success and quality of the program was highly dependent on certain key faculty and administrators. In addition, external forces influenced WSU's ability to attract the numbers and the quality of students needed to sustain a viable program. The loss of key faculty coupled with the external challenges of the 1980s diminished quality and quantity within the program, leaving it vulnerable after the 1989 tax referral vote.

Overall Quality and Strengths of WSU

Each institution of higher education has its own unique strengths, and WSU is no exception. Although the smallness of the institution presents challenges in terms of funding and resources, it also presents distinct advantages. There is an exceptional student/faculty ratio allowing for small class sizes and a high level of personal attention for the students at WSU. A former faculty member spoke of the "close connection that the faculty has with the students" as a true advantage for WSU students. Whereas a

student on a large campus can sometimes be just one in thousands, one participant noted the opportunities for students at WSU:

There are some really good things that happen in small places for kids for leadership. And you go into an English class, you get the top professor – I mean, we could match Dr. Laura Peterson against any English professor in the world.

Another participant commented:

We could do a terrific job with that kind of student that I described, that doesn't want a big school or is afraid of it.... They come to us, a lot of times, angry, frustrated, mad at the world, but that kind of student we can help.

The campus wisely markets its smallness as an advantage. The cover to a recent Academic Catalog proudly claims, "Small university. Big advantage!" (WSU Catalog, 2004-2005).

WSU's quality has improved in a number of areas since the 1950s. There are more faculty members with doctoral degrees and the facilities are vastly expanded and improved, including a new or recently renovated library, science hall, classroom building, campus center, field house, campus theater, and wellness center. A large education building is in the process of being constructed.

Quality and Quantity during the "Glory Days"

As participants commented on earlier experiences in the music department, their comments may reflect memories of the "good old days" that have become more rose colored with time. Nonetheless, a number of alumni spoke in glowing terms of their experiences during the 1960s and 1970s. Many participants commented on the exceptionally strong and thriving program that existed at WSU in the 1960s and 1970s.

One participant described the heyday of the department as the fifteen years between 1963 and 1978. At that time, Mike Propeck conducted enthusiastic choirs which sometimes exceeded 100 participants, Larry Dillon directed outstanding bands, and Brian Reberg served as a highly respected classroom instructor. Comments were made that music was the strongest program at WSU and that the true strength of the program seemed to have come from the exceptional music faculty: “Oh, the college music program that was here was very highly regarded. I mean the people that were running it – the Propecks, and the Rebergs, and the Dillons – I mean these people did a fantastic job.”

At that time, the program was first and foremost a music education program, and participants felt that WSU graduates were highly regarded as teachers throughout the state. According to one participant, music teachers from WSU were highly sought:

The grads that we produced, people stood in line to pick them up, even those who were not at the top of the heap. Everybody got a job. Schools were, you know, getting bigger. Baby boomers were going to school. It was a golden time.

A number of participants also mentioned that students from the 1970s were known, not just as outstanding teachers, but as outstanding musicians. There was a great deal of pride generated from this small music program, and the music alumni knew they were part of something special:

Well, there’s a lot of pride in it. When I went to school here we had a ton of student teachers all the time that came from here. And as I recall, and maybe you’ve heard, the crop of students that went through here in the ‘70s, they’re outstanding musicians.

One testament to the quality of the students from the 60s and 70s is the fact that many of the music alumni from those years are still active performers, even if they no longer are employed in the music field. Music alumni who own businesses, work for the National Guard, farm, or are retired spoke of their continued involvement with music. As one said, “I have fun with it. I still do my hour and a half [of practicing] a day and I still do guest artist stuff.” Another agreed that many still perform on a regular basis, “The thing about it – and it’s still true – a lot of the musicians that I went to school with, they’re still gigging.”

The Power of One

Key individuals played a large role in the success of the music department. Certain high-quality faculty members stand out as having a noteworthy impact on music at WSU. Working tirelessly, setting high standards, and drawing others to them and the school with powerful personalities are some of the qualities of these powerful and positive individuals. The efforts of powerful and positive faculty members have truly shaped the music department, often taking it to heights unexpected in a small, rural institution. The smallness of the campus and of the music program magnified the importance of these skilled individuals. When such individuals have been present at WSU, music has thrived. When individuals with those characteristics are not present, music has been susceptible to the agendas of cost-cutting administrators.

Even as powerful faculty members had a strong impact on music at WSU, the same can be said for powerful administrators, in particular WSU presidents. The presence of strong administrative support for music did much to secure the program, while the lack of such support contributed to its decline and ultimate elimination.

Michael Propeck

Michael Propeck served the music department from 1946 to 1978, helping to transform it from an insignificant department to one of the strongest in the university. A former music teacher said with a tinge of awe in his voice, “Anybody who had him as a teacher, they revered him as an icon in their lives.” Participants commented on his tireless energy and powerful personality. Although Propeck had a gruff exterior and a penchant for swearing, he also possessed “the heart of a marshmallow” and the ability to command respect immediately. Those who worked with him easily recalled colorful stories that give a glimpse into his character. One faculty member stated:

You couldn’t get any gruffer than Propeck. I was teaching . . . in the back of the auditorium in an overflow room and could hear him swearing up a storm as he’s rehearsing the *Messiah*.

A former faculty member remarked:

But he was a strict disciplinarian. He would tell the kids, when we were going on tour, “Now remember, when I say we leave at 8:00 that means the clutch will be engaged on the bus.” And I have seen a kid drive up as the bus was pulling away, and he’d say, “Keep going,” and made the kid drive to the sites we were going to in the course of the day. And we might do a performance or two in the morning, have lunch, a performance or two at a school in the afternoon, and maybe an evening performance. But that kid never forgot that lesson about being on time.

One participant recalled:

And I remember we were rehearsing the choir, and he had the sopranos isolated, the sopranos singing this line, and he said, “You seven bitches in the front row just get out of here until you find the right notes.”

A faculty member described his first phone conversation with Propeck:

And I said, “I really appreciate your offer of the job at Widmer High School,” but that was as far as I got. “Oh my God,” he exploded. “What’s the matter?” “This is no goddamn high school. This is a college. Now get your [growls] up here and let me talk to you!” And I thought, “I gotta meet this guy.”

For all his gruffness, students had a great deal of respect for Propeck; he was a no-nonsense disciplinarian who conducted large choirs with authority:

Well, I think in one sense we were scared to death of him because we just didn’t know what was gonna happen or where it was gonna go or where he was gonna take us, and on the other hand, I think we all loved him. But we respected him; we revered him and . . . we stood back from him. He was the boss. He was the head honcho, and when he said, “Jump,” you said, “How high?”

Propeck built a thriving choral program while at WSU, but his conducting skills were not necessarily strong. One music alumnus described him as a terrible conductor, a sentiment echoed by a former faculty member. But based on the comments made during this research, what he may have lacked in conducting skills he made up for in personality, dedication, and a clear understanding of what it takes to educate young teachers. The beginning of excellence in music at WSU certainly started with Mike Propeck, a powerful and positive influence on the program.

Perhaps the strength of the program was due even more to Propeck's exceptional talent as an administrator. As chair of the music department, he had the ability to negotiate with key administrators at WSU and serve the needs of those within the department:

Propeck was an excellent administrator. Propeck was a fine department chair and he was a strong leader, but he was also a buffer that kept everyone doing their thing and gave them the freedom to do it as they wished.

One former faculty member commented on Propeck's ability to acquire funds for whatever might be needed, whether it was new instruments, tours, travel money for competitions, or a trip to perform at the World's Fair in New York City:

Or I'd come into his office and I had a list of the instruments that we needed. And he looked at it and he swore a little bit, and turned the page and looked again and he swore a little more, and he finally said, "Is this the best quality?" And I said, "Probably not. It isn't for the Minnesota Orchestra." And he said, "Well Christ, Mac [a name he used universally], let's get the good stuff. And he threw it back to me. And I said, "Good idea, Mr. Propeck." I went back and got all first line.

Propeck also dealt with members of the community well. According to one former member of the faculty, he built relationships with community members and forged valued friendships. "He cared about people. He cared about relationships that went beyond the campus or the classroom. And in the community – he knew the auto dealers, he knew the people in the restaurants." The music department was the beneficiary of the strong relationships he built with community members. As noted by a

former member of the music faculty, Propeck didn't hesitate to ask for scholarship donations, building enough trust with individuals and businesses in the area that people were happy to oblige.

Larry Dillon

For all the praise heaped on Mike Propeck, perhaps even more was given to Larry Dillon. He built the instrumental program from the ground up, taking it to heights far beyond what even Propeck's choirs had achieved. Dillon was an extremely demanding director whom students respected and for whom they were willing to work endless hours.

He worked very, very hard . . . and yet many of the people in town say he exploited the kids. They were just so busy, they worked on weekends, like Sundays at 1:00 in the afternoon to 6:00 at night; I mean, long hours. But the kids knew that if they really put in a lot of time, maybe they would reap the harvest, and, in this case, they did.

Unlike Propeck, participants described Dillon as an exceptional director. He knew how to get the sound he wanted, as testified by one former student:

And [working with people] was really, truly his forte. He was very good at getting results from students. He did what he had to do, and without strong-arming, but he was really good at getting results from a band. And the most important thing is he knew what it was supposed to sound like. Smart guy. He did a lot with very little.

Dillon's jazz band eventually won impressive regional and national awards, the type of honors usually achieved only by the biggest and most prestigious music schools in the country. It was truly a David and Goliath scenario, with little Widmer State

University outshining some of the top music schools in the nation. One such competition was at Ellendale University's Mid-West College Jazz Festival, a prestigious regional competition. Fifty bands auditioned to compete at the festival with only twenty-six selected to attend. WSU placed in the top three along with Northwestern University and Ohio State University. The size and reputation of the other schools in the top three testifies to the magnitude of WSU's accomplishment. WSU's *Alumni Magazine* speaks in glowing terms of the ensemble's achievement: "A listener at the Ellendale Mid-West College Jazz Festival commented that some bands had volume, 'but Widmer State had style'" (WSC state band ranked, 1978, p. 3). The article goes on to state: "One of the judges, . . . , noted on his critique, 'It was a pleasure to hear a band that plays music – jazz music – with a conception of time, feeling, dynamics, and a musical message'" (WSU band ranked, 1978, p. 3). Thus, WSU did far more than excel in competitions; it appears to have performed on a truly musical and sophisticated level.

Another award that demonstrated the quality of the jazz band under Dillon's direction is the JazzPlus award. JazzPlus is a highly recognized national award sought by university jazz bands from major institutions across the country. Widmer State University's jazz band won the award in the late 1970s, a truly impressive accomplishment. WSU music students at the time understood the significance of the award, as stated by one alumnus:

Oh, we were ecstatic. That was just something you couldn't even hardly believe. Each individual player in that band – they were all good players – but they had that cohesion; they had that special something that you get once in a while. And the sum total of that group couldn't be stopped. Each individual probably never

could have gone that far on their own, but as a whole, they worked together, they *lived* together. It's all they did!

In announcing the award, one judge praised WSU in glowing terms: "All the college bands I found to be excellent or very good with one absolutely sensational, namely the Widmer State College Jazz Ensemble. Their playing is utterly charming, tasteful, original-sounding with superb use of dynamics and unusual voicing" (Annual JazzPlus, 1979, p. 20).

Even a band from a large, prestigious music school would be thrilled to win the JazzPlus award, an accomplishment described by one faculty members as a "miracle" for WSU. Dillon was described by one student as a "genius with the jazz band." In order to win that award, participants commented on the many strengths Dillon displayed: his own musicality, his discipline as a director, his ability to draw out the most in his students, his ability to mold a cohesive ensemble, and his skill in selecting top-notch repertoire. As one former member of the music faculty noted:

So Larry used mostly *originals* where maybe other jazz bands at that time were using like stock arrangements, so I think that had something to do with it. In the 80s, it was probably unique to have your own, like *arranger*, so to speak, rather than using a stock band arrangement. So, I think that probably had something to do with it.

Participant after participant spoke of Larry Dillon in glowing terms and remember working with him with true fondness. As one community member noted, "He demanded excellence. He demanded commitment. And he got it from the kids . . . he had very little patience with garbage, and he felt that if you were gonna be in music, you had to be

doing it with a commitment.” This attitude inspired his students, many of whom perform today throughout the state and who continue to be a credit to WSU.

Brian Reberg

Brian Reberg is not described as a man with a big, powerful personality; instead one community member described him as an “elegant, cultured, wonderful man.” He is referred to with respect for the quality of his teaching, his calm character, and the impact he had on the community in the 37 years he served WSU. One such contribution was a series of Study Tours of Europe, initially co-organized with Michael Propeck. Reberg organized the tours independently once Propeck retired, taking between 25 to 45 community members, alumni, faculty members, and students on tours, lasting approximately two to three weeks each, starting in the 1970s and continuing to the final tour in 2000, the year he retired. He organized each tour, often around major music festivals such as those in Bayreuth, Salzburg, Lucerne, and Edinburgh. Countries visited include England, Scotland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, East and West Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Italy, San Marino, Vatican, Liechtenstein, Austria, Slovenia, Czech and Slovak Republics, and Croatia. All trips were educational and focused on the music and culture of the countries visited. Glowing articles about the success of the tours appear in numerous alumni magazine and attest to the exceptional opportunity these tours offered to community members, alumni, students, and faculty.

Another creative program Reberg fostered while at WSU is the Community Concert Series. Five concerts per year are brought to WSU and are partially funded by National Endowment for the Arts grants as well as student body funds. On a small annual budget, top notch musicians with national reputations perform in Widmer. The

Community Concert Series continues to this day, with concerts open to both community members and university faculty and students.

After Propeck retired, Dr. Reberg became the chair of the department, where he presented a much different demeanor than that of Propeck. Reberg was praised by participants for his kind, easy-going, positive nature as an administrator and his ability to smooth ruffled feathers. He had the unfortunate distinction of serving when the department was eliminated. Some participants questioned if he fought hard enough for the department at that time, while others acknowledged that the decision was a done deal, one that was beyond his control. "It was a no-choice decision . . . and I have to say I think Brian, because he was department chair, got a lot of the blame for that. But the alumni doesn't realize the pressures that he was under." Reberg's letter to the Curriculum Committee (Appendix D), demonstrates the clear argument he made in defense of the department upon hearing of the decision to eliminate it. One member of the music faculty who was teaching at that time perhaps had a better understanding of Reberg's strength as chair:

Brian Reberg was a good chair, I thought. He stuck to his guns. He did not buckle to President Richland at all. I mean, one of the reasons why Richland disliked him so bad is that he wasn't a "yes" person for Richland.

Michael Heath

Michael Heath is another individual who devoted himself completely to WSU while there. He was hired in 1998 by then president, Dr. Miller. He is described as having high standards and true skill as a director. Heath grew up in Widmer and many people knew him and were strongly in favor of his hiring. Unfortunately, that sentiment

was not unanimous, and Heath faced some difficult scrutiny from faculty members on campus. According to some participants, the political forces began to roll and two camps emerged, one that appreciated the quality of Heath's work, and the other that felt he was too strict and not a good fit for WSU. As one of Heath's community supporters observed:

Heath's a perfectionist. And he has to be. A conductor has to be. You can't let your sopranos sing a B-flat when everybody else is singing B-natural just because they want to have fun. No, no, no, no. You have to be a dictator. And he got fantastic results. He didn't bully the students. I sat in and watched him rehearse. He did good work.

Heath was hired with funds raised by community members. He founded a community school of the arts that offered a number of innovative classes, including guitar, children's dance, drawing, swing dance, poetry writing, and stained glass making. He soon combined community and college singers into one ensemble, providing a strong bridge between college and community. Heath had big plans for the WSU Community School of the Arts and saw it as a true link between campus and community as well as a means of improving the artistic life in Widmer:

The health of a community is demonstrated by the strength of its artistic life. Let us hope that through the creation of the Community School of the Arts and our commitment to the arts we can make WSU and its surrounding communities a very healthy place to live, learn and work. (Heath, 1998, p. 13)

Not only did Heath start the WSU Community School of the Arts, he was the person who brought music for credit back to WSU after it was eliminated in 1989-1990. The campus even cleared the noon hour to keep it open for choir only.

For as hard as Heath worked to get music reinstated at WSU, first through the CSA and later with for-credit ensembles and lessons, he fought a losing battle with the revered memories of Propeck and Dillon. In 2002, President Miller resigned and President Gary German, an interim president came to WSU. President German was described by one participant as a “hatchet man” who was encouraged by Heath’s detractors to fire him. The day before graduation, Heath was called into German’s office and fired.

George Rhodes

George Rhodes came to WSU from the high school music program in Widmer-Dunn. The WSU administration at the time, not particularly fond of Heath’s more intellectual approach, was excited to get a man who is described as a “rah-rah sort of guy who gets a lot of enthusiasm out of his kids.” Rhodes is a man for whom the word “charisma” was invented; as one participant noted, “People flock to him.” Having observed two of his concerts, it is safe to say that his energy and enthusiasm burst forth from the stage. Since he arrived at WSU, numbers have grown in both the band and the choir and students seem to genuinely enjoy working with him.

Members of the community are either excited that he is at WSU or critical of the choice, depending on their taste in music. Some participants feel that his concerts lack quality, while others love his concerts and the popular repertoire he chooses. Since there was no music major or minor at WSU when he was hired, he did not have the quality of

students that former directors had and comments are sometimes made that the concerts are more “high school level.” The fact that one person must now address both band and choir, rather than having a specialist for each, does seem more similar to a high school position than a college position. Nonetheless, his personality is a draw and a current WSU administrator feels that he is unique in terms of his ability to bring students into the ensembles:

Every college needs a champion. That’s why the decision was made to go with George. Now when he’s gone, it’s going to be really difficult to attract somebody with that kind of enthusiasm, because that’s contagious. That’s what students need to see. It makes them want to be here, gives them confidence. It’s a good thing.

In addition, Rhodes directs the local men’s choir, allowing all funds raised from tickets sales to go towards WSU music scholarships. His magnetic personality adds to his success as a fundraiser for the music department. “He doesn’t have a problem with telling people you need to give us this much money for, or asking people, and it works.”

The faculty members listed above have devoted themselves to the success of the music program at WSU. Their efforts, especially those of Propeck and Dillon, have become almost legendary. Administrators have responded to the efforts of these individuals as well as to the noticeable shift in the quality of the program when men such as Propeck and Dillon left.

Dale Richland

As an administrator, President Richland, although not universally admired, did have his supporters. One former faculty member praised his efforts to increase

enrollments and keep the university from being turned into a two year college or a high school. As he noted, to some, President Richland was a hero for “saving the campus” on more than one occasion. Indeed, documents written by Richland, including those written for the alumni magazine and the local paper, are eloquently written in support of the institution and its fight to stay a four-year institution. In addition, as stated by one former WSU employee, Richland was admired for his excellence in presenting the university’s budgetary needs to the State Legislature each biennium. Later administrators empathized with the difficult position he faced after the December 5th tax vote.

