

September 2007

Dear Branch Chair and President,

Welcome to another year of Certificate of Merit activities. Thank you for your willingness to serve MTAC in this most important capacity. It is appreciated more than words can express. The work that you do and the time you volunteer are vital to the CM program. In fact, our CM program simply could not operate without you. The more than 28,000 music students statewide who participate in CM certainly benefit from your efforts. Again, thank you so much!

Please make sure that your teachers know that the new (2007) Piano and Voice Syllabi will be used for the upcoming 2008 evaluations. Also, please be sure that each teacher has a copy of the *parent letter* and the *keyboard addendum* (watch the CM News for additional updates.) There is also an updated version of the *Certificate of Merit Policies* - please note that we have put all updates in blue so that they are easier to locate. Be sure that every participating teacher has a copy of these policies since they are responsible for the contents relative to their discipline. The Policy, as well as all files included in this "mailing", are available to all your teachers online at mtac.org.

Your teachers may print these files at home or your branch may print copies for the teachers. The State Board has decided that there will not be reimbursements for copies this CM year. Here is a note from State Treasurer, Madeline Miller:

- The State Board has decided to let the branches take on the responsibility of the CM printing. If they feel that it's necessary, they can raise their branch fee. There will still be time to raise the fees before the database opens on September 15. We are hoping that this will end up being less work for the CM Chairs. This can put more responsibility on the branch members. They can download some of their own papers, and only the numbers that they actually need. It will also hopefully make all of the members aware of all of the information on the website. It's there for all of the members, not just the CM Chairs.

If you have any questions, please have your Branch Treasurer contact the State Treasurer.

You may establish your own procedure for collection of CM fees. Be sure that the teachers understand that their registration is not valid until your branch receives their fees. You may need to remind teachers of the need to pay fees since registration, but not fee collection, is done online. However, teachers should be reminded that their registrations may be cancelled if their fees are unpaid by the postmark deadline of November 16.

In several branches there will be regionalization of certain disciplines. Your string, wind or voice students may be evaluated at a neighboring branch, or you may host students from other branches. As soon as the registration is complete, the discipline chairpersons will work closely with all branch discipline chairs. Be sure your discipline chairs have password access to your branch database and are able to arrange their own scheduling. If you are sending students to another branch, you will need to send the \$4 per student that you have retained from the initial registration to the host branch to help defray the costs of running the CM evaluations. If you are receiving students, you can expect the \$4 per student to be sent from the branch(es) involved.

The Branch CM Evaluations are scheduled from Feb 23 to April 6, 2008. Contact Linda Rohmund (Southern Chair for Scheduling) or Judi Sands-Pertel (Northern Chair) if you have any

questions or problems. Hopefully, you have secured your CM site by now. Please cooperate with your evaluator chair in setting your dates, and also be actively involved in recruiting new evaluators.

There are numerous sources for you to access information about what is happening in CM:

- Our very own Webmaster, Lowell Webster, keeps the website updated with information. Be sure to check the site regularly for anything new.
- The CM Chairs group at yahoo is extremely important. This is where the Council will send you important information between newsletters and mailings. You, the chair, as well as your BFS (Branch Fast Schedule) person, should be added to this group. Contact Lowell if you are not already a part of the group.
- Our CM Information Chair, Amy Martin, has sent the first CM newsletter of the 2007 – 2008 year. The newsletter is sent by email only (do not look for it in the mailbox); it is also available on the MTAC website. If you did not receive the newsletter, please email Amy at martin3750@comcast.net. If you cannot receive email, please designate someone in your branch to receive it for you. There are important items discussed in each issue of the CM Newsletter. If you have questions or if you have some creative ideas about how to make CM run more smoothly at the branch level, please let Amy know. The newsletter is a valuable tool for exchanging ideas and clarifying procedures.

An excellent source of information for your teachers is our CM Teacher Training Session. Several members of the Council are available to travel to your branch to train your teachers for CM preparations, procedures, guidelines and policies or to introduce the new syllabus. Many branches have already booked their meeting. If you are interested in a session, please contact Judi Sands-Pertel at Jspmidi@aol.com to set up a date and time.

Other tools available especially for branch chairs are the Encyclopedia of Certificate of Merit and a Chronology for Branch Chairs, both prepared by Bobbette Cameron. An updated version will be available in mid-September so be sure to go to the website and print a copy. It will be invaluable to you!

An exciting addition to the teacher home page is the Power Point presentation of the new syllabus entitled “Meet the Syllabus”. There are also errata sheets for the new syllabus located there; several things were inadvertently left out of the syllabus and many sharp-eyed teachers have been helping us locate these items since convention. Please let your teachers know that they are there.

If you have any questions about your job as branch chair, please email any of us on the CM Council. It takes all of us working together to make Certificate of Merit function. Just one favor, please ... do not give out CM Council phone numbers to teachers or parents; we love to talk just with you! Remind your teachers to remind their parents about the chain of communication.

I am looking forward to another successful year. Thanks again for your part in this splendid educational program.

Sincerely,
Karen S. Becker
CM Coordinator
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