Entrepreneurship Center for Music at University of Colorado Boulder

by Jeffrey Nytch DMA, January 13, 2020
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Overview

University of Colorado **Boulder**

Editor's Note: Dr. Jeffrey Nytch was interviewed on December 12, 2019 by Philip Bouchard, Executive Director of TrustedPeer Entrepreneurship Advisory. This interview was condensed and edited for clarity.

Interview questions and highlights:

- *What do you see as your primary roles?*
- *What has changed since you became the director of the Entrepreneurship Center?*
- *Why is arts entrepreneurship lagging behind general entrepreneurship in terms of standard approaches?*
- *What are the desired outcomes for music entrepreneurship at Boulder?*
- *What did you present at the January USASBE conference?*
- *Why have you chosen to make the music entrepreneurship certificate open only to music majors?*
- *What are the benefit of having a music entrepreneur on a startup team of engineers or business students?*
- *How do you encourage your music entrepreneurs to participate in entrepreneurship programs across CU?*
- *What kind of marketing works best for student engagement and what doesn't work?*
- *How can the business community leverage the Entrepreneurship Center for Music at CU?*
- *How do you shepherd a music major through entrepreneurship from freshman to senior year?*
- *What are the new programs that you are going to offer and support in the new Imig Music Building?*
- *What are you doing to promote faculty engagement in the other disciplines?*
- *How do you leverage your growing base of alumni music entrepreneurs?*
- *What are your current challenges? How do you plan to address them?*
- *What decisions have you made that you would advise other university center directors to avoid?*
- *What would you advise universities and directors that are just getting started?*
- *What is your vision for music entrepreneurship at CU over the next few years?*
- *What are the limiting factors to achieving that vision?*

Philip Bouchard: As the Director of the Entrepreneurship Center for Music at the University of Colorado Boulder, what do you see as your primary roles?

Jeffrey Nytch: I see my roles as twofold. The first is to inspire students to think about their careers in more creative ways, broader ways than they have probably thought about to-date. Musicians generally come into school with a very narrow, short list of things that they think are career possibilities: they're going to be a private teacher, a K-12 educator, perform professionally, or teach at the university. Musicians think those are their only four career options available to them. I help them see that there are lots of other ways to bring their music into the world and lots of ways to use a music education in other fields -- because not all of our students will necessarily have careers as professional musicians. My first role is to open up their sense of what's possible.

My second role is to give them tools to realize their goals. This is the career skills component that's different from conventional entrepreneurship programs and that makes music entrepreneurship programs a different from what you'd find in the B-school.

Bouchard: In October, I interviewed your colleague from SMU, Jim Hart, and learned that there are now more than a hundred universities supporting arts entrepreneurship. What are the current trends in music entrepreneurship programs? What has changed since you became the director of the Entrepreneurship Center for Music at Colorado 10 years ago?

Nytch: The biggest change is simply the number of new programs that have been added. When I started here 10 years ago, we were one of maybe a dozen programs. It was a pretty small cohort of people, we all knew each other and we all knew what was going on with each other's programs. As you noted, that has since exploded, especially in the last five years. That tipping point has been reached, and among all the reputable music schools in the country there are only 1 or 2 hold-outs: entrepreneurship has become an expected component of a comprehensive music school. Within that, though, there is still a tremendous amount of variation in styles, content, courses, and programming. Those things only start to become more codified after a field begins to form an identity. That identity has been forming just in the last 5 years or so.

What has evolved along with this growth is a sense of Arts Entrepreneurship being an actual discipline within the academy, which has both positives and negatives. But mostly it's positive, because now we're beginning to address two fundamental questions:

1. How do we train educators in this field, especially since we all come from different backgrounds and we are usually artists first and businesspeople second?
2. What are the best practices and theories that undergird our pedagogy?

Addressing these issues is a positive development, and I'm pleased that there are organizations like the Creative and Arts Entrepreneurship Social Interest Group in USASBE and the Society for Arts Entrepreneurship Education that are providing a platform for research and pedagogy to be explored and shared.

