



News Release

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Century College to Offer New Music Degree in Fall

Starting this fall, Century College will be offering a new Associate in Fine Arts (AFA) in Music degree.

Designed for students who want to start training for a career in music or music education, the AFA in Music degree includes both beginning and advanced courses in music theory, ear training and music history. Students also receive intensive training on their main instrument, and rehearse and perform in ensembles.

Any student with an interest in music and a high school degree is eligible to seek the new AFA degree. Century College music department Prof. Elliot Wilcox said the college surveyed students from high schools in the North St. Paul, Maplewood, Oakdale, Mahtomedi, White Bear and Stillwater areas and determined that there was more than enough student interest to begin offering the new music degree at Century.

Century student Katie Churchill, 20, of North St. Paul is thrilled about the new degree and plans to become one of the first students to earn the AFA. A member of the Century College Choir, Churchill takes vocal lessons and would like to pursue a career in music therapy. She plans to transfer to either Minnesota State University, Mankato or the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

“A lot of people think you have to go straight to a four-year school to get a degree, but you end up paying so much more,” said Churchill. “Elliot is such a great teacher, and I learned a ton my first year. There’s a big difference between singing in a high school choir and taking a college-level music class. Elliot really makes things understandable.”

Wilcox, a North St. Paul resident, predicted that the new music degree will attract significant numbers of students, particularly students who want to be music educators. He noted that the need for music educators is growing in Minnesota and across the country.

Century is the only two-year college with an orchestra, and it also has a choir, band, jazz combo and jazz ensemble. The college also has invested in new performance pianos, classroom and practice pianos, and electric pianos. “We are really geared up to accommodate the serious-minded music student with fine instruments and a technologically up-to-date classroom setting,” said Wilcox.

He noted that class sizes for the music degree are relatively small with 15 to 30 people in a class. In addition to their music classes, students also enroll in general education classes as part of their liberal arts education. To facilitate the smooth transfer of credits, an articulation agreement is in place with Minnesota State University, Mankato. The AFA in Music degree also may transfer in part or in its entirety to other baccalaureate institutions.

An advisory committee of community members, including three area high school music directors, an orchestra director and a retired Century music professor, has advised the music department on its curricular offerings.

“Being able to offer this degree is a big deal for our department,” said Wilcox. “We have high hopes that we will be serving many more music students in our area.”



Photo: Prof. Elliot Wilcox and Century music student Katie Churchill of North St. Paul.