Some, however, felt that Dr. Richland went too far during the 1989 tax crisis. For one thing, at the time of the decision to eliminate the music program, President Richland chaired the Faculty Association, a practice that has been described as less than ideal. As one former faculty member noted, since Richland set the agenda, he exerted a great deal of political control over what topics were discussed and when:

So, there was always an agenda, but it was like – this is a terrible thing to say, but it’s true, and others will vouch for it – that when there would be important items on the agenda, they were delayed until the last few minutes when people started leaving to go off to class or lunch or something, and Richland, he would time this so carefully, whether it was intentionally or not. . . . Richland, who was chairing the meeting, which of course, to begin with, is a very bad situation. You need to have someone who is not the president of the institution chairing the meeting. It has to be someone internally, but not the president. And so by delaying crucial issues until the very last minute, everybody would vote just to get out of there. Then discussion would be to a minimum. It was almost like an intimidating

experience. There was very little discussion ever raised. So when we got to something as important as those issues, and it had to all be approved by faculty vote, it was treated – how can I say this and not sound vindictive? It was treated as though this is not important to anybody. It was sort of shoved under the table.

Dr. Richland was not well liked by a number of people on campus. Whereas the previous president, Dr. Blaire, was spoken of with affection, Dr. Richland was often criticized, including a number of references questioning his honesty. Three former faculty members described Richland as dishonest, one going so far as to call him a “pathological liar.”

The criticism that President Richland was not a supporter of music existed even when the program was doing its best in the 1970s. One music alumnus made reference to the fact that the president failed to act when the program was at its peak:

They didn’t – and by “they” I mean whoever was running the school at that time – and that’s why I say they didn’t promote the program. When it should have been promoted, when it was successful, that’s really an opportune time to make – and we all know this. I mean if you have something that’s working, you should promote it and keep it working and make it grow. Well, they didn’t do that. And for whatever reason, and I don’t know why, and I wasn’t, of course, involved in those decisions then, it was a failure to do that. And that’s really why this went away.

As things became more difficult in the 1980s, the lack of support was felt even more deeply by the music faculty: “And I feel we did *not* get any support from the administration. We always had the feeling they were gunning for us; to get rid of us.”

Robert Clarkson

President Clarkson, the current president at WSU, is another person with strong supporters and detractors. One of his most commendable achievements is inheriting a university with a million dollars of debt and quickly getting it in the black. Clarkson has strengthened the university's position within the state and a number of major building projects are now taking place on campus, a sign of economic health and stability. One community member expressed her gratitude for his Herculean effort to get the school out of debt as well as her admiration of him as a wholesome individual:

Awesome. . . . Like how he turned the budget around was phenomenal. I mean, without him, the college would have been closed. So that was first and foremost. Clarkson is a pretty down-to-earth person and he's just like you and me. He isn't the president of Widmer State College anyplace else. He's just your ordinary Robert Clarkson. Good family man, good community person.

Clarkson has been criticized by some for not supporting the arts; for example, it was said that he was not a supporter of Heath when he was at WSU. Others have implied that he cares far more about business than a liberal arts education. Clarkson stated his support of music but much of his support for music has been behind the scenes. The recent successful push to reinstate the music minor at WSU received Clarkson's support as it went through the necessary channels for approval. In addition, he has been a strong ally of George Rhodes and his well-received approach to repertoire. A former music faculty member expressed appreciation for the president and the support he showed for getting the music minor back at WSU:

I deeply like President Robert Clarkson. He was a straight-shooter, I just think he's a good administrator, from my perspective. I know there are people that do not like him, and I think it's for stupid reasons. Crazy things that just don't make any sense. . . . But he got on board, too . . . to see what we could do to get music back. And he's supported George very strongly.

Dr. Clarkson seems to be a practical administrator (if the program isn't graduating majors, cut it; if music will bring people to campus, support it). He has a clear understanding of the strong impact cutting a major such as music had on the campus. As he stated, "Losing majors [degree programs], a lot of them, I hate to say this, but people don't notice much. You drop an athletic team, a music program, that kind of thing – that's what people notice."

Cultivated and Vernacular Traditions

This research uncovered two approaches to repertoire selection that appeared to impact participants' perception of both quality and quantity within the music program. Research uncovered a number of terms currently used to name these two approaches including cultivated, high art, highbrow, classical, or serious for the one and popular, vernacular, or lowbrow for the other. Labeling the two approaches is difficult as labels can appear to pass judgment on value, but for the sake of this research, they will be called the cultivated tradition and the vernacular tradition. H. Wiley Hitchcock described these terms in his book, *Music in the United States: A Historical Introduction* (as cited in Scholten, 1988). The cultivated tradition might include a serious choral piece such as the Fauré Requiem, while the vernacular tradition might include selections from musicals or spirituals. Some of the literature reviewed for this research used the terms highbrow and

lowbrow to describe the two approaches, terms that may be more familiar to some readers.

Understanding that the terms are not meant as judgments as much as a way to describe general categories, it can be noted that some professors received both praise and criticism for a highly disciplined, cultivated approach with little use of vernacular repertoire. Others were admired or disparaged for focusing on “making the ensembles fun” for the participants and being more open to vernacular repertoire. The two views continually influenced how people perceived the ensembles. Some directors were seen as striving to improve the quality while others were viewed as deliberately courting numbers with the use of more accessible repertoire.

Participants often mentioned the large numbers Propeck attracted to his choirs. Some praised him for the numbers he was able to draw while others criticized the quality of the choir and the quality of his directing. His *Messiah* productions, which were extremely popular, often included community members who did not rehearse the full term, something that later directors would not allow:

I sang for Propeck. I knew the program pretty well. At that time, there were maybe 100, 120 in the choir, never auditioned. Just anybody came in and sang. We did *Messiah* every year whether we had orchestra or not. In my mind, it was kind of a sing-along. It was not, in my mind, not very [knocks twice on table]. But there were a lot of people who participated, whether community people who thought, “Ah, this Mr. Propeck, he’s the cat’s meow. He’s doing everything – look at these hordes of people.”

Phil Larson, the choir director at the time of the elimination of the music program approached his ensembles differently. His was a decidedly intellectual approach. According to one participant, he studied the music carefully, even going to the English department for assistance with the text. Larson also chose cultivated repertoire for his choirs. As one former music faculty member recalled, “Larson used a lot of very fine music. I could never ever question his choices of repertoire . . . the more traditional choral works like a Bach or Handel or something.” Under Larson, choir members had to audition in order to be accepted into the choir, a big change from the Propeck days. As one non-music faculty member noted, Larson might have diminished the numbers in the choir with his selectivity: “‘Well, I just don’t think you have the right voice’ so instead of 100 people, they had 20.”

Another person who was particularly hard hit by reactions to his approach was Michael Heath. Heath chose a serious approach to repertoire and rehearsing, one that he felt was not always well received or understood:

I come from a standard choral, classically trained background. And that’s what I felt it should be. If it was going to be a college choir, that’s what it should be. The faculty, those who might have had support for it, thought it should be more of a pops approach. And I didn’t feel comfortable with that. I wanted it to be something that reflected an academic, strong appearance and background that any college choir should have, I think. You can do pops as a secondary thing, but the initial needs to be a classical approach.

Another change that Heath made that was not well received by some was in his approach to the *Messiah*. As described by one participant, his *Messiah* choir, which

consisted of community members and WSU students, was carefully rehearsed, he hired professional musicians from a nearby orchestra for the orchestral parts, and he wanted a polished performance undiminished by alumni who were not fully rehearsed. The more inclusive approach that Propeck had taken was certainly not acceptable to Heath.

Participants spoke of two opposite responses to Heath's style; he was applauded by some for the professional quality of the performance while others were angry at being turned away from participating in their beloved *Messiah*.

When Heath's contract was terminated, it was immediately filled by the current band and choir director, George Rhodes. Although Larson and Heath adopted a more cultivated approach, George Rhodes embraces the vernacular side. Community members had lobbied strongly either in favor or against the hiring of Rhodes and his more vernacular approach. Although Rhodes's concerts do include some cultivated music, he recognizes the appeal of performing vernacular music. Having viewed two of his concerts, it can be noted that the audience and the performers appeared to truly enjoy the vernacular music presented.

President Clarkson hired Rhodes and is one of his strongest supporters. When viewed through the lens of quantity, Clarkson's support is understandable, considering that when Rhodes first started the band consisted of only seven members. Rhodes is justifiably pleased with the change in numbers since then:

My first year here, I called them the Magnificent Seven. I had seven in the band. I had to play trumpet. And I had a bassoon, a flute, a clarinet, and well, like I said, there was seven. And I literally had to go and rewrite music so we could play it to make it fit the group. I had seven in band, and I probably had 20 in

choir. And the high water mark was last fall. It just kept getting a little bit bigger, a little bit bigger, until the one year about four years ago when I came to the first day of class and, jeez, I had freshmen – there were four clarinets signed up, freshmen; four trumpets, three trombones – I mean, I almost started crying because I was so, ‘I’ve got a band! I don’t have to play! I’ve got a band!’”

Certain participants in this research expressed a desire for Rhodes to address quality more. The statement made by one participant that “quality is not his strong point” was reinforced by a former member of the music faculty: “Well, what George Rhodes is producing is certainly not high quality. He’s got numbers. He’s got lots and lots of people involved, but if you call that a high-quality college group, it’s not.” Those who are critical of Rhodes’s approach are also critical of the audiences who enjoy his concerts:

They wouldn’t go to a Dillon concert and be able to recognize that it was of superior excellence. They wouldn’t be able to go to a concert, whether it was a choir that was very disciplined and very knowledgeable and be able to recognize the kind of work that goes into that kind of production. So what George Rhodes does is really nice because it sounds kind of like what you would hear if you went to a group playing at a bar. It’s pop music, and it’s fun.

Although Rhodes received some harsh criticism about the quality of his ensembles, there are those who support his efforts, understanding the need to build numbers in order to build quality. As stated by one administrator:

Things I heard, Larson, Heath, those types, wanted professional musicians as a freshman. . . . You don’t have a major, you don’t draw those students. Not

patient to wait to build, expecting the end product right away, and you just exhaust people. You can't start at the top.

What seems clear is that George Rhodes is a realist. To him, it may not be so much a matter of preferring quantity over quality as a practical understanding of the path that needs to be taken in order to rebuild the program. As one administrator stated:

We have to get numbers first, then some resources, and then improve the quality. And George was good at that. He's, "I'll get students, and we'll turn them into musicians." Totally different philosophy and students can tell that instantly. Now they feel welcome.

Loss When Strong Faculty Members Depart

The challenge of filling "big shoes" certainly existed at WSU and the inability to successfully replace key faculty members contributed to the demise of the program. Although the music department at WSU faced a number of external challenges in the early 1980s which will be discussed later, losing extraordinary faculty was perhaps the biggest factor affecting the program. Propeck and Dillon were commanding figures plus their partnership together increased the success of the program tenfold. One community member commented on the faculty who followed them, "They were good music people, but didn't have the kind of charisma, and they just didn't last." A number of music faculty members came and left in rapid succession, many not serving the program well. One alumnus, who had observed the rehearsals of one such faculty member, commented on its quality:

This was after Dillon had quit and they were going through two or three other, people were rotating through. It was bad. I mean, when you go into rehearsal and

they don't even stop when things are wrong, and they weren't willing to stop and woodshed . . . and they were playing wrong notes, and I mean it was bad. My high school bands were better than that.

Students at WSU immediately noticed the difference in instruction after Propeck and Dillon left. For example, Dillon was succeeded by a man who, according to one former faculty member, was "not strong in jazz." Students started to leave the instrumental program, as noted by another member of the music faculty: "A lot of [students] quit, and that's not unusual after someone highly successful does something and you bring someone else in." Alumni noticed the change, too. After Dillon left, alumni would come to a homecoming game and see a faltering WSU band perform. As noted by one alumnus, this negatively affected the quality of the whole program: "So, I think what happened then is the alumni stopped sending their students which is what I think is pretty much how the program is fed. . . . The word was out that the quality of the band program was down."

Being a small school compounded the problem. At little WSU, the loss of Propeck and Dillon had a devastating impact, as noted by one community member: "Yeah, it was like there was nothing there that would sustain after 'the' person moved on." A similar fear is now being voiced concerning WSU's ability to keep students in the ensembles should George Rhodes leave the program. "He's a personality that has charisma. The minute he's gone, that whole thing will fall through." Such concern is not unfounded, as the success of the music program at WSU has been overly dependent on the efforts of key individuals.

Recruiting Quality and Quantity

During the '70s and '80s, when the WSU music program was at its peak, the recruiting efforts made by members of the music faculty were also at their peak. The quality of the recruiting efforts was reflected in the quality of the students attracted to WSU. In the '80s, the type of recruiting activities shifted and external forces started to impact the quantity and quality of students willing to major in music as well as to attend WSU. The diminished numbers and quality of students recruited into the program in the 1980s contributed to the weakness of the department, a powerful reason it was considered for elimination.

Quality of Recruiting Efforts

Propeck and Dillon were star recruiters. They had relationships with the high school music teachers and felt no hesitation about going after the top music students in any school. They were both willing to spend extra hours traveling to woo exceptional high school students; a former faculty member commented on their expertise in recruiting:

He [Propeck] knew – and Larry Dillon was very good too – because they knew the directors, they knew the high school students that these directors had produced, or they were, as we all were eventually, going to contests and festivals and judging students and taking down names. You know, you don't recruit on the job, but you recruit after the fact.

Dillon seemed to have a particular knack for recruiting and understood the importance it played in the quality and quantity of participants in his ensembles. Perhaps

one of the best indications of Dillon's skill as a recruiter comes from the story he tells of his first days at WSU:

They didn't really have a band. About half a dozen kids would get together. . . . So my job was to build a band program. And I went to work. And I remember talking to so many students. I had all their cards from when they enrolled, mostly freshmen. And I started making a list: "This boy went to the state to the west. This girl came from the state to the south. And they played this instrument." I didn't care how many years they'd played. So I made this list. And I went to [registration] and I'd say, "Pardon me. Is your name Joe Blow?" "Yeah." "Well, I'd like you to sign up for band." Some weren't interested. But he thought about it. And that's how I worked all day like a dog, recruiting kids.

Participants recalled being successfully courted by Dillon, sometimes even after they had agreed to attend a different institution. As one alumnus noted, "Dillon was good, looking back. He was the one that did the recruiting, went around and encouraged kids to come here. That's kind of why I came here."

A good deal of the recruiting took place when the ensembles went out on tour. According to one faculty member, the quality of the groups was a natural magnet to high school students, especially those from smaller towns who were intimidated by attending a larger institution, but who were impressed with the quality that came out of WSU. On those tours, Dillon was constantly on the lookout for talent. "Dillon didn't care where you came from; he just wanted to know if you could play your horn."

No observations about students involved with music at WSU can be made without also discussing Shane Olson. Olson taught music at Widmer High School from 1952 to

1976. He conducted the band and choir, gave instrumental and vocal lessons, and taught harmony to those pursuing a career in music education. He led a well known high school stage band/dance band that played at up to ten high school proms every spring. People still speak in awe when describing Olson and his skill as an educator. A former community member spoke of the reverence felt towards Olson in the community. “You know, we had Shane Olson in Widmer for years, and he was, in many ways, a god in the eyes of the community.” Another community member spoke in equally glowing terms, “Widmer-Dunn had band and choir people here, Shane Olson, and he had a dynasty and he still has a legacy around here for the things that he did.”

WSU was the beneficiary of Olson’s excellent teaching since many of his students went on to WSU for college, not only as music majors and minors but as participants in the ensembles. As noted by one community member, his students still contribute to the important role that music plays within this community:

It spilled over into the college because Widmer State then got some of those students, and they were very, very good in music. And they’re still good in music. They’re still the ones that, when you call on them, we just did a thing out at one of the country churches, and that’s who we called on. Because they still play, they still are participating. They’re farmers, they’re – none of them are music teachers, but they are still connected with that idea. I mean, they have a love for music that was kept nourished, and grew, and they’re good.

This observation was reinforced by a former member of the music faculty:

I’ve lived in a lot of different communities; that area had more musical talent than I had ever seen anywhere. My goodness! I mean the farmers around the area,

very fine caliber players. Lawyers, all kinds of different people that weren't doing much with music at that time that were in the groups earlier. And several of them that were music majors, double majors, that sort of thing. So there was kind of a natural built-in support for the department.

Perhaps one former high school student best reflects on the long-reaching impact Olson had on music in the area:

When we're together, we always reminisce about Shane Olson and our usual saying is, "Shane didn't warn us that we'd still be playing 40 years later!" In fact, at my 40th class reunion this summer, we all agreed that our best memories of high school were of band and choir, thanks to Olson.

Unfortunately, the quality of the recruiting efforts dropped after the Propeck/Dillon/Olson years. One faculty member speculated that when Dillon left, the remaining faculty members didn't feel the same commitment to recruiting:

It was beneath their dignity to go out and talk to these kids. What do you think, this is the Eastman School of Music sitting in here? We're sitting in a dumpy little town with nothing. Eight, nine, a thousand students at the most. And you're going to sit . . . and do nothing?!

The diminished success in recruiting was not a reflection of a lack of recruiting effort perhaps as much as an altered style of recruiting. The music faculty from the 1980s had fewer connections with the high school teachers and performed a less effective, behind-the-scenes type of recruiting. One music faculty from the 1980s described his efforts:

Well, we put some promotional items together; then I took Friday afternoons off and went and visited schools in the area. . . . And then, we also prepared some

additional materials for the people that were in the admissions office that went out to give them something, too. So, that's some of the things that we were doing.

When George Rhodes was hired, recruiting once again took a turn for the better. For one thing, Rhodes has an outgoing personality, much like that of Dillon and Propeck. One WSU administrator labeled him the "Pied Piper" and went on to say, "Yeah, he brings them in! His personality is such that he can do that." In addition, Rhodes was a high school music teacher for many years, and as such has a strong network of friends who work in high schools.

Even with George Rhodes's magnetic personality, overall recruiting at WSU could be improved. Students from the town of Widmer, who used to be such a resource to the university, are not being recruited strongly. As one local mother observed:

But just general overall, I think Widmer State needs to do a better job of recruiting students. I mean, I have three children, twin sons and a daughter, and one of my friends in school, her daughter graduated the next year, so it's three years in a row. Our children received letters of recruitment from every institution in . . . [state] except Widmer State.

External Forces Impacting Recruitment

During the 1980s, the quality of the music department as well as the number of students majoring in music started to diminish as the program felt the impact, not only of internal forces, but of external forces. Shifts in state demographics, a weakened state economy, and a diminishing population of state K-12 students resulted in the closing of a number of small schools. Music programs were eliminated in some schools experiencing ,

budgetary challenges. A former faculty member commented on the impact that the tighter state finances of the 1980s had on music programs:

High schools pinched for money, began to cut back on whatever they could cut back on. Well, you never cut back on phy ed, of course, you cut back on music.

There was less demand for music graduates, so we got to the place where we were producing only a few music majors.

The statistics comparing numbers of K-12 schools, numbers of students, and numbers of high school graduates since 1960 are startling (Table 3). The categories

Table 3. Decline in School Populations and Number of Students.

	1960-61	1970-71	1980-81	1990-91	2000-01	2009-10
Number of K-12 schools	1,432	939	683	677	625	436
Number of students (Grades 1-12)	120,368	163,074 (Grades K-12)	127,882 (Age 6 and up)	119,355 (Age 6 and up)	115,300 (Age 6 and up)	101,319 (Grades K-12)
Number of high school graduates (previous academic year)	7,516 (1959-1960 school year)	11,943 (number in 12 th grade)	11,294 (1979-1980 school year)	8,174 (1989-1990 school year)	9,058 (1999-2000 school year)	7,001 (2008-2009 school year)
			1979-80	1989-90	1999-2000	
Number of public high school music teachers in the state*			189	124	103	

* Figures are not available for K-8

(State Department of Public Instruction, n.d.)

presented do not match exactly from year to year (e.g. Grades 1-12 vs. Grades K-12 vs. Age 6 and up) due to inconsistencies in data collection categories over the years. Nonetheless, it is evident that the number of schools diminished by more than half between 1960 and 1990 and that there were fewer and fewer high school graduates from which to choose. The numbers for later decades are even more ominous for the state. In addition, although figures are not available for 1960 and 1970, the number of music positions in the state's public high schools dropped significantly between 1980 and 1990.