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ember, I attended Steve Blanks' Lean Innovation Educators Summit and it feels that there are standards being set in entrepreneurship with, for example, Lean Launchpad and the use of the Business Model Canvas and Mission Model Canvas. Why is arts entrepreneurship lagging behind general entrepreneurship in terms of standard approaches?

Nytch: I'm not sure that we're lagging. All of my colleagues use the same resources as those used in the B-school. But we have to take an additional step, which is to translate those business concepts into terms and contexts that make sense in an artistic context -- which is a very different one from a typical business. Moreover, the way to do that translation hasn't been standardized yet. To put that in context, when I was in school studying music history there was a standard text that every introductory music history class in the country used; there was a shared understanding of what an introductory music history course should entail. That kind of standardization of curriculum is true in virtually every discipline at the introductory level.

However, Arts Entrepreneurship doesn't yet have that. There are certainly common threads, but people use a variety of things; there are several books out there and they're each a little different; folks have their own syllabi and class structures that can vary quite a bit more from place to place -- more than is the norm in academia.

I don't think that's a bad thing, though, because different schools have different needs. The students at a conservatory like Eastman or Juilliard are, pretty much without exception, focused on a particular kind of performing career. This is in contrast to a large public university like Colorado Boulder, where we've got folks who are interested in K-12 teaching, for instance -- which is a very different set of skills and needs than somebody who wants to have a classical career; we've also got a very strong jazz program, and there are some different needs there, too. We also have a lot of students who love music but have no intention of being professional performers. How else can their love of music be applied in the marketplace?

Music entrepreneurship has to balance between identifying a baseline of standards and practices on the one hand, and providing a variety of approaches depending on the particular needs of an institution on the other. Disciplines that have been around for decades have largely worked that out; most of us in the arts space are still grappling with it.

Bouchard: What are the desired outcomes for music entrepreneurship at Boulder? Are you looking for students to be educated about entrepreneurship or are you looking at outcomes like businesses created? Is there an analog for music entrepreneurship or arts entrepreneurship to a startup?

Nytch: This is perhaps the number one challenge that we have as programs within the academy, because our units and our universities want to know what's the return on investment. In the business school, they can show the number of ventures started, how much venture capital was raised; the engineering college can report the number of patents generated or products brought to market. These are nice, tasty metrics that can be determined pretty easily.

For us in the Arts, not just music, while we do have some students who have started a venture or some kind of arts related business and we can celebrate those, they are a minority. Far more commonly we have someone who is, say, a classical trombone player and she decides to go out and have a private teaching studio and do freelance work and sub with an orchestra -- which would be a very typical kind of career for a classical musician. In that scenario it's hard to say what percentage of their success is because they're applying the skills they learned in my class. We can have anecdotal evidence, sure. We have the student who writes to me two years later and says, "I just wanted you to know that I think about your class every day and it was really helpful." But to have hard metrics regarding impact is difficult. It's akin to the struggle that liberal arts colleges have about how do you measure the impact of a liberal arts education? "I'm thinking more clearly. I can communicate more effectively. I'm a better writer than I was." But how do you measure those things? It's a difficult challenge. I don't think any of us have quite cracked that nut yet.

Bouchard: You were selected to deliver two papers at the January 2020 USASBE conference. For those of us who were not able to attend, what did you present at that USASBE conference?

Nytch: One of the things I love about USASBE is they have traditional scholarly papers and folks presenting their research, but they also have teaching workshop tracks where you can present challenges that you're having and get feedback from your peers. Both of the things that I presented are in that vein.

The first one was an exercise called cognitive combination, from a paper by Thomas Ward that identified mechanisms for creative thinking. One of those mechanisms is called "cognitive combination," where you take two things that appear to be unrelated on the surface but when you combine them there are new, emergent properties that come forth. For example, the pain pads called "icy hot." "icy" and "hot" are contradictory terms, but the combination describes the product perfectly. Another example is a car company that promotes "affordable luxury." Taken separately they mean opposite things, but when you put those two things together all of a sudden it conveys something very clear about the product. Ward then asks what would happen if we use cognitive combination to not just describe existing products but actually envision new ones.

