UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music

Guidelines for Evaluating Community-Engaged Music-making and Practice-based Research

In Academic Personnel Review

Prepared by

The Herb Alpert School of Music Committee on Community-Engaged Scholarship

with assistance from the departments of Ethnomusicology, Music, Musicology and IDPs of Global Jazz Studies and Music Industry

This document was unanimously approved by the FEC on

May 16, 2025

Background:

In AY 2021-22, the Council on Academic Personnel (CAP) recognized the importance of establishing criteria to evaluate excellence and impact of community-engaged scholarship. In doing so, CAP communicated that it understood that community-engaged scholarship in diverse fields will be expressed through a diverse range of work products in relation to diverse public partners. For this reason, CAP invited deans to organize working groups to establish criteria for evaluating community-engaged scholarship applicable to their individual school/division. This document was prepared by Jan Berry Baker, James Bass, Regina Carter-Garnett, Nina Eidsheim, and Helen Rees and builds upon the pilot documents authored in the division of Social Sciences and the School of Arts and Architecture.

Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to establish transparent criteria within the Herb Alpert School of Music so that community-engaged artists and scholars know how their work will be evaluated and that departmental peers, the dean, and the Council on Academic Personnel will have a common frame of reference for rigorously evaluating community-engaged research and teaching when it appears in faculty dossiers for academic personnel review.

Rationale:

The documents from the Division of Social Sciences and School of Arts and Architecture articulate the need for an evaluative framework, including, but not limited to, the following:

- The false historical distinction between professional artists and artists who engage with community participants with intentionality and ethical clarity.
- The endemic difficulty of evaluating community-engaged music-making and practice-based research by those unfamiliar with its process.
- The propensity of minoritized and historically underrepresented individuals to disproportionally undertake projects that utilize endogenous techniques in community-engaged music-making and practice-based research

- The inherent inequity in the transposition of evaluative structures from more historically privileged forms of artistic production onto this more recent form of artistic endeavor.
- The maintenance of ethical relations between scholars/practitioners and community members within a collaborative process as integrally linked not only to its thematic focus, but also to its generative and administrative stewardship.
- Current models of research and performance have integrated modes of creative research, teaching, and service in ways that distinguish those categories from previous modes of knowledge production.
- The fact that community-engaged research is relational and that as a result, a time commitment to building those relationships is part of the process that must be taken into consideration when evaluating timelines and productivity.

Particular to the School of Music, additional contexts and observations are necessary to engage on this topic:

1. Music-making and practice-based research is an exercise in creating primary knowledge. While all epistemological systems exist in relation to other modes of teaching andlearning, in Western culture music-making and practice-based research has traditionally been seen as inherently a thing in and of itself and as a site that generates its own discourse; this is now changing as the connectedness of the arts to other facets of life is increasingly recognized. In other world music traditions, music-making has not always been regarded as insulated from social, cultural, and historical contexts and influences.
2. Artists, researchers, and scholar-performers are aware that the activities with which they engage activate and catalyze changes in thought, belief, action, and perception, thereby affecting peoples' actions through the objects, worlds, and ideas produced.
3. As notions of musical practices and performance have expanded, so has the conception of where and how such research can take place. Music-making and research as practices have different evaluative modes than traditional research modalities.
4. Knowledge-making has become increasingly inter/multidisciplinary, with few performers and researchers working within a singular medium and within a singular evaluative framework.
5. Similarly, music-making and research has become increasingly collaborative, with shared authorship becoming increasingly prevalent.
6. Different types of engagement in practice-based research are now increasingly recognized, including hands-on work with material culture, collaborative chronicling and archiving of musical traditions of the full diversity of communities locally and further afield, collaborative work on sound and video recordings of all types of community artists and groups, and new creativeeducational approaches that encompass dissemination of diverse traditions.
7. Some believe that peer-review within the performing arts is most evident in non-trade/professional publications such as daily newspapers or popular periodicals. Simultaneously, the recognition of the significance of practice-based research (and all its related fields of inquiry) has expanded the peer-review process to artistic and academic peers. Many performers and scholars seek peer validation or review from the communities with whom they engage and mutually impact, and the value created by and for that community should be respected as expert evaluation of the project.