Due to the diminishing numbers of students, there was increased competition for quality music majors amongst state institutions, another challenge for the WSU music department. As noted by one long-time community member, nearby large state schools started to draw students from the smaller communities that had once been the main feeders for WSU:

I'm sure there were a lot of kids who went to Holben State University or Wollen State University just because they were big schools and you could go to McDonald's at 11:00 at night if you wanted to, and Widmer never had that.

Another former member of the music faculty summarized the challenges of the 1980s a slightly different way:

Widmer State was one of the major suppliers of musicians and teachers for this state during the 60s and 70s and maybe as far back into the 50s. They had strong people who were out there teaching. As those people retired, and left the field, and you have younger teachers coming in with less skills, less ability to get students motivated, Title IX, all of these things, that quality of student wasn't coming to Widmer.

Something as seemingly unrelated as student deferments to the draft influenced enrollments. As one participant noted, “’69 was a peak year as far because that was the last big year of, ah, Vietnam War in terms of enrollments.” Participants also commented on societal shifts that may have hurt enrollments in music. One alumnus felt that the students in the 1980s were less disciplined and questioned if they could have survived the earlier rigors of the music program:

I don’t know that they would have survived what Propeck and Reberg and Dillon expected. I mean, there were unwritten rules – you warmed up before you went to band, you were never late for choir. I don’t know if the kids that came later on would have enjoyed working with those people because they weren’t that way. They weren’t as dedicated.

Nationally, there was a shift in the degrees students sought in the late 1970s. Externally, there was a diminishing interest in music as a major as students turned to more “practical” degrees such as business and computers. As one administrator noted:

More and more students are, I don’t want to use the word “vocational,” but they want to get their degree, their job skills, and graduate as quick as they can. So, things like music and, that’s just been hard on those, the arts and humanities.

Business and computers became increasingly popular as students sought more practical degrees. One music instructor from that time noted the change:

It’s a time when students – high school kids, seniors and that – were not going into music education . . . mid-80s. Kids didn’t – they didn’t want to be a band director. They wanted to be engineers, and there were all sorts of things they wanted to be. There’s no money in it. Any kind of teacher, there was no money

in it. And consequently – we go from all those music kids . . . to all of a sudden to they’ve got nobody in the degrees. Nobody is enrolling as a music major. Well, you can’t run a music program if you haven’t got any music majors or minor.

There was also a shift in the majors chosen by women. With women having access to more professional fields, there were fewer women choosing a traditional major such as education. As noted by one community member, “Certainly, women could go in other things, and maybe not so many into music or teaching.” Add to this an increased involvement in women’s sports, and a time-intensive degree such as music became even less appealing.

Part III: Town and Gown Relationships, the Role of Music

Town and gown relationships are particularly strong between WSU and its host community and an understanding of codependence exists between the two. The campus and community share a history of mutually beneficial activities and support. Community members acknowledge the major role that the institution plays in the community, while campus personnel are appreciative of the support of the community.

Historically, music is an integral part of this strong town and gown relationship, a point that may not have been fully appreciated by those choosing to eliminate the music program in 1989. The arts played an important role in campus culture as well as community culture by providing events to attend and opportunities for participation. The decision to eliminate music at WSU did not reflect an understanding of the significant role the arts held at WSU and its host community. Now, twenty years after the decision,

the role the arts play in the community has diminished. This shift no doubt is due to multiple causes, but was inevitably hastened by the decision to eliminate music at WSU.

Background on Town and Gown Relationships

Interdependence of Community and Campus

WSU and the community of Widmer are inextricably bound to each other. It is unusual that such a small town should host a university and the community is well aware of its dependence on the college. Community members made frequent predictions concerning the demise of the community should the university be closed: “If that college closed, that town would die in a big hurry and people are aware of that.” One community member described it as “the lifeblood of the community,” adding “I think the general consensus is that we’ve got to support it because what would happen if we lose it?” A report to the HESB written by an outside consulting group speaks to the crucial role the university plays within the community. “It is abundantly clear to us that the local communities regard the universities as critical elements in the local psyche and sense of place. The city of Widmer, in particular, would suffer enormously without the university” (Vision for the 21st Century Consulting Team, 2002, p. 54).

WSU’s self-studies give valuable insight into town and gown relationships. The 1996 NCA self-study recognizes the mutually beneficial relationship felt by the campus and its host community:

Overall, relationships with the community are guided by the concept of reciprocity. The University provides services to the community; in return, the community supports the University through attendance and donations, indicating a degree of mutual satisfaction (Widmer State University, 1996, p. 89).

Since the university is one of the major employers in town, it plays an integral role in the economic well-being of the community. Threats to the college are perceived as threatening to the community. One community member spoke of the fight waged against any efforts to change or close the campus:

The community feels very strongly about the college . . . anything that goes on where, talking about closing Widmer State, where the community really bands together, and head out to [the] capital to talk to the legislature, or write the letters, make the calls, anything they need to do.

The various threats to WSU, including the suggestion that it be changed to a high school, the tax vote, and the move to change it to a two-year college have instigated immediate assistance from the community. As one Widmer-Dunn community member noted, “When all these things were coming around about closing Widmer State, boy, the rally was up, and the flags were hoisted, and we can’t – they know the economic impact this college has on these two communities and the county.”

Community members feel bound to the university for more reasons than mere survival. There is a genuine affection and loyalty to the university from many members of the community. One community member spoke of the fondness community members have for the institution. “They love it. They support it. They know that it’s a very important part of our two communities, Widmer-Dunn.” Even the terms “college people” and “community people” are often interchangeable. According to one community member, “There’s a number of people from the college that are also community people, so they will get involved in different activities and such that go on, too, so that’s a huge connection.” This college/community interchange is strongly evident in music activities.

A former administrator praised area musicians' willingness to contribute to college and community: "In terms of people who were oriented toward music it didn't matter if you were university or community. So if we needed a drummer, we found one from wherever."

Community Involvement with Institutional Decisions

According to one former administrator, at times, the community is so involved with the university that the boundaries between community and campus are blurred. This sense of ownership on the part of the community sometimes reaches into decisions made by university administrators. A current administrator commented on this somewhat unusual extension of town and gown relationships:

So the community has a more, I think, personal interest, I was going to say a vested interest, but a more personal interest in our students. So what impacts our students, our faculty and staff, the community, I think, feels very open to express their opinions and to support or not support actions that we take as a university.

This extension of community into institutional decision making is clearly seen within the music department, providing further witness to the permeable boundaries between community and campus. Heath's appointment was strongly encouraged by a number of prominent community members, some of whom actually donated the funds necessary to hire him. Even as certain community members lobbied to hire Heath, others lobbied to fire another faculty member. One former member of the music faculty tells a story of being approached by President Richland with concerns from the community:

So he came into my office one day and said, "They say that you're pretty firm and pretty stern in the classroom." "Who's saying this?" "Well, they . . ." "Richland,

I don't want to hear this. If you have concrete evidence, then you come and see me." Well, the complaints came from a couple of stalwart supporters of Propeck in the community.

The very fact that community members felt comfortable approaching the school's administrators about whom to hire or fire suggests a town and gown interaction that is unusually strong. The 1996 NCA report tactfully mentions this possible over-extending of community input as an area for potential improvement in the campus's community relations: "Community members feel such a strong ownership of the University that occasionally they forget they do not have a formal role in governance. The University can find mutually beneficial ways to capitalize on this loyalty" (Widmer State University, 1996, p. 89).

Town and Gown and the Arts Through the Eyes of Campus

A sense of commitment to its host community is evident at WSU. The university supports the community of Widmer in numerous ways, including hosting community activities on campus, inviting community members to participate in campus events, and providing volunteer leaders to the town of Widmer. As President Clarkson noted, "Small campuses and towns are joined."

The university hosts a number of community activities within its facilities, including a children's theater, a community art gallery, the elementary school's Patriotic Day Concert, high school district music contests, and the use of their swimming and recreation facilities. Summer arts camps and sports camps for children also take place on campus. The campus makes available video conferencing facilities, public meeting rooms, their library, and their Teaching and Learning Center. Community programs such

as Head Start, State Job Services, Gully County Economic Development, and Community Services are also housed on campus (Widmer State University, 1995-1996).

Widmer's self-studies attest to the importance and success of its town and gown efforts. The 1996 NCA self-study gives an excellent summary of the relationship WSU fosters with its host community. Highlighted in the list of campus activities that are meant to serve the community are those involving music, including the European Study Tours and the Community Concert Series (Widmer State University, 1996, p. 88). The 2005 NCA self-study mentions the many volunteer leadership roles provided by WSU faculty and staff: "WSU encourages a strong staff and faculty commitment to community participation. Faculty members and staff members hold positions of responsibility in city government and service, church, and professional organizations, at local and state levels" (Widmer State University, 2005, p. 140). The 2005 self-study also notes the university's contributions to the social goals of the area: "The ample opportunity WSU provides for sports activities, art gallery showings, concerts, and play productions indicates its dedication to university-community social goals" (Widmer State University, 2005, p. 144).

Town and Gown and the Arts Through the Eyes of Community

Even as WSU is committed to its host community, community members feel bound to the success of WSU and show their support through an array of activities. One of the most significant means of showing support is through an impressive array of fundraising activities. The community raised funds for the new Wellness Center and Field House on campus, as well as the refurbishing of the campus theater (WSU, 2005). Each year community members raise a significant amount of money for student

scholarships. The January 2010 *Report to Investors* includes descriptions of the following fundraising activities, most of which include community participation: Widmer Women's Social, Annual Fund Drive/Phonathon, Athletic Club Raffle, Fall Scholarship Drive, Ag Auction, "Fourth & Goal" Drive, Graduation Brunch, Holiday Gala, Honor Society Recognition Dinner, Lake Country Alumni Gold Event, Lakeside Socials, WSU Golf Classic, Historic Building Rehabilitation Project, Party with a Purpose, County Golf Scramble, Socials & Activities for Alumni & Friends, Gully County/Widmer State University Luncheon, Rocky Mountain Alumni Gathering, May-Port Summerfest Activities, Holben Alumni & Friends Social, Brunch Belle, Three-on-Three, and Basketball Tournaments (Widmer State University, 2010, pp. 6-18). Also included in this report are lists of endowments, annual scholarships, donors, and Life Income Funds. For a small community, there is a great deal of fundraising and community giving on behalf of the university.

To better understand the creativity and dedication demonstrated by community fundraisers, a few events merit a more detailed description. The first is the Brunch Belle event held annually to raise scholarship money for students in the music ensembles. The event was started in the early 2000s in an effort to assist the current WSU band and choir director in his efforts to attract students to the ensembles. Community members, Beverly Schmidt and Julie Niles, approached Dr. Jones, the president at the time, and offered to fundraise for the new music director on one condition:

We want to do this, but only on one condition. And that would be because it would be all community people that would be doing this, and we wanted every

single penny to go to that music department and not get into any kind of general fund or something. That's exactly what happened. It went to music.

The funds raised by Brunch Belle go completely to music scholarships. The event takes place in the spring and is much anticipated within the community. Individual sponsors decide on a theme and each decorates a table based on their theme. The 2009 brunch had over 30 tables including themes such as *All that Glitters, I Never Promised You a Rose Garden, Lest We Forget, Rhapsody in Blue, Fairy Tales and Dragon Scales*, and many more (Brunch Belle, 2009-2010, p. 66). Campus food service provides the food for the brunch and a local store donates the champagne while the sponsors of the tables provide their own desserts. Music students, the recipients of the scholarships, provide the music as well as serve as waiters.

Each year, the decorations go far beyond a "pretty table," and the décor is so beautiful that tickets are actually sold for a viewing of the tables on Friday night for those not fortunate enough to have a ticket for Saturday's brunch:

We just ask designers to be creative. I mean, anybody can set a lovely table with a little bouquet in the middle, but we wanted whimsical, flamboyant, fun – just as creative as they can possibly be. And this is a testament to the people in this community. It's like, just staggering every year when you walk in and see this room of tables, and they are unbelievable. They are absolutely unbelievable.

The event starts at 10:00 a.m. with champagne and a silent auction. One community member smiled as she recalled, "Everybody is milling around and music is playing and it's just really a festive, festive fun thing." President Clarkson plays a visible role in Brunch Belle, emphasizing the strong town and gown role played by this event. Not only

does he help greet guests and pour champagne (dressed in a tuxedo) he also addresses the guests and speaks of the importance of the scholarship money raised by the brunch, emphasizing that the event serves the community and the college.

A second unique fundraiser in town is the Ag Auction, which raises scholarship money for athletic scholarships, WSU Alumni Association, and the WSU Foundation. This auction includes items far exceeding the value of the items auctioned at Brunch Belle, and people come willing to pay. One participant told of the elegant dinners that are successfully auctioned for thousands of dollars:

People will auction a meal off for \$2,500 or \$3,000 . . . like a gourmet meal, like a five course, six, seven, eight. . . . So maybe four couples will go in and do it. And maybe they're willing to spend six or seven hundred dollars apiece. Well, then you and I, it's not like we're gonna make meatballs and spaghetti. I mean, it is the drinks, it's just everything – well, Beverly Schmidt, this friend of mine who does *amazing* things, she did a Titanic meal on the ship. She sent cards out to everybody, and everybody was the ship's captain and all of the different characters that were on the ship. And they came dressed up in the dresses and the hats and the ship's captain uniform and the chef and all that. So, I mean they really go all out. There's one couple that, well two couples that do it – theirs is always in high demand. They have lobster shipped in from Maine, and it's a lobster meal.

The elegant scope of these dinners and the high price people are willing to pay is especially remarkable considering the rural setting of the event.

Another excellent example of community fundraising is the Art Gallery Gala. Local and area artists are invited to create items around a theme each year and the resulting creations are offered at both silent and live auctions. Participants enjoy wine, hors d'oeuvres and fellowship, background music is provided by Widmer state jazz musicians, and proceeds of several thousand dollars go towards the art gallery as well as one humanities scholarship for a WSU student.

A final example of the community's ingenuity in raising funds at every turn occurs in the summers. A number of alumni and community members have lake homes and gather for socials while at the lake. Someone decided that these socials would be a good chance to fundraise, so now those attending pay \$25 per person, with funds going to the education department. The Lakeside Socials are a big hit with those attending: "Oh, they love it! And they do them June, July, and August."

In addition to an active pool of dedicated fundraisers, the town of Widmer has an impressive number of generous donors. Donations from community members are well appreciated by WSU administrators, who realize the valuable role they play in the university's success. As noted by one WSU administrator, donors sometimes say, "I'll give you ten-twelve thousand dollars. And let's offer a couple hundred dollar scholarships to just provide some additional incentive to people that you are recruiting to the college, and an additional incentive to participate in extracurricular activities." A former member of the music faculty pondered what will happen when such donors are no longer around:

The community – you know, you had people like . . . , who would give their heart and soul and a lot of money to support the arts. And when those people are gone, I'm not sure where we're gonna go to get the support.

These isolated incidents do not tell the whole story, as the support in Widmer for the college is mentioned by many with pride. One community member who is active in raising funds for music at WSU described the motivation behind her extraordinary efforts. She reminisced on the positive experience she had participating in music when she was a student at WSU, even though she was not a music major:

I love music. That's what that program did for me. And maybe that's where my passion is. Maybe I want that for these young kids. Maybe they could never appreciate that. Maybe they don't want it, but I would love that they would have that kind of passion for it, and to feel proud, and to feel good, and just the total enjoyment.

The 2005 NCA self-study acknowledges the important role that arts at WSU play in its host community. "WSU's plays frequently bring students and community members together, as does WSU's music program, which invites community attendance at its concerts. . . . Art exhibits also expose students to the work of talented external constituents" (Widmer State University, 2005, p. 146). One community member acknowledged the cultural advantages brought to Widmer by WSU. "I think part of that passion [for the arts] is through Widmer State, the connection there obviously when you think of the entities available there and the interaction between town and gown that's a given."

It is worth noting that the strong dedication to the arts in Widmer was damaged by the decision to eliminate music. A current faculty member felt the decision left the small community without the cultural activities that had once been so important:

I think it all happened very fast. And it was made, I guess, without thinking of some of the consequences. You take out; essentially we didn't have any arts in this college for a number of years and it kind of takes out someone's soul sometimes. And it leaves people with nothing to do. . . .

This loss eventually influenced the culture life of the community, as noted by a former member of the music faculty:

Things happened sort of incrementally. You know, we're losing some faculty members and the choir's going to go away. Well, that doesn't seem like a huge loss when you hear about it, but when your cultural existence depends on that sort of thing happening in your community, you realize it only too late. You don't realize it when it's happening; you realize it after the fact.

Shifting Support for the Arts

Today, the strongest supporters of music in Widmer reflect a graying population. This is noticeable even in the town's churches, as noted by one community member:

When I came to this church, they had a children's choir, they had a high school choir, they had an adult choir. . . . And we have just an adult choir, can't get the children. Well, if you don't have the children singing, you're not gonna have an adult choir, either. We're still running off of Shane Olson.

A former member of the music faculty commented on the support he felt from older community members rather than the whole community:

But, what I realized was that it was just the old people who respected me. . . .

And if there was support for what I was doing, it was coming from that older generation – the ones who remember the old Widmer as it was. But the new generations have no connection to that.

One community supporter of the arts feels challenged by what she sees as the current split in the community:

It's a mixed bag because we have a group, I guess would be the best word, of people who are passionate about the arts and who work very hard to either start or get something going or whatever. And we also have those who wouldn't know art from an automobile.

A music instructor commented on the yearning expressed by older community members who want music to return to its former place of prominence in the community:

They want to see it survive. They want to see it grow. They want to see it flourish. And they want to support it, because they just know how important it was, and how fun it was, and they want to bring it back.

Attendance at Arts Activities

One of the ways community members show their support for the arts is through attendance at arts activities. Such attendance varied through the decades, possibly demonstrating a shift in the importance of the arts to the community. According to one older participant, before Propeck and Dillon came, concert attendance was minimal, and it was largely through the efforts of those two men that attendance improved. In the 70s, there was strong attendance at concerts, both community and college. A former faculty member reminisced on the big turnout for concerts and plays in earlier decades:

They flocked to them. . . . We packed the auditorium for the *Messiah*. Then in the spring, when Cal Williams took over the drama department, we did musicals every spring. Oh, they were popular. . . . We packed the house for those musical performances.

Once the music degree was eliminated, access to concerts immediately diminished. The community culture of attending concerts lessened and was not easy to rebuild. Heath's concerts were not necessarily well attended, except by older members of the community. One participant commented on the graying of the concert hall after attending a recent concert in a large city, a trend that he sees reflected in Widmer: "There were 500 people in the audience, and I was one of the younger people there, and I'm 71. So that's not a good sign for the future." Such a trend can have an especially chilling effect on an already small base of supporters of the arts in a town such as Widmer.