I do an exercise in the classroom when we're talking about ideation, trying to figure out what that means and how to go about the process of generating novel ideas. I have two baskets with random words on slips of paper. Teams of three to four students pick one out of each bag and then they've got to come up with a product or service drawing from those two words. It can be something quite literal or, better yet, something that draws on the metaphorical qualities of the things.

For instance, if one of the words is "oven," that has both literal and more symbolic possibilities. On the surface the combinations might appear to be completely nonsensical -- maybe they draw "beer" and "tree" -- but the exercise is to show them what it means to brainstorm and come up with a creative idea for something. Sometimes they come up with some pretty cool things and it's a fun exercise, but it has some limitations in that sometimes the combinations are so weird that it's actually a barrier to thinking creatively: the students just get stuck. The problem that I'm posing in that session is how can we either choose the words differently, or have different sets of words, or perhaps restructure the exercise entirely so that it has a better and more consistent outcome.

The other challenge that I presented at USASBE comes out of CU. We've had a New Venture Challenge for the past 12 years, and I believe we were the first anywhere to have an Arts track within an entrepreneurship competition.

However, we found that there are problems with having multiple tracks defined by discipline. One is that the tracks ended up being very very unequal where you may have 85 teams in the IT track and 12 teams in the Creative Industries track, for example. If somebody came up with something that could conceivably be in either track -- let's say some sort of arts app -- they would want to compete in the Creative Industries track because they had a better chance of winning.

Another problem is that different disciplines were likely to have students coming in at different levels: many of the teams coming out of the business school were MBA students, or the College of Engineering was sending PhD students with big research dollars and a faculty advisor behind them. Some teams already have revenues, some of them already have investors, and they were going up against undergraduates who didn't even know how to spell entrepreneurship six months ago, students who are just getting their feet wet. That's not an even playing field.

The question that we're struggling right now at CU–Boulder is, "How can we maintain the diversity of disciplines that we've created here on campus while not stacking the deck in favor of more experienced teams with better resources and support behind them?" Because there's no doubt that the success of the discipline tracks is that we get to the final rounds with a wide range of product types.

Not all entrepreneurship competitions have that diversity; they tend to be heavily weighted on the engineering and I.T. side of things. So we want to maintain that diversity and that interdisciplinarity and still create a level playing field for everybody. That is a challenge that we haven't quite figured out yet.

I saw the USASBE sessions as a great opportunity to see what other programs are doing and see if we can come up with a better system.

Bouchard: Your certificate in music entrepreneurship and the minor in music entrepreneurship have strict requirements for courses to be taken. You also provide for flexibility with the track and capstone courses. Some university arts entrepreneurship programs allowed non–Arts students to participate. Why have you chosen to make the certificate open only to music majors?

Nytch: We have a certificate in music entrepreneurship which includes a business minor as part of that, but we don't have a minor in music entrepreneurship. You can do a business minor without the certificate, or you could do the music courses as electives and not do the business minor, or you can do the whole shebang and get the certificate.

The reason why don't allow non–music majors to do the certificate is purely a capacity issue. I'm the only instructor in this program and I usually have 15 to 20 students who want to take the entrepreneurship class in the College of Music. I'm pretty sure if I open that up it would be 30 or 40 students, which would not be optimal. I would love nothing more than to be able to open that up with multiple sections; we just don't have the capacity at present.

In terms of flexibility of the curriculum, you have to acknowledge the fact that you know what the students need more than the students know what they need -- especially in a field that's essentially unknown to them. On the other hand, you want to allow some element of choice because not all students have the same goals and needs. Within our certificate, students do have flexibility within the business minor due to an elective track that has a wide menu of options. They can also take as many of those track electives as they want -- even all five.

For the last course in the business minor, they're put into teams and the team decides what venture they're going to develop and pitch as their final project. Sometimes those projects are involved in music, sometimes they're completely unrelated. It depends on whether or not the music student is able to convince their peers about the idea. Even when their team ends up doing something completely unrelated to the arts it gives them a diversity of experience, which I think is still very valuable.

