

Organizational Leadership Development:

Investing in Students

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Abstract

Leadership development is an essential task of every organization. This 30th Anniversary paper reflects the development of international student involvement at the World Federation of Music Therapy (WFMT) as a means of building vigorous leadership. Between 2008 and 2014, the process ranged from initial inquiries to the culminating establishment of WFMT's first *Assembly of Student Delegates*. Project examples illustrate students' enthusiasm and engagement in organizational tasks and events while demonstrating their growth as potential leaders. Future perspectives briefly address current global leadership development issues and give an outlook on how WFMT might be proactive in addressing these challenges. Testimonials of two student leaders who now serve in leadership roles on the WFMT Council demonstrate that leadership development matters to both WFMT and the students involved. Thus, investing in students means investing in the future of the profession and WFMT.

Keywords: WFMT; music therapy; organizational leadership development; students; global leadership; multicultural; world congress.

Resumen

El desarrollo del liderazgo es una tarea esencial en toda organización. Este artículo sobre el 30 Aniversario refleja el desarrollo de la participación de los estudiantes internacionales en la Federación Mundial de Musicoterapia (WFMT) como medio de construir un liderazgo vigoroso. Entre 2008 y 2014, el proceso varió desde consultas iniciales hasta la culminación en la creación de la primera Asamblea de Delegados de Estudiantes de la WFMT. Ejemplos de proyectos ilustran el entusiasmo y el compromiso de los estudiantes en tareas de organización y eventos, al tiempo que demuestran su crecimiento como líderes potenciales. Perspectivas de futuro abordan brevemente los temas de desarrollo de liderazgo global actual y muestran un panorama sobre cómo la WFMT podría ser proactiva para abordar estos desafíos. Los testimonios de dos estudiantes, que ahora ocupan posiciones de liderazgo en el Consejo de la WFMT, demuestran que las cuestiones de desarrollo de liderazgo son importantes tanto para la WFMT como para los estudiantes involucrados. Por lo tanto, la inversión en los estudiantes significa invertir en el futuro de la profesión y en la WFMT.

Organizational Leadership Development: Investing in Students

"There is almost no limit to the potential of an organization that recruits good people, raises them up as leaders and continually develops them."

~John C. Maxwell (2001)

Leadership development is one of the most important tasks for growing the World Federation of Music Therapy (WFMT) and leading it into the future. Why? Leaders are the ones who have a vision, take initiative, convince members, create partnerships, identify needs, develop proposals, make decisions, organize implementations, solve problems, take responsibility – and foremost, are committed to making things happen (Workgroup for Community Health and Development, 2014). An international organization such as WFMT needs many strong intergenerational, multicultural, and global leaders with various skill sets and perspectives who share WFMT's vision, responsibilities, and commitment. Therefore, **investing in students as the next generation of professional music therapist is essential for sustaining WFMT and bringing creativity and innovation today that will make an impact tomorrow.**

First Impulse

In 2008, the American Music Therapy Association Students (AMTAS) expressed a growing interest in learning about music therapy worldwide, how to get involved with WFMT, programs for studying abroad and scholarships. At the same time, the 2008-2011 WFMT Council was experiencing a generational shift, leaving the Council with the dilemma of how to develop organizational leadership for the next decade. From the collaborative efforts of both groups, the "AMTA Students Go International" project was born, asking students

and their advisors in all regions of the United States of America, the following three basic questions:

1. What would you be interested in learning about music therapy worldwide?
2. How do you see yourself getting involved on the international level?
3. What ideas and projects come to your mind?

During the 2009 AMTA Annual Conference, the WFMT Council held a roundtable for students (WFMT, 2009) to respond to their ideas and suggestions with potential WFMT projects and student involvement. As an immediate outcome of this discussion, the WFMT Council filled the *Executive Assistant* position with a student leader, designed a *WFMT for Students* page on the website, created the first *World Congress of Music Therapy Scholarship for Stu-*



FIGURE 1. WFMT Council members discussing international student involvement during a roundtable at the 2009 AMTA Annual Conference in San Diego, California, USA.

Roundtable Presenters (from left to right): Dr. Byungchuel Choi (World Congress Organizer), Dr. Petra Kern (President), Dr. Mary Boyle (Research & Ethics Chair), Tian Gao (Regional Liaison, Western Pacific), Dr. Gene Behrens (Regionals Liaison, North America), Gabrielle Tee (Executive Assistant), Dr. Joerg Fachner (Publications Chair), Dr. Annie Heiderscheit (Secretary/Treasurer)

dents, and established two new membership categories – one for *Student Organizational Members* and one for *Student Individual Members*. AMTAS joined WFMT as the first student organizational member in 2010 followed by the European Association for Music Therapy Students (EAMTS) shortly thereafter.

