

# Billboard's 2019 Top Music Business Schools: Taking Classes From The Grammys To SXSW

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Valerie Yuan

From left: David Brik, co-founder of the Music Industry Committee at UCLA and 2018 graduate, interviewed DJ sister-duo NERVO for the Herb Alpert School of Music's Office Hours series in 2018.

Don't expect to find students confined to classrooms at the leading music business schools.

Students have quizzed Dave Matthews backstage at a concert in Albany, N.Y.; studied Cuban music in Havana; visited Los Angeles to cheer on alumni nominated for Grammy Awards; and traveled on a college-sponsored trip to South by Southwest in Austin.

Those were among the educational outings offered by the music business programs chosen by *Billboard* in its annual spotlight on industry-related courses at colleges and universities nationwide.

For those seeking music careers, in front of or behind the mixing board, the following schools are at the top of their class.

**Belmont University -- The Mike Curb College of Entertainment**

## *Nashville*

In June 2018, Belmont students ventured 60 miles southeast of their Nashville campus to work backstage at the Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival. Later that summer, study-abroad students from the program -- which is endowed by its namesake, a veteran of the country music business -- journeyed to Australia to complete coursework in tourism, wellness and music business. For the lattermost class, students worked with industry professionals from Live Nation in Australia and from Mushroom Music Group, the leading independent music company in Australia and New Zealand, to explore issues around primary and secondary ticketing. Students also have the opportunity to work on a number of faculty-led research projects: Associate dean Cheryl S. Carr has received a grant to study the role of women on Nashville's Music Row; and Doyuen Ko, associate professor of audio engineering, is collaborating on an initiative to digitally replicate the acoustics of historic structures, including the Columbia Records studio in Nashville where Bob Dylan, Johnny Cash, Simon & Garfunkel and others recorded.

**Alumnus:** Ben Vaughn was promoted to president/CEO of Warner/Chappell Nashville in January.

## **Berklee College of Music**

### *Boston*

Berklee senior Taylor Pollock was one of just three students chosen from a global pool of candidates for the EQL Studio Residency, created by Spotify in partnership with Berklee and Electric Lady Studios. EQL is aimed at increasing opportunities for female producers and engineers in the music industry. (Pollock began a six-month studio residency in Nashville last October.) In another move recognizing the connection between music and social progress, the college also announced the creation of the Berklee Institute of Jazz and Gender Justice. Under its founder and artistic director, Terri Lyne Carrington, the institute addresses gender equity in jazz, a genre historically dominated by men.

**Guest Speaker:** Epic Records president Sylvia Rhone will keynote the annual Berklee Career Jam, which will conclude with an April 5 concert celebrating Rhone's career and featuring students performing the music of Missy Elliott, J.J. Fad, Tracy Chapman, Jason Mraz and Camila Cabello.

## **Detroit Institute of Music Education (DIME)**

### *Detroit/Denver*

Kevin Nixon and Sarah Clayman brought decades of experience as musicians and executives, and previous success as music educators in the United Kingdom, to their creation of DIME, which they launched first in Detroit in 2014 and then in Denver in 2017. Through a partnership with Metropolitan State University of Denver, DIME offers a bachelor's degree in commercial music performance, commercial songwriting and music industry studies at both locations. DIME

reports that students from 22 countries are enrolled in the school's online education program, which is accredited through Falmouth University in the United Kingdom to offer a British degree in music entrepreneurship.

**Faculty:** Antea Birchett, who heads the DIME songwriting department in Detroit, co-wrote "Gone Away" on the self-titled debut album from H.E.R., which won the Grammy Award for R&B album of the year in February.

### **Drexel University -- The Westphal College of Media Arts and Design**

*Philadelphia*

The opportunity for students to work alongside established artists, engineers and producers is a calling card of the music business program at Drexel's Westphal College of Media Arts and Design. Trumpeter Matt Cappy, whose credits include sessions with Elvis Costello and tours with Tony Bennett and Aretha Franklin, cut basic tracks with students last fall in the Sound Recording 1 class for an upcoming album. The school's Mad Dragon Music Group is a full-fledged independent record label (recently signed artists include Drift, Americanadian, Hannah Krupa and Line Leader), with distribution through Sony Music's Orchard Group. Jeff Apruzzese, who helped launch Berklee's Popular Music Institute in 2015, recently joined the Drexel faculty.

**Guest Speakers:** Pledge Music founder/CEO Benji Rogers and RIAA chief technology officer David Hughes were among the executives on campus this academic year.

