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February 12, 1999

To: Lee L. Huntsman
Provost

From: Marsha L. Landolt
Dean and Vice Provost



Re: Ten-year review of the School of Art

Recommended action:

The Graduate School Council considered the School of Art and its BA, BFA, MA, MFA and PhD programs at its meetings on December 17 and January 21. The Council recommended that all degree programs be continued while observing that the School would benefit from selective investment on the part of the University. Specific recommendations for investment, other than addressing certain safety issues in studios, are hampered by the lack of a strategic vision and plan. The Council expressed concern that the faculty are overextended by their effort to support a diverse array of programs serving a large number of students. The Council further recommended that a follow-up review be conducted in 5 years. It is expected that in the intervening time the School will adopt a strategic plan that results in focusing its effort and resources, and that the University will make targeted investments to help it achieve its goals. I concur with the Council's recommendation. The self-study, report of the review group, and the response of the Group to the review report are attached.

Background:

The School of Art is comprised of the Divisions of Art, Art History and Design. Its administration is diffuse, with the separate Divisions playing major roles. The roles of the separate divisions are so strong that the self-study was divided among them and, to the detriment of the review, lacked an overall vision or summary of the School and its priorities. The Division of Art supports faculty and programs in eight areas: Ceramics, Fibers, Metals, Painting, Photography, Printmaking, Sculpture and Cross-Disciplinary Arts. The Divisions of Art History and Design are more homogeneous, but still support scholarly activity and courses covering a broad swath of their respective fields. The School is comprised of 43 faculty, 25 teaching assistants and 21 staff technicians. It houses 1100 undergraduate majors, with a large concentration in the BA (nonstudio) program in Interdisciplinary Visual Arts and Art History. There are 2 FTE advisors for the 1100 undergraduate majors in 11 undergraduate programs and 50 MFA students in 9 programs. The advisors also counsel prospective students. The operating budget for the School has remained flat, in absolute dollars, for 6 biennia. In 1987-1989 the operating budget was \$358,302; in 1997-1999 it is \$340,182. Morale is adversely affected by salary compression and low salaries in comparison to other departments in the College. Low salaries seem to be due to market forces as, relative to peers at other universities; the School of Art's salaries are not further behind than the College's salaries overall.

The review committee members commented favorably on quality of the programs and the dedication of the faculty to the School and its programs. It also was observed that the faculty have shown considerable resourcefulness in the face of limited support. The review committee complimented the performance of the current director, Chris Ozubko, particularly in regard to his ability to address the many constituencies within the School. However, they also commented that it was difficult to detect an overall sense of mission. This difficulty is attributable in part, to the heterogeneous nature of art and faculties in schools of art, and to the internal competition for limited resources. One external member commented that the faculty were "hitting the wall" and having difficulty seeing beyond their current difficulties and constraints. The committee also expressed concern about communication within the school:

"There seems to have been little communication with or engagement of faculty in strategic planning; consequently, School administration and faculty have no idea, really, of where they stand, confused as they are about the goals, objectives, standards of performance, and measures of success that determine the allocation of resources, priorities in making curricular decisions and faculty rewards. This makes it difficult for the School to plan and to make tough decisions among competing demands."

After considering the self-study and the report of the review committee and discussing both with the on-campus members of the review committee, the principal concerns regarding the School and its programs identified in the December 21 meeting of the Graduate School Council were:

1. *Teaching load.* The School was asked to consider reducing the number of students in the Interdisciplinary Visual Arts BA program and the 128 credit requirement for the BFA.
2. *Planning and administrative issues.* The school was asked to consider:
 - Establishment of a visiting committee for development advice.
 - Development of a comprehensive technology plan.
 - Formation of an interdivisional curriculum committee.
 - Development of a space use plan taking into account student demand for programs in assigning space (*i.e.*, one that includes a mechanism for reassigning space allocated to programs with low or declining demand).
 - Development of a strategic plan that addresses decreasing instructional support for nonmajors, scaling graduate programs to appropriate size and retaining only those that are most successful, combining programs for greater instructional and resource efficiency, reallocating faculty resources among programs for greater efficiencies, and dropping programs that are less critical to the School and College mission.
3. *Henry Art Gallery.* The School was asked to consider the interaction that the School should have with the Henry Art Gallery. Should the Gallery be used more extensively? Does it offer the appropriate support?
4. *Studio fees.* Would additional studio fees for undergraduates alleviate some of the funding problems? Could this be implemented?
5. *Prioritize the list of financial need.* The major needs appeared to be safety (technicians in studios), space (Sand Point was mentioned in the self-study), additional TAs and additional money for the slide collection. These are just a few of the many listed in the self-study. The School was asked to identify its greatest need.