Development and Growth

The first student *Executive Assistant* (i.e., Gabriel Tee) gained a deeper understanding of WFMT's mission and work through participation in all aspects of operation and management of the organization. She also received mentoring, and support from the WFMT President and Council Members. These experiences also prepared her to assume specific leadership roles. At the beginning, the role of the student *Executive Assistant* was designed and intended:

- To facilitate the interactions among students worldwide,
- To represent students' opinions and ideas on the Council, and
- To maintain the *WFMT for Students web page*.

The following three initial student projects, speak to the immediate interests of students and continue today 1) *Window to the World* (i.e., multimedia stories reflecting students' international music therapy experiences), 2) *Info Cards* (i.e., business-size cards answering frequently asked questions about music therapy in over 20 languages), and 3) *Connect* (i.e., a global peer network aiming to connect students across the world to foster cross-cultural learning).

To increase student involvement across WFMT's eight regions, the 2008-2011 WFMT President (Dr. Petra Kern) and second student *Executive Assistant* (Rose Fienman) established the first WFMT *Assembly of Students Delegates*. Similar to WFMT's *Regional Liaisons*, seven motivated student leaders were appointed to serve as representatives and connection points for students in their region (i.e., Africa, Australia/New Zealand, Europe, Latin America, North America, Southeast Asia, and Western Pacific). As outlined in the *Assembly of Student Delegates Handbook* (Kern & Fienman, 2010), the ongoing purpose of the WFMT ASD is:



FIGURE 2. Three ongoing initial student projects. Available at <http://www.wfmt.info/wfmt-for-students-2014-2017>

- To enhance students' knowledge of the profession.
- To provide a forum for international student activities.
- To facilitate the sharing of ideas, thoughts, and opinions, and
- To assist in preparing responsible, politically aware, and skillful leadership of WFMT.

Expanding the student involvement on the WFMT Council, the student *Executive Assistant* served as the administrator of the *Assembly of Student Delegates* and took on

additional tasks such as defining and executing new student projects, representing the *Assembly of Student Delegates* during Council meetings, and organizing *Assembly of Student Delegates* meetings. The inaugural face-to-face meeting of WFMT's first *Assembly of Student Delegates* was held on July 4, 2011 at the 13th World Congress of Music Therapy in Seoul, Korea and was followed by a Tea House Meeting with the WFMT President and all Council members. This was a historic and proud moment for WFMT.

