**TO: Michael Bebawy, President of the Student Senate**

**FROM: The Society of Musical Arts (SOMA) and the NJIT Music Committee**

 **Erica Holzer, SOMA President**

 **Colin Pope, Katherine Coombs , SOMA Co-Vice Presidents**

 **Charles R. Brooks, Ph.D., Music Initiative Committee Representative**

**SUBJECT: Proposal to Support the Open-Access Music Room and Student Musical Performances**

**DATE: October 13, 2016**

The Society of Musical Arts (SOMA) in collaboration with the NJIT Music Initiative Committee, and on behalf of all student musicians at NJIT, request funding from the Student Senate to make the SOMA open-access music room (B-49) and our three music ensembles functional and sustainable into the future. The funds requested will be used to purchase necessary storage units for instruments in the music room and provide additional instruments needed for general student use and for our three student performance musical groups: the string ensemble, the wind ensemble, and the jazz ensemble.

**History of NJIT Music Initiative**

SOMA and the NJIT Music Committee

In 2012, students Matt Lavine and Eric Holzer formed the Society of Musical Arts (SOMA) and the initial small membership began to perform at a variety of NJIT events at the request of Campus Center and other NJIT entities. In 2013, a university-wide music committee was established to collaborate with SOMA to explore starting a music initiative that would provide opportunities for the many students who expressed interest to play in performing ensembles.

2013 Music Survey

That year, a survey administered to the student body showed over 800 students had musical experience in high school and wished to play in a band or orchestra if their schedules permitted.

Formation of the Wind, String, and Jazz Ensembles

In the Fall of 2014, with a small grants from the Bergen Foundation and the Rauch Family Foundation, the three music groups were started. Three professional conductors—one for each ensemble-- were invited to initiate the program and well-attended concerts have been performed at the end of the Fall 2014, Spring 2015, and Fall 2015, and Spring 2016 semesters. Smaller instrumental student groups have also played at open houses, alumni events and other venues, responding to many requests. Furthermore, the NJIT Athletic Department has requested us to form a Pep Band which to enhance school spirit at basketball games and other sporting events. All these events have given our student musical groups wide visibility, raising NJIT’s profile on campus and beyond.

Playing for Credit; More Students Playing

In Spring 2015, three academic music class sections (THTR 220/221, sections 001, 002, and 003) were formed and approved by the provost, allowing student performers, if they wished, to register for one credit per semester, up to three semesters. This allowed us to pay the conductors as adjunct instructors. This semester, with the addition of the freshman musicians, 75 students are playing in the wind ensemble, 40 in the string ensemble, and 40 are in the jazz ensemble.

Fall 2016 Incoming Freshmen Orientation Survey

During summer orientations an online survey was sent to all incoming freshmen. The survey indicated over 85% of the responding new freshmen answered “ yes” to the question : “Do you feel that having opportunities to play music with others and having a music program on the campus would enhance your experience at NJIT?” Furthermore, 159 of the incoming Fall 2016 freshmen indicated that they played an instrument and would like to participate in one of our music groups if their schedules permitted. Over 100 incoming 2016 freshmen have joined SOMA and one of the performing groups so far, which began rehearsals the first week of this semester. Others plan to join in the spring after their first hectic semester at the university.

**Student Senate Support of SOMA and the Music Initiative; Security of Room**

In Spring 2016, the Student Senate provided funding to create an open-access music room to give NJIT musicians a place to practice and explore their musical interests, and some basic instruments were purchased with this funding. Campus Center assigned room B-49 to SOMA for this purpose and university administration provided funding for work-study student monitors so that the room can be open daily from 9:00 AM to 9:00 PM. The room has also been fitted with a security system to make sure the equipment there is safe and only selected individuals can open it. The room will be open starting the third week of the Fall semester. Since the success of our music initiative and the enthusiastic response of new freshmen have been so overwhelming, additional instruments are needed to fulfill the needs of our students and storage units are needed to securely organize the room.

**Benefit to NJIT Students and Beyond**

The instruments, equipment, and supplies that have been and will be purchased will be accessible to all NJIT student musicians. Our intention is to make the instruments as widely available to NJIT students as possible, whether they join one of the performing ensembles or not. Furthermore, all NJIT students benefit from having a musical program that enhances campus life through concerts and other performances during the year.

SOMA and the NJIT music initiative have enhanced the quality of life for students, faculty, staff, and friends who visit our campus. Many outside guests, including members of Board of Trustees and family members of the student musicians, expressed their excitement about the music initiative and commented on how it enhances the image of the university. As our provost said after the Fall 2015 concert, “It’s a miracle.” This proposal asksfor your consideration for funding that will allow this “miracle” to continue and benefit even more students at the university

**Details of the Funding Request**

This funding request will give more NJIT students access to instruments they play but do not own. This especially includes larger instruments that are often too expensive for students to purchase themselves, but are necessary in a band or orchestra. Besides the instruments listed below, storage units and folders will allow us to professionally organize and secure the equipment and music NJIT owns. The total request is for $24,322 as follows:

**SOMA/MUSIC INITIATIVE REQUEST –October, 2016**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **QNTY** | **NAME** | **MAKE** | **VENDOR** | **UNIT** | **TOTAL** |
| 1 | OBOE | SELMER | NEMC | $1530 | $1530 |
| 1 | BASSOON | FOX | NEMC |  4263 |  4263 |
| 1 | XYLOPHONE | YAMAHA | NEMC |  2312 |  2312 |
| 1 | 5-PIECE PRACTICE DRUM SET | REMO | NEMC |  338 |  338 |
| 1 | LOW VOLUME CYMBAL SET | ZILDJIAN | NEMC |  250 |  250 |
| 4 BOXES OF 6 | MUSIC STANDS | MANHASSET | NEMC |  179 |  716 |
| 2 | MUSIC STAND RACKS | NAMHASSET | NEMC |  221 |  442 |
| 1 | EUPHONIUM | DILLON | DILLON |  1255 |  1255 |
| 1  | BASS CLARINET | LEBLANC | NEMC |  1800 |  1800 |
|  | ASSORTED HAND PERCUSSION AND MALLETS |  |   |  200 |  200 |
| 80 | MUSIC FOLIOS | DEEP RIVER | JW PEPPER |  25 | 2000 |
| 3 | INSTRUMENT STORAGE CABINETS | WENGER | WENGER | 1847 | 5541 |
|  |  |  |  | **TOTAL** | **20,647** |