

# British Columbia Post-Secondary Music Forum

## Annual BCCAT Music Articulation Meeting

### Minutes

**Date:** Wednesday, May 7, 2025, 10 am – 3:30 pm

**Location:** Vancouver Community College, Broadway Campus A, Room 5043

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://vcc.zoom.us/j/61254024134?pwd=xdO66H04Pg3xOKatKGitHMocLkZrQ.1>

**Recorded by:** Mijoo Lee (VCC)

**Meeting Called to Order at 10 am.**

#### 1. Introductions

- Jim Palmer, Chair of BCPSMF, Douglas College, opened the session and welcomed everyone.
- Territorial acknowledgements: Emily Logan from VCC
- Institutional Greeting: Emily Logan from VCC
- **Participants:**
  - Mauricio Pauly, SFU
  - Janette Tilley, Douglas College
  - David Visentin, VCM/Camosun College
  - Eva Hodge, Capilano University
  - Alexis Luko, University of Victoria
  - Adrian Verdejo, Douglas College
  - Elle Ting, BCCAT
  - Emily Logan, VCC
  - Bernie Arai, VCC
  - Hazel Fairbairn, Douglas College
  - Eva Hodge, Capilano University
  - Siri Olesen, Capilano University
  - Sasha Koerbler, VIU
  - Kathryn Anderson, UBC
  - Amy Farahbakhsh, UBC
  - Melody Diachun, Selkirk College (online)
  - Ruth Enns, VAM (online)
- **Regrets:** Karen Nakajima, CapU; Nicole Hurst, VAM

#### 2. Purpose of the Meeting

This articulation meeting was designed not as a formal decision-making venue but rather as a collaborative space to share developments and challenges in institutional operations, curriculum reforms, and the provincial credit transfer system. The flexible structure allowed for timely updates, spontaneous additions, and the exchange of current practices among faculty members across institutions.

### 3. Meeting Structure

The agenda, circulated in advance, served as a framework but was not strictly fixed. The meeting included:

- Summary review of the 2024 articulation meeting
- Institutional Reports with program updates and enrollment trends
- BCCAT policy changes and digital system updates
- Student recruitment issues, especially those affecting international students
- Presentations on outcome-based curriculum reforms
- Feedback and concerns regarding the Transfer Credit System (TCS)
- Planning overview for the 2025 JAM conference

Participants were encouraged to raise additional topics throughout the meeting, making the structure adaptive and participant driven.

### 4. Institutional Reports (Round-Table Format)

Each institution presented updates reflecting their current context, curricular priorities, staffing developments, and student needs.

- **Simon Fraser University (SFU):** SFU welcomes students eager to explore alternative paths in music and sound, emphasizing flexibility and individual growth. Faculty consists of five professors within the School of Contemporary Art, with expertise in music, production design, and academics. While the courses may not have direct equivalents elsewhere, students are encouraged to shape their learning experiences through interviews and conversations. The program seeks curious and innovative students who are open to exploring interdisciplinary approaches.
- **Douglas College**

Music Diploma, Foundation for Music Therapy Studies, and Basic Musicianship Certificate Programs: The College continues to face space challenges, with shared spaces in performing arts and plans for a new mastering suite set to open this fall. Enrollment is lower for September 2025 so far, but the music diploma program applications are continuing and faculty are exploring ways to offer more flexible pathways for students, including combining preparatory and diploma-level courses. Staff changes include the retirement of longtime piano division head Barrie Barrington, new contract voice instructor Sylvia Zaradic, and contract choir instructor Kemuel Wong, while the College also seeks a replacement for the Pop Guitar and Voice Basics instructor. The College is finalizing its comprehensive program review and had a successful inaugural Indigenous Artist in Residence program, featuring Russell Wallace, who worked with students and faculty on workshops and performances.

Music Technology Program: Hazel Fairbairn, coordinator for Music Technology and the Applied Audio Advanced Certificate at Douglas College, shared updates specific to the MTD perspective. Applications remain strong, with over 90 applicants for just 26 seats, indicating high demand for a program rooted in a non-traditional, production-oriented perspective. The new Applied Audio program, effectively a third-year specialization, has slower enrollment due to its entry requirements and challenges in marketing to non-high school audiences, though a second cohort of 13

students has just begun. The college is moving ahead with plans to develop a full four-year music technology degree, now focused solely on audio rather than merging with stagecraft. Progress continues with a specialized mastering suite, which will support advanced coursework in mastering, post-production, and Atmos mixing, with strong institutional support for this ambitious facility.

