Worship Arts Program Builds New Recording Studio

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Tucked away in the basement of the Campus Center, a recording studio is under construction. Boxes line the hallway leading to the room, but soon countertops and amps will be installed, and computer equipment will be set up connecting the recording room to the rehearsal room next door, visible through a soundproofed window. The studio will give students an opportunity to gain experience recording and producing right on campus.

Dordt’s worship arts major is a relatively new addition to the academic program. The four-year program is housed in the Theology Department, and students who choose the major can broaden their studies beyond music to include drama, art, or communication. Worship arts students can also pair their studies with a pre-seminary focus.

The new studio will allow students to experiment with music they’ve written and hear it produced and engineered in a professional manner, says Director of Campus Ministries and Worship Arts Jonathan DeGroot. Hearing what’s written on the page can change how you interpret a song, explains DeGroot: “When you record, you often hear parts you hadn’t noticed.

“Our vision for the recording studio has two aims,” he says. First, the studio will help students who are pursuing the goal of writing new, high-quality, theologically solid music with a distinctly Reformed inclination. “There’s a lot of praise and worship out there right now, but there’s been very little that is particularly Reformed,” he says. Dordt hopes to change that by training and encouraging a new generation of distinctly Reformed writers, musicians, and worship leaders.

Second, the department hopes to bring students from other majors into the new studio, and it plans to offer an Introduction to Recording class for students in disciplines like digital media production, drama, or music.

With the new equipment, students will acquire hands-on experience with high-quality equipment, an opportunity that will yield benefits in their future vocations.

“There’s no shortage of job opportunities for aspiring church worship leaders,” says DeGroot, who says he often receives calls from churches in search of worship leaders. “Churches are looking for people who aren’t just worship planners, but worship leaders,” he says.

The studio will also benefit Campus Ministries, which oversees a variety of student-led worship teams on campus.

“At Dordt, we’re blessed with an abundance of talented songwriters and musicians,” DeGroot says.

These students and faculty members have contributed to the vibrant culture of corporate worship on campus. The new recording studio will help broaden the reach of their gifts to worshipping communities and congregations beyond Dordt.

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