Concert attendance may be improving in the last few years. Currently, George Rhodes reports that his concerts are growing in popularity: "The audiences started growing, and growing, and getting to the point that now, we get a nice-size audience . . . when we do our concerts. It's not just parents and grandparents. Community folks come."

The Impact of Sports on the Arts

As in many communities, sports play an important role in Widmer. For such a small community, an impressive variety of sports activities are available for the town's youth, including baseball, hockey, football, basketball, volleyball, golf, and tae kwon do; there is even a horse club. Three parents spoke of their children's involvement with the

many sports offered today, sometimes comparing it to their involvement (or lack of involvement) in music. One parent explained:

My son, of course, did the sports thing. He was football, he was basketball; he played basketball until he was a freshman in high school and then decided that wasn't for him. He did choir and he did band, but he quit those like his freshman year of high school, too.

Another parent stated:

They started out when they were younger in music, but as they got older, more sports were kind of taking precedence over music. My daughter isn't in band, anything like that right now, and she's not in choir as well.

One described how active her children were in sports:

Personally, on our side, we're very involved in sports. All my kids have played hockey, or basketball, or volleyball, golf, and baseball – they're very active, so we really promoted that as much as we. . . . We tried to get to music and other things, too. They're involved in church activities as kind of an outlet, so it's not all sports.

In contrast to the stories told by today's parents, one older participant described her years as a young student and compared the roles that music and sports played in education then versus now:

When I went to school, music was required. You had to have music, and the school had to provide time for it. So, we had band practice *and* choir practice right along with the regular classes of math, science, and such. And sports you did after school. That's been reversed.

Another community member agreed that sports are the main activity in town now, stating that residents ask: “But what do you do in Widmer-Dunn on the weekend if you don’t go to the volleyball game, the basketball game, or the football game?” She went on to bemoan the increased role that sports play in Widmer today:

My husband and I oftentimes wonder why we stay here. Why do we live in the sports mecca of the world? Why do we live in a town where kids will give up everything in the summer to go in and play basketball four hours a day? Where if you don’t go to the volleyball game on Tuesday night and the football game on Friday night, and the basketball game on . . . there isn’t anybody to play with. “Where is everybody?” “Oh, they’re at the game.” “Well the game’s in” “Yeah, well they all went.” Very, very, sports very heavy . . .

More than one participant commented on the impact Title IX had on the arts. One former faculty member noted: “It devastated the arts not because of women playing sports only, but because of the amount of time it took away from the arts.” Another faculty member agreed:

Well, Title IX created a whole new area for physical education, so that focus now in the community was going to be in that area, and the arts – you know, it’s a subtle shift. But the arts made a shift then.

Some community members still hold out hope for the arts and feel that they are not being completely overtaken by sports. According to one community member, “You know, it’s just – you know sports are certainly important here, but for some reason, the arts and music in this community is kind of a big thing.” A former public school music

teacher noted that sports do not seem to have completely replaced the arts for the community of Widmer:

They support music. They know how important music is. And whether it be in the elementary school, junior high, high school, or at the college, they support the arts. They like their sports, but they like their music as well. It's kind of a neat thing to be able to have both.

Town and Gown Perceptions of an Arts Curriculum

A number of participants in this research offered their perceptions of the important role the arts and humanities play in a college education. Concern was voiced about the impact the 1989 tax vote had on the arts and humanities courses taught at WSU. After the vote, the campus still needed to teach some humanities courses as well as courses in music and art for elementary education majors. Would these few courses be sufficient training in the arts for WSU graduates? As one community member mused:

How can you have a four-year college with an education degree and not be able to study the arts? How can you be a well-rounded person, balanced person, without those things? And one class in art humanities and one class in music humanities and one in literature doesn't do it. It doesn't make you a well-rounded person.

A number of participants echoed the perspective that the arts are an integral and essential part of a liberal arts education. One community member expressed a concern voiced by others: "I happened to feel very strong that, an educational institution isn't complete at any level without the arts. And the human being is not complete without the arts." One alumnus offered her concern that the decision to eliminate music at WSU did not reflect forethought about the pedagogical consequences of the decision:

We didn't look down the road as to how are people gonna change and, gee, can you have a well-rounded education without having those courses? And, truth be known, as you well know, music can teach everything. It can teach math, it can teach languages, it can teach scientific things.

A former administrator discussed the many people who echoed this opinion in the years after the vote:

There were definitely those I heard from, who felt a college education wasn't complete without classical music in particular being part of it. So there was definitely concern on the discipline side as well. You know, I'd get comments about what research shows in terms of competence in music. It's so important for a lot of other things. That came up as well.

There was a concern voiced that a lack of exposure to the arts was diminishing the quality of educators with degrees from WSU:

They need to be much better rounded than they are. We are putting out people who can bobble a basketball and whatever else they do in phy ed, and can diddle around with computers and so on. But I think in elementary, you have to have somebody who can make those children love music, art, theater, because those children need to grow up with that dimension of their lives.

There is another reason offered for the importance of the arts to WSU. Since WSU is not a large university, it does not have the plethora of student activities offered at large institutions, and students sometimes are seeking a way to fit in. More than one story was told of a student at WSU who struggled until joining an ensemble:

He is your typical, geeky-looking guy, and he's got the big, kind of curly hair, and he's a science major . . . didn't hardly even talk to anybody. . . . You should see him when he performs. He is absolutely feeling every note he sings, never has music to look at because he knows the words, and he's got all these friends that accept him. And he's just blossomed, and he is the most happy kid that when those kids are on the risers, I always have to watch him, because he is just into it.

President Clarkson's support of the arts seems to come less from a personal love of the arts and more from a recognition that the arts serve as a tool for enhancing enrollment and retention at WSU: "Part of my enrollment plan, trying to keep students here is to recruit students by those type of activities – drama, music, speech, athletics – 'cause that's a support system. They belong to something . . . there's a reason to stay."

Overall, the participatory nature of a music ensemble seems to brighten the college climate for many students, faculty, and administrators. One alumnus commented on the impact that music brings to the campus culture. "I think it's everything. I really do. I think it's a whole different environment on a campus if you add that music." A current administrator smiled at the pleasure he feels at hearing music once again coming from the rehearsal halls. "It's fun to walk down the hall and hear the choir singing and practicing."

Summary of the Findings

Both the interviews conducted and the documents studied for this research revealed a wealth of information surrounding the decision to eliminate music at Widmer State University. Events leading up to the decision included the financial challenges of the 1980s and state attempts to deal with those challenges. As important as the December

5th referral vote was in the elimination of the music degree at WSU, it was not the only reason for the decision. The research included in this chapter demonstrates factors such as the decline in the quality of the program, the diminished numbers of students wishing to major in music, and the loss of powerful faculty members, all of which made the music program a target for elimination in 1989.

Participants spoke freely of their reactions to the decision to eliminate music. Anger was mentioned most often as a reaction, but additional responses include sadness, resignation, acceptance, resentment, understanding, abandonment, and loss. Many of those interviewed expressed concern for the impact the decision had on the campus and questioned whether it diminished the value of an education at Widmer State University.

Town and gown relationships are strong between WSU and its host community. The decision to eliminate music impacted the community in multiple ways. Whereas some community members were angry at the college, others worked harder than ever to raise funds in an effort to bring music back to campus. The research uncovered the unusually strong role that music played in this rural community, much of which can be attributed to some key music educators from the past. Reflecting on that past presence, participants mentioned the detrimental repercussions they felt the decision had on the current community and campus cultures. The concern that participants voiced about a diminishing interest in the arts cannot be attributed solely to WSU's decision to eliminate music. A number of other shifts in demographics have affected the arts in Widmer and older participants are well aware that the presence of music in today's community is far different than it once was.

CHAPTER V
INTERPRETATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This research studied the factors leading up to a university's decision to eliminate its music degree and the consequences experienced after that decision. Of special interest has been the impact that eliminating music from the curriculum had on individuals within the university as well as the host community. Widmer State University (WSU), a small state institution of higher education located in a rural Midwestern community, was chosen to be the subject of a case study. Twenty-eight participants were interviewed for the case study, selected using a snow-balling technique. Participants included WSU faculty members, alumni, and administrators as well as community members from the town of Widmer. In addition to conducting interviews, hundreds of related documents were researched to provide substantiation of the historical events impacting the decision to eliminate music and the consequences of that decision. The university, town, participants and certain relevant documents have all been assigned aliases for the purpose of anonymity.

The purpose of this study is to provide administrators of higher education with valuable information should they be faced with the need for retrenchment and thus be considering the elimination of a music degree. Towards that end, the primary question answered by this research is: What were the causes and consequences of the decision to

eliminate the music degree at Widmer State University? Through the course of conducting the research, three major themes evolved and will be addressed in this section of the study. Additional questions listed in Chapter I will also be addressed in this chapter:

1. What are some of the political and demographic factors which can lead to a decision to eliminate a music program?
2. If administrators believe the least disruptive cut for the campus is to eliminate the music degree, do they understand the repercussions of their decision in terms of constituents such as faculty, alumni, and members of their host community?
3. How are issues of quality of the program and quantity of enrollments taken into account?
4. How might powerful individuals impact such a decision?
5. What are the implications of such a decision for town and gown relationships?
6. How might this decision impact campus and community culture?
7. What are special consequences to such a decision when the university is part of a small, rural community?

The conceptual framework used for this study is that of social capital. In recent years, the concept of social capital has been a “victim of its own success” (Briggs, 1997, p. 1) as the term has come to have multiple meanings which have weakened the clarity of its usage (Beugelsdijk & Smulders, 2003; Briggs, 1997; Farr, 2004; Pooley, Cohen, & Pike, 2005). The definition used in this research offers a basis for understanding the

term: “a broad term encompassing the norms and networks facilitating collective action for mutual benefit” (Woolcock, 1998, p. 155). Hanifan (1916) presents a historically significant reference to social capital and describes it as “that in life which tends to make these tangible substances count for most in the daily lives of a people, namely, goodwill, fellowship, mutual sympathy, and social intercourse among a group of individuals and families who make up a social unit . . .” (p. 130). Experts generally agree on three types of social capital. Bonding social capital is reflected within groups possessing similar traits or interest while bridging social capital forms connections across social groups (Putnam, 2000; Woolcock, 2001). Linking social capital is a means of sharing resources and ideas from institutions beyond the community (Woolcock, 2001).

Bonding and bridging social capital are particularly relevant in this research. This study demonstrates the impact that a decision to eliminate a music degree had on the social capital of one small state university and its rural host community. It is evident that such a decision impacts the networks, fellowship, social intercourse, and goodwill within campus and community.

Chapter V includes a discussion of the community overview as well as the interpretation of the three major themes of this research. Figure 3 represents the three main categories of this research, centered on the decision to eliminate the music degree, and surrounded by the conceptual framework of social capital. This chapter ends with final assertions, implications for practice, recommendations for future study, and a conclusion.

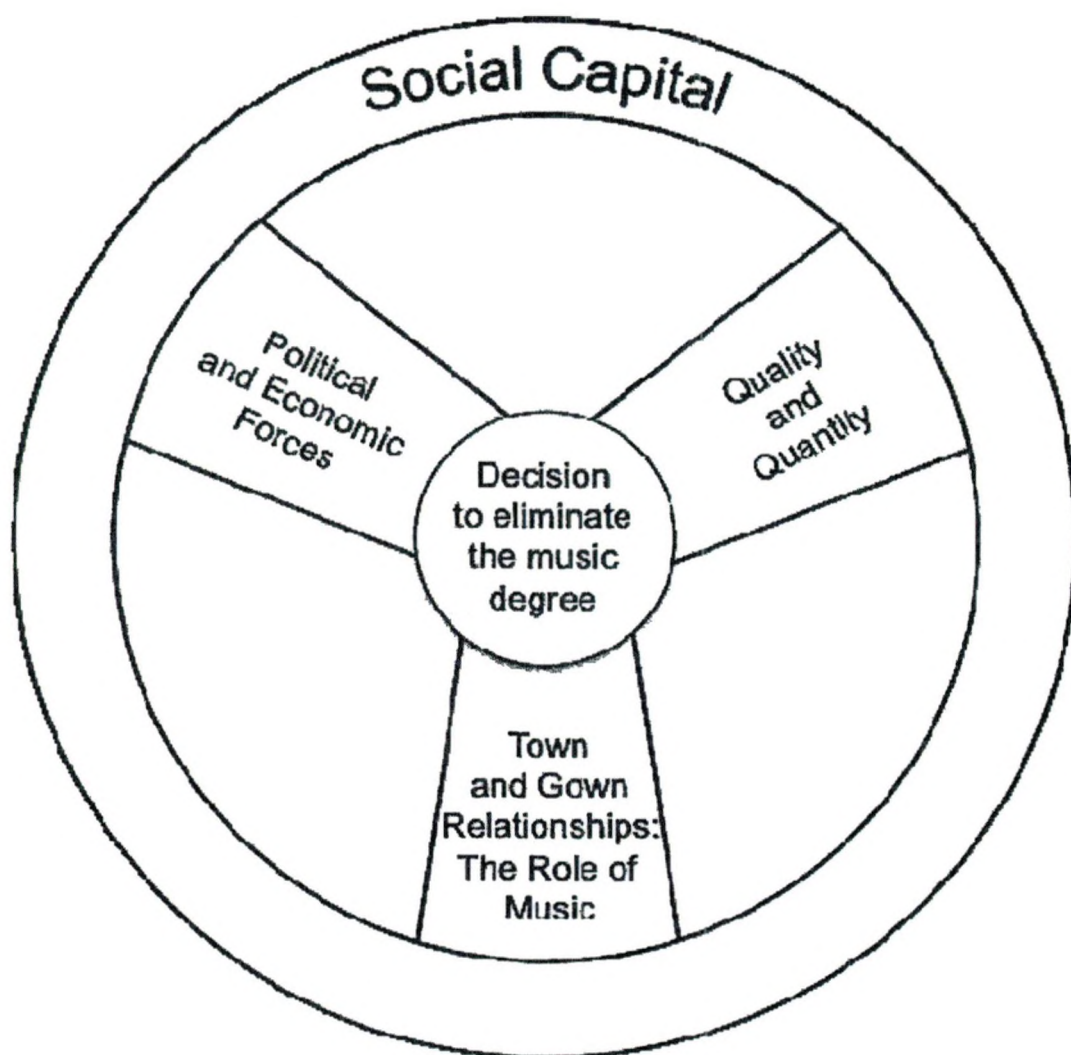


Figure 3. Social Capital Wheel.

Community Overview

The town of Widmer is rich in social capital. Factors that are often used to indicate social capital such as church involvement, volunteering, social interaction, trust, networks and connections, commitment to education, and a strong sense of family (Langston & Barrett, 2008; Pooley et al., 2005; Putnam, 2000; Putnam, 2001) are all visible in Widmer. The homogenous nature of the community adds to its sense of

bonding social capital, as residents relate well to one another and feel connected through a commonly shared ethnic heritage. Active religious affiliations are identified as one of the strongest sources of social capital (Fukuyama, 2000; Putnam, 2000) and religious bonds are strong in Widmer. The caring nature of the community and their willingness to reach out to help those in need, such as after a local natural disaster during the 1990s, is an indication of the powerful social capital evident in the community. Another indicator of social capital is safety (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000; Putnam, 2001). The safety felt in Widmer is an indicator of the trust felt by community members while the smallness of the community contributes to firm bonds of family, friendship, and networks. Well established social networks within the community reflect the social capital felt in this rural community of interrelated activities. Flora and Flora's (1996) description of local culture is highly suited to the community of Widmer:

Local culture, including social networks, contributes to community attraction and a sense of place. These social networks are many faceted and embedded in one another. Your dentist is also your tenor in choir and fellow bowling-league member, whose spouse serves with yours on the town council and whose daughter dates your son (p. 39).

That said, there have been shifts in some of these indicators since the 1970s. One such shift is due to the increased mobility of the community. The building of a nearby interstate highway in the 1970s led to a decrease in social interactions while shopping or eating in the downtown area and a resultant decrease in businesses serving the community. As more workers commute into or out of town, residents fear that the community is becoming more of a bedroom or retirement community, rather than the

active, self-contained community it once was. Another shift is that of declining population. As community population has declined, it has also aged, adding to the concern that Widmer is losing the diversity that historically was supplied by a multi-generational population.

Widmer is a college town and the presence of Widmer State University is crucial to the economic strength and social well-being of the community. Community members support the college through fundraising efforts, donations, and attendance at college events. Since the 1970s, members of both the campus and the community have been sensitive to threats to WSU's existence, including a proposal to change it to a residential High School for the Gifted, a proposal to turn the university into a two-year college, and numerous implications that redundant programs between WSU and other institutions in the state should be eliminated. At various times, these concerns have left the community feeling less than secure about the safety of its major asset, Widmer State University.

According to participants, the community has been the past beneficiary of excellent arts programs, both from the high school and the university. In the 1970s, the university provided programs of study in art, drama, and music which contributed strongly to the cultural opportunities within the campus and community. The 1980s brought diminished funding for education which will be discussed further in this chapter and which had a negative impact on the availability of arts events within the community. This decrease in arts events negatively impacted the social capital of both campus and community by diminishing opportunities for social interaction and cultural participation. The 1990s brought an increased effort to regain the cultural programs that had been lost and thus improve the social capital within the community and college. Drama

productions returned to the university, a community-run art museum was brought to campus, and a strong effort was made to bring music back to the college curriculum. A community school of the arts did much to reinvigorate the arts on campus and within the community.

Part I: Political and Economic Forces

In addition to the overall question addressed by this research, seven additional questions of interest have been posed, the first being: “What are some of the political and demographic factors which can lead to a decision to eliminate a music program?” It became evident during the course of this research that political and economic forces played a major role in the decision to eliminate music at Widmer State University. Although these were not the only factors impacting the decision, such forces were a catalyst for the action that was taken. From this realization, the following theme emerged: Political and economic decisions have a profound impact on the social capital of communities and institutions.

The 1989 Tax Referral Vote

Whereas taxes on state resources strongly supported higher education in this state in the 1970s, the natural resources upon which those taxes were based diminished in availability during the 1980s, leaving state institutions of higher education (IHE) needing additional support. The State Legislature responded with needed tax increases during the 1980s. An additional increase in state taxes in 1989 helped to create a solid biennial budget; unfortunately the tax increase backfired when a disgruntled citizen obtained enough signatures for a tax referral vote. The December 5th, 1989, vote rescinded the tax

increase, leaving state IHE with the urgent need to cut substantial amounts from their current budgets.

The financial shortages presented by the December 5th vote caused WSU to turn to retrenchment, a path that is often preceded by economic challenges. Peterson (1984) warns of the financial challenges experienced nationally by IHE during the 1980s and offers advice to administrators facing resource decline. First, he suggests that administrators redefine the university's mission and take advantage of what he calls "strategic choice" (p. 43), a fluid approach to decision making that also focuses on long range vision. "Strategic choices involve a more subtle feature of the mission redefinition: the restatement of an 'institutional vision.' Vision encompasses organizational planning and culture or ideology" (p. 44). Peterson goes on to discuss the emphasis on efficiency stressed in older planning models for institutions coping with resource reduction, and suggests new approaches such as basing decisions on learning outcomes or improvement as well as that which is unique on a given campus. Was WSU's president aware of these older and newer models for coping with resource reduction? If so, he appears to have embraced an older efficiency model rather than one centered on mission, vision, or learning outcomes.