These concerns were transmitted to the Director, the Acting Dean and the Divisional Dean for discussion at the January 21 meeting. A summary of the response follows.

- *Teaching load.* The 128-credit requirement for the BA degree is the standard for comparable degrees at other Universities. The suggestion that entry to the BA degree in Interdisciplinary Arts be restricted would simply shift demand from this program to other undergraduate programs, most likely within the College of Arts and Sciences. If savings are to be generated through reduction in student numbers, it appears that the MFA program, with 50 students spread over 9 programs, might offer the most gain with least damage to the mission of the School.
- *Planning and administrative issues.* The School is developing a technology plan, forming an interdivisional curriculum committee, devising a space plan, developing a strategic plan and considering the establishment of a visiting committee.
- *Henry Art Gallery.* This relationship seems to be underdeveloped rather than poor. The Graduate School Council is concerned that the Gallery should work closely with and support the academic missions of the School.
- *Studio fees.* The school takes the view that the imposition of fees is the only way studio programs can be offered at an appropriate level. It is willing to increase the many fees it already charges, as well as to impose additional fees to provide access to studio programs and, if possible, in Art History as well.
- *Prioritize the list of financial need.* Although a list of priorities was supplied, they seemed not to be linked realistically to the stresses and demands within the school. The Director stated that many of the problems could be overcome with a general raise in faculty salaries. It is simply not clear that this would lead to satisfaction with the work load or alleviate the stresses associated with internal competition for operations support. It appears that the most crucial

need is for studio supervision, which is performed by technicians. Inadequate supervision was cited throughout the review and may increase the risk of personal injury or damage to facilities. The School may benefit from analytical support to identify its strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities and to help it relate costs to programs. Such an analysis would be a great asset to developing a strategic plan.

In the words of one member of the Graduate School Council, the School seems to have made a "strategic wager" in the form of offering a great diversity of degree programs and courses serving a huge number of students, with the hope of gaining resources adequate to the task it has assumed. In the current climate of extreme fiscal restraint, such a gamble is clearly at a disadvantage in comparison to a rational and clearly articulated strategic plan. The Council is strongly of the opinion that the School of Art is significantly undersupported. However, it also is of the opinion that the School has not prioritized its needs within the context of an achievable set of goals. Currently, it is not possible to discern what a limited (by fiscal necessity) investment is likely to return in terms of satisfying an over-stretched faculty, strengthening the most successful programs, or making improvements in advising or studio safety.

Clearly, the School must develop a rational plan as the result of an analytical process that addresses its goals and priorities. To be successful in this process, the faculty must understand that all programs will not benefit equally. The alternative is that none will develop adequately, confusion over the direction of the School will continue, and no one will know what to expect. It is encouraging that the School informed us on February 2, that they will not admit students to the MA track in Industrial Design beginning Autumn, 1999. However, this can not yet be taken as a sign of willingness to permanently diminish effort in undersubscribed or less critical tracks, given the fact that they hope to reopen the track should they be able to hire faculty.

The School stands to benefit significantly from looking for support outside the University, strengthening its ties with the local art community, and developing potential patrons. It should consider strategic alliances with other organizations, both public and private. The School is fortunate to have a Director dedicated to such an undertaking and a Divisional Dean willing to actively participate. The University should support these efforts and identify ways that it can offer guidance.

The Council recommends that the School engage in a strategic planning process that identifies the critical needs of those programs of greatest value. The University should respond to a clearly articulated plan by making targeted investments. Investment might be staged so as to encourage the school to maintain focus on fulfilling its strategic plan. We recommend that the program be reviewed again in 5 years. The interim review should focus on the fulfillment of the strategic plan and the success of the investments made.

- c. Richard McCormick, President
 - David Hodge, Acting Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
 - Michael Halleran, Divisional Dean, Arts and Humanities, College of Arts and Sciences
 - Fred Campbell, Dean of Undergraduate Education and Vice Provost
 - George Bridges, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education
 - Debra Friedman, Associate Provost for Academic Planning
 - John Slattery, Associate Dean for Academic Programs
 - Augustine McCaffery, Assistant to the Dean
- Graduate School Council
School of Art Review Committee