### **Indiana University -- Jacobs School of Music**

*Bloomington, Ind.*

The most successful musician from Bloomington, Ind. -- John Mellencamp -- never attended Indiana University, but he did receive an honorary doctorate from the school in 2000. Yet even a superstar like Mellencamp (who endured contract disputes early in his career) could have benefited from the industry knowledge conveyed by the university's Jacobs School of Music. A new course, The Business of the Business, is part of the school's mandate to give up-and-coming musicians the skills to launch and maintain successful careers. Existing courses teach copyright, licensing, production, promotion, live performance and music law, among other aspects of the business. The Office of Entrepreneurship and Career Development has introduced an eight-week course to prepare students entering the workplace to communicate effectively, prepare competitive portfolios and consider a range of career options.

**Alumnus:** Drummer Kenny Aronoff has played with Mellencamp for over four decades and also backed Brian Wilson, Alison Krauss, Bob Dylan and others.

### **Kennesaw State University -- The Joel A. Katz Music and Entertainment Business Program**

*Kennesaw, Ga.*

The Coles College of Business at KSU contains the Katz Music and Entertainment Business (MEBUS) Program, endowed by top music business attorney Joel Katz. The certificate program is a 24-credit-hour instructional sequence covering accounting, marketing, management, entrepreneurship and other topics, with optional production classes and three required capstone courses in music and entertainment business. Program director Keith Perissi, in partnership with marketing company Moxie, produced the FutureX 2018 conference at KSU to explore emerging business models in music, film, TV and gaming. MEBUS students worked with PlayPro Media and its Business and Selling Entertainment program to help promote EDM artist Leah Culver, who was featured on Marshmello's 2018 hit "Fly."

**Alumna:** Samantha Zieber is an artist-rights coordinator at Live Nation in Atlanta.

### **Los Angeles College of Music**

*Pasadena, Calif.*

The P-Funk Mothership landed in Pasadena in February as Parliament-Funkadelic frontman George Clinton arrived at LACM for a conversation and Q&A with students. "Teach me something!" Clinton told the crowd. The session was part of the college's "Let's Talk Music" series, which has featured artists including Moby, Ne-Yo and Ziggy Marley. LACM enrollment now includes a membership in Grammy U, The Recording Academy's program that connects college students with music-biz professionals. The school has strengthened its internship program, which has placed students at music companies such as Atlantic Records, Big Deal Music and 411 Music Group.

**Alumna:** Sandro Cavazza, who studied vocal/music production and recording at LACM, is featured on Kygo's 2018 track "Happy Now."

### **Los Angeles Film School -- The Los Angeles Recording School**

*Los Angeles*

The Los Angeles Recording School, a division of the L.A. Film School, is located in the heart of Hollywood, on Sunset Boulevard. It has programs in audio production (offering an associate's degree in 18 months or a bachelor's degree in 36 months) as well as a music production program that covers everything from music theory to business practices. New to the school this past year is an online track and additional industry classes in the audio production curriculum. A half-mile down Sunset, the film school occupies the historic RCA building, where a recording studio once hosted sessions by Elvis Presley, The Rolling Stones, Henry Mancini and others.

**Alumnus:** Andres Borda engineered Carlos Vives' *Vives*, which earned a 2019 Grammy nomination for best Latin pop album.

### **Middle Tennessee State University -- College of Media and Entertainment**

*Murfreesboro, Tenn.*

No fewer than nine alumni of MTSU -- including one who earned his degree last December - worked on recordings up for Grammy Awards in 2019. One of them, Luke Laird, shared the best country song Grammy as a co-writer of Kacey Musgraves' "Space Cowboy." On the evening of the awards, 150 NBC News affiliates nationwide aired correspondent Kate Snow's report on the school, which one anchor dubbed a "Grammy-winner factory." A contingent of MTSU students and staff traveled to Los Angeles for Grammy Week to participate in activities including a reception for alumni now living in Southern California. Beverly Keel, chairman of MTSU's recording industry department, is co-founder of Change the Conversation, which fights for gender equality in music. (MTSU has also conducted research on female representation in country music.)

**Alumnus:** Mitchell Tenpenny, whose hit "Drunk Me" reached No. 2 on Billboard's Country Airplay chart in December, is a nominee for new male artist of the year at the Academy of Country Music Awards, which will be handed out in Las Vegas on April 7.

### **New York University -- Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development** *New York*

Nearly 25 years ago, Village Records was launched as an on-campus label by music business majors at NYU Steinhardt and involvement is now required. The venture immerses students in A&R, design, product management, marketing, publicity, promotion and more. This school year, the Village Records class has been working with alternative R&B group Haiku and hip-hop ensemble Tabemono. Music Analytics, taught by Pandora head of music curation Alex White and former Warner Music Group chief strategist Howe Singer, is also now required of all students. A newly added course, The Economics of Music Regulation, is taught by David R. Strickler, a professor with unique credentials: He is one of the three judges who sit on the U.S. Copyright Royalty Board.

