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Eastman School dean appointed

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The Eastman School of Music has named a new dean to lead the school as competition among international music schools increases, University of Rochester officials said Monday.

Douglas Lowry, dean of the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati, joins Eastman on Aug. 1.

"The 21st century metaphorically begins today at the Eastman School of Music," UR president Joel Seligman said in announcing Lowry's appointment.

"He comes to us as someone with an extraordinary background in academic administration," Seligman said. "And he comes to us, even more significantly, with the sensitivity and the talent to, if you will, orchestrate the conversation that will be the key to the future of Eastman."

Seligman called Eastman School the jewel in UR's crown, recognized since its beginning 80 years ago as the leading school of music in the nation, possibly worldwide. But the school faces increasing competition, as music schools at universities such as Yale dramatically boost their endowments for scholarship funds and new programs.

Lowry has led the College-Conservatory of Music for seven years. Previously, he taught, performed and held leadership positions at the Flora L. Thornton School of Music at the University of Southern California.

A native of Spokane, Wash., Lowry earned his bachelor of music degree in theory and composition from the University of Arizona and two master's degrees, in trombone performance and orchestral conducting, from USC.

Seligman noted the involvement of Lowry in community groups in Cincinnati, such as the city's symphony, opera, creative arts school and Classical Music Hall of Fame. Lowry also has been a successful fundraiser for the Cincinnati Conservatory, Seligman said.

Lowry said the landscape for music schools has changed dramatically in the last five years, with more schools—some with "huge asset bases"—vying for national prominence.

"The Eastman advantage will be to create an experience unique

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in higher education—regardless of the assets, with offerings so unique that students are attracted,” Lowry said.

Working with faculty and Eastman School administration, he said, the school needs to learn to look at cultural change in which fewer people are attending live performances. In addition, the school must look at changes in consumer behavior in which an organization’s prominence can be determined by where it lands on a Google search and what people say in blogs.

“Never have consumers wielded as much control,” Lowry said. “As we sit in front of the computer screen we are visiting the most visited theatrical stage. We need to lead this exploration, define its path of events, revive live music.”

Eastman School has been led for the last year by Interim Dean Jamal Rossi, a deputy dean who stepped in when former dean James Undercofler was appointed president and CEO of the Philadelphia Orchestra Association. Undercofler served as Eastman dean from 1997 to 2006.

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