- **Victoria Conservatory of Music (VCM):** This year, the Conservatory is undergoing significant changes, with many senior leaders, including Dean Stephen Green, leaving for career shifts, creating a sense of transition. Tricia Baldwin has been confirmed as the new Dean. The Conservatory, in partnership with Camosun College, faces challenges from the college's \$11 billion deficit and ongoing restructuring, which has caused stress and anxiety across the institution. As part of the restructuring, music has been moved to a new school called Arts and Access, causing some discontent among faculty who feel the department has been downgraded. Despite these challenges, the transition is being managed as transparently as possible, with clear communication from the president's office.
- **Capilano University (CapU):** CapU is currently undergoing a comprehensive curriculum overhaul with DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) as the guiding framework. The curriculum committee, comprising faculty from multiple disciplines, aims to launch the redesigned program in 2026. Siri Olesen from Capilano University shared updates on the Music Therapy and Jazz departments, as well as the ongoing redesign of the Music Diploma program. Stephen Williams is retiring as long-time coordinator of Music Therapy, with Susan Summers stepping into the role. The Jazz department continues to thrive with strong enrollment and effective outreach, expecting two solid cohorts this year. Due to a six-month hold from Academic Initiatives and Planning, the Music Diploma Program had to shift from a full program redesign to a more limited redevelopment, which restricts the extent of changes but still allows for curriculum updates. While enrollment in the Music Diploma program remains a concern, faculty are hopeful that the redesign and continued recruitment efforts will help attract more students by offering a distinct and appealing program.
- **University of Victoria (UVic):** Alexis Luko, director of the School of Music, announced the successful passing of a revamped core curriculum, focusing on decolonization and flexibility for transfer agreements, to be implemented in September 2025. Despite two years of budget cuts, the school has made new hires, including Marion Newman and Lauren McCall, and received funding for Black and Indigenous scholar positions. The Faculty of Fine Arts also appointed a new Associate Dean Indigenous as part of a university-wide initiative. While traditionally known for Western classical music, the school now offers jazz studio lessons, ensembles, and relevant theory/history courses, allowing students to focus on Jazz. Marketing for the new jazz offerings will be updated in the future.
- **Vancouver Community College (VCC):** Emily, the department head at VCC Music, shared several updates about the program. While the school faced budget cuts in other areas, such as the language instruction program for newcomers, the music department was fortunate to avoid cuts, maintaining steady enrollment and applications. There were no retirements this year, but several new faculty members joined, including Michael Kolk for classical guitar, Risa Tonita for preparatory musicianship and music history, Katherine Evans for trumpet, Emma Ringrose for oboe, and Noah French Nolan for Jazz piano. Bernie has taken over as assistant department head while Dr. Morgan is on educational leave. The program is undergoing a redesign, focusing on de-sequencing and decolonization, with plans to transition from a two-year diploma and bachelor's program to a four-year degree, with options for a diploma and community music appreciation exit points.

- **University of British Columbia (UBC):** The school had a strong year for recruitment, receiving high-quality applications and building a healthy incoming class, with a notable focus on attracting more international students. Academic Advisor Amy Farahbakhsh shared that a major curriculum renewal is underway, aiming to better align credit and contact hours, reduce student workload, and provide more elective options—though changes won't take effect until September 2026. There's also ongoing discussion about making some core requirements optional to give students more flexibility in theory, history, and interdisciplinary studies. Faculty changes include the retirement of Keith Hamel, leaving music technology courses to be covered by sessional while future staffing is determined, and the composition area is also looking to expand amidst broader hiring challenges.
- **Selkirk College:** Selkirk College's Contemporary Music & Technology program just celebrated its 35th year, having focused on contemporary genres and technology since its inception. The program offers instruction in a wide range of styles - excluding classical music and remains a Pro Tools-certified school. It has a strong transfer relationship with Berklee College of Music and is working to simplify transfer options within Canada, where many students prefer to complete their bachelor's degrees. The one-year Advanced Diploma is growing in popularity, attracting not only Selkirk graduates but also students from other institutions like McGill. Despite broader college budget pressures, the program remains stable, with increased application numbers for September and renewed leadership under the current chair.

## 5. BCCAT Presentation

Elle Ting, a Policy Advisor from the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT), gave a thorough presentation on operational guidelines, funding, platform updates, and research initiatives relevant to articulation committees.

- **Operational Principles and Budgeting:** BCCAT emphasized that institutional funding (not PD budgets) must be used to support articulation meetings, aligning with provincial Ministry directives. Misunderstandings on this issue remain common and were clarified.
- **Resource Access and Transparency:** Each committee has access to a dedicated page on the BCCAT website, where they can upload meeting notes, agendas, and shared resources. A synchronized Google Calendar helps all committees keep track of event timelines.
- **Special Project Funding:** Up to \$15,000 per year is available for initiatives such as curriculum alignment studies, pilot transfer models, and learning outcome mapping. Elle noted that arts-related committees rarely apply and encouraged more proposals.
- **TCS (Transfer Credit System) Modernization:** System upgrades include improved routing logic, expanded equivalency handling, and integration with ONCAT (Ontario). Future tools include support for block transfers, micro-credentials, and reverse-transfer pathways via the Pathways Tool (currently in testing).
- **Current Research Projects:**
  - Correlation between tuition burden and student willingness to transfer
  - Interprovincial and international equivalency policy frameworks
  - Functional review of Letters of Permission (LoP)

- Case studies on Indigenous learner transfer success
- **Event Announcement – JAM 2025:** To be held November 6–7, with Day 1 fully online and Day 2 in hybrid format at Vancouver’s Paradox Hotel. Feedloop will replace Whova as the new event platform.
- **Closing Recommendations:** Elle asked that feedback, system challenges, and policy concerns be sent directly to BCCAT so they can inform future changes.