**Guest Faculty:** Musician/actor/activist Rubén Blades joined NYU Steinhardt as the dean's inaugural scholar-in-residence in September 2018.

### **New York University -- Tisch School of Arts, Clive Davis Institute of Recorded Music** *New York*

Among the millions who watched NYU grad Maggie Rogers' *Saturday Night Live* debut last November were likely some of her former classmates at the Clive Davis Institute, where, less than three years ago, Pharrell Williams raved about the aspiring singer's music. A viral video of that on-campus encounter ignited Rogers' career. But the institute (endowed by its namesake, who founded Arista and J Records and is now chief creative officer at Sony Music) isn't looking back. A new program focuses on the Cuban music scene and provides a semester trip to Havana in January. New courses focus on the work of Paul McCartney, Joni Mitchell and Kendrick Lamar as well as music's influence on fashion. The course Hip-Hop/Jazz Continuum is taught by A Tribe Called Quest's Q-Tip.

**Guest Speaker:** Scooter Braun, founder of SB Projects and manager of Justin Bieber and Ariana Grande, met with students in October 2018.

## **Occidental College**

*Los Angeles*

Occidental's highly regarded music program (works by faculty member/composer Adam Schoenberg earned two Grammy nominations in 2018) is further leveraging its location and alumni ties to the music industry. This past year, under music department chairman David Kasunic, "Oxy" launched a new study track in music production and new courses in songwriting, supported by a grant from the Johnston-Fix Foundation. Additional funding from the Mellon Foundation has enabled the college to host visits by top producers and industry professionals, including Ludwig Göransson, who won an Academy Award in February for the score to *Black Panther*. Grammy-winning artist Esperanza Spalding was honored by the college and offered a master class to students in 2018.

**Alumni:** Among those who remain true to their school are manager Ian Montone (Jack White, LCD Soundsystem), Warner Music Group CEO Steve Cooper and music attorney John Branca (a trustee whose family endowed the patio at the student center).

## **Pepperdine University -- Institute for Entertainment, Media, Sports and Culture**

*Malibu, Calif.*

Now in its fourth academic year, Pepperdine's Institute for Entertainment, Media, Sports and Culture draws upon the strengths of the school's Seaver College, School of Law and Graziadio Business Program. Newly launched are MBA and law programs in entertainment, media and sports. Pepperdine became the latest school named as a university affiliate of the Grammy Museum. The program gives the school access to museum archives for educational purposes and lets students participate in research programs, internships and seminars. In October, IEMSC will host a conference on the recently passed Music Modernization Act at the Grammy Museum.

**Alumna:** Lisa Burelli is senior vp human resources at WME.

## **State University of New York, College at Oneonta**

*Oneonta, N.Y.*

More than 20 SUNY Oneonta music industry students took part in an in-depth, four-hour backstage tour of the Times Union Center in Albany, N.Y., last December that included a conversation with Dave Matthews before his band performed at the venue. Oneonta illustrates the opportunities available to music business students at public colleges outside industry centers. A new on-campus community studies the role that music plays in everyday life. A new course, Digital Music and Beat Production, allows students to create a recorded portfolio of

tracks meeting contemporary standards in the school's studio. Adjunct lecturer Nancy Tarr is executive director of Well Dunn, a nonprofit partially underwritten by the Bonnaroo Works Fund that provides sponsored industry internships to students with financial need.

**Alumnus:** Rit Venerus, founder/president of Cal Financial Group, is business manager for Dave Matthews Band and arranged the students' visit.

### **Syracuse University -- Bandier Program for Music and the Entertainment Industries**

*Syracuse, N.Y.*

South by Southwest hosted a convergence of rising bands and emerging executives in March thanks to the Bandier program, which took almost its entire senior class to the Austin-based music conference. Beforehand, the school, which is endowed by outgoing Sony/ATV chairman/CEO Martin Bandier, sent out its annual distribution of student résumés to several thousand of its industry contacts. Under program director Bill Werde, the on-campus Rezak Music Business Lecture series has hosted a lineup of top executives and artists that included Republic Records chief executives Monte and Avery Lipman and former Grateful Dead member Bob Weir. A student trip to Asia is also in the works and will focus on China "to see this rapidly emerging music business power through the eyes of those creating it," says Werde.

**Alumnus:** Andrew Beyda, director of business and legal affairs at Sony Music Latin, is founder of the Bandier program's alumni association.