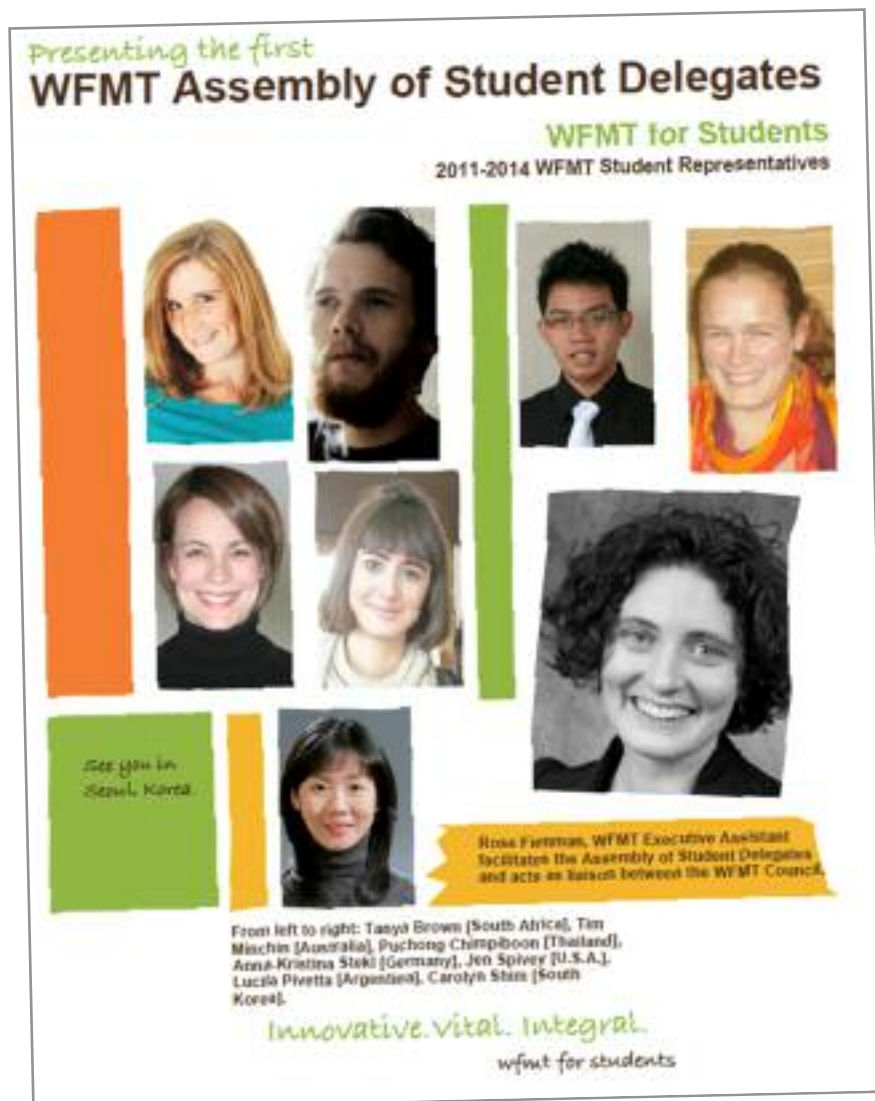


FIGURE 3. WFMT's first Assembly of Student Delegates

Impact and Manifestation

The prestigious WFMT *World Congress Scholarship for Students* was first offered in 2011. This scholarship attracts music therapy students and interns from around the world, who are active members of student organizations in their country, have an interest in global music therapy, and want to get involved with WFMT. One of the scholarship recipients became the third *Executive Assistant* (Jen Spivey), who also went on to lead the *Assembly of Student Delegates* during the term 2011-2014. During her term, the WFMT Council viewed the *Assembly of Student Delegates* as an innovative, vital, and an integrative component of WFMT. The Council also empowered and encouraged them to take on additional leadership opportunities. While maintaining the three initial projects and tasks outlined in the *Assembly of Student Delegates Handbook* (Kern & Spivey, 2013), student delegates reached out to student organizations and individual students in their regions to advocate for music therapy across the world, shared information about their work while eliciting feedback from various student groups, and increased student involvement in WFMT. One of their remarkable projects was the production of a two-part video providing resources and guidelines for establishing, structuring, and running successful music therapy student organizations. The content of the video demonstrates a solid understanding of organizational procedures, benefits, and potential challenges, as well as knowledge and skills student delegates need to become effective organizational leaders of WFMT.

Investing further in WFMT's student leaders and bringing new ideas to the 14th World Congress of Music Therapy, the WFMT Past President (Dr. Petra Kern) and Congress Organizer (Dr. Gerhard Tucek) encouraged extensive student involvement in planning, organizing,



Video Part 1: Purpose, Advocacy, and Benefits
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_WLPozkhdExx



Video Part 2: Structure, Meetings, and Challenges

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_WLPozkhdExx

FIGURE 4. Strategies of Establishing & Running Music Therapy Student Organizations.

and executing a world-class event held in Vienna/Krems, Austria in 2014. The *Assembly of Student Delegates* had the chance to learn from individual WFMT Council members and the local world congress planning team through observation, mentoring, hands-on opportunities, and support in hosting their own events. WFMT's student leaders rose to the occasion and successfully offered the following world congress-related opportunities for engaging students from many countries and cultures.

- *Travel Tips Series*. Disseminating five fact pages (i.e., About the Host Towns, Funding Your Trip, Reasons to Attend, How to Make the Most Out of It, and What to Bring and Consider) preparing students for attending the World Congress of Music Therapy.
- *WCMT Buzz. Get Excited!* Releasing two videos featuring students from North America, Europe, and Australia who share their motivation behind attending the World Congress while creating a social media buzz on Twitter.
- *Pre-congress seminar*. Addressing the highly relevant topic “Studying, Interning, & Working Abroad: Preparing for Global Engagement” with invited expert speakers and commentaries of student speakers.
- *WFMT Assembly of Student Delegates Meeting*. Transitioning responsibilities from the outgoing to the incoming *Student Delegates*.
- *Student Poster Session*. Highlighting the activities and achievements of music therapy student organizations and individual students across the globe.
- *WFMT Assembly of Student Delegates Roundtable*. Featuring the current status and challenges student representatives face in their regions under the title “WFMT ASD Exploring the Future: Student Perspectives on Globalization of Music Therapy.”
- *WFMT Assembly of Student Delegates Booth*. Sharing information, asking questions and getting answers, meeting student leaders and informally learning about the benefits of engaging in global leadership roles within WFMT while networking among peers from various countries.