The Capstone course that they do with me in their senior year is wide open -- and we're in the process of widening it even further. At present, you have to develop an arts–based venture idea and compete in the New Venture Challenge. But the idea is yours to develop. However, I'm finding that going into that competition isn't necessarily the best fit for everybody. Some students might be ready to go ahead and get this thing launched out into the community; for others their venture doesn't really lend itself to a competitive framework. For those students, we should spend that semester getting their venture off the ground rather than spending their time going through the hoops of the competition. There may be some who have some kind of specific, one–off project that they want to do in the community and they want to employ their entrepreneurial skills to make that project a reality. I want them to have those kinds of options. Moving forward, there will be more flexibility in the form of their final Capstone.

Bouchard: What are the benefit of having a music entrepreneur on a typical team of engineers or business students?

Nytch: Musicians are tuned to a bunch of interesting things. They're interested in how something feels to the user. They're tuned into that because they're always thinking about their audience, always thinking about how to use their music to connect with somebody. Oftentimes, engineers can be really bad about thinking about how their product is experienced by the user.

Musicians are also likely to have a worldview that looks at things from a different perspective. Diversity of perspectives on a team is good. Musicians are also very good at analytical thinking. Yes, engineers and computer scientists and business folks are analytical, but musicians analyze the details in service to a bigger picture. I don't think that necessarily business folks or engineers always have that broader sort of sense of how these details fit into something bigger. But musicians analyze small musical details in order to better understand the whole piece of music; that's a unique skill.

Bouchard: How do you encourage your music entrepreneurs to participate in entrepreneurship programs across CU? The last thing you want is a team consisting of four engineers or four business school students.

Nytch: Yes, but the real question is, "Why don't more music students participate in these programs?" There are two clear reasons, but the solution is not obvious. One reason is they're just so busy. There's nobody busier on campus than a music major: in addition to all of their classes, they're spending four or more hours a day practicing, they've got extra performances and rehearsals, and they've still got all the same kinds of homework that everybody else has. They're just constantly moving.

To say, "There's this thing over in the business school across campus and it's about design thinking and I think this would be a really cool thing for you to do." Their response is, "I've got to practice tonight and I've got a jury tomorrow morning. And P.S. What the heck is design thinking??"

The other piece of that, and this is true for all of the Arts and Humanities, not just music, is that the whole "business thing" and "entrepreneurial thing" is so foreign to them. It just feels like a leap too far, and they may not even perceive it as relevant to their goals. Worse yet, they're intimidated by it.

Whereas students in the business school or schools like engineering or computer science, where there's discussion from the very outset about creating things that are going to go out to the marketplace, those kids are going to have a very different mindset. As soon as they come in as freshmen, they're already thinking along the lines of creating products and services, usually in a commercial context. For musicians, that is the farthest thing from their thinking when they come in. They're just thinking about making music, about how to master their instrument. They're asking themselves, "Am I ever going to have the chops to make it as a professional violinist? Am I good enough? I think I need to go back to the practice room for two more hours..."

The combination of those two things makes entrepreneurship a tough sell for a lot of music students. It's part of the reason why there is that inequality in the Venture Challenge that I mentioned earlier: they're entering in at a much less advanced stage than their peers. It's basically the same set of issues playing out in a different way.

Bouchard: Steve Blank's Lean Startup methodology is about getting out of the classroom and speaking with your customers. Musicians naturally think about what they are producing, what they are developing, in terms of how it is going to be received by their customers. It's really too bad that musicians don't have more bandwidth because a musician should be on everybody's startup team to build a culture of entrepreneurship that focuses on the customer and to always remind people of that.

Nytch: Yes, absolutely. IBM publishes a report listing the top 10 qualities that executives look for in their hires. As I read down the list, they're describing music students. The number one thing that is unique to musicians and rare among other disciplines is that musicians are not only able to exercise self-discipline to go off and work by themselves to solve the problem and get the job done, but they're are also able to work well in groups because they have to collaborate with their chamber music group or with an orchestra. Most people are one or the other. "Don't put me on a team of people. That's the worst punishment. Just let me do my thing over here." Or they are, "Please don't shut me in a room by myself. I'll die if I can't be working with other people." Musicians have both of those qualities and they can toggle back and forth. That in itself is an incredibly valuable skill that goes beyond just being a musician.

