



JEN Signature Chapter Central Washington University

cwujenclub@gmail.com

What CWU JEN does...

By JEN CWU President, Domi Edson

Having a collegiate chapter of JEN can be a great way to enhance the jazz experience at your university! Central Washington University's chapter was founded in 2013, and currently has roughly 100 active members. We put on at least one event every week, catering to students focused on both performance and education.

When starting a chapter, it is very important to have an executive board. Our board is very large as the club has grown significantly over the years.

Here are our officer positions and what they do:

- President
 - Holds meetings, communicates with clinicians and guest artists, organizes and facilitates events and generally oversees the club. They are also responsible for finding funding sources- many universities have multiple internal organizations that may have funds you can use.
- Vice President
 - Assists the president.
- Treasurer
 - Runs our weekly fundraiser. We sell "jazzy pizza" in the music building every week.
 - Collects and records club dues. We have club dues of \$10. Any student can participate in our events, but paying \$10 enables them to go on trips and be entered in a raffle to win a lesson with a guest artist (more on that later).
- Senator
 - Attends club senate meetings and presents our funds requests to them.
 - One of the ways we receive funding is by being an official university club because there's a separate pool of money for student organizations and activities. This means our JEN club is in the same category as badminton club, history club, fashion club, and many others.
- Secretary
 - Takes notes at the executive board meetings.

As our club grew, we added the following positions:

- Event Coordinator(s)
 - Responsible for dealing with logistical details and execution of events as well as scheduling and advertising them.
- Vocal Jazz representative
 - Represents our vocal jazz area's voice at meetings and helps facilitate and create vocal jazz themed events.

Some of the things you can do once you have a chapter:

You can host jazz jams. Here's some of the things that we do to cater to players of all ability levels, and bring in a large crowd:

- Host the jam at a restaurant or cafe- they will appreciate the extra business, and you get a chance to hang out, eat, and get outside of the music building.
- Have a host for every jam- this will help get people there right at the beginning to hear the opening set.

- Have a signup sheet where students can put down a tune and figure out instrumentation. This ensures that anyone who wants to play can, and makes sure that everyone knows whatever tune is called.
- One of the ways we get higher attendance from both performers and spectators is by having a theme. For example, our first jam was a twin jam where your “twin” was supposed to be a freshman to try and get them involved from the start. We have a costume contest and the winner wins a free slice of pizza, so some people get really into it.
- One of the ways we cater to less experienced jazz players is to have a tune of the week. This tune is determined ahead of time so anyone can learn the head and changes, and lead sheets are posted on our JEN bulletin board the week before. For that tune, we let everyone and anyone play, and we will even switch out rhythm section members as the tune goes on.

You can host a reading big band.

- This is a great way to keep students who did not make a jazz band involved.
- Gives music educators with no jazz experience an opportunity to play jazz.
- Also gives a student director a chance to run a rehearsal.
- Practice sight-reading!
- We choose easier charts with a theme- for example, one session we focused on Basie charts and what it means to play in the Basie style.
- We structure the session by first reading the chart down. Then, facilitated by the student director of the week, the group discusses ways to improve it. This gives the more experienced members a chance to practice rehearsing, and the less experienced members learn how to play in the jazz idiom.
- Every quarter we have a vocal jazz session. This gives them a chance to sing with a big band, and gives the band experience backing a singer.

You can host listening sessions.

- We will hang out in a classroom and have a sheet go around so people can write down tunes to listen to.
- We will sometimes have a theme such as Blue Note Quintets to help focus our listening. This is a fun opportunity for us to listen to both classics everyone should know as well as some newer music we may never have heard of.
- We will have a “drop the needle” contest to win a slice of jazzy pizza. We’ll play random short excerpts of several famous jazz recordings, and whoever gets the most correct (tune name, album, year, and personnel), wins a free slice of pizza!

You can host clinics to help future jazz educators.

- Every year we will host rhythm section 101 clinics where we will have a student in jazz 1 or in some cases the jazz area TA give a clinic on some of the basics of their rhythm section instrument and its role. We have method classes, but not in the jazz idiom, so this is a great opportunity for future educators to learn information such as basic piano voicings, how to walk a bassline, and the basic swing drum pattern.
- We host an Improvisation for Classical Musicians clinic to cater to classical musicians who want to be music educators.
- We host a Vocal Jazz 101 clinic to help instrumentalists learn more about vocal jazz.
- We have a sound equipment clinic to talk about PA systems, microphones, and amplification.
- These clinics are run by knowledgeable students or faculty, so they’re easy to execute and don’t require a lot of money.

You can bring in guest artists to do clinics and performances.

- We use our club budget to bring in guest artists.
- We will raffle off lessons every time we or the jazz area brings in an artist. Members who have paid their club dues of \$10 have a chance to win a lesson!

You can host large events.

- This year we are also planning a Women in Jazz Day- we will have a female professional for every instrument (and voice) on campus to give masterclasses and clinics, as well as have a faculty and participant performance at the end of this day. We are opening this free event to anyone of any age, and are hoping to have a large variety of participants from all around the state.

You can send representatives to the national JEN conference.

- Every year since 2014, our club has sent 8 members to attend the JEN conference. We always have more than 8 people want to attend, so we have a presentation where people pitch why we should send them, and the board and advisor (our jazz area head) decides which 8 members can attend.
- This year, we were able to fund flights, hotel, and registration with money from the university's services and activities committee. This counts as research, so likely your university will have many places you can ask for funding!
- The 8 students who will be attending will split up to attend as many clinics as possible. They will take notes into a google drive account that is available to all the members of our club. That way even students who couldn't attend can still get the amazing information from the conference!
- When the attendees get back, they hold a highlights meeting where every conference-goer presents their favorite clinic to anyone who wants to hear what they learned.

You can go on trips to see live jazz performances.

- We will buy tickets in bulk and rent a van from the university to send a group of JEN members to see performances for a reduced rate (the club will pay for part of the ticket, and attendees will pay the rest).

These are the things we do at Central Washington University! Feel free to use/modify any of our ideas.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact us at cwujenclub@gmail.com.