Kevin:

Sorry I didn't get to visit with you while I was in Rexburg last week, but next time for sure. This is just a short note to share with you that I am very impressed with level of the students as well as the quality of the teachers. It is very obvious the jazz faculty is teaching sound basic fundamentals to all the students, because what I heard was good playing and performance throughout all the ensembles. The teaching of basic fundamentals made the difference in our students the 27 years I was at Northern Colorado.

The jazz choir (Vocal Union) has a great sound and were very flexible to work with. What great attitudes and talent. As I didn't get a chance to hear anyone solo (improvise), I would hope the vocal students are taking advantage of the Vocal Jazz Combos as well...it is very rare indeed when there is an opportunity for students to sing in an excellent jazz choir and yet another opportunity for them to learn vocal improvisation and style in another ensemble.

The jazz ensemble is absolutely terrific. The trumpets are very strong (a very talented lead player), the trombones solid all the way through (some good teaching going on there), and the saxophone and rhythm sections are absolutely first-class. Students were easy to work with and adapted to suggestions immediately. Outstanding musicians!

The jazz improvisation and the jazz ped classes are right on the mark regarding what information is being taught and shared in a positive and participatory classroom environment. The quality of the students and the teaching in these classes is superb.

Your facilities are to be the envy of many music schools, outstanding classrooms, practice rooms, offices, and ensemble rooms. There was hardly anything out of place or not clean: the halls, restrooms, windows, walls, etc. The students obviously have a sense of pride in what they are doing and are focused and motivated to succeed at the highest level.

My congratulations to you, the faculty, and the support staff for your and their commitment to excellence.

Sincerely,

Gene