

PERCUSSION EQUIPMENT, FACILITIES, & ORGANIZATION FOR small PROGRAMS

NATIONAL CONFERENCE on PERCUSSION PEDAGOGY
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Purpose: To provide thoughts and ideas for consideration in planning for percussion needs.

General Opening Statement: The National Conference on Percussion Pedagogy (NCPD) established the “National Standards on Percussion Equipment and Facilities” document in order to assist administrators and educators in determining inventories and facilities needed to successfully accomplish an institution’s educational mission. This document by the NCPD can be viewed at:
<http://ncpp.percussionpedagogy.com/publications.html>

I. Facilities

A. General Thoughts:

- Are there a sufficient number of areas available for **student practice**?
- Are there a sufficient number of areas available for **instrument storage**?
- Are there a sufficient number of areas available for **case storage**?
- Do the rooms that house percussion instruments meet the necessary **space requirements**, minimum door width (40 inches) required for entrance and are they in close proximity to rehearsal spaces?
- How does one store and access equipment used by students?
- Give your Section Leaders and Managers the responsibility of keeping the cabinets and equipment organized. Lock cabinets and storage areas and consider limiting key access.
- Observe the spaces throughout your facility!**
- Are there opportunities for certain areas to be used for percussion EQ instead of their current use?
 - Storage room in back of the Band Hall, classroom closets, practice rooms not being occupied or used for their intended purpose, etc.
- Are the current spaces being used at full capacity for their intended use?
- Are there areas being used for robe storage, old instruments needing repairs, risers, blackboards, etc that can find another home? Make suggestions to someone in authority.

B. If you need justification for more space:

- Prepare accurate figures for administrators:
 - In 2019-2020 there will be _____ students trying to use _____ practice rooms.
 - There are _____ hours of available time per day while the Music Building is open between _____ am to _____ pm, and _____ hours of needed space for

percussionists to practice (_____ number of hours if divided equally between the _____ rooms).

•An example for addressing the “Percussion Facilities” area:

For a program our size at _____, according to the NCPP Standards, we should have _____ practice rooms. We currently have only _____ dedicated to percussion practice and none of these spaces will accommodate a 5-octave marimba being moved in or out without removing the bars. NCPP Standards state there should be _____ spaces for storage; we have only _____ available. Moving instruments from location to location for rehearsals and performances of our more than _____ ensembles using percussion instruments creates significant wear and tear on the instruments and drastically affects their sustainability.

C. Health & Safety issues and concerns

•ALL Percussion Practice Rooms must be accessible by ALL students, including those with physical disabilities.

○ Is there an elevator available from the main level to the basement, or the 2nd level?

•Carrying large, heavy cases up and down steps several times a year for Band, Orchestra, Jazz Ensemble, Athletic Band, and Percussion Ensemble trips, tours and concerts off campus can be very hazardous.

○ Is there space on the main level of the building to store instrument cases?

○ One serious injury by student or faculty member could cost the College/University thousands of dollars in lawsuits from personal injury.

•There could be hearing issues in both the rehearsal spaces, practice rooms and the studio due to excessive sound. Are there appropriate measures in place for hearing protection in all of the rooms?

II. Equipment

A. General Suggestions:

•Keep a list of “current equipment needs” available at all times! You MUST be prepared if an administrator should ask, “what do you need right now for _____ dollars?”

○ Have two lists available: a complete prioritized list of equipment and another in decreasing dollar amounts.

•Try to reduce the moving of instruments from practice areas to large group rehearsal rooms, and from one space to another because of the wear and tear on the equipment.

•Create an “*Instrument Check-Out Form*” that students will use to sign-out instruments when moved out of the area for performances off-site.

•When other ensembles remove equipment from the percussion area (for tours, etc.), request a list of equipment being used from the section leader(s) or director before their trip.

- Create and maintain a “*Percussion Inventory*” list of all equipment; and update it often.
 - This *Inventory List* should include the following items:
Drums, cymbals, keyboards, accessories, stands (of any and all types), instrument cases, and additional supplies. Also prepare a “*Check-Out Form*” for students who may ask to “borrow” these items for a specified time.
- Create a “*To Do List*” of summer repair items that may include changing drum heads, replacing cymbal felts, bar cord, post insulators, bass drum stand straps, triangle clip cord, etc
 - Make this an on-going list that includes the date(s) of when these items were completed for future reference.
 - Don’t forget to add tightening the casters on cases, oiling latches, and replacing torn or worn-out foam, and marking/stenciling items.
- Create percussion positions similar to other ensembles that could include a Manager, Librarian, and Section Leaders for each instrumental ensemble.
 - Schedule a regular weekly meeting with the above-mentioned people to discuss issues related to the area: upcoming events (concerts, tours, major moves, etc), repairs needed, personnel issues, and set responsibilities of each person for the week ahead.