We know that a significant percentage, perhaps as many as 30 or 40 percent, of our graduates are not going to have careers in music. When I talk to a prospective student or parent of a prospective student and they ask, " What's the value of a music degree?", I tell them about these transferable skills, because the value that they get from a music degree is not necessarily measured in whether or not they end up having a career in music. That's yet another way that measuring the impact of what we do is hard to quantify: does having a music student pursue a non-musical career still constitute success? In my book the answer is a resounding Yes.

Bouchard: And they have the trump card of the entrepreneurship certificate. When a hiring manager at a company says, "Why am I talking to you? You're a music Major." That graduate can state, "I've got a minor in business and a certificate in music entrepreneurship!" Outside of increasing the number of hours in a day, how can you increase student engagement in music entrepreneurship? What kind of marketing works best for student engagement and what doesn't work?

Nytch: What I've discovered is that every center should have a team of students who are your ambassadors because there is nothing like peer marketing. I can be as much of a happy warrior as I can be, always upbeat and have a positive relationship with my students, but I'm still the Professor. When students are the ones who are helping design those materials and delivering those materials, boots on the ground marketing is by far the most effective thing.

Going beyond marketing, one thing that I'm always on the lookout for, and I try to bring multiple examples of this every academic year, are entrepreneurial guests whose artistic credentials are beyond reproach; that way we can break down the erroneous assumption that the entrepreneurial aspect of their career was something they did because they couldn't hack it as a performer.

I bring in world class people and have them talk about how they got their careers off the ground. How does your ensemble operate? How do you guys get gigs? And what are the pros and cons of having a manager? This helps students see that people who they respect artistically are also using these entrepreneurial principles. That makes entrepreneurship seem less of a foreign thing that is not relevant to them, helps them see that entrepreneurship isn't a substitute for being a good artist. Both of those misconceptions get blown out of the water. I bring as many different kinds of examples as I can so that students can see entrepreneurship in real terms. It's not abstract anymore.

Bouchard: That's how you leverage the business community locally and at large for your students. Conversely, how can the business community leverage the Entrepreneurship Center for Music at CU?

Nytch: It's a great question. We've started to have conversations with a couple of different stakeholders including the Chamber of Commerce and the Career Services Center here on campus to ask that exact same question, because Boulder has an incredible entrepreneurial community -- especially for a city this size.

The CU campus already has a fantastic ecosystem in the tech and R&D sectors, with lots of great ties to the local business community. Now we need to start by simply raising awareness within the Boulder community about these qualities that musicians have.

A few years ago we had a breakthrough on that front. One of the teams that participated in the New Venture Challenge was a team of doctoral students in engineering and a doctoral student in music who came up with "Specdrums", a really fun way to make music with colors and these little activators that attach to your fingers. Right after they won the New Venture Challenge, which was a big enough coup, they got acquired by Sphero, which is a Boulder based venture.

Now we've got music graduates working for a robotics and entertainment company. That's one little piece of visibility, but it's one I want the whole Boulder community to hear because I think if more businesses understood the value of music students they'd be open to hiring them. However, we haven't yet figured out exactly how to connect those dots in a systemic way.

Bouchard: How do you shepherd a music major from freshman to senior year in getting them involved in entrepreneurship along the way?

Nytch: That's a great question. Part of it is raising awareness before they even start. We have sessions about the Music Entrepreneurship Center during recruitment season; when they're visiting for their audition they also come to a session where I explain about what the "e" word means and about our programming. We talk to them about it during Orientation Week.

We offer a course called *Building Your Music Career* that's required for all performance majors. We recommend that they take the class in their sophomore year so that if they get the bug and decide that they want to do the certificate, there's time in the remaining semesters for them to fit all that stuff in. Some even take it in the Freshman year. We try to front load it with that required course coming early on.