The events hosted by the *Assembly of Student Delegates* fostered enthusiasm, creative ideas, and engagement to the organization. They attracted new students who articulated their interest in serving the organization in various capacities. Many students expressed

their gratitude for the variety of events offered as well. In addition to these events, student scholarship recipients reflected their learning experience under the *Window to the World* following the 2014 World Congress of Music Therapy.

In tradition of honoring the development of new leadership in music therapy communities around the world, the theme of the 15th World Congress of Music Therapy will be *Moving Forward with Music Therapy: Inspiring the Next Generation*. The congress will be hosted by the Japanese Music Therapy Association (JMTA) and held in Tsukuba, Japan from July 3-8, 2017. Moreover, acknowledging the importance of the student leaders, the WFMT Council and WFMT Membership included the role of the *Executive Assistant* and *Assembly of Student Delegates* in the WFMT Bylaws (Rev. 2014) as a fundamental part of the organization.

3.6.6. Executive Assistant. The Executive Assistant (a former WFMT Student Delegate) will be appointed by the President and serve a three-year term. The Executive Assistant shall

- Assist the President, Past President, and Secretary/Treasurer to executive delegated tasks;
- Function as the leader of the WFMT Assembly of Student Delegates.

3.6.6.1. Assembly of Student Delegates. The World Federation of Music Therapy Assembly of Student Delegates consists of the Executive Assistant and one Student Delegate from each of the eight regions. Student Delegates are appointed by the Executive Assistant in collaboration with the President and current Student Delegates. All members of the Assembly need to be student members of the World Federation of Music Therapy and reside in the regions they represent for the duration of their term.

3.6.6.2. Meetings. Triennial face-to-face meetings of the Assembly shall be held during the World Congress of Music Therapy, and online meetings shall be held in the interim. A quorum of the Assembly shall consist of no less than 2/3 of the filled positions.

FIGURE 5. Excerpt of the WFMT Bylaws (Rev. 2014)

Future Perspectives

Currently, WFMT has a well-balanced inter-generational and multi-culturally informed leadership team and a strong *Assembly of Student Delegates* led by the fourth student

Executive Assistant (Julie Lytle and then Anna-bele Brault). Leading WFMT successfully into the future requires the WFMT Council to stay informed, embrace change, and face the challenges over the next decade. In terms of organizational leadership development it means *building continued leadership, offering hands-on learning opportunities, fostering cultural competences, and valuing personal and professional gains.*

Building Continuous Leadership. Due to the smaller number of the Millennial generation in some parts of the world, it is predicted that there will be a leadership deficit in the non-profit sector over the next decade (Hannum et al., 2011). Hence, leadership development is an ongoing endeavor that should be taken seriously by any organization. WFMT needs to continue devoting time and resources in building its own stream of new, enthusiastic leaders who passionately share the vision, mission, and values of the organization. In-

vesting in students has been a successful strategy for WFMT in developing new leadership and should be continued. For instance, several WFMT scholarship recipients contributed to various student projects, served on the *Assembly of Student Delegates*, and three of them moved into elected and appointed leadership positions on the 2014-2017 WFMT Council. The growth of students' international interest and involvement in music therapy worldwide is evident and essential for the sustainability of WFMT.

Offering Hands-On Learning Opportunities. Students are more likely committed and engaged in organizational tasks when there are hands-on learning opportunities that contribute to their personal and career progression (Hannum et al., 2011). In 2014, WFMT released its first Strategic Plan outlining six core strategies, goals and objectives for 2014-2017. The WFMT Council should offer high-impact learning opportunities that align with

TABLE 1. WFMT Student Involvement over the Past 30 Years (as of March 16, 2015)

