

Nomination Letter

Music Business Association

Music Business Educator of the Year:

JOHN SIMSON, American University

It is my great pleasure and honor to nominate John Simson for the Music Business Association's *Music Business Educator of the Year* for 2025.

I have known John Simson for over 20 years. Since the day I met him, John has always been a champion for those around him, lifting them up toward success because he saw potential for something great.

There is no better example of John's recognizing such potential than when he created the Business and Entertainment Program in the KOGOD School of Business ten years ago. John had previously taught as an adjunct in the Washington College of Law at American University in the 1990s and saw that there was a need to be met in AU's undergraduate community. He took the experience and lessons from his lifetime career in many facets of the music industry and turned them into his vision for an educational program for the next generation of leaders.

John envisioned teaching the business side of the entertainment industry to students with interests in the creative arts. He crafted courses that covered the details of the entertainment industry's ecosystem in a *business* school in Washington, DC....a city known more for politics and law. John successfully blended all of these unique components into what has become an incredibly successful program track in KOGOD, yielding over 200 majors and minors each year. The program has repeatedly been recognized by Billboard Magazine as one of the country's highest ranked music business programs in the country.

As the BAE Program Director, John impacted the futures of hundreds of students and alum. By building an impressive team of full time and adjunct faculty, John has comprised a comprehensive curriculum that covers the business mechanics of the entertainment industry. He works with students personally to ascertain what they wish to do with their careers, and then tailor fits an individual program to help them reach those goals.

John's work to help students spans far outside of the classroom. He has organized annual BAE "treks" to the major entertainment hubs of Los Angeles, New York, Nashville and Austin, TX to expose students to the real world workplaces across the country. He brings in speakers and entertainers from all parts of the industry, not only to help educate our campus community, but to show the outside industry leaders what a tremendous program American University has at KOGOD. Most recently, John worked with his "Representing Talent" classes organize a campus concert featuring FloRida and Flo Milli. This experience not only showed our BAE students the practicalities of putting on an arena show, it also put American University on the map with industry leaders that learned about the BAE program through the show's promotion.

John has connected hundreds of BAE students and graduates with employment opportunities, mostly through his decades-long personal relationships that span the entertainment industry. He gets to know his students so well over their four years in the program, that he is ready to help them with the professional steps during their time at AU and after graduation. His reputation in the industry is tremendous, yet through John's humbleness, he has amazingly avoided the ego trap that is prevalent among many leaders of the music industry. He is just as happy to buy a bunch of pizza and watch the Grammy telecast with students in the KOGOD Business School lounge, as he was in the 25+ years that he served as a leader of the Recording Academy.

I can speak personally about how John mentors those around him every day. One of the best decisions of my life was to say YES to John Simson when he invited me to return to my alma mater as an adjunct faculty member eleven years ago. John was starting the BAE program at the time and was looking for professionals that were passionate about their careers in the entertainment industry and wanted to share those experiences with students.

Since then, John has helped formulate so many courses, along with his instructors. He cultivates professional excellence at all levels, whether it is the first-time job for a graduating senior, or, in my case, the dream job of a lifetime after decades in the industry, to now become Associate Program Director of the BAE program. John doesn't only "Represent" Talent, he *Recognizes* talent and helps find the best places to use it. We are so fortunate that John chose American University to share *his* talents the talents that have helped make so many others' dreams a reality.

I would be happy to share any additional thoughts and information with the Committee about John Simson, my mentor, colleague and dear friend.

Sincerely,

Linda Bloss-Baum

Director

Business and Entertainment Program

KOGOD School of Business

American University