2022

Progress Report

USC THORNTON SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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INTRODUCTION

The USC Thornton School of Music was founded as the Conservatory of Music in 1884. Its first, official student council was formed in the 21st century.

While the Thornton Student Council began in the spring of 2021 with the election of its inaugural cohort, it truly began during the spring and summer of 2020. It began with crises. It began with loss. It began because we were galvanized to act.

Some of you did not deal with the height of our global and national pandemics while enrolled at USC. There are those who may not have signed the student and alumni petitions which circulated at that time. You may not have personally called upon this administration to advocate for the health and safety of its students. Perhaps you were not here to ask the faculty and administration to demonstrate their commitment to Black Lives Matter in our coursework, in our repertoire, and in our hiring practices, to name but a few of the demands.

Whether you arrived at USC afterwards or can recall those moments, please know: this university made commitments. Our school made commitments.* Our leaders made commitments. And so did the students.

The formation of the Thornton Student Council was specified in the enumeration of demands. The elected members of this council were tasked by their peers and by this administration with creating something previously unimagined in breadth and depth, equal to the task at hand and the task ahead.

As we transition the council to our student successors, we take this moment to share the efforts of our first season.

*For specifics, please visit: https://music.usc.edu/our-commitment/

MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

Jorge Padrón, Chair

Hello new (and returning) TSC members, students, staff, and faculty! It has been a momentous year for us. We broke serious ground in legitimizing ourselves in the eyes of university, established our presence with the student body, and reached out to build relationships with the other Thornton councils. That said, there's still a lot to be done.

We encourage everyone to consider their experience at Thornton. Do others share these views? Are there students that disagree or have vastly different experiences?
Are there voices that aren't in the discourse? What could Thornton do differently?
What is Thornton doing well?

We are excited for our new council roster and we believe you all can do great things.
It truly takes a village, but you're not alone on this path.

Here's to a fruitful and productive year!

Warmest Regards,
Jorge

> A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at.
> [Oscar Wilde]

COUNCIL GOALS

As this was our inaugural year with no precedent, the council prioritized the following goals for achievement.

01

PURPOSE

It was determined early on that no vision or strategy would be possible until we agreed upon why we exist and what we value.

> *Our purpose is to encourage freedom of scholarship; preserve & encourage student rights; promote a unified & cohesive student body; maintain forums to discuss our views and rights.*

02

VISION

TSC envisioned a paradigm of how access and equity were affected at Thornton via four main pillars comprising our experience of the academy. The pillars are: community, space, education, and support.

03

STRATEGY

Our council strategy flowed from the aforementioned frameworks into the following actionable goals for our elected term.

- Advocate for TSC Sustainability
- Establish Relationships
- Promote Student Engagement
- Participate in the Dean's Search
- Identify & Share Recommendations

MEASURING PROGRESS

The following chart summarizes our strategic goals, methods, and outcomes.

STRATEGY	METHOD	OUTCOME
TSC Sustainability	• Establish FY22 General Operating Support • Formulate FY23 Budget Projections (Labor & GOS)	• Secured FY22 GOS with matching FY23 support. • FY23 labor projections not authorized.
Establish Relationships	• Identify existing Thornton councils & committees; • Participate in their regularly scheduled meetings	• Liaised with Student Affairs; Dean's Cabinet; Staff, Faculty, & JEDI Councils; Operations, TA Committee.
Student Engagement	• Host Two-Day Student Mixer on Ramo Lawn SP22	• Provided space for meeting TSC officers; opportunity to cast TSC election vote; meet fellow students with snacks, prizes, & games.
Dean's Search	• Advocate for student participation in the selection process throughout the year	• Provided written & verbal feedback to the selection committee; • Participated in town halls & listening sessions.
Recommendations (Identify & Share)	• Facilitate surveys to the student population in Fall & Spring semesters; meet with students one-on-one as requested.	• Presented analysis of findings to the administration

FINDINGS

Access & equity via four pillars of academe.