	1985-2008	2008-2011	2011-2014	2014-2017
Student Organizational Members	0	2	1	0
Student Individual Members	0	4	39	14
Executive Assistant (student leader)	0	2	1	1
Assembly of Student Delegates	0	7	7	6
WFMT Student Web Pages Traffic (unique hits)	0	16,987	65,763	5,604
Student Projects Entries (ongoing)				
Window to the World	0	21	20	16
Info Cards	0	117	56	0
Connect	0	71	112	16
World Congress Scholarships for Students	0	6	7	--
Students attending the World Congress	unknown	557	335	--

the organization's priorities and prepare student leaders to be capable in managing tasks and challenges that are transferrable to their potential work place. Moreover, Council members should find out about students' experiences, talents, and interests while supporting them in realizing their potential as global leaders. Making students a crucial part of the organization's empowerment strategies will most likely increase their commitment, responsibility and professional growth as multicultural leaders who can skillfully navigate both the opportunities and challenges the profession may face the next 30 years.

Fostering Cultural Competencies. Global non-profit organizations represent various cultures and work with members, experts, and communities with diverse cultural values, beliefs and practices influenced by ethnicity, gender, age, religion, socioeconomic status, political views, sexual orientation, geographical region, historical experiences, native language, or traditions (Web, Darling, & Alvey, 2014). Consequently, emerging WFMT leadership talent should have diverse opportunities to expand their cultural knowledge, awareness, sensitivity – and ultimately cultural competences to effectively serve in cross-cultural situations. While there are various projects and global events available to WFMT student leaders, the WFMT Council should continue fostering cultural competencies by expanding knowledge (e.g., training units), skills (e.g., communication), and resources (e.g., funds for international service projects). It is desirable that student leaders sustain their cultural curiosity and become global literate leaders who promote mutual respect and understanding of music therapy education, research, and practice worldwide.

Valuing Personal and Professional Gains. Many students may find it unattractive to volunteer their time and talent for no pay, little

recognition, and limited impact (Hannum et al., 2011). Present WFMT leadership should frequently convey both their passion and dedication to the cause and share what they have gained both personally and professionally by serving the organization. The following two statements shared by current WFMT Council members and former student leaders are examples par excellence – inspiring others to serve and lead.

Serving in a student leadership role within the WFMT enabled me to hone skills related to collaboration. I was challenged to refine my communication and organizational skills, contributing to my professional development. Furthermore, the experience provided practical opportunities to deepen knowledge of other cultures in a unique way. My personal life was enriched by travel and an expanded worldview. Not only did I enjoy the mentorship of established experts in the field, I gained lifelong friendships with people who share my professional values. I choose to continue seeking service opportunities with WFMT because I believe in the organization's mission and values. Like so many of our colleagues worldwide, I am inspired by the global development of our field and want to contribute in whatever way I can. ~Jen Spivey, MA, MS, MT-BC [WFMT Executive Assistant 2011-2014; WFMT Secretary/Treasurer 2014-2017]

Through serving WFMT as a student, I gained skills in networking, communication, and leadership, as well as an increased understanding of the way cultural differences impact the international world of music therapy. In terms of my personal experience, I have met many interesting people, several of whom have become mentors to me in the field. I was fortunate to be able to travel to both South Korea in

2011 and Austria in 2014, both of which were eye-opening experiences. I believe that the visibility of the roles I have served with both AMTAS and WFMT have increased my opportunities as a young professional. I continue to serve WFMT because I want young professionals to have a voice in the organization, as we are the future of the field of music therapy, and I hope that my service inspires other young professionals to consider serving in organizations, be it at the regional, national, or global level.

~Rose Fienman, MSW, MT-BC, [WFMT Executive Assistant 2010-2011; WFMT Public Relations Chair 2014-2017]

Conclusion

Nonprofit organizations may face unique challenges over the next decade. However, individuals may always seek a sense of purpose for their work and to create good for their professional communities and the people they serve. If global organizations such as WFMT invest in the future and create skillful leadership while honoring individual's interests and talents, perhaps a powerful win-win situation will develop that can carry WFMT's vision into the next three decades. Music therapy students are the next generation of professionals and potential leaders of tomorrow. Hence, students' attentiveness in global music therapy and the work of WFMT should be encouraged and strongly supported by WFMT. As Mahatma Gandhi, one of the world most influential leaders said, "The future depends on what we do in the present."

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About the Author

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Petra Kern, owner of Music Therapy Consulting, online professor at the University of Louisville, and Editor-in-Chief of *Imagine* is former WFMT President and recipient of WFMT's First Service Award. During the strategic planning process, she provided a historical perspective to predict and determine the future of WFMT.