**Rob Falvo, Professor of Percussion**

**Off-Campus Scholarly Assignment**

**Projected Year/Semester: Spring 2016**

**Project**:

To present a recital performing jazz on vibraphone as a soloist and section player in a combo (group) and to add a jazz mallet component to the applied percussion curriculum.

The plan is to present a recital in the Fall semester 2016 that will include solo improvisational arrangements of standard jazz tunes and combo performances of standard jazz tunes. Also, by the Fall semester, the percussion department will add jazz mallet performance to its curriculum by including standard jazz pieces into the performance levels. I am requesting an Off-Campus Scholarly Assignment for the Spring semester 2016 so that I can have the time to develop as a jazz mallet player and prepare for the recital, and re-edit the percussion performance levels.

**Teaching Replacement**:

An adjunct faculty member at the HSoM is interested in taking my course load for the semester. This will include applied lessons and percussion ensemble. I will be in town to do the auditions and will organize the ensemble placement auditions, lesson schedules, etc. for the beginning of the semester.

**Jazz Studies**:

I have been studying and practicing jazz on vibraphone for the last four years.

My jazz studies so far have been:

\*privately with vibist Jon Metzger at Elon University

\*on-line with vibist Gary Burton as part of the on-line classes given at Berklee College of Music

\*attending the Jamey Aebersold Jazz Camp for two separate week-long workshops at the University of Louisville, private studies with vibist Dick Sisto

\*auditing Todd Wright’s jazz piano class

\*informally with Keith McCutchen, Andy Page, Ron Brendle and Todd Wright

\*privately on Skype with vibist Ed Saindon at the Berklee College of Music.

**Impulse For The Project:**

The motivation for doing this is two-fold. I am very passionate about including jazz in what on I do on stage at the HSoM and as a free-lancer. I find it fresh and exciting. I have been thinking about playing jazz for a long time but just did not have the time to practice or study it. And, as an instructor and percussion educator, I look forward to presenting jazz to my students at the HSoM. I would like to add jazz studies on mallets to our percussion curriculum. I have started doing this informally with students in lessons and would like to continue in a more formal way by giving them an option to achieve some of their levels on mallets in jazz or in classical music. This can potentially open up avenues for recruiting percussionists. There are very few college percussion programs in North Carolina or the surrounding states that can offer both classical and jazz mallet studies.

**Course Of Action:**

During the OCSA, the plan is to take an on-line Berklee course in the Spring semester 2016: Reharmonization Techniques with Steve Rochinski – Course code: OHARM-412.

The reharmonizing class will give me more experience reharmonizing jazz standards and will supply me with knowledge to perform with more creativity as a 4-mallet improviser and chordal performer. Performing with 4-mallets allows me the unique opportunity to perform with the rhythm section (comping), and horn section (improvising) in any combo or jazz band as well as allows me to perform as a solo vibraphone performer.

Also, the plan is to study privately via Skype lessons with Ed Saindon who teaches jazz on vibraphone at the Berklee College of Music and to study privately with Keith McCutchen. With Ed, I will be learning how to perform as a vibes soloist as well as improviser and with Keith, I will be developing a stylistic “Bebop” approach to improvising and comping as well as sharpening my aural skills.

A key for developing solo repertoire for the Fall semester jazz recital will be to assimilate what is learned in the on-line course, and lessons with Keith McCutchen with my on-line studies with Ed Saindon, Professor of Vibraphone studies at Berklee College of Music. In lessons with Ed Saindon, I will be learning how to develop jazz pieces with no accompaniment. This will include taking choruses for solo improvisations while maintaining the chord structure. Performing with 4-mallets allows me the option of accompanying myself as I am soloing very much like a pianist except that I have only three octaves and four fingers to use. Gary Burton, internationally known jazz vibist, began to make this popular in the late 1960’s when he played exclusively with 4-mallets and won a Grammy Award for Best Jazz Performance by a Soloist for his album Alone at Last. Ed Saindon, who I will be studying with, is a former student of Gary Burton. The group jazz tunes will continue to be developed by rehearsing and performing with other jazz performers on the HSoM faculty and with performers in Western North Carolina. The OSCA will allow me more time to organize and perform in a group setting throughout the region.

By the Fall semester 2016, I believe I will be well-equipped to develop a jazz vibraphone pedagogy so that we can add it to the performance levels. Students will have the option to take the jazz mallet track or the classical mallet track up to level eight. Students that opt to take the jazz mallet track with also need to achieve level two in the classical mallet track since the classical mallet training will be beneficial for all students developing technique as a two or four mallet performer. The OSCA will give me time to develop the pedagogical materials necessary to develop this track and advertise it on the HSoM Percussion Webpage and Facebook page for recruitment.