### **University of California, Los Angeles -- Herb Alpert School of Music, UCLA Extension**

*Los Angeles*

While the Herb Alpert School already offers an academic minor in music industry studies -- 250 students applied for 30 slots this year -- it expects university approval to offer a major in the field in 2020. New courses this academic year include Forensic Musicology, co-taught by Judith Finell, who testified as an expert for the Marvin Gaye family in the "Blurred Lines" case. UCLA Extension, the university's continuing education program, offers certificates in music business, music production and film scoring and a specialized study track in music supervision.

**Guest Speakers:** The student-run Music Industry Committee at the Herb Alpert School featured an interview with the DJ sister-duo NERVO last October and hosted Sickamore, senior vp AR and creative director at Interscope Records, in February.

### **University of Miami -- Frost School of Music**

*Miami*

The Frost School has launched one of the newest chapters of CMA EDU, the campus-based professional development program of the Country Music Association. Students will use their connection with the Nashville-based organization to plan visits by industry speakers, participate in marketing and promotion activities, secure internships and job leads and more. The school previously became an affiliate of Grammy U and also boasts its own student-run Music Industry

Association. Frost students are also attending major industry events each year, including the Music Biz conference in Nashville and APAP/NYC, the annual meeting of the Association of Performing Arts Professionals in New York.

**Guest Speakers:** Meet the Labels at the University of Miami was a campus event in November co-presented by the Miami chapter of Women in Music that hosted executives from the three major music companies and indie Top Stop Music.

### **University of North Texas**

*Denton, Texas*

UNT is awaiting final approval (expected this spring) for an undergraduate minor and MBA program in music business and entrepreneurship. Courses will focus on marketing for musicians, artist management and touring, music law and finance, the business of music in media, audio production and performing arts management. The MBA program, offered in collaboration with UNT's College of Business, will include additional courses such as accounting for management, organizational behavior and analysis, and an introduction to business decision processes. Even before this expansion, UNT boasted the largest public-university music program in the nation with an entrepreneurship curriculum reaching nearly 1,600 music majors among its student population of 38,000.

**Faculty:** Fabiana Claire, founder/director of UNT's music business and entrepreneurship program, was a featured speaker at the 2018 Music Biz conference in Nashville.

### **University of Southern California -- Jimmy Iovine and Andre Young Academy**

*Los Angeles*

The academy, which launched in 2014 with an endowment from Iovine and Young (aka Dr. Dre), offers a degree in arts, technology and the business of innovation, which explains its focus well beyond the music business. In February, undergraduates who won a competition that sent them to Adidas headquarters in Germany worked on the company's #CreatorsUnite campaign, while graduate students met with the Children's Hospital of Los Angeles to propose ways to improve the treatment experience of pediatric diabetes patients. But music isn't forgotten: Academy seniors Cam Lindsay and Jacob Fishman have created an augmented-reality experience for festivals, which Lindsay calls a cross between Guitar Hero and Dance Dance Revolution, that will be unveiled at USC's annual Springfest on March 30.

**Alumna:** Caitlin Tran, the academy's first valedictorian, co-founded In Great Company "to make entrepreneurship more accessible and inclusive to young women of all backgrounds."

### **University of Southern California -- Thornton School of Music**

*Los Angeles*



USC's Thornton School of Music, founded in 1884, describes itself as the oldest continually operating cultural institution in Los Angeles -- no small claim in this global cultural capital. But the school remains cutting-edge. Thornton last fall launched a new master's degree in music industry. Michael Garcia, founder of Redpoint Consulting Group and former senior vp/COO of Live Nation, is chairman of the music industry program. Veteran artist manager Trudy Green, formerly of HK Management, and Vans Warped Tour founder Kevin Lyman joined the faculty in the past year.

**Alumnus:** Trumpeter/bandleader John Daversa won three Grammy Awards in February for his album *American Dreamers: Voices of Hope, Music of Freedom*, which features faculty member Paul Young on trombone.

### **William Paterson University -- Music and Entertainment Industries Program**

*Wayne, N.J.*

Offering both undergraduate and MBA degrees with a music industry focus, William Paterson University is home to the Music Biz 101 & More radio show and podcast, which reached its 200th episode in 2018. Last May, students taped sessions with key executives attending the Music Biz conference in Nashville. WP's deep industry ties (and proximity to Manhattan) allowed students to meet with Warner Music Group executives at the label's New York offices in November, with a similar trip planned to Sony Music.

**Guest Speakers:** A seminar focusing on women in the music industry hosted by SiriusXM vp Steve Leeds has featured Artist Group International's Marsha Vlasic and BMG's Kate Hyman; in April, it will present AEG Live's Debra Rathwell, Sony Music's Julie Swidler and Cyndi Lauper's manager, Lisa Barabis.

*This article originally appeared in the March 23 issue of Billboard.*

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