We also have some carrots to entice them. The Entrepreneurial Scholars Program allows students who have enrolled in the certificate and have done the first couple of courses to apply for a $2,000 merit-based scholarship.

Lastly, I do everything I can to create a sense of a cohort. Once they are in the certificate program, they do things as a group together. Even if it's just to have a meeting together to talk about their ideas. We're building that sense of community because, for music students especially, they're so used to working alone on things, they may not have many peers who want to join them in this entrepreneurial thing. They often feel alone or isolated. They feel like odd balls. Creating a sense of community, a sense of a cohort, is a really important thing as well.

Bouchard: The College of Music is building a $57 million addition for the Imig Music Building, in which you are going to have dedicated facilities for the Entrepreneurship Center for Music. What are the new programs that you are going to offer and support in the new Imig Music Building?

Nytch: One of the things I'm excited about is simply where the Center is located. In the early conceptual conversations with the architects, we requested two things: a conference room that is configurable with white boards everywhere, like a sandbox to play in, and then that the center be centrally located in the heart of the building. I want students to not be able to come to school without walking past the Center five times a day. It will be located at a major intersection of traffic, and there will a big glass wall that's going to be impossible to miss -- as opposed to where we are now, which is tucked back in a warren of hallways.

With the new Center, I plan to have stuff constantly going on in that conference room. Currently, our co-curricular workshops are held at a single time Wednesday evenings at five o'clock. In the new Imig Building we'll have much more flexibility with scheduling these events, to have different things at different times in hopes of capturing more students. I'd love to have brown bag lunches where students can, for example, bring in their CVs to work together for 45 minutes. We want to create a sense that there's an energy in that place, where students know that they can come to get their questions answered or to get feedback on their ideas. That conference room is the key to having a greater variety of things going on to meet the needs of our students.

Bouchard: What are you doing to promote faculty engagement in the other disciplines?

Nytch: From speaking to my colleagues at other universities, I can say that the challenge everywhere boils down to how siloed your institution is, and whether the administration and the structure of the place are doing more than just paying lip service to interdisciplinary stuff. Are there actually structures in place to encourage interdisciplinary work? Is entrepreneurial activity encouraged, facilitated and, perhaps most importantly, rewarded?

One positive example is Arizona State, where the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts has all the arts, design, and media units under one umbrella. That's so much better than having those units divvied up across campus. CU is at the bottom of the barrel in terms of this, where we are a College of Music only. Meanwhile we have Theatre and Dance and Art & Art History in the College of Arts and Sciences; we have a Technology Arts and Media program as part of the ATLAS Institute -- which is run by the College of Engineering. And then we have the College of Media, Communication and Information. We have creative, arts-based things going on in four different colleges with very few institutional systems and structures to encourage cooperation.

As a result, it's very difficult here at CU to do the kind of interdisciplinary work that is absolutely critical in today's creative sector. That's why I wish that this were an Entrepreneurship Center for *all* the Arts, because the Arts in particular are becoming increasingly multidisciplinary. The walls between genres are dissolving. People under the age of 30 want a meaningful aesthetic experience; they don't care what label it has. They don't care what genre it is. They just want it to be a meaningful experience, preferably one that's shared in community.

Instead we've got classical music over here and we've got these other arts over here and we've got these other things over here and everything is siloed -- that's the way we've been teaching (and presenting) the arts for 200 years. But that's not the way the future of the Arts is unfolding on either a market level *or* an artistic level. Interdisciplinarity is absolutely critical to our future, but all too often our institutional structures don't facilitate that.

Bouchard: Alumni tracking for a lot of entrepreneurship centers is a pain point. How do leverage your growing base of alumni music entrepreneurs? Do you have a mentor network that is comprised of your alumni entrepreneurs?

Nytch: It definitely is a pain point. The problem is not just with music entrepreneurs but music graduates in general. There has been very little tracking of that here at CU, and we're not alone in that regard: I hear the same things from my colleagues across the country. We are beginning to address that in terms of bringing in some staff capacity to help with alumni relations. It's run out of the Advancement office, but it's understood to be about more than raising money. The real goal is to become more connected with our alumni. At present, though, it's just an informal network of people that I try to keep track of.

