In 1960, Wayne Nichols, with support from Jack Sisson, notably formed the first extracurricular student jazz band at The University of Central Oklahoma. A decade later, Kent Kidwell formalized a student jazz ensemble as an accredited course and founded our modern jazz program. Shortly after, Kidwell’s jazz bands began receiving top honors at many nationally respected jazz festivals. With the notable addition of faculty member Lee Rucker in 1980, jazz at Central has now grown to include eleven student jazz groups with multiple jazz degree offerings. UCO big bands, combos and individual students have received numerous awards and honors for outstanding performances at events held around the world.

After current Director of Jazz Studies Brian Gorrell took over leadership of Jazz Ensemble I in 2009, the group was invited to perform at both the 50th anniversary of the Jazz a Juan Festival in France and the Umbria Jazz Festival in Italy. These invitations culminated in a major European tour in 2010. Our Jazz Ensemble I then performed as a featured guest at the Jazz Education Network (JEN) Conference in Louisville in January 2012. In March 2012, the same group was named the outstanding large collegiate jazz ensemble nationwide by Downbeat Magazine. In January 2013, our Jazz Composers Combo was invited to perform as a closing group at the JEN Conference in Atlanta. In December 2013, Jazz Ensemble I was one of only two collegiate jazz ensembles nationwide selected to perform at the Midwest Clinic in Chicago. In January 2015, the same group was selected to perform the honors jazz concert closing set at the Oklahoma Music Educators Annual Conference in Tulsa.

In addition to offering a Minor in Jazz Studies and Oklahoma’s only Master of Music in Jazz Studies, plans are now being finalized to offer a Bachelor of Music in Jazz Performance Degree in Fall 2016.

“The Jazz Studies and Symphonic Programs at UCO gave me the tools I needed to not only grow as a musician, but as a person and a professional in the music industry. The faculty and staff work very hard and patiently to prepare each individual for his/her goals in the world of music.”

- Christopher Stanley, MM Jazz Performance, Former Student

View more info for this division at www.ucojazzlab.com/education
AUDITION REQUIREMENTS

- Applicants should perform a jazz solo transcription or jazz etude (24 bars minimum) for their instrument drawn from a recognized jazz artist. Please provide two copies of the written transcription or etude.
- In addition, if able, applicants should perform a common jazz standard by playing the melody and then improvising over the chord changes. Piano accompaniment will be provided.
- Guitarists are expected to demonstrate proficiency comping in various styles.
- Pianists are expected to demonstrate proficiency comping in various styles with one and two-handed voicings.
- Bassists are expected to demonstrate proficiency in jazz bass line construction.
- Drummers are expected to demonstrate knowledge of percussion rudiments and examples of the following common styles using both sticks and brushes at various tempi: Be-Bop, Jazz Waltz, Bossa Nova, Samba, Afro-Cuban, Funk, Rock, Shuffle, and Jazz Ballad.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND TUITION WAIVERS

Scholarships and tuition waivers are available for qualified students by audition. Please visit our website ‘music.uco.edu/audition’ to apply and request an audition.

UCO JAZZ LAB

The UCO Jazz Lab is the home of the UCO Jazz program and serves three primary functions; as an education facility for the jazz studies program, as a community focused live music venue and as a place to learn, write and record music. Visit www.ucojazzlab.com for more information about this program’s mission to educate, entertain and create.

JAZZ FACULTY

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UCO Jazz Program Founder

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