8. Some believe that peer review within the arts is most evident in major-label, commercially released, commercially viable recordings. With the proliferation of artist self-produced, self-released content, the recognition of important archival, limited-release recordings of performances and research should be recognized as major additions to be evaluated; ensuring that the intentions and goals of the community collaborator are honored is central, present, and defined in any such recording.

Within the above frames, community-engaged music-making and practice-based research raise a distinct set of issues particular to how creative activities exist within the academy, which the current guidelines within the Call are insufficient to address. Consequently, we offer the below set of evaluative criteria for community-engaged music making and research. An additional goal within this document is to also allow for artist-scholars working in more relational and reciprocal models within a community context to fully engage in their work and no longer be asked to undertake a second set of creative actions by translating their more "non-traditional" music-making and research into the historically favored and recognized outputs within the academy. As our fields change over the next years and decades, it is vital that our tenure and promotion evaluation processes adapt accordingly.

Criteria and indicators for evaluating community-engaged music making and practice-based research

We recommend the following as the criteria for evaluating community-engaged music-making and practice-based research, mindful of the variation in contexts, the breadth of faculty work, and departmental promotion and tenure guidelines. We note that these criteria are meant to be enabling for community-engaged faculty, not onerous. The indicators are intended to be expansive and inclusive so that faculty dossiers can be prepared and read with appropriate context. Faculty would not be expected to meet all the indicators in each area. Many of the criteria overlap with the document from the School of Arts and Architecture document, which has been amended to include language specific to fields in music.

Criteria	Indicators
1. Clear Academic & Community Impact Goals Objectives defined Clear purpose and focus of inquiry	**The artist-scholar provides evidence of clear goals such as—** ● Clearly stating the basic purpose of the work and its value for the discipline(s) AND the public good ● Documenting the alignment between the artist-scholar's role, departmental priorities, and university mission ● Defining goals and objectives that are realistic and achievable ● Identifying significant intellectual questions in the discipline AND for the community/external stakeholders with whom the artist-scholar is partnered

	● Articulating a coherent program of research and objectives ● Articulating pedagogical lessons to utilize for teaching and student learning
2. Adequate Preparation in Content Area and Grounding in the Community Preparation and knowledge about developments in the field of study and relevant community context	**The artist-scholar provides evidence of adequate preparation and grounding in community partnerships such as—** ● Investing time and effort in developing reciprocal and mutual relationships with community partnerships ● Bringing appropriate skills to the collaboration ● Participating in training and professional development that builds skills and competencies in community-engaged music making and knowledge-making ● Understanding the norms and expectations of high-quality collaboration and partnership
3. Appropriate Methods: Rigor and Community Engagement Rigor is evident in research design, data collection, interpretation, and reporting of results Rigor is maintained, or even enhanced, through community-engaged approaches	**The artist-scholar provides evidence of artistic rigor informed/enriched by engagement such as—** ● Refining a research question, or confirming its validity, through collaboration or co-generation with community/external partner(s) ● Using methods appropriate to the goals, questions, and context of the work and providing rationale for election of methods ● Modifying procedures in response to changing circumstances ● Engaging the community/external partner as a partner/collaborator(s)in developing and/or improving the artistic project ● Extending and broadening the dissemination of study findings through partnership with community members and organizations ● Enhancing curriculum by incorporating updated information from community members critical to student learning of course material ● Deepening and contextualizing the learning experience in a course by involving community experts in design and implementation ● Revising curriculum and community placement with community partner based on student feedback and community partner observation
4. Significant Results: Impact on the Discipline/Field and the Community	**The artist-scholar provides evidence of significant results/impact such as—**