Ultimately I would love to have a mentoring network categorized by discipline and by geography. If somebody says, "I'm a flute student and I would love to talk to some alumni flute people who are out there playing" we can connect them. Or if they say "I'm moving to Chicago and I want to get hooked into the music scene in Chicago" we can help them with that, too. These are two different needs, but we have alumni in both of those columns all over the world. It's just a question of figuring out how best to identify them, connect with them, and then stay engaged with them.

Bouchard: In addition to tracking and engaging your alumni, what are your current challenges? How do you plan to address them?

Nytch: We've touched on most of my current challenges.

- Tracking alumni.
- Figuring out ways to evaluate success.
- Student awareness and student participation in light of their crazy-busy schedules.

One challenge we haven't talked about involves communicating what we're doing to our stakeholders both within the College and in the University. That means administrators and folks higher up the ladder but also with new donors and supporters of the College. What's the ECM (Entrepreneurship Center for Music) doing? What are our students up to? How are we addressing those challenges? For alumni engagement, new staff capacity will track alumni more intentionally and set up a mentoring network. For student engagement, we've created a student action team to be on the ground promoting with their peers.

Finding ways of measuring success is still a wide open question. I have yet to come up with any great solutions other than the hopes that with the alumni tracking we will at least have a better, more complete set of stories to tell. I currently use a spreadsheet labeled "Student Outcomes". When I hear about something I go and I put it there so that I remember it. But that's hardly a system, nor is it anywhere near a complete picture.

In terms of informing stakeholders, I've just started to do two new things.

- One is to publish a Blog called "Field Notes from the Entrepreneurship Center," which consists of reflections on entrepreneurship education or something that tickles my brain, in order to help people understand how I look at my job, what I see my role as, my philosophy about entrepreneurship in the Arts and how that informs my own work as a composer, and how I see this playing out for our students.

- The second is that a least twice per year we'll be putting out a newsletter to highlight things that happened during the semester, like a student venture or an interview or information on the cool guests that came in. In Academia everyone's so busy and we get stuck in our

own little section of the world, and because entrepreneurship is so often on the periphery of the traditional kind of conservatory model it takes a lot more intentional communication about what I'm up to than I have perhaps realized.

I'm finally at a place where I have enough capacity in terms of administrative support to begin to do some of these things.

Bouchard: What decisions have you made that you would advise other university center directors to avoid?

Nytch: That's an interesting question. Most of my colleagues experience some kind of resistance or push back from their faculty colleagues when it comes to entrepreneurship, especially in the music school. I like to say that we don't call it a *conservatory* for nothing: after all, it's a teaching paradigm, an institutional paradigm, that was developed in Germany in the 1800s -- and it hasn't changed very much since then. And it's been a tremendously successful model; there's no doubt. But in terms of anything that's new, there's often a lot of unease and suspicion and push back.

Some of the things that I wasn't fully sensitive to when I came in was the fact that I might do something that I thought was completely innocuous but a studio professor would perceive that as stepping on their toes or infringing on their turf. You just have to be incredibly sensitive to that. Rather than allow that to become something that's adversarial, instead, reach out to those colleagues and ask, "How can we work together? Tell me what your students need and how I can help you serve your students better?" That is something that I didn't fully do well in my first few early years.

I'd advise to avoid doing that, and to be proactive about communicating the What and Why of your programming.

Bouchard: You've been the director of the Center for 10 years, since 2009. A lot of university Arts entrepreneurship centers and programs are just getting started. What would you advise universities and directors that are just getting started?

Nytch: First, if the institution is looking to create a position to run their program, make sure that you have the resources to make that a full-time position, that you really commit to doing it. A lot of those hundred university programs we mentioned earlier are headed up by folks who are doing this in addition to their studio responsibilities or some other role that they play within the college. I recognize that sometimes that may be the only way to get started; institutions may not have the resources to fund a new full-time position. And the folks who take on these additional responsibilities do so because they're passionate about it and recognize how important it is.