Literature written soon after the 1989 decision to eliminate music suggest that retrenchment decisions should be guided by early and careful strategic planning (Chabotar & Honan, 1990; Hardy, 1990) and intentional academic priorities (Eckel, 2002). According to Ashar and Shapiro (1990), "Almost always, extensive information search and analysis precede decision making" (p. 121). Literature sometimes refers to the use of a rational choice model during the process of retrenchment, a model that

emphasizes a purposeful and goal directed approach (Ashar & Shapiro, 1990; Gumport, 1993).

Apparently, even when such planning takes place, it often is not followed (Ashar & Shapiro, 1990; Eckel, 2002; Gumport, 1993) leading one to believe that the decision is far more complex than can be anticipated. Some items mentioned for consideration when anticipating and planning for retrenchment include external demand for the program, quality of the program, and overall essentiality of the program (Eckel, 2002). To this list, Gumport (1993) adds centrality of mission.

Regardless of which models the WSU president may have understood at the time, can extensive planning take place in situations such as that faced by WSU? In the case of WSU, the December 5th vote resulted in the need for the campus to make the decision on how to cut over \$600,000 from its budget almost immediately. The campus needed to report its intentions to the Higher Education State Board (HESB) by January 11th, leaving little time for early and careful strategic planning. Although December 5th to January 11th does not leave much time for planning, the campus had been aware that the vote was imminent for a number of months. The president commented on the vote in written communications as early as September, 1989. In spite of the urgent tone of the president's writings, it appears that little strategic planning or advance prioritizing took place on campus. Minutes of campus committees reveal no discussion on a plan of action until after the December 5th vote. According to participants, the main discussions on what to eliminate should the vote require budget cuts seems to have taken place on the administrative level only. Such discussions focused on numbers – low enrollment

numbers and high cost numbers. The impact of the decision on university culture and on alumni giving seems to have been only marginally acknowledged.

The decision for program elimination at WSU was due in part to political forces within the campus environment, a scenario that is not unique to WSU (Hardy, 1990). Politics definitely played a powerful role in convincing the faculty at WSU to vote for the elimination of music and art. The president justified the choice of music and art for elimination by stressing that those programs had decreased enrollments paired with high cost. These two reasons are often high on the list of considerations for those deciding on academic retrenchment (Eckel, 2002; Gumport, 1993; Schackner, 2010).

What is potentially unique about WSU is that the president went beyond merely stating the above reasons for program elimination; he made frequent references to a “state directive” to eliminate low-enrollment/high-cost programs. The academic dean reinforced this “directive” at a crucial Curriculum Committee meeting. He emphasized the singular decision that had to be made by implying that across-the-board cuts could not be taken due to NCATE accreditation, that the HESB was not giving the campus any choice in the matter, and that HESB was insisting that high-cost/low-enrollment programs be targeted. It is interesting to note that other campuses did not seem to get the same message; comparable program cuts did not occur at other campuses within the state system, as evidenced in the report on proposed annual budgets for 1990-1991. The report includes a section outlining how each state IHE planned to deal with the budget cuts; only one other small institution had any program cuts and they were minor (see Appendix E).

Bolman and Deal (2003) refer to the sources of power within an organization, one being framing or the control of meaning and symbols (2003). This form of power allows a leader to shape the issue presented to a group in a way that the leader's desired outcome is inevitable. I believe this was the case at WSU. As stated by a number of participants, members of the faculty committees voting on the issue, including the Curriculum Committee, Finance and Plant Committee, and Faculty Association, were led to believe that they had no choice but to eliminate the music and art programs. Another form of power mentioned by Bolman and Deal is coercive power, which is described as "the ability to constrain, block, interfere, or punish" (p. 195). Coercive power was felt at WSU and is reflected in the numerous references to other faculty members being unwilling to defend music for fear of losing their own jobs.

Another reason that programs are vulnerable to retrenchment efforts is if they lack political strength on campus (Slaughter, 1993). In describing common retrenchment efforts of the 1980s, Slaughter states:

Fields such as the humanities and fine arts generally did not structure their discourse to intersect with that of academic executives' rhetoric on productivity. Faculty in these fields could have easily made the case that their fields increased productivity in high technology, high export areas such as entertainment and media, for example, but they did not" (p. 272).

Such was the case at WSU. At the time of the decision to close music at WSU, the music department did not hold a position of strength on campus. Eckel (2002) asserts that strong program leadership is crucial in times of retrenchment and some participants in this research questioned if the chair provided the strength needed to defend against

retrenchment efforts. While others felt that the chair did all that was possible when faced with a “no choice” situation, either he did not have the necessary campus support or did not have adequate time to successfully defend the department before its sudden elimination.

Reactions to the Referral Vote

A second question addressed in this section of the research is, “If administrators believe the least disruptive cut for the campus is to eliminate the music degree, do they understand the repercussions of their decision in terms of constituents such as faculty, alumni, and members of their host community?” One administrator who was part of the decision making process did refer to a concern for alumni, donors, and the faculty who would be losing their jobs. Nonetheless, the administrators appear to have been naïve or short-sighted in their understanding of the potential ramifications of their decision.

The faculty members who were released reported strong feelings of anger, loss, betrayal, and sadness. They described feeling targeted and that their years of effort at WSU were meaningless to the administration. Gumpert (1993) describes a frequent reaction of such faculty members: “Targeted faculty reacted to plans for academic program reduction in two basic patterns: as powerless victims or enraged defendants” (p. 297). I would say that the music faculty at WSU felt a mixture of powerlessness and rage. They questioned the president’s motives in eliminating music, feeling that the tax vote gave him an easy way to eliminate a program he didn’t like in the first place. Compounding these sentiments was the fact that the president was not seen as an honest man. The element of trust, so crucial to social capital, was lacking.

Faculty morale was weakened by the elimination of the program and the term “devastating” was used to describe reactions to the decision. The faculty reactions at WSU were similar to those reported in a case study of the University of Oregon, where a number of programs and faculty positions were eliminated in 1991 due to fiscal challenges within the state. A lowering of morale and sense of devastation was reported at the University of Oregon with a resultant lack of trust in the university following the retrenchment decisions (Kerlin & Dunlap, 1993). At the University of Oregon and at WSU, social capital was weakened by the lowered faculty morale on campus. Even before the decision was made, professional communication and networks at WSU were weak, as evidenced by the fact that members of the music faculty were so taken off guard by the decision to eliminate the program. The social capital “glue” needed to work together as a group to face a common problem and resolve it for the common good was missing.

The fact that the decision was perceived to have been made by administrators without true input from faculty, alumni, or community members affected more than those who lost their jobs. “Contiguous faculty,” as labeled by Gumport (1993), are those who fear being cut next or internalize their concerns because “there but for the grace of God go I.” As stated by Olson (2006), “. . . each department competes directly and by design with other departments for the same pool of resources” (para. 11). At some schools, contiguous faculty actually do fight for their colleagues, but according to participants, this was not the case at WSU. The feelings of vulnerability were just too strong. Any sense of safety that accompanies a strong sense of social capital evaporated with the severity and immediacy of the situation at WSU.

Although administrators considered the impact the decision would have on alumni and donors, it is doubtful they had any inkling of the magnitude of the negative reaction that would be unleashed. Alumni reported feelings of betrayal since they were not informed earlier or consulted about the decision. Some alumni from the glory days of the department stated firmly that the university had squandered a program that had once led the campus, and some alumni cut all ties with the university. Donations were impacted with a number of alumni refusing to donate ever again. Twenty years after the decision to eliminate the program, music alumni still express anger. The social capital that existed between WSU and its alumni received a powerful blow as connections were severed, trust diminished, and good will evaporated.

The final group affected by the decision consisted of the community members of Widmer. This seems to be the group that the administration considered the least, if at all, when making its decision. The community of Widmer traditionally has had a strong bond with WSU and the two groups recognize their mutual dependency. Community members support the institution with donations and fundraisers and by attending sporting events, art shows, plays, and concerts. According to older residents, in the 1970s, the community attended a number of excellent concerts given by a large and popular university choir and an exceptional jazz band. Concerts such as the town's beloved *Messiah* performances even offered community members and alumni the opportunity to participate by singing with the university choir. Such collaborative efforts reflect bridging social capital by allowing members of the two groups to come together for shared experiences. During the 1980s, WSU began to eliminate programs in the arts, including drama, art, and finally music. The elimination of the music degree, in

particular, had an immediate and powerful impact on a community with a strong history of devotion to musical excellence and involvement.

Social interactions take place wherever people gather, and concerts at WSU provided an excellent opportunity for social interaction. Social capital is reflected in such interaction within a community (Beugelsdijk & Smulders, 2003; Putnam, 2000). Falk and Kilpatrick (2000) state that “Community interactivity connects with social, civic and economic outcomes” (p. 105). When the music department at WSU was eliminated, the community members lost the opportunity to be engaged with each other by gathering to listen to music. Community reactions to this loss included anger and sadness as well as a diminished respect for WSU and a weakened sense of attachment to the university.

By eliminating the music department, the university eliminated far more than an academic program. It erased the opportunity to build social capital through social engagement at concerts and in addition, it weakened the good will felt towards the university, both from those within the institution and those within the community. The political forces that contributed to the decision to eliminate music are undeniable; a rescinded tax law resulted in the need to cut huge amounts from the WSU budget. Nonetheless, WSU administrators viewed enrollment numbers and cost of the program while failing to consider important aspects of social capital that would be negatively impacted by such a decision.

Proposals for Changing Widmer State University

As mentioned in Chapter IV, the whole WSU campus felt vulnerable at various points to the whims of the HESB and the caprices of politicians within the state. Since WSU is the smallest public IHE institution in the state, the feeling of vulnerability due to

political forces seems to be constantly present, much like the fear that the smallest and weakest kid on the block might feel. Participants implied that the institution often felt one step away from elimination or reconfiguration. When large funds needed to be cut from the state budget for higher education, eyes often turned to this school and how its mission might be changed, how its programs might be restructured, or even if it might be totally eliminated.

In 1985, the president successfully fought off a proposal to change WSU into a residential High School for the Gifted. In 1990, right after the tax referral vote, the president battled a proposal to change the institution from a four-year university into a two-year college. Throughout the 1980s, various dialogues within the HESB implied that redundant programs between WSU and other institutions in the state should be eliminated. These constant threats no doubt added to the willingness of administrators at WSU to eliminate music; far better to make one large targeted cut than to see the whole institution become even more vulnerable to the whims of the state.

Economic and Political Forces Within WSU

The president of the university at the time of the referral vote was viewed with admiration by some and derision by others. Although the president received a great deal of criticism from participants in this study, he was also given credit for “saving” the university on more than one occasion. He fought hard to keep the campus a four year liberal arts institution and in the months leading up to the tax referral vote wrote a number of eloquent articles in the alumni bulletin and the local paper educating voters on the importance of their support. Throughout his presidency he represented the university

well in legislative sessions and was admired for his ability to secure needed funds for the institution.

Those who did not support the president questioned both his honesty and his use of power while president. One example of an excessive use of power is evident by the fact that he served as the chair of the Faculty Association, thus allowing him to have undue power over the setting of the agenda and when and how agenda items would be presented. According to Hermann, Preston, Korany, & Shaw (2001), "if a single individual has control over the various forms of coercion available in the society and, as a result, wields power over others, the decision unit can be a predominant leader" (p. 85). Such predominant leaders sometimes reflect a more authoritative regime and the president at WSU certainly demonstrated some of those characteristics.

One final struggle at WSU, almost a mini political movement in itself, has been the effort to bring a music minor back to campus. Ever since the elimination of the program in 1989, the question has been asked, "Did the program need to be cut, or could we have just eliminated a major but retained a minor?" Upper level classes are highly specialized and usually taken only by music majors, whereas lower level classes, including ensembles, tend to draw large numbers. Participants questioned why the lower level classes and ensembles were not retained, allowing at least a minor to continue. The efforts to regain a music minor have been strong since the 1990s. This year, the reinstatement of a music minor was finally approved.

Had the administration chosen to retain the minor from the start, WSU would not have been able to cut as many faculty members and would have realized less of an economic benefit from cutting salaries. One might question where the campus would

have been able to cut the extra funds if fewer music (and art) faculty had been released. It is noteworthy that the affected faculty all needed one year's notice before they could be released, therefore other cuts had to be made in 1990-91 before any savings from music and art salaries could be realized in 1991-92.

During that year, finances within the system took an unexpected turn for the better. As desperate as things seemed in December 1989, it appears that funding within the state higher education system rebounded much sooner than anyone expected. The HESB minutes from September 13-14, 1990, discuss how to best spend additional unallocated funds and recommend that the first priority would be towards a 7% faculty raise. Recommendations were then made on spending funds after the faculty salaries are increased. Topping the list was the hiring of faculty and staff in positions that were vacant at the time.

At this point, WSU would have had the finances needed to once again fund its music program, before the faculty had even left the campus! The WSU Faculty Association minutes from October 22, 1990, reflect that WSU now had \$132,000 in unallocated funds to use, with faculty salaries being the top area to receive the funds. As small as this amount may seem, it would have been adequate to fund the music salaries as they stood in 1990. The salaries of the three full time music faculty members who were released totaled \$94,850 while the salary for the eliminated art position was just under \$27,000. One full time music faculty member, Brian Reberg, was not released so his salary is not factored in here. Instead of reinstating the music positions, all remaining WSU faculty were informed that they would receive new contracts, with proposed increases in salary being retroactive to the beginning of the academic year. Worth noting

is that by 1991, the president felt that salary dollars were abundant enough to actually ask the HESB if funds from Salaries and Wages could be transferred to Operating and Equipment, a request that was approved in the April 11-12, 1991, Higher Education State Board minutes. The president could have reinstated the music positions with the additional dollars that were available in 1991 before the music faculty members even left the campus, but he chose not to do so.

As mentioned in Chapter IV, the question was raised by a former faculty member about why the administration hadn't just "weathered the storm" and waited for the pendulum to swing back to a position of increased economic stability rather than cut music. Given that the institution had to make alternate cuts for one year before the music and art faculty could actually be released, could WSU not have continued with those alternate cuts rather than eliminating music so completely from the campus curriculum? Such an approach would have helped to maintain social capital both on campus and within the community. Music would have continued to contribute to the social engagement of students and community members and would have continued to serve as a bridge between the community and the campus.

The perception of music faculty members at the time was that the president wanted the program to go. This appears to be true. Even with faculty salary dollars available in 1991, the president chose not to reinstate the music positions. His stated reasons for eliminating the program were low enrollments and high cost, but his reasoning does not appear to have taken into account the broad long-range consequences of such a decision.

Part I Summary

The political forces impacting WSU before the decision to eliminate music were profound. The tax referral vote resulted in much needed taxes being rescinded, leaving the campus obligated to cut a large portion of its budget in a brief amount of time. Added to the difficult economic times of the 1980s was the constant insecurity felt by those affiliated with WSU due to its small size and tenuous position with the state system. The decision to eliminate the music degree has been best understood by administrators, but poorly received by alumni and faculty alike, partly due to the manner in which the decision was presented to the campus.

Part II: Quality and Quantity

In examining the issue of enrollment, a second theme emerged: Quality and quantity issues, when dependent on key individuals, can leave an academic program vulnerable to elimination. As stated in Chapter IV, low-enrollments were touted as one of the main reasons to eliminate the music program. Thus, the question, “How are issues of quality of the program and quantity of enrollments taken into account?” is addressed in this theme. The quality of the faculty and administrators also impacted the department and this section addresses the question of how powerful individuals impacted the decision to eliminate music.

Importance of Quality

The quality of the WSU music program fluctuated from its peak in the 1970s to its elimination after the 1989 tax referral vote. In the 1970s, the choir was thriving and the jazz band won regional and national awards. Not often does a small state institution in a rural community boast of such a strong music program. The music faculty had high

standards for their students, and the students responded with long hours of hard practice and rehearsing. Alumni from this time period still speak with pride of the quality of the ensembles in which they participated while at WSU. The strength of the program, however, rested to a great deal on the shoulders of a few key faculty members. When the stronger individuals left, the department felt an immediate shift in terms of the quality of the program and the quantity of its enrollees.

The type of music favored by different ensemble directors also had an impact on the numbers of students enrolled. Sometimes the approach taken was not understood or supported by community members or WSU administrators, who then passed judgment on the efforts of the directors. Added to that were shifts in external issues affecting enrollment (quantity) that will be discussed below.

In the last twenty years, dedicated faculty members and administrators contributed a great deal towards regaining music at WSU. Even with the many challenges that have faced the institution, the quality of the efforts of faculty members, administrators, and community members have resulted in the recent reinstatement of a music minor at WSU.

Cultivated and Vernacular Traditions

When considering the causes and consequences of the decision to eliminate the music degree at WSU, one important quality/quantity issue concerns how music was and is perceived at WSU and within the community of Widmer. The issue reflects the type of repertoire selected by ensemble directors and the perceptions that were shared by research participants concerning those choices. For convenience sake, the two approaches to repertoire selection have been labeled here as the cultivated tradition and

the vernacular tradition. As stated earlier, these labels are in no way intended to pass judgment on the value of any particular type of music, but are rather offered as a general way to describe two cultural traditions.

Some music directors at WSU were more drawn to the cultivated tradition while others chose a more vernacular approach. At WSU, the first approach tended to draw smaller numbers while the second approach was open to more universal participation. The fluctuations between the two approaches produced various responses including: (a) alumni disgruntled with what they saw as the fun “pops” approach of certain vernacular styles ; (b) a mixed reaction from the community, with some community members wishing for the old days of more classically-oriented (cultivated) music while others expressed enjoyment of a more relaxed, fun (vernacular) approach to concerts; and (c) administrators critical of smaller numbers in ensembles and more cultivated repertoire choices.

A battle over what is beautiful or admirable is currently being waged when it comes to taste in music, a battle that is well worth reviewing here. Bourdieu (1984) traces this conflict to the seventeenth century and describes it as a struggle “between groups differing in their ideas of culture and of the legitimate relation to culture and to works of art” (p. 2). As far back as 1945, Tocqueville lamented a diminishing appreciation for beauty:

. . . the general mediocrity of fortunes, the absence of superfluous wealth, the universal desire for comfort, and the constant efforts by which everyone attempts to procure it makes the taste for the useful predominant over the love of the beautiful in the heart of man. (p. 50)

According to Savage (2006), “Music, it can be argued, is an unusually polarized field” (p. 161). According to Savage, highbrow music, as it is sometimes called, has traditionally included opera, classical music, and to some extent jazz. Rock, country and western, heavy metal, and hip hop have been examples of lowbrow forms of music (Savage, 2006). Peterson and Kern’s (1996) list of vernacular music includes country, bluegrass, gospel, rock, and blues (1996). Preferences for cultivated music are associated with a more educated population (Savage). They are also associated with older members of society, although Peterson and Kern note that such age-specific tastes have been changing since World War II. Peterson and Kern describe what they see as a shift from “highbrow” status to an omnivore status, where more kinds of music are readily appreciated. They attribute this shift to numerous factors, including increased education, a more mobile society, and digital accessibility to varied musical genres. Martin, Bunting, and Oskala (2010) conducted a comprehensive survey of the arts in England. They found that two-thirds of their respondents engaged in the arts because they are “fun and entertaining” and over half of the respondents felt that the arts “don’t mean anything to me” (pp. 35-36). Chan and Goldthorpe (2005) contend that “several different processes are likely to be at work in shaping individuals’ patterns of cultural consumption” (p. 208), including education and economic class.