Upon hearing the thoughts, questions, & experiences of students at Thornton, we understood that our work centered around access & equity through four main pillars that shape our time at the university. Who has access? It is equitable?

SPACE

Space shapes our musical identities, friendships, and skillsets by virtue of what spaces are available and accessible. Technologies in the space also contribute to or detract from our music-making and creative abilities.

COMMUNITY

Students want to feel a part of a connected community where it feels like professors, students, and staff are on a similar page.

EDUCATION

Students desire an education that is rooted in best practices pedagogically and professionally, with a flexible approach & a diversified curriculum that is musically challenging & creatively satisfying.

SUPPORT

Students are seeking support not only in terms of financial, professional, and material avenues but also in terms of wellness. Above all, students want to feel respected and safe.

NEXT STEPS

TSC looks forward to receiving the annual reports and season reflections from our colleagues in their respective councils, in the hope that we may futher our mutual understanding, transparency, and progress.

Where do we go from here?

We hope future councils & administrations will consider the following:

01 Student Experience

- Increased attention to retention & the student experience that equals our acquisition focus.
- Invest in messaging our internal constituents as much as we do our public audience by hiring an administrator for Internal Communications to assist with transparency & resource awareness.

02 Enhanced Communication

- Explore ways we can collaborate to share & access space more equitably: practice rooms, gear, research areas & stages.
- Communal space for friendships & wellbeing is vital; lounges are advocated for at TSOM & our satellite locations, such as Gateway.

03 Shared Resources

- Professional Development & Mentorship is recommended across all levels & generations; this includes TA-ships.
- We encourage transparency in the TA selection process as an avenue to securing funding.

04 Professional Development

- Release statistics on how much support is given at Thornton with respect to grants/scholarships, student loans & work study.
- Students continue to express support with & for our BIPOC/ALAANA colleagues in all areas, including & especially funding considerations.

05 Financial Support

- Offer recording access & training across departments to remain competitive with our colleagues at other schools & in the industry.
- Conferring with the Division of Contemporary Music and Performance will help diversity initiatives within the Classical Music Division & further attempts to embody the “new classical”.

06 Educational Outlook

CONCLUSION

This year's Thornton Student Council laid the groundwork for our successors to create community and enact change.

The following members served during the 2021-2022 school year.

Langdon Dearborn	Undergraduate, Music Production
Jordan DeTiege	Undergraduate, Jazz Studies
Courtney Fortune	Graduate, Arts Leadership
Elise Haukenes	Undergraduate, Strings
Nolan Juaire	Undergraduate, Classical Guitar
Adam Karelin	Undergraduate, Composition
Nova Luna	Undergraduate, Vocal Arts
Jorge Padrón	Graduate, Music Teaching and Learning
Errol Rhoden	Undergraduate, Winds & Percussion
Koji Sakano	Undergraduate, Choral Music
Laura Leigh Spillane	Graduate, Choral Music
Leaha Maria Villarreal	Graduate, Composition
Olivia Wendland	Undergraduate, Music Industry
Shelby Wong	Graduate, Keyboard Studies
Nathan Zoob	Graduate, Studio Guitar

Jorge Padrón	Chair
Leaha Maria Villarreal	Vice Chair
Koji Sakano	Officer of Records
Olivia Wendland	Public Affairs Officer
Jordan DeTiege	At-Large Undergrad Representative
Nathan Zoob	At-Large Graduate Representative

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to those who contributed their time and energies to this unprecedented effort.

Thornton School of Music Dean Robert Cutietta

Associate Dean for Student Admission & Student Affairs Phillip M. Placenti

Thornton Dean's Cabinet

Thornton Faculty, JEDI, & Staff Councils

Thornton Department of Communications

Thorton Department of Finance

Thornton Department of Operations

Thornton Department of Student Affairs

Our work continues together.

CONTACT

THORNTON STUDENT COUNCIL

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