The Clarinet Studio at Washburn University has much to offer you in your musical journey. I am very excited about my current students who are working together in realizing their career aspirations. I would like to draw your attention to what we have here at WU… a student-centered faculty and university, dedicated students, and an atmosphere for learning and creativity.

The Department of Music offers performing opportunities in the Symphony Orchestra, Wind Ensemble, University Band, and numerous chamber music ensembles including our Clarinet Ensemble. In addition to our wonderful scholarships, the Honors Woodwind Quintet, Marching Band, and Pep Band are audition-based stipends and income-earning opportunities. We have a performance class that meets weekly throughout the semester, and classes in reed making. I have created a Topeka Youth Clarinet Choir that meets every fall and gives the Washburn clarinet studio the experience of working with younger clarinet students. This pedagogical aspect is vital in your education as a music major or minor as well as something that is important in building your resume/vitae. All in all, the experience here at WU is second to none and I hope you will get a chance to see in person why we would like you to come to WU!

Karen Benda is an avid chamber musician, recitalist and artist-teacher who plays with a “well-defined sound and nuance of phrasing (Cincinnati Enquirer).” Benda has presented numerous chamber music concerts at the Interlochen Arts Camp while also being featured on National Public Radio’s (NPR) Performance Today. Benda has held teaching residencies at the University of Costa Rica and in Colombia, as an artist-faculty member of the Colombian Youth Philharmonic.

In addition to her work at WU, Benda is Instructor of Clarinet at the Interlochen Arts Camp. She has performed at various venues including the Sunflower Music Festival, the International Clarinet Association ClarinetFest and the International Double Reed Society. Benda has also taught at Ohio University. Benda attended the Aspen Music Festival, Music Academy of the West and was substitute clarinetist for the New World Symphony. An advocate of body awareness for musicians, Benda is studying the Alexander Technique through the Houston School for the Alexander Technique.

Dr. Karen Benda
Lecturer of Clarinet

Contact:
Dr. Karen Benda
(785) 670-1512
karen.benda@washburn.edu

Education:
Doctorate of Musical Arts
University of Michigan

Master of Music Performance
Cincinnati-College Conservatory of Music

Bachelor of Music Education
University of Oklahoma

Clarinet Graduate 2014, Bailey:
“I really enjoyed my time at Washburn working with Dr. Benda and being a part of the clarinet studio. Dr. Benda always pushed me to be my best and was willing to go the extra mile when I needed help. The clarinet studio was also like a second family to me and I have walked away with strong friendships because of my experience at Washburn.”

Senior Clarinet Student, Meaghan:
“I chose Washburn for the small class sizes, personal attention, and the acclaimed faculty. Dr. Benda has helped me find my musical voice on the clarinet by teaching me in depth about expression, technique, and performing without tension. Washburn has given me so many amazing opportunities that will take me forward confidently and enthusiastically into a fruitful future in music.”