Partiality for either the cultivated or the vernacular traditions surfaced in this research, where various WSU ensemble directors were praised or vilified for their choice of repertoire. The participants in this study often expressed strong sentiments on which tradition they preferred, how they perceived repertoire choices, and on the success or failure they felt each tradition demonstrated in drawing numbers to the program. Some

directors chose more cultivated repertoire and were praised, especially by older community members who appreciated what they felt were high standards and serious selections. On the other hand, not everyone was as responsive to this approach and some community members and administrators made judgments in terms of numbers; they were dissatisfied by the smaller numbers of students they felt were drawn to the cultivated ensembles or the smaller numbers of attendees at such concerts.

Turrini (2008) writes of program managers and paying audiences, but his words could easily be transferred to music directors and ensemble participants in Widmer: “A programming manager aims to serve an audience’s current tastes. Listeners pay for at least a share of the organization’s costs, and if these tastes are ignored, the audience will abandon the organization” (p. 74). This places directors in a difficult position; do they follow their own musical tastes if they differ from what seems to be desired by the campus or community? Should repertoire be reflective, not only of taste, but also of a standard expected of a college music curriculum? Should it be a mixture of both?

In Widmer, it seems to have been particularly important that the directors not ignore the predominant taste preferences of the community and the administration at WSU, regardless of their personal preferences. There was certainly an administrative preference for directors to recognize Turrini’s warning that one cannot disregard the prevailing musical tastes. More than one director felt negative repercussions from ignoring the preferences of administrators and two directors reported direct confrontations with a university president over emphasizing a more cultivated tradition.

Some would argue that there is a broader reason to study music than just to address personal tastes. Gates (1999) asks:

Why study music that lies outside of the music found meaningful by our family, our friends, and ourselves? The short answer is not a liberal one, but a libertarian one: We should reserve the right to exercise musical options, even when these options seem to compete with the collective taste” (para. 52).

If one agrees with Gates’s contention that it is important to study music outside of our own personal tastes, then some administrators and directors at WSU might be doing their student body and the community a disservice by catering to more populist tastes. Gates explains:

Partially to promote community, we plan music study for others not only so that their musical experience is similar – so that they have the option of belonging through music – but also so that their musical options increase beyond those easily available in their personal surroundings” (1999, para. 53).

Viewing the study of music through this lens, WSU lost a great deal when it eliminated its music degree. WSU students were no longer able to be gain exposure to as many varied musical experiences. The current WSU band and choir director often presents well received concerts of vernacular music as well as some cultivated music. When the music minor is reinstated, the type of repertoire that will be chosen will be worth noting. Will the director feel the need to focus more on cultivated music when the concerts are part of a music minor? Or will a shift to more vernacular music be seen as an acceptable adjustment to current times?

The experience at Widmer brings up another important point in this study. The musical tastes in the community itself seem to be shifting to less cultivated and more vernacular than once embraced. How much, if any, is due to the fact that the university

eliminated its music degree and the community was left with relatively little access to more sophisticated music? How were the musical tastes of the students who attended WSU in the 1990s different from those who attended in the 1970s when they had opportunities to listen to and participate in a more cultivated music? DiMaggio and Mucktar (2004) report a declining interest in high culture performing arts in the 1980s and 90s, especially in younger audiences. Did the change in the status of music at WSU hasten the shift in musical tastes within a community that, at one point, was an oasis of exceptional, cultivated music experiences?

The Power of One

In a way, WSU was the scene of a perfect (good) storm in the 1960s and 70s. Exceptionally strong music educators came together during those years to contribute to a music department that far exceeded what one might expect from a small state institution located in a rural town in the Midwest. Powerful individuals played an important role in the earlier success of the music department and in later efforts to reinstate a music minor at WSU.

The first of these, Mike Propeck, served as the choir director and chair of the department for many years. Under his leadership, the choir grew to include large numbers of eager singers. In addition, his open invitation for participation served as a bridge to the community as alumni and community members joined the college choir to participate in much loved productions of the *Messiah*. Research participants described him as “revered” and spoke fondly of singing in his choir. Although some questioned his skill as a director, none questioned his dedication to his craft or the immense impact he had on the program. He had a commanding personality, complete with a gruff exterior

and a caring heart. He was a powerful and successful recruiter and during the Propeck years, the music program was the largest it has ever been.

Propeck was especially skilled as the chair of the music department, somehow managing to find the funds necessary for tours or new instruments whenever needed. He served as a powerful advocate for the department and held a position of strength within WSU. Certain questions can be raised: Would the music department have been eliminated if Propeck had still been chair in 1989? Would he have been able to fight efforts to eliminate music more effectively than the chair who was ultimately faced with the problem? Would such efforts even have occurred under his leadership? It is impossible to answer these questions, but it is not the first time they have been raised when a strong leader leaves a program or institution. Krenelka (2009) discusses the closing of the U. S. Open University (USOU), and makes similar observations concerning the vulnerability of the school once its strong leader resigned. "It is difficult to know whether USOU might have survived if Sir John had stayed as its top administrator" (p. 68).

Brian Reberg took Propeck's place as chair and was praised for his efforts in that position. A participant spoke of his willingness to stand up to the president as one reason that the president did not like him. Although he was unable to "save" the department after the December 5th vote, faculty present at the time conjectured that at that point, no one could have saved the department from elimination; it was a "done deal." Krenelka (2009) comments on the need for a strong leader during difficult times but goes on to comment that it is even better if there is more than one strong champion of the school. Such support was a luxury that Reberg did not have.

The band director, Larry Dillon, was another powerful member of the music faculty. He was respected as a highly skilled director; under his tutelage, the jazz band won regional and national awards usually reserved for the biggest and most prestigious music schools in the country. Although his emphasis was more on quality than quantity, like Propeck, Dillon was a dedicated recruiter with a dynamic personality. The department grew in stature because of the quality of the students who were drawn to WSU to study under him. He chose a cultivated approach to his repertoire, employing the highest quality of jazz music and avoiding a “pops” approach. The quality of his students coupled with his high standards and expectations for hard work contributed greatly to the overall quality of the department in the 1960s and 70s.

After the department was eliminated, Michael Heath founded a community school of the arts (CSA). At the time of this report, there were approximately 330 community schools of the arts in the U. S. (Lysinger, Perry, & Donald, 2010). Heath initiated a number of creative programs through the CSA, the most significant being a combined campus/community choir. Participation in choirs has often been mentioned as a tool for community engagement (Langston & Barrett, 2008; Putnam, 1993; Putnam, 2000; Putnam 2001; Sander, 2001). Heath’s combined college and community choir filled a void in Widmer and WSU and served as a true reflection of bridging social capital.

Heath was probably one of the most controversial individuals in this research, in part due to his cultivated approach to music. Not everyone appreciated his more refined approach to the *Messiah* and his decision to only include members of the choir who had rehearsed from the start of the term. Propeck had allowed alumni and community members to join in the concert and many with fond memories of those experiences

viewed Heath with disdain. His choice of repertoire was also more cultivated and not always understood or appreciated by the administrators on campus. Although he was eventually fired due to lack of administrative support, Heath was a well-trained director who did much to bring music, and quality music at that, back to the campus.

Finally, the current band and choir director, George Rhodes, has been described as a “magnet” for the department. He has a charismatic personality that draws students to the WSU music ensembles; he worked to reinstate the music minor, and has a strong network of friends who are high school music directors and who assist with his efforts to grow the program. He serves as a bridge between community and campus through his radio show on big band music, the concerts he puts on at community fundraisers such as the Brunch Belle, and his conducting of the BoMen’s Choir. One might describe him, not only as a magnet, but as a beacon for bridging social capital.

Rhodes’s approach to music has been more vernacular and the current students respond well to this approach. His concerts are not well received by those who feel they do not reflect the quality that the music program once had. On the other hand, Rhodes has not had the luxury of working with music majors and minors. He seems to have an intuitive sense of the type of music that is currently most appreciated and perhaps understands the shift from “highbrow” to “omnivore” taste that has been a national trend in the last twenty years.

One more individual should be mentioned before leaving the section on outstanding faculty who impacted music at WSU. During the ‘60s and ‘70s, the music department benefited from the efforts of an exceptional high school music instructor, Shane Olson. According to participants, Olson developed an impressive high school

music program that served as an important feeder program for WSU, and no doubt, contributed to making the peak years of the department as exemplary as they were.

WSU has been fortunate to have music faculty and chairs with such a strong sense of devotion to the department and to the community. Each of the individuals mentioned above served the institution in powerful and positive ways. Social capital was vastly enhanced by the efforts of these individuals as music added to the sense of engagement on the WSU campus as well as the community of Widmer.

Faculty members were not the only powerful individuals affecting the music program; university presidents played a key role in the elimination of the music program and later in the efforts to reinstate the music minor. As stated earlier, some even had strong preferences for either a cultivated or vernacular approach to repertoire. Presidential support for one tradition over the other sometimes resulted in the actual firing of a music director such as with Heath, or the hiring of another such as Rhodes.

The role of strong presidents inevitably brings us to a discussion of President Richland, the president serving when the decision to eliminate music was made. The perception of the participants of this study was that this was a top-down decision, made with little or no input from faculty, alumni, or community members. Participants conjectured that other administrators may have been involved with the decision making process, but that ultimately it was the president's decision to eliminate music. Some participants in this research, especially later administrators, understood the necessity of such a decision due to difficult economic and time constraints. Nonetheless, the majority of participants criticized Richland heavily. The top-down decision making process did not sit well with those who bore the brunt of the decision.

The decision to eliminate music at WSU left little opportunity for debate. The decision was only briefly and marginally contested by those on campus. Hermann et al. (2001) address foreign policy, but their article on leadership demonstrates just such a lack of public reaction:

When a single individual has the power to make the choice concerning how a state is going to respond to a foreign policy problem, he or she becomes the decision unit and acts as a predominant leader. Under such conditions, once the leader's position is known, those with different points of view generally stop public expression of their own alternative positions out of respect for the leader or fear of reprisals. (p. 84)

They go on to assert that leaders who bring pre-conceived priorities to the table, often “‘rally constituencies around the flag’ thus reducing the effectiveness of domestic opposition that may disagree with a particular action or activity” (p. 88). Richland’s claims that there was no choice but to eliminate low-enrollment programs due to a directive from the HESB left the WSU campus feeling that, indeed, there was no opportunity to disagree with such a decision. Yet, such a directive was not felt on other campuses within the state system; campuses approached their cuts in ways other than by program elimination (see Appendix E).

Since low enrollment was the justification offered by Richland for cutting the music program, more review is warranted concerning exactly what those numbers included. When examining enrollments at WSU, four areas need to be considered: (a) numbers of declared music majors enrolled in the program, (b) numbers of students

enrolled in music classes, (c) numbers of music graduates, and (d) credits generated in music classes.

Taking these figures by category, in 1989, there were 12 declared majors in the music program (Widmer State University, 1990) as compared to 27 a decade before. In the second category, music courses had one of the highest cumulative enrollments on campus, no doubt due to participation in the music ensembles. In reviewing figures in this category, there were 275 students enrolled in music classes in 1988, the fourth highest enrollments on campus (Widmer State University, 1988). In 1989, the figure was 234 and the department was still one of the strongest in terms of total enrollments (Widmer State University, 1989a). Students were indeed interested in music and participating in music courses. The third category, total music graduates, paints a darker picture; although there were eight music graduates in 1986, none had graduated in 1987 or 1988.

The final category deals with credit production as a means of assessing the efficiency of the department. In the fall of 1989, the credits generated by music courses totaled about 3% of the total credits generated on campus (Widmer State University, 1989a). Contrasted with this is the fact that salaries for all fulltime and adjunct music faculty totaled approximately 7.5% of the total educational salaries (Widmer State University, 1989b). If the president was chiefly concerned with numbers, these numbers do not look good for the music department at WSU. If the president also questioned the efficiency of the department based on low credit production, one has to wonder if he took into consideration certain factors impacting credit generation in a music department. First, music ensembles at WSU (as in many IHE) are taught for three hours a week but

students only pay for and receive one credit. Unlike a three credit English class where 100 students generate 300 credit hours, three hours of instruction for 100 ensemble students only generates 100 credit hours for choir, band, or jazz band. In addition, music programs always include private instruction on applied instruments. Such one-on-one instruction produces extremely low credit production. One hour of instruction is usually computed at .66 of the total time and thus only generates .66 of one credit.

Low credit production is an issue often faced because of the very nature of a music curriculum, even in thriving programs. Nonetheless, President Richland could easily have presented a compelling case to eliminate the music degree based on recent graduation rates and low credit production. In fact, participants spoke of the numbers that were presented to the Curriculum Committee and the report on music that was prepared, a report that seemed to have been “hard to argue with.” The report no longer exists. The president’s files related to this decision, including letters of protest, have curiously disappeared.

Additional questions can be addressed here concerning the decision to eliminate music at WSU. First, there were still music majors enrolled in the department but not as many as in prior years, and in the last two years none had actually graduated. Before cutting the program, one has to wonder if Richland asked any of the following questions: Are there quality issues that impacted enrollments? Have there been shifts in faculty positions that negatively affected retention? Are there regional forces at play? Do declining numbers represent a national trend or a temporary dip? Although Richland did answer a few broad questions in a written communication for this research, he

unfortunately declined to be interviewed in person, leaving no way to discern what considerations were taken into account.

Richland's leadership style in the case of the 1989 cuts in funding was to meet the problem head-on and come to a quick resolution. Indeed, concerns for enrollment numbers can be "a delicate dance of priorities that has often split the faculty and administration" (Van Der Werf, 1999, para. 4). His decision was based on the issue of quantity but on the shallowest of levels. His written communication stated that he made the decision based on the numbers of majors graduating from the program in the last few years and the cost of running a music program (which is always high). His "balancing act" was not balanced. He did not seem to take into consideration the numbers of students enrolled in music courses at the time, the importance of music to the campus culture, the significance of the program for town and gown relationships, the centrality of the program to the mission of a liberal arts institution, or the social capital that would be lost along with the program.

Although WSU has had a number of presidents since Dr. Richland, none have impacted music as strongly as the current president, President Clarkson. Clarkson was employed by WSU first as a faculty member in the business department, next as academic vice-president, and finally as President. Some research participants criticized Clarkson for not understanding the arts, and yet he has been a key player in the effort to bring a music minor back to WSU. He did not offer as his motivation a love of music or any deeply rooted appreciation for the arts. Rather, Clarkson spoke often of the importance of engaging students when they are on campus and of giving them opportunities to be part of groups outside of their classes. He sees the value of music and

sports in drawing students together so they are not left alone in a dorm room interacting only through their computers. Much of Clarkson's support has been behind the scenes, but it is clear that the reinstatement of a music minor owes much to this president.

Loss When Strong Faculty Members Depart

A large program housed within a major institution is far less likely to experience dramatic repercussions when a star faculty member (or two) retires. At WSU, the department suffered a huge loss when Propeck and Dillon left. Fortunately, Reberg still led the music faculty, but the department had lost two of its most magnetic personalities. As noted by Krenelka (2009), too much reliance on one strong individual leaves a program vulnerable. Although WSU did hire other strong individuals, such as choral director Phil Larson, participants noted that the newer faculty were unlike their popular predecessors, and as is often the case, were not well received because of those differences. The reluctance of alumni to send students to this altered program, the aversion music students had to the approach offered by new faculty members, and diminished support from community members all added to the declining numbers and quality experienced in the program once Propeck and Dillon left.

Impact of External Forces on Quality/Quantity

Externally, a number of factors influenced the numbers of students in the music program at WSU. First, within the state, the numbers of high school graduating seniors dropped significantly, diminishing the potential pool of enrollees. The number of K-12 schools within the state decreased from 1432 in 1960 to 683 in 1980 and the number of music teachers in public high schools experienced a 34% drop between 1980 and 1990 (State Department of Public Instruction, n.d.), leaving a diminished need for music

teachers within the state. Nationally, there was a decline in interest in music as a major in the late 1970s, as students became more interested in vocational degrees (Horowitz, 1987; Slaughter, 1993; Thelin, 2004). According to Thelin, “Enrollments soared in such fields as business administration, management, accounting, and anything else thought to confer an edge in admission to graduate programs in law, medicine, or business” (p. 327). Although the trend hit WSU somewhat later, it did contribute to lower interest in music during the 1980s. Not only did the numbers diminish, but participants commented that the quality of available students lessened and was reflected in ensembles that did not attract the attention and accolades of the previous decade. What might have happened if these shortcomings were viewed as temporary and not deserving of the draconian cuts experienced in 1989?

Part II Summary

Even as political forces impacted the decision to eliminate the music program at WSU, so did issues related to quality and quantity. The program was impacted by the loss of key faculty members upon whom it had depended, diminished effectiveness of recruiting efforts, a decline in the quality of the program, diminished numbers of available high school graduates within the state, a declining number and variety of positions for music educators within the state, and a shift in the majors preferred by incoming college students. Add to that the varying degrees of acceptance and rejection concerning the cultivated and vernacular approaches of the various directors, and it is evident that the program was threatened by multiple challenges to its security.

Part III: Town and Gown Relationships, the Role of Music

Widmer State University and its host community have enjoyed a long and positive relationship. Town and gown relationships are solid and in past decades have been fortified through a mutual interest in the arts. This section of the study answers two important questions, what were the implications of the decision to eliminate music for town and gown relationships and how did this decision impact campus and community culture? The research for this section resulted in the following theme: Small institutions and their host communities have a shared cultural climate and are dependent on each other for social capital.

Background on Town and Gown Relationships in Widmer

Cox (2000) refers to town and gown relationships as having the ability to alter the role of the IHE within society. This can be said of the role WSU plays within the community of Widmer. It is not just an ivory tower dedicated to educating college students. WSU's faculty are active members of the community and its arts programs impact Widmer's cultural life. WSU's role within the town of Widmer is crucial to the existence of the community on financial, educational, and cultural levels.

Widmer State University and its host community currently have an exceptionally strong relationship built on trust, collaboration, and inter-dependent needs. The long-standing relationship between campus and college has served as a tool for "communication, sharing, and interpreting information" (Cox, 2000, p. 15). There is a strong understanding on the part of community members that Widmer's survival depends on the success of the university. This dependency is much more pointed than would exist in a large metropolitan area. If a small college in New York City closed, for example, the

city would go on with hardly a blink, but should WSU close, the town of Widmer would be devastated. That said, it is also true that ties exist much deeper than mere survival. Community members and alumni view the university with affection and stated that they see it as more than a financial boon to the community; community participants spoke as if they feel a true partnership with the campus.

For its part, the campus views the community with respect and an understanding of the mutual dependency that exists between the two groups. The campus is aware that community members contribute greatly to the success of the institution through fundraising efforts, volunteer time, and donations. Campus arts events and performers contribute to the cultural health of the community, thus providing a town and gown bridge that is much appreciated by the community.

At times the involvement of the community almost oversteps the normal boundaries of town and gown relationships, as when community members lobby the administration to hire a given person, fire another, or alter the curriculum. Evidence of community involvement with faculty appointments surfaced throughout this research. It is apparent that community members approached various presidents with their likes and dislikes concerning faculty appointments. It is also apparent that administrators listened to such input, as with the hiring and firing of Heath. Various WSU administrators have navigated these waters with more or less skill, and the current president understands the importance of maintaining a positive relationship with the citizens of Widmer.