Having a part-time director is not an effective way to go about launching a program because it will tend to putter along on the periphery unless it's got the resources to make a significant impact. If a full-time position right away is simply impossible, look at ways to partner with the university career center or with other entities on campus to figure out a way to piece something together. Make sure that you've got the resources to do it well rather than do it in a half-baked sort of way.

Second, be aware of not only the lay of the land within the music school, within the arts unit(s) involved, but also understand where the business school stands on this. I'm incredibly fortunate here at CU that the Leeds School of Business is fully behind entrepreneurship centers across the campus, and that we have an incredible cross-campus ecosystem where we all support each other; we're all colleagues and we get together to coordinate programming across campus. It's all very collegial here at CU. But I've spoken with colleagues at other universities where the business school says "You will not use the "e" word in your center title or your coursework or *anywhere*, because entrepreneurship belongs to us." There's often hostility towards these things; if there is, you need to address that at the outset.

Third, where possible, it's better to have a faculty director than a staff director, and the history of this Center bears that out. The Entrepreneurship Center was started in 1999 and we had four staff directors in seven years. I heard these horror stories about the early years and how those early directors received really nasty pushback from some of the faculty. There's also this thing that's common in academia where some faculty look down at staff and don't see them as equals.

When they created the position for which I was hired, it was the first time that a tenure-track Arts Entrepreneurship position was created from scratch. That poses its own set of challenges, but it meant that when I came in, I was a colleague. That changed the dynamic entirely of how the Center was legitimized; and my ability to form relationships with my faculty colleagues made all the difference in the world. A lot of places are going to say, "We're not adding tenure lines these days. Forget it!" However, it's something to think about because I do think it is a better model.

Bouchard: What is your vision for music entrepreneurship at CU over the next few years?

Nytch: My vision is to take away the word "entrepreneurship" and create a center that truly is the umbrella for all manner of professional experiences -- because musicians are increasingly leading very diverse, if not fragmented, careers doing a lot of different kinds of things. I want to coordinate programming in an integrated way so that students experience the full spectrum of opportunities that are out there. Yes, we're going to tell them how to get gigs and how to set up a teaching studio and all of those traditional things, but that's only part of a much bigger picture.

For instance, we need to talk about how to create a meaningful community outreach program, because this is becoming an increasingly important part of how musicians support themselves. How do you do bring music into a homeless shelter or into the prisons? What role does arts administration play in all of that? What role can technology play? What about cross-disciplinary research with the medical school about the impact of music on the brain?

Lastly, I want all these elements to explode into a broader galaxy of opportunities that ends up becoming more than just helping somebody with their career. It's this idea of developing an artist citizen, the idea that we artists have a role in society and it's a potentially powerful role. For me, that's where the excitement resides: helping shape the next generation of artist citizens. Entrepreneurship can be the red thread that holds all of that together, but it's just one means to a broader end.

Bouchard: What are the limiting factors to achieving that vision?

Nytch: The limiting factors are what I refer to as the three S's:

- Space
- Staff
- Simoleons

Nothing that a staff of 10, a few more offices and a few million dollars wouldn't solve! But it's surprisingly hard to get the support you need to make these programs everything that they could be. This loops back to the idea of evaluating success and measuring the impact of our program.

If you're having a conversation with a donor about making a multi-million dollar gift to endow this new great idea that you have, they may think the vision is terrific -- but they're not going to write a check for $5 million unless I can show them exactly what that $5 million is going to do. I can say, "We're going to create artist citizens. We're going to change the way they look at the role of music in society. We're going to equip our students to go out into the world and change people's lives." I believe those words down to the core of my being, but for savvy, business-minded folks they're like, "That's very inspiring, Jeff, but I don't know what that looks like. How will I know that my support will generate the desired results?"

That's a limiting factor right now: connecting the dots between the vision, the impact of which is hard to measure, and the actual dollars required.

Bouchard: This has been a fantastic interview. I can't thank you enough. Great insights. I look forward to reviewing this transcript and sharing it with the TrustedPeer network of your peers.

Nytch: Thank you for including me!