B. How does one raise funds for Equipment, outside of the regular sources?

- Take your group(s) “on the road” (could be a small trio, or larger Percussion Ensemble)
- Play for Department or school functions; a President’s Reception at Christmas, etc
- Provide youth concerts for local school programs; either in school or invite them to your campus for special “educational” concerts; initiate appropriate fees for these.
- Present a Day of Percussion (DOP) with yourself or other guest artists presenting Clinics, Workshops, Master-Classes, and/or performing with your ensemble(s).
- Find granting organizations where you can apply for grants for equipment.
- Sell older equipment to help purchase newer items.
- Solicit possible donors for your organization; audience members who may be financially “well off” that regularly attend your programs.
- Produce a *CD* for sale at performances and through your Department’s web-site.
- Use online *Crowdfunding* sources: be specific in describing your needs.
- Be creative with *social media*; create videos to share with donors including a thank you.

C. Suggestions for a Department Review (NASM, etc.):

Example statement from NASM Review concerning equipment

•Although we’ve made great strides in recent years, the current _____, percussion inventory and facilities are lacking in certain areas according to the NCPP “*National Standards*” for the amount and nature of instruments for the size department we currently have. This document considers the number of students,

ensembles, instruments and rehearsal and practice spaces in a department. The web site where this report by the NCPP can be viewed is: <http://ncpp.percussionpedagogy.com/publications.html>

•Normal annual budgets for the instrumental area do not allow for purchase of new percussion instruments with larger price tags (5-octave marimba or a set of four timpani). Please see timpani justification example – next.

D. Justification for A Special Need - *Timpani Example:*

Identify The Problem:

•To replace the well-used set of 4 timpani with new ones of the same quality would cost more than double the Music Department's entire yearly-allotted budget for new instrument purchases.

State The Situation:

•It is absolutely necessary to have a full set of working timpani in each large rehearsal room, in at least one percussion practice room, and in the percussion teaching studio.

•Our oldest set of timpani was purchased in the early 1970s and has been used the most of any of the percussion instruments in the Music Building.

•The current timpani can no longer be played in tune because they have been “played out” during that time. The bowls are out-of-round and dented, tension rods and counter-hoops are bent, and the tuning gauges are no longer working correctly (and cannot be replaced).

•These timpani in the Band Room are used by the Concert Band, Symphonic Band, Symphony Orchestra, the Percussion Ensemble, and by students for practice and in their sophomore, junior, and senior recitals.

•These timpani are taken on tour several times a year by the groups listed above, as well as the Orchestra, including to the Christmas Concerts in the Twin Cities. This creates a great demand on these instruments, which has required additional upkeep and maintenance.

•Spare parts are no longer available for these drums since they haven't been made in ___ years.

State The Solution:

•To purchase a new set of “Professional” timpani.

•This would cost about \$ 32,500 total.

•Funds could be secured from donors eliminating the need for a budget increase. This would have to be a collaborative effort working in conjunction with the Development or other offices.

Final Thought:

•Purchasing a musical instrument is the same as purchasing an automobile. There is a certain “lifespan” for each instrument purchased that must be considered.

E. Final Comment:

•Developing an outstanding percussion program involves “creating a culture” among your students AND colleagues. Each incoming student should know what is expected of him/her when they enter the program. Upper-class students should be responsible in developing and maintaining this culture. Repetition is the key to success. This is a great mentoring opportunity for your students.

III. Repair and Maintenance Items

A. Whose responsibility are percussion repairs?

•An area of concern for every program includes Repair and Maintenance issues. An annual budget for repairs and maintenance of inventory should be adequate for replacing drum heads, small instrument repairs, stand repairs, screws, nuts, bolts, bar cord, cracked bars on keyboards, bar tuning when needed, instrument covers, cracked cymbals, cymbal pads, felts, washers, and sleeves, and many more items. It should also be noted that most of these repairs are also completed by the percussion teacher or a student and not a trained professional, except for bar tuning.

•To increase the allotment of funds available for Repair and Maintenance, discuss with your administrator how the instructor and students are doing as much of the repair work themselves as possible in order to stretch your Department funds. Add up the money that you save the Department in labor costs (hours put in times the current “shop rate” -\$45 per hr. for repairs).

•Throughout the year, make a list of repair items to tackle over the summer months or during school breaks.

•A Student Manager or Graduate Assistant should have the responsibility for assisting in repairs. Allow time in your schedule to teach them proper repair and maintenance techniques. This is a skill they will need in their future positions.

•Have each person in the percussion ensemble or percussion methods class do a quick check of all instruments they are standing behind at the beginning of a rehearsal. Report necessary areas of concern to the instructor.

- Encourage students to tighten screws, check pedals, secure bass drum stand straps, check bar cord, and other things that only take a moment but keep instruments working properly.
- Consider doing simple repairs like replacing tambourine heads during a *Percussion Master Class* situation where you can present this “art” to a group of students.

B. A Repair Area Should Include The Following Supplies:

•Extra heads (especially for snare drums, concert toms, bass drum, and timpani).

- Use small cabinets with pullout drawers for quick repair items, i.e. screws, nuts, bolts, replacement bar cord, post insulators, cymbal straps & pads, felts, washers, and cymbal sleeves, and many more items.
- A Tackle/Tool Box of emergency repair items to take on tour with the ensembles or keep in a special place for student manager to use (should include most of the above items).