Town and Gown and the Arts Through the Eyes of Campus

As suggested by Buys and Bursnall (2007), campuses must acknowledge their partnership with their host community when considering institutional practice. WSU

embraces just such a partnership as it extends a hand to the community of Widmer in numerous ways. It allows the community to use its facilities at little or no cost, even housing a number of community organizations on campus. When WSU does apply a usage fee, it is kept low; according to one current administrator, "I would hate to alienate the community over a few bucks." Faculty members and administrators hold offices within city government, churches, and social organizations. According to one participant, WSU has provided mayors for the community, police, judges, and members of the city council. Faculty members have built community friendships and in turn been trusted by community members, a reflection of social capital that has been extremely beneficial to both campus and community. This is in sharp contrast to the results of a report conducted by Miller (1963) which found that "University faculty are more likely to be giving of their knowledge and energy in Washington, D.C., New York City, or Thailand than in their home community" (p. 443). Hopefully the experience that Miller found in 1963 has changed, not just in Widmer, but nationally, as IHE realize the importance of fostering strong town and gown relationships (Cox, 2000).

WSU hosts a number of events that community members attend, including drama productions, art shows, sporting events, and concerts. Past arts-related programs, such as music study tours of Europe, provided unique opportunities for community members. Such tours allowed students, faculty, alumni, and community members to participate together in excellent educational tours of Europe with a knowledgeable host dedicated to music education. Town and gown relationships were strengthened from such tours, as well as from the Community Concert Series organized in partnership with a regional arts council. Quality performances are brought to the small town of Widmer that would not

normally be available in a rural community. This concert series continues to this day and reflects the bridging social capital that exists between campus and community. The community school of the arts that was started in the 1990s also fostered strong town and gown relationships. Not only were community members able to participate in the classes and the community choir, they also enjoyed attending concerts at the college, once again, something that had been missing since the elimination of the music program.

When the music program was eliminated, town and gown relationships were negatively impacted by the loss of the program. Since the hiring of the current band and choir director, music events have once again strengthened town and gown relationships. The current band and choir director conducts the ensembles at the university, directs the music program at his church, offers a weekly Internet radio show on big band music, and is the leader of the BoMen's choir, a popular community choir for men. At one point he directed a community band, the Prairie Winds, he works with the high school to organize high school band festivals, and his Renaissance Festivals and Christmas concerts are a big draw for the community. His energy seems endless and his presence is strongly felt throughout the college and the community; as one university faculty member said, he "is a super-dynamic person in the community. People flock to him."

Drama is another form of the arts that experienced a rebirth on the WSU campus and that contributes to town and gown relationships. Although the drama major was eliminated from the official curriculum even before music was, drama productions are once again flourishing. Current college productions, including musicals, draw community members of all ages, not only as viewers but also as participants. As one

community member stated, “They have kids and anybody in the community who wants to try out for the plays is welcome to do that.”

The current president of the university understands the importance of town and gown relationships. He is visible in the community and one community participant in this research described him as “one of us.” When facing a particularly difficult decision recently concerning historic buildings on campus, he called town hall meetings to discuss potential courses of action with community members. Such discussions maintained the trust felt by the community. The social capital engendered by such trust is in sharp contrast to that lost after the decision to eliminate music had been made with no community input. The current president is present at community fundraisers, such as the Brunch Belle, lending support to those who work hard on behalf of the campus. Although his motives may not stem from a love of the arts or a belief in art-for-arts-sake, he has been supportive of the arts, including the community art gallery that is currently housed on campus. He has a clear understanding of the bridge the arts offer to community members of all ages.

Town and Gown and the Arts Through the Eyes of Community

Perhaps one of the most unexpected results of this research was the discovery of the unique dedication of the community of Widmer to WSU. As has been stated many times, the community is small and thus lacks the human, cultural, and economic resources available in larger communities. Yet the town possesses an abundance of hard working, dedicated individuals who initiated creative efforts to support the college and who worked to help reinstate a music program at WSU. The numbers and variety of fundraising events and the commitment to fundraising from the community are

testaments to the strong town and gown relationship between Widmer and WSU.

Individual community members were often praised for going “above and beyond” when it comes to fundraising. As one community member stated, finding volunteers and fundraisers in this community is not difficult, especially when it is for support of the arts.

Not only is there an abundance of volunteers, but volunteer-run events are well supported by the community at large. The Brunch Belle, for instance, is one of the most anticipated events of the year, and from all accounts is an elegant event, complete with exquisite decorations, fine food, live music, and champagne served by WSU’s president dressed in full tuxedo. The Ag Auction brings in huge dollars for the university with bids for special dinners sometimes reaching \$3000, no small feat for a rural community. University evaluators, such as the North Central Association of Colleges and School (NCA), praise the contributions made by the community while the alumni magazines boast of the fundraisers, many initiated and run completely by community members, from which the campus benefits. Community members seem to continually have the university in mind, even turning summer socials at the lake into opportunities to raise funds for WSU.

The dedication of the community members in Widmer is indeed inspiring. Not only is the number of community-run fundraisers impressive, but the fervor with which community members speak is striking. Many have fond memories of participating in music in the 1960s and ‘70s and are passionate about bringing those opportunities to today’s students.

This research did uncover one interesting aspect of the volunteer pool involved with music events. Many seem to be from the “young-old” group, a group Okun and

Michel (2006) describe as between ages 60 and 74. Many of the active advocates for music with whom I spoke are young-old residents who remember the quality of the concerts of the Propeck and Dillon years, and yearn to bring those days back. They are passionate about such efforts, in part, because they have lived in Widmer for many years and feel a great sense of commitment to the university and the community. As Okun and Michel state, "Individuals with a strong SOC [sense of community] are posited to feel obligated to work on behalf of the community" (p. 174), a sentiment that is echoed by other researchers (Liu & Besser, 2003; O'Dwyer & Timonen, 2009). The assertion that such a commitment to the greater good may be more likely found in older rather than younger members of the community (O'Dwyer & Timonen, 2009) is certainly reflected in the town of Widmer.

The young-old members of the community are dedicated to volunteering for the community and the university in ways not seen in younger residents. Younger participants spoke of volunteering for activities that directly relate to their own children, such as their child's sports team or Sunday school class, rather than efforts meant to benefit the larger community. Another possible reason that older members of the community volunteer is that, according to participants, the older residents of Widmer reflect a more educated group, as noted earlier. According to the Arts Council England (2007), "Those with higher levels of education attainment and from higher socio-economic groups are more likely to have volunteered" (p. 2). Thus the younger, less educated "bubbas" mentioned by one participant as currently staying in Widmer are less likely to volunteer.

The effort to bring music back to WSU is due only in part to support for the institution; there is also an understanding among residents of the importance of music within their community culture. Two different participants used the term “the only game in town” when describing the music department at WSU. Research has supported that the older generation is also more likely to support music and to attend concerts of established forms of music (Bunting, 2010). This is certainly the case in Widmer.

It is worth stating again that, according to participants, younger families in Widmer are currently more involved in their children’s sports teams and school activities than with the arts. This may be evidence of a national trend away from the arts and towards an all-pervasive involvement with sports. Current studies reference the values gained from sports participation such as well-being, civic engagement, and volunteering (Lopez & Moore, 2006; Le Menestrel & Perkins, 2007; Vandell et al., 2005), values that have also been associated with participation in music. It seems that, at least in the town of Widmer, there is a move away from the arts and towards sports as a tool for filling extra-curricular time and fostering positive traits such as skills, knowledge, and competencies (Le Menestrel & Perkins, 2007).

Town and Gown Perceptions of an Arts Curriculum

One last area to be addressed in town and gown relationships is the perception held by both members of the campus and the community concerning the importance of the arts in a college curriculum. This may seem more like an academic issue than a community concern, but a number of community participants expressed strong feelings about the importance of the arts in a liberal arts education.

Community members expressed the need for an arts presence on campus for two reasons, the first being to assist education majors to be better teachers. A community member spoke of the essential role the arts play in developing effective educators, a role to which WSU had contributed so strongly before the fateful Dec. 5th vote.

I think of the elementary teachers that have had a musical background and they bring it in to the classroom . . . but I just think that the humanities of any kinds that you bring into a classroom, I think it's just frosting on the cake for your kids, be it music or art.

The second reason community members felt that the arts are important to maintain at WSU is in order to expose students to cultural advantages that they might not otherwise have. Participants expressed strong convictions that a liberal arts education is not complete without exposure to the arts. Their comments reflect the view that the humanities, and thus music, should be encompassed in a liberal arts mission that emphasizes study beyond mere career preparation.

At the time of the tax referral vote, there was a natural concern about how the music and art courses that were external to the music degree would be covered once the music and art faculty were released. One faculty member questioned how the campus could even continue to teach courses such as Music in the Elementary Classroom. "Finding someone to teach those very specific areas on a small campus in a rural community is not an easy thing to do." Fortunately, one member of the music faculty remained on campus after the department was eliminated and was able to teach a number of the humanities courses and arts-centered education courses.

One way to track the importance of the arts and humanities at WSU is through their accreditation reports. Early reports stress the importance of the humanities, including a strong general education requirement in the humanities for all students. For example, the 1985 NCA report states, “Widmer State College recognizes a special need created by the limited opportunities available in this relatively small community to provide cultural and co-curricular activities to complement the academic experiences of students.” After the 1989 vote, the role the arts and humanities played in the WSU curriculum declined. More recent reports once again demonstrate that the university is seeing the arts and humanities as key to a well-rounded education.

Part III Summary

The strong town and gown relationship that exists between WSU and its host community inevitably impacts the social capital in both groups. Human capital, social capital, and cultural capital are often mentioned together in the literature (Liu & Besser, 2003; Okun & Michel, 2006; Tweten, 2008). The human capital that it takes to volunteer for fundraisers or perform in concerts adds to the cultural capital of the community, which in turn is reflected in social capital. Community members can be more engaged with their community when there are more opportunities for such networking.

It has been claimed earlier in this study that the social capital of the community was diminished when the music program at WSU was eliminated. When concerts were eliminated, an important opportunity to network and experience group involvement was taken away. But at least for young-old members of the community, a new source of social capital was born, that of fundraising. The fundraising events organized by community members provide two forms of social capital. First, they act as a bonding

social capital by giving like-minded members an opportunity to work towards a common goal. Second, they function as bridging social capital between community members and WSU, as both groups benefit from interaction concerning a shared purpose.

Final Assertions

The final assertion for this research is: The decision to eliminate a music degree highlights four key factors affecting the rural university in this study and its host community: first, both campus and community are extremely vulnerable to the impact of political and economic forces; second, both are overly dependent on the efforts of key players such as star faculty members, powerful administrators, and dedicated fundraisers; third, both understand that the arts, and music in particular, offer an opportunity to embrace their interdependence through mutual cooperation; and finally, both are experiencing a shift in musical tastes. Note that three of these factors address the final question asked in Chapter I, what are special consequences to such a decision (to eliminate music) when the university is part of a small, rural community?

Political and economic decisions made on the state level have had an enormous impact on this institution. The 1989 tax referral vote affected all IHE within the state, but the vote forced this small institution to eliminate its art minor and music major and minor, a decision that had an unexpected impact on the social capital of both college and community. Social capital took an immediate “hit” as opportunities for community engagement diminished, trust in the university’s administration waned, and community networks were weakened. The backlash from faculty, alumni, and community members was immediate and long lasting. Many alumni and community members still register

anger concerning the decision, feeling that it was too top-down without input from faculty and community stakeholders.

Participants reported that the music program at Widmer State was extremely successful in the 1960s and 1970s. Unfortunately, it was far too dependent on a few star faculty members. This left the department vulnerable when those individuals left, and indeed, the success of the department was not sustained after the loss of those individuals. It is true that shifts in demographics also impacted music enrollments across the state and the nation during the 1980s, but this institution was particularly vulnerable to the loss of key faculty due to its small size.

Although the music department benefited from the efforts of certain key players, it suffered due to the input of others. A strong president negatively impacted the department by his use of power in the institution, including coercive power, the ability to punish those who do not agree, and framing power, the ability to present issues in a way that the outcome is pre-determined (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

The small size of the college and the community has been mentioned in the above two factors of this final assertion and is equally important in the third factor. Widmer State University and the town of Widmer are irrefutably codependent, in part due to their small size. During interviews, community members often asserted that the town would not exist without the college. Conversely, the college understands the priceless resource it has in the devoted members of the community who organize fundraisers and donate time and money to the institution. University faculty and administrators reported that they do not see themselves as removed from the town, and many hold important positions in community government, churches, and social networks.

One area where this strong commitment to town and gown relationship is most evident is in the arts. The college houses a community art gallery and university drama productions include college and community members. Participants reported that musicians, including music faculty, willingly serve both the campus and the community, and perform for either group when asked. Community members raise money for band and choir scholarships and to pay for educational trips for members of the ensembles. Through the years, the community fought valiantly to keep music alive and well on campus. In the late 1990s, a community member funded the first position in music to exist on campus since the elimination of the degree. Community members lobbied the WSU administration to reinstate a music minor for the last twenty years; the efforts of community members and WSU faculty and administrators finally paid off as a music minor was approved for reinstatement at WSU just as this study neared completion.

Finally, both Widmer State University and the town of Widmer seem to be experiencing a shift in musical tastes. It is hard to know if this is in any way due to the fact that music was eliminated from the WSU curriculum after the 1989 referral vote. For years after the vote, concerts featuring cultivated music were only minimally available in Widmer. Efforts to regain such concerts met with some resistance, and it is impossible to know what impact the gap in availability had on the tastes on campus and in the community. There is currently a preference for the cultivated tradition by some community members, mostly older, and a partiality to the vernacular tradition by many others. The current administration at WSU and the band and choir director seem to acknowledge that more people are drawn to the vernacular tradition and see that approach as a means of attracting numbers back to the music program at the university as well as to

the concert hall. Current literature suggests that this is a national trend, certainly not one unique to Widmer, as “highbrow” audiences become more “omnivore” in their tastes (Peterson & Kern, 1996).

One additional factor impacting music in Widmer is involvement in sports. The perception of many participants in this study is that younger families in the community are more interested in sports and less interested in music. As noted by a number of participants, with that decline in interest is a diminished concert attendance by younger community members and a decreased participation in private music lessons, choir, and band by area youth. Such a decrease in participation and musical study will undoubtedly impact the musical tastes of the community, and education will be needed in order to explore all of the options available in musical styles (Gates, 1999). The good news for music lovers is that there is currently an excellent high school music director who is once again increasing interest in music. The bad news is that the fate of music study is once again placed squarely on the shoulders of one key individual, a position of vulnerability that has not served music in Widmer well in the past.

It should be added here that support for sports is not the only value that can be attributed to one generation over another in Widmer. The efforts to bring music back to WSU, the impassioned praise for the value of music, and the commendable volunteer efforts on behalf of music students come largely from young-old members of the community. The younger members of the community who were interviewed did not express the same support for the arts or interest in music. Thus the fervor with which many of the participants in this study spoke may soon die with the participants. In its

place, Widmer may be destined to become a more sports oriented, less culturally engaged community.

Implications for Practice

The issue of retrenchment is currently of extreme importance as numerous IHE face budget cuts. During such financially challenging times, administrators of IHE are often hard pressed to make ends meet. At times, directives come from the State Legislature that cuts in campus budgets must be made. During such times, administrators are forced to make difficult decisions. Will they make across-the-board cuts or target cuts? How will they formalize a process for trimming the budget, deciding who will be involved in the decision making process, and determining what factors will be considered when making cuts? Will they even have time to implement such a process?

At Widmer State University, administrators were forced to make a decision concerning budget cuts with little time for advance planning. What time they did have does not appear to have been used for campus-wide decision making efforts. Rather, it appears they chose a top-down process with little, if any, input from faculty or community stakeholders. I offer here that such a process is not one that will sit well with those affected by the decision. If the decision is to eliminate a program, it is also offered that such a choice may impact far more than the students and faculty involved in the program. When the program is one with community and campus-wide appeal and participation such as music, drama, or sports, it is argued that the impact will be felt far more than if the program cut were perhaps a program such as philosophy or French poetry. Alumni, donors, community members, and the complete campus community will

feel the repercussions of campus budget cuts when those cuts involve eliminating a program that contributes to social capital.

As is often the case, the stated reason for the decision to eliminate music at WSU centered on the numbers: low student enrollment and high program costs. I would argue that numbers are a shallow indicator when considering retrenchment options. Additional areas to consider, as stated earlier, are learning outcomes (Peterson, 1984), the centrality of the program to the institutional mission (Gumport, 1993), and the external demand for the program, quality of the program, and overall essentiality of the program (Eckel, 2002). Essentiality of the program lends itself to broad interpretation. Is the program essential to: (a) a liberal arts education, (b) to a well-rounded college experience, (c) to the completion of adjacent majors, (d) to a cultured and civilized graduate? As noted by Schackner (2010), "A subject's worth . . . should not be based on the number of graduates churned out" (para. 13).

I would add three other items for consideration during retrenchment efforts: first, the social capital generated by the program; second, its impact on town and gown relationships; and third, the potential long-term consequences of eliminating a program. In the case of WSU, eliminating music did far more than remove music students and faculty from the campus. The decision impacted the cultural climate of the campus and the community, it removed opportunities for social engagement among students and community members, and it drastically impacted the bridging social capital that was reflected in positive town and gown relationships. When considering the long-term consequences of the decision, although they cannot be understood in advance, administrators need to think far beyond the immediate financial crisis. As stated by

Hardy (1990), “the implementation of ‘hard’ decisions may, in certain circumstances, be counterproductive . . . while financial resources are clearly a matter of concern for university administrators, they are not the only criteria for success” (p. 316).

To a certain degree, the community of Widmer gained new opportunities for social engagement when the degree was eliminated as it banded together to organize fundraisers to bring music back to WSU. This may be in part due to the unique nature of this small town and is not something that can be expected. The age of the volunteers and those most committed to music is once again worth noting as young-old residents, those between the ages of 60 and 74 (Okun & Michel, 2006), show a decidedly more committed interest in the arts.

Another important issue addressed by this research which has implications for practice is the role administrators take in supporting music. If a university wishes to maintain the important role the arts play in our society, then it must be proactive in protecting their status so that interest in the arts is not lost or supplanted by other activities such as sports. The fervor that the young-old participants in this research expressed when speaking of the value of the arts may be lost to future generations if the institutions where their grandchildren are educated do not feel a commitment to retaining an arts curriculum. In today’s high-tech world, where students have easy access to digital forms of music, how will they be inspired to attend a concert of live chamber music? Do administrators feel an obligation to present such music, not because it is the music students choose for leisure listening but because it is beautiful and timeless? It is the same question that is posed concerning the value of reading Shakespeare or studying the classics.

Mike Greenberg (2005) addressed this issue in an article on the importance for symphony orchestras to maintain high standards for repertoire, rather than cater to more popular demands. He admits that understanding and listening to classical music requires more education and concentration than listening to lighter forms of music. Greenberg observes, “A hard-core classical work lasts longer than a pop song for the same reason that a novel takes longer to read than a Post-it® note” (p. J1). If one accepts that both cultivated and vernacular traditions of music have value, will both be supported in the campus environment? If those in control at IHE make the decision to limit or eliminate the arts offerings available at their institutions, are they aware of the long-term consequences of such a decision? Will they accept the role they play in the marginalization of the great classics of Western music, a scenario so well described by Joseph Horowitz in his book, *Classical Music in America: A History of its Rise and Fall?*

If administrators do not consider these questions when faced with the possible elimination of a music program, perhaps we will one day be forced to accept that higher education has abdicated its role as a protector and nurturer of the arts. Or is it perhaps time for arts advocates to recognize that computers, the Internet, and sports have taken over our leisure time, and to accept quietly and graciously the diminishing interest in live concerts of cultivated music – and indeed the cultivated tradition itself?