Beneficial impact as determined in collaboration with the communities/community members in which the research is conducted. Development of ongoing and reciprocal relationships with community partners is one concrete impact Assessment of knowledge created (in field, discipline, community)	● Achieving the intended or notable goals, impact, or change consistent with the purpose and target of the work over a period of time ● Contributing to new knowledge in the field/discipline through publication in curated venues, peer-reviewed journals, other artistic outlets or performance contexts, and other nontraditional forms ● Contributing to and benefiting the community/ external partner ● Making progress towards social equity and/or systemic change that promote the public good ● Securing increased funding for additional research, program implementation, and/or community partners ● Increasing capacity of community members/organizations to advocate for themselves ● Adding consequentially to the discipline on issues that matter to the external partners and the community ● Opening up additional areas for further exploration, inquiry, and/or collaboration ● Ability of the work, in various venues or formats, to stimulate intellectual conversation that advances the discipline or field ● Ability of the work, in various venues and formats relevant for the community partners, to stimulate conversation within a community or general public ● Advancing knowledge/understanding for the community in which the work is situated, and discussing its generalizability/transferability to other populations or as a model that can be further investigated in other settings
5. Effective Presentation and Communication to Artistic and Community Audiences Artist-scholars effectively communicate with appropriate audiences and subject their ideas to independent review	**The artist-scholar provides evidence of effective presentation and dissemination such as—** ● Communicating with/disseminating to appropriate artistic and public audiences consistent with the mission of the institution • Presenting the work in appropriate venues with significant curatorial practices; publishing research results or teaching innovations in peer-reviewed, practitioner, or professional journals, and other non-traditional forms/venues ● Using appropriate forums and presenting information and materials in forms that community stakeholders and external partners find accessible and understandable

	• Disseminating information through media used/read by community members • Producing documents directed towards service providers, policymakers, or legislators • Creating and inspiring new conversations (e.g., write-ups, references, etc.) in BOTH public and music spheres ● Communicating outcomes of community- engaged work in collaboration with community/external partners. Acknowledging that in many contexts this may involve a significant output not in English and recognizing that this is not a simple act of translation, but an ethical approach of access to a non-English speaking community. This might also include creating access for differently abled bodies. ● Presenting community-based exhibitions in forms consistent within a particular community. This may include group exhibits or events by community members or other non-traditional forms and outputs. It is important that information always be presented with clarity and integrity.
6. Reflective Critique: Lessons Learned to Improve the Music Making or Practice-based Research and Community Engagement Reflective critique of community partnerships Evaluation of partnership successes and failures	**The artist-scholar provides evidence of reflective critique such as—** ● Critically evaluating the work with appropriate evidence ● Seeking evaluations from community members and using those evaluations to learn from and direct future work ● Changing project/course design or line of inquiry based on feedback and lessons learned ● Being involved in a local, state, national, or international dialogue related to the work ● Engaging in personal reflection concerning, for example, issues of privilege or racism
7. Collaborative Leadership and Personal Contribution The artist-scholar's work has earned a reputation for rigor, impact, relevance, and the capacity to advance the discipline or community agenda	**The artist-scholar provides evidence of leadership and personal contribution such as—** ● Describing how the work has been recognized, used, or built on by peers ● Describing how the work has been recognized, used, or built upon by community members, practitioners, professionals in the field, and external experts, including positively impacting the university's relationship with community and stakeholder groups

	● Providing comments or reviews (solicited/unsolicited, formal/informal) from academic and non- academic colleagues, peers, and experts ● Receiving awards or letters of appreciation from community-based organizations for contributions to the community ● Receiving invitations to present to professional society meetings and conferences, to present to community audiences, to testify before legislative bodies, to appear in the media, or to serve on advisory or policymaking committees ● Mentoring students, early career faculty, and community partners
8. Socially and Ethically Responsible Conduct of Research and Teaching The work is conducted with honesty and integrity The artist-scholar's work is conducted in a way that fosters respectful relationships with students, community participants, external partners, and peers	**The artist-scholar provides evidence of consistently ethical behavior such as—** ● Socially responsible conduct of research, teaching, and outreach in creative activity, writings, discourse, approach to music-making, and nature of collaboration; cultivating the conduct of sound research techniques, creativity, and appropriate engaged pedagogies that result in meaningful and beneficial contributions to communities ● Approaching communities as mutual partners to foster trusting, equitable relationships ● Engaging communities in a respectful manner ● Recognizing and valuing community knowledge systems and incorporating them into the research process and courses as appropriate ● Appropriately involving community/external partners in writing and reviewing products and acknowledging their work