## 6. Recruitment and Enrollment Discussion

This section summarized common trends and challenges shared across institutions:

- **Early Engagement:** There has been a surge in inquiries from students in grades 8–10, attributed to changes in high school arts program structures. Institutions like VCC, UBC, Douglas, and CapU report growing early interest.
- **Application Challenges:** A decline in application literacy among prospective students has led to frequent submission errors, missed auditions, and incomplete portfolios. This is seen as a generational gap in procedural awareness.
- **International Enrollment Decline:** Although interest remains high, actual enrollment among international students is falling due to delays in PGWP (Post-Graduation Work Permit) policy announcements. UVic and CapU reported conversion rates under 30%.
- **Increase in Adult Learners:** Students in their 30s–50s are enrolling in greater numbers, primarily for career change or personal development. These learners require flexible formats and practical curricula.
- **Marketing Gaps:** CapU and VCM encountered problems with promotional materials misaligned with program content due to weak internal communication. In contrast, VCC is emphasizing direct outreach from faculty to high school music teachers and band directors.

## 7. Curriculum Reform and Outcome-Based Design

- UVic demonstrated how outcome-based design helped align pedagogical views and streamline departmental consensus.
- Douglas and CapU discussed integrating non-Western music and applied practices to support curricular decolonization.
- Strategies for reconciling resistance among faculty were discussed, including building structural incentives and faculty agency.

## 8. Feedback on Transfer Credit System (TCS)

Institutions provided real-world examples of TCS limitations and process inefficiencies:

- **Code Misclassification:** Douglas has two music courses labeled as “PEFA” (Performing and Fine Arts). This led to VCC’s music department not seeing the transfer request because it was sent to a different VCC department.
- **Routing Failures and Staff Absence:** Requests were sometimes sent to incorrect

departments or remained unaddressed when reviewers were unavailable. UVic shared that some denials were caused not by ineligibility but by missed review windows.

- **Expertise Gaps:** Courses were occasionally evaluated by faculty unfamiliar with the subject matter. Music, with its subdivisions in composition, theory, and jazz, is particularly prone to mismatched evaluations.
- **Student Misconceptions:** Many students mistakenly assume that institutions will handle credit transfers automatically. Transfers must be initiated by the sending institution.
- **Technical Constraints:** While individual course mapping is supported, block transfers are not yet functional. BCCAT's Pathways Tool, set for release in 2025, aims to address this.
- **Policy Response:** BCCAT is actively collecting feedback and piloting auto-routing improvements for better efficiency.

## 9. JAM 2025 Overview

- **Date & Venue:** November 6 (online) and November 7 (hybrid) at Paradox Hotel, Vancouver. In-person attendance capped at 150–180.
- **Platform:** Feedloop will replace Whova. Features include live chat, session switching, and document viewing without requiring account registration.
- **Registration:** Opens early September. Early sign-up is recommended. A waitlist will be used to manage cancellations.
- **Program Highlights:** Sessions on transfer credit innovations, micro-credentialing, and indigenization are planned. Attendance from Ministry and BCCAT staff is likely.
- **Purpose:** JAM is designed as a space for comparative learning, policy experimentation, and network building among BC's academic communities.

## 10. Chair Election

- Jim Palmer has completed his 2-year term as Chair of the BCPSMF. Members were invited to nominate themselves or others for the 2-year chair position. No nominations were brought forward. Jim nominated himself to continue with a second 2-year term. It went to a vote, and all were in favour of Jim beginning a second 2-year term as Chair of BCPSMF.

## 11. Closing Remarks

Jim Palmer offered closing reflections:

- **Acknowledgments:** Expressed gratitude to attendees for their perseverance and commitment to inclusive, student-centered education.
- **Ongoing Collaboration:** Emphasized that long-term issues—such as TCS upgrades, flexible curricular models, and international policy adaptation—require continuous joint effort.
- **Next Steps:** A post-meeting summary and feedback form will be distributed by the end of May. Institutional responses are requested before the end of term.

- **Vision:** The meeting reaffirmed the role of educators in fostering adaptable, inclusive practices, and modeled a collective approach to educational transformation.

### **11. Next meeting**

Location: SFU (Camosun College as backup)

Date: First Wednesday in May

Meeting adjourned at 3:30pm