Rage, rage against the dying of the light.
Dylan Thomas

Recommendations for Future Study

At the completion of this research, a number of considerations for future study present themselves:

1. Very little research has been done on the impact that decisions at IHE have on the institution's host community. The reactions and perceptions of community members to such decisions should not be overlooked, especially when the community is directly impacted.
2. More research should be done on the repercussion of eliminating a music program from an IHE. Little has been researched on this topic, and yet in times of economic hardships, music programs are particularly vulnerable.
3. I would find an additional longitudinal study of the community of Widmer to be of great value. It would be interesting to plot the changes in musical taste and the strengths of the community over the next twenty years, as the current generation of young-olds is replaced.
4. Research should be done on the impact that Title IX has had on the study of music and participation in music activities such as choir and band.
5. Studies on the decline of the arts are being conducted, but even more research must be done to examine the competing interests that are taking time away from the serious study of music, such as the impact of digital music, two career families, at-home passive consumption of music, overcrowded marketplace for leisure activities, sports, etc.
6. Even more research needs to be done on generational attitudes towards the arts, taste in the arts, and participation in the arts. Do younger generations

who have a preference for vernacular music “grow into” a taste for cultivated music, or will they maintain their current preferences? How will current tastes impact performances of cultivated music in future generations?

Conclusion

This study examined the causes and consequences of a decision to eliminate music at one rural, public institution of higher education, Widmer State University. The research was conducted using social capital as the conceptual framework and examined social capital issues between campus and community. Additional questions concerning the political and demographic factors leading to the decision; the repercussions felt by faculty, alumni, and community members; issues of quality and quantity that affected the decision; the role played by powerful individuals; the impact the decision had on town and gown relationships as well as campus and community culture; and special consequences related to the small size of the school and the community were addressed during the course of this research.

It is hoped that administrators will view the elimination of a music degree as having implications far beyond the loss of an academic major. This study demonstrates that such a decision has the potential to impact town and gown relationships, community and campus cultures, and the social capital of the university and its host community.

APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

TITLE: Perspectives of Community Members When a University Eliminates Its Music Major

PROJECT DIRECTOR: Alice (Beth) G. Klingenstein

PHONE NUMBER: 701-845-7269

DEPARTMENT: Educational Leadership

STATEMENT OF RESEARCH:

In order to participate in this study, you will need to give what is called “informed consent.” This means that you will need to understand the nature and risks of the research. This document will give you the information that is important for this understanding. This research will only include subjects who choose to participate. Please take your time in deciding whether or not to participate. If you have questions at any time, please ask.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH?

You are invited to be in a research study about what happens in a community when the local university either closes its music department or eliminates its music major. The purpose of this study is to find out what role music at the local university plays in the community culture and if a diminished university involvement with music may have unforeseen consequences on the community itself.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL PARTICIPATE?

In the initial test case, I will interview approximately four people. Later, as I expand the research, I will interview approximately 20-30 people.

HOW LONG WILL I BE IN THIS STUDY?

The initial test case will last from February, 2009 to May, 2009. Further research at a later date will extend over a longer period of time, but may not involve the original participants. For this test case, I will visit you at a mutually agreed upon location between 1-3 times, with each visit lasting approximately one hour.

_____ **Participant's initials**

WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THIS STUDY?

During each visit, I will ask you questions that will be shaped by our conversation. I will record your answers on a computer program and later on will transcribe what you have said into a written document. The questions will be open-ended and will mostly give me an idea of how you feel about the topics we discuss.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF THE STUDY?

There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study. Nonetheless, you may experience unforeseen risks, such as feeling uncomfortable answering certain questions. If you feel upset by any questions, you may stop at any time or choose not to answer a question. If you would like to talk to someone about your feelings about this study, you are encouraged to see a counselor (at no expense to either me or UND).

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE STUDY?

Those interviewed will benefit from the opportunity to express their feelings about the impact that a diminished presence in music within a university has on their community. It is hoped that in the future, others will benefit. For example, the findings of this research may be of value to administrators who are considering eliminating a music department or music major. The study will also be of value to those seeking to better understand university/community relations as well as those working as arts advocates.

ALTERNATIVES TO PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY:

Those who do not wish to participate in this research need not participate. If you decide you are willing to participate, your name will be kept confidential. You will only be referred to by a code name, and no one other than myself will know exactly who said which comments. The list of coded names will be kept in a locked drawer at a separate location away from all other data from the research.

WILL IT COST ME ANYTHING TO BE IN THIS STUDY?

There is no cost to you for participating in this study.

WILL I BE PAID FOR PARTICIPATING?

You will not receive any payment for participating in this study.

WHO IS FUNDING THE STUDY?

There is no funding for this research.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

The records of this study will be kept private to the extent permitted by law. In any report about this study that might be published, you will not be identified by name. This study record may be reviewed by Government agencies and the University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board if an audit of some sort is required.

_____ **Participant's initials**

IS THIS STUDY VOLUNTARY?

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. If you decide to leave the study early, I ask that you notify me in writing of your wishes to withdraw from the study.

CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS?

As the sole researcher conducting this study, you may ask me any questions you have now. If you have later questions, concerns, or complaints about the research, please contact me, Alice (Beth) Klingenstein at 701-845-7269 or alice.klingenstein@und.nodak.edu. You may also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Kathleen Gershman, at 701-777-3157.

If you have questions concerning your rights as a research subject, or if you have any concerns or complaints about the research, you may contact the University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board at 701-777-4279.

Your signature indicates that this research study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in this study. You will receive a copy of this form.

Subject's Name

Subject's Address

Subject's Daytime Phone Number

Signature of Subject _____

Date _____

APPENDIX B

LIST OF CODE NAMES

Pseudonyms for Individuals Interviewed or Mentioned in This Research

Angela Rizzo	Chair of the Education Department in the 1990s
Beverly Schmidt	Community member active in fundraising
Bob Simonson	Spearheaded movement to rescind 1989 tax increases, founder of CFC
Dr. Brian Reberg	Former faculty member of music department, present when department was eliminated
BJ Blaire	President of WSU before Richland (from 1959-1973)
Cal Williams	One time head of theater program at WSU
Dr. Chris Miller	President of Widmer State University (from 1993-2002)
Dr. Dale Richland	WSU president when decision was made to remove the music degree (1973-1993)
Darrell Meyers	WSU band director when music was eliminated
David Johnson	Former adjunct music teacher at Widmer
Denise Fitzner	Community member, works at hospital
Donald Bates	Top notch former music alum
Elaine Packard	Community member, works at a bank in Widmer
Dr. Elizabeth Jones	WSU president from 2003-2006
Floyd Wilson	State governor during 1989 tax referral vote

Gary German	WSU interim president after Miller and before Jones (2002-2003)
George Rhodes	Current Director of WSU band, choir, jazz band
Jesse Hudson	Current music teacher at Widmer-Dunn High School
Dr. Jim Hartley	Academic Dean when music was eliminated
Julie Niles	Community member active in fundraising
Larry Dillon	WSU award winning jazz band director
Laura Peterson	Longtime community member and WSU faculty member
Martin Ramados	WSU administrator, present when decision was made to eliminate music
Michael Heath	WSU music faculty member, started the CSA
Mike Propeck	Highly regarded WSU choir director
Ned Taylor	Governor before Floyd Wilson
Phil Larson	WSU choir director at time music was eliminated
Dr. Robert Clarkson	Current WSU president
Shane Olson	Exceptional Widmer-Dunn High School music person in 60s-70s
Zachary Stine	Member of music faculty when degree was eliminated

Pseudonyms for Organizations / Events in Widmer

Ag Auction	Fall fundraiser for WSU
Alumni Magazine	The alumni magazine for WSU
BoMen's Choir	Men's choir in Widmer
Brunch Belle	Fundraiser for WSU students in music ensembles
Citizens for Fairness Coalition	A group formed to overturn the 1989 tax measures
Clarksdale	The largest city in the state

Clarksdale Tribune	Clarksdale newspaper
Community Concert Series	Concert series offered in collaboration with regional arts council
Community Nights on Broadway	Fundraiser
Dunn	Small town near Widmer
Eldridge State University	Small state institution
Ellendale Mid-West College Jazz Festival	A regional jazz festival
Grace College	A private college with a good music program
Gully County Gazette	County paper for Widmer
Higher Education State Board	State governing board for higher education
Holben	Larger city near Widmer
Holben State University	Large state institution near Widmer
JazzPlus Competition	Prestigious national jazz competition
Prairie Winds	Community band in Widmer
Widmer-Dunn	Neighboring towns of Widmer and Dunn
Widmer-Dunn High School	High School currently serving Widmer-Dunn
Widmer State University	The state institution studied in this research
Wollen State University	A large state university not far from Widmer

APPENDIX C

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

WSU presidents mentioned in this research:

- BJ Blaire 1959-73
- Dale Richland 1973-1993
- Chris Miller 1993-2002
- Gary German (temporary position) 2002-2003
- Elizabeth Jones 2003-2006
- Robert Clarkson 2006-present

Faculty mentioned in this research:

- Shane Olson (Widmer High School band/choir) 1952-1976
- Michael Propeck (WSU choir/Dept. chair) 1946-1978
- Larry Dillon (WSU band) 1963-1981
- Brian Reberg (WSU classes/Dept. chair) 1963-2000
- Phil Larson (WSU choir) 1983-1991
- Michael Heath (WSU Community School/choir) 1998-2003
- George Rhodes (WSU band and choir) c. 2003-present

Events mentioned in this research:

1960s and 1970s

- “Hey-day” of the WSU Music Department 1963-78
- WSU new music building built 1969

1985

- Governor recommends that WSU be changed into a residential High School for the Gifted

1989-1990

- New gas, sales, and income taxes take effect
- Some citizens oppose the new tax measures, acquire votes needed for a tax referral vote
- December 5th tax referral vote rescinds new gas, sales, and income taxes, leaving all state IHE facing large budget cuts
- Faculty Association votes to endorse Curriculum Committee's recommendation that the music major/minor and art minor be eliminated along with associated faculty positions
- The HESB recommends changing WSU to a two-year college

1990-1991

- No music ensembles offered

1998

- Heath initiates a community school of the arts with community chorus

2010-2011

- WSU reinstates music minor

APPENDIX D

TEXT FROM LETTER TO CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Written by Dr. Brian Reberg, Chair of the Music Department, Dec. 15, 1989, Meeting
(retyped with pseudonyms)

Yesterday, as we sat in this room, it was painfully clear to me the direction to be taken, especially in light of the Dean's admonition to review the data (costs and enrollments) and then decide the direction to move in eliminating 4 FTE from our faculty. The music costs factor, \$105.77, is the top of the heap, exactly where it has been for the 27 years I've served on this faculty. I learned this sad fact my first week as a faculty member at Widmer State College. This high cost could be attributed to such factors as low enrollments, but ultimately it gets down to one principal factor: private lessons are perhaps the only one-on-one teaching/learning situations in all of higher education. There is no possible way of altering this in any institution around the world. Costs are driven up and simply cannot be reduced. Elimination of the program is the only way to reduce this high cost.

When every non-teaching aspect of this institution has been cut to the point where any further cuts would prevent the institution from functioning, then, and only then should curriculum cuts be made. But this must [be] the last consideration. If the music major and minor are eliminated, there will be a major savings realized very quickly. But, since two of the faculty members are far below the campus average salary, the four

positions plus benefits will probably not realize the full \$150,000 savings needed. In addition, someone will be needed to teach general courses such as Understanding Music, Music in the Elementary Grades, and Music in the Pre-School. The funding for this will need to come from somewhere.

The loss of the major and minor should not be the only considerations, however, since other factors enter in.

Once a degree program is dropped, there is no possibility of ever reinstating it, at least in our lifetimes in . . . [state]. Such is the case with our Speech and Drama, and Art majors. These two vital segments of artistic development will never return and we are a less viable institution as a result.

Performance groups will be eliminated. This may not seem crucial at the moment, but the loss extends beyond concerts. What about the organist for graduation and opening convocations? The band at basketball games? Music for organizations in the community and churches? Widmer State University does not exist as an island.

The opportunities for recruiting students in other areas will be greatly diminished. Frequently students are brought to my office as they tour the campus because they wish to sing in choir or perform in an instrumental group, yet have no desire to be music majors or minors. In other words, we could be eliminating students who would be interested in other majors and minors. We have had students indicate a very strong interest in WSU if only we had a drama major with a music minor. As a result these students applied at other institutions. Music has been a relatively important major or minor for elementary education majors. This combination has been a “sellable” commodity for many years.

The music graduates of WSU have been recognized for decades as among the strongest music educators in . . . [state]. Note such individuals as . . . [lists eight names], plus literally hundreds more, including _____ who was recently offered a major teaching assistantship at Kansas State University. Our students have been noted as receiving a practical introduction to the world of music education, being prepared for the real world of public school music.

I see the step we are about to take today as the beginning of the demise of the institution, not just one more discipline.

In all of our discussion to this point there has been no mention of cuts outside of the teaching faculty. What is administration going to do by way of helping us achieve the goal of cutting 4 FTE?

In addition to faculty cuts, the state could realize a substantial increase in income by selling the very fine equipment we have accumulated over the past 40-45 years. The Steinway concert grand alone would cost \$50,000 if purchased today on the open market. But then there wouldn't even be a decent piano for a visiting performer to use.

Lastly, I would like to add that I can deliver four sacrificial lambs and the program to the altar of Bob Simonson, but I cannot put the axe to work since I am one of those sacrificial lambs. Again, only after all avenues have been explored and all other sacrifices have been made should tampering with curriculum be considered. The curriculum is the mainstay of all educational institutions.

APPENDIX E

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BUDGET CUTS FOR ALL STATE IHE

This is not the original document, but rather a summary of its contents created for this study.

Respondents were each asked to explain the impact of the lowered 1990-1991 budget on their institutions (Widmer and Mayerton are the only institutions reported program eliminations.).

Holben State University: Holben wished to avoid a decrease in faculty salaries but they did increase workloads and class size. Holben reduced the budget for academic operating expenditures; the main library's budget; and equipment expenditures. Holben's Professional School absorbed the majority of the campus's cuts. The budget reductions meant that they could not make progress towards new program development that they needed for accreditation. The Professional School lost over \$2,500,000 due to the negative tax referral vote (9.6% of total Professional School budget).

The Professional school, instead of giving their faculty an approved 7% pay increase in 90-91, only gave seven faculty members merit pay increases. This resulted in a savings of over \$500,000. They also needed to delay recruitment for three open positions, and suspend recruitment for six other open positions. They suspended recruitment for six vacant staff positions. Six classified staff positions were scheduled

for elimination. They also chose to eliminate funding for one particular area _____ (or at least delay it indefinitely).

The Professional School cut back on its operating budget (making it hard to purchase necessary supplies). They cut back on library costs and faculty development dollars as well as on the purchase of new equipment and funds for research in 90-91.

Baker State University: Baker State University was experiencing a growth in enrollment so they received extra state dollars and were not as affected as other campuses. Their capital improvement budget was decreased causing a delay of replacement of windows. Funds for operating expenses were reduced, especially for travel.

Northern Plains State University: Northern Plains State University eliminated faculty salary increases resulting in larger faculty loads (they were having an increase in enrollment during this time). NPSU reported that the lack of salary increases led to poor faculty morale. They reported that they were satisfied with their equipment budget even though all areas of need were not met; their library automation system remained on hold; staffing levels remained low.

Wollen State University: Wollen SU could not fund approximately 14 FTE teaching positions, so class size, course offerings, and other quality improvement issues were negatively affected. They maintained the same operational budget for expenses in 90-91 as 89-90. They made minor adjustments to equipment and plant budgets. The campus reported being at a disadvantage when recruiting faculty because of their “non-competitive salary levels.”

Patton State University: Patton State University spoke of operating at a critical level because of the budget cuts, stating, “We cannot improve progress without needed funds.

We cannot keep up with technology without needed funds” (p. 20). They did not report specific cuts.

Bellman State University: Bellman State University reported an impact on salaries: “The loss of the critical area funding and the faculty salary increases for this budget period has had a devastating effect on our faculty. As of this writing, fourteen faculty have resigned to accept employment outside of . . . [state]” (p. 25). In terms of equipment, they reported, “The balance available for 1990-1991 is not sufficient to meet the requests submitted” (p. 25). Bellman SU expressed concern with plant improvement. They received only 35.6% of their request and lament that, “The long term effect of this lack of funding will obviously be the deterioration of the physical plant. The deferred maintenance on our buildings and grounds will result in significant expense in the future” (p. 25).

Lokem State University: Lokem reported an impact on salaries: “The institution’s flexibility has been greatly diminished due to reductions in part-time faculty, part-time support staff (Academic Support and Physical Plant), and student assistants” (p. 26). They also stated that the equipment funds “will not be sufficient to adequately address the needs of the institution” (p. 26).

Eldridge State University: Eldridge felt a strong impact on salaries, leaving one position unfilled, and increasing class sizes and loads for existing faculty. They eliminated the position of Director of University Relations from the appropriated funds payroll and moved it to local funding, also eliminating some alumni and public relations services. These shifts in funding result in local funds being used that otherwise would be used to support student scholarships. In addition, they eliminated one custodial position

spreading the workload over existing custodial staff. Eldridge commented on their lowered equipment budget: "Continuing reduction in the equipment budget limits the institution with respect to implementation of new instruction technologies" (p. 27). They reported that larger class size was causing crowding in the classrooms.

Widmer State University: Widmer State University stated: "The 1989 Legislature demonstrated concerns and commitment toward Widmer State University by providing increased state funding for: faculty and staff salary adjustments, faculty development, an online Library system, additional equipment, and capital improvement projects.

The December referral had a devastating impact on our appropriations. Equipment and capital improvement budgets are virtually non-existent. Faculty development and institutional travel have been cut back substantially. Computer center equipment lease commitments will be delayed. Second year salary increases were eliminated. An administrative staff position was eliminated. Other staff positions were combined. **Music and Art faculty and students have been notified that their programs will be discontinued after the 1990-91 academic year.** There is little flexibility in our modest budget. Current funding levels do not adequately address institutional concerns regarding faculty and staff compensation, professional development, equipment upgrades, and plan renovations and repair needs" (p. 29).

State College at Fullerton: Fullerton cut back on a number of positions, both faculty and staff. They eliminated 7 F.T.E. faculty positions, 4 F.T.E. support positions, and 2 F.T.E. Physical Plant personnel because of the tax referral. The college also shifted 1 F.T.E. from the Physical Plant to Housing. They reported not having the financial resources to give faculty raises in the 90-91 year. Their equipment budget was cut substantially; over

\$300,000 was cut leaving only a little over \$100,000 remaining in the equipment budget. They also lost capital improvement monies and had to postpone repairing their steam lines.

Mayerton State College: Mayerton made a number of adjustments in salaries, increasing salaries for only three faculty members where there was critical need. **Mayerton eliminated two programs: carpentry and automotive technology.** Salaries were reduced. A librarian position was proposed to remain vacant for 1990-91, delaying participation in the Higher Education Network for Campus Libraries. Their equipment budget was cut by 36.7% or a little over \$100,000 from the level in 1989 and capital improvement spending was cut.

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