



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON  
*The Graduate School*  
*G-1 Communications*  
*Box 353770*  
*Seattle, Washington 98195-3770*

*Telephone: (206)543-5900*

*Fax: (206)685-3234*

April 20, 2009

To: Phyllis Wise, Provost  
Douglas J. Wadden, Executive Vice Provost

From: Gerald Baldasty, Vice Provost and Dean  
James S. Antony, Associate Vice Provost and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

RE: Review of the Center for Digital Arts & Experimental Media

This memo outlines the Graduate School's recommendations on the Center for Digital Arts & Experimental Media (DXARTS) program review. More detailed comments on the program can be found in the documents referred to below. The DXARTS review included the following milestones and documentation:

- DXARTS self-study (December, 2007)
- Charge meeting between review committee and administrators (January 30, 2008)
- Site visit (February 25-26, 2008)
- Graduate and Professional Student Senate report (March, 2008)
- Review committee report (April 29, 2008)
- DXARTS response to the report (August 8, 2008)
- Graduate School Council consideration of review (March 19, 2009)

The review committee consisted of:

Elizabeth Van Volkenburgh, Professor, UW Biology (Committee Chair)  
Sean M. O'Connor, Associate Professor, UW Law  
John Sylvester, Professor, UW Mathematics  
Jon Christopher Nelson, Professor, College of Music, University of North Texas  
George Legrady, Professor, Media Arts & Technology, University of California, Santa Barbara

A subcommittee of the Graduate School Council presented findings and recommendations to the full Council at its meeting March 19, 2009. After discussion, Council recommended continuing status for the undergraduate and graduate degree programs, but with the next review during the

2012-2013 academic year. The Council noted that this innovative, internationally renowned program would benefit from a review in 5-years, after it has produced more Ph.D.s, moved further from “start-up” into “stewardship” mode, addressed questions of space, and have clarity about the possibility of departmental status. Specific comments regarding the unit and its B.F.A. and Ph.D. programs include the following:

### **Degrees Offered**

- B.F.A. and Ph.D.

### **Program Strengths**

- DXARTS is a strong, internationally renowned program with good coverage in most areas of digital arts. It has a dedicated and high quality faculty and staff, highly motivated students from diverse backgrounds, and excellent graduate student financial support.
- The program has excellent equipment; in general DXARTS uses its resources efficiently and productively.
- There exists strong community interaction via a successful required internship/research program.

### **Challenges & Risks**

- DXARTS is presently working through the transition from “start-up” mode to “stewardship” mode and long-term sustainability.
- As a non-departmental program, DXARTS faces challenges navigating faculty governance, promotion, and tenure procedures that are designed around departmental structures.
- Paying for space off campus is expensive and, while giving faculty and students access to needed facilities, it presents a long-term liability for the program.
- The program may need to actively work to avoid a gender gap in its undergraduate population.

### **Areas of Concurrence**

- The review committee noted that creating and maintaining positive, collaborative relationships with faculty and programs across campus can be challenging due to DXARTS’ small faculty size, its very bright and ambitious students, and its charting of new intellectual territory. The program collaborates broadly, while it has made a concerted effort not to actively recruit faculty across campus in support of its students, preferring a more organic structure for building collaborations.

### **Council Recommendations**

- The undergraduate and graduate degrees should be continued, with the next Graduate School review in five years (2012-2013)
- Arts & Sciences should carefully consider granting DXARTS departmental status with a view towards enhancing growth, improving governance, and streamlining the promotion and tenure process.
- DXARTS should explore the creation of additional 500-level courses in support of the graduate curriculum.

- Program faculty should assure mechanisms are in place to maintain ongoing, productive ties with other units on campus. DXARTS should continue to share technical expertise with other programs.
- DXARTS should continue to pursue options for alleviating concerns about space.
- The Council recognizes the two new faculty positions approved by the College.

We concur with the Council's comments and recommendations.

cc: Douglas J. Wadden, Executive Vice Provost, Office of the Provost  
Ana Mari Cauce, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences  
Robert C. Stacey, Divisional Dean for Arts and Humanities, College of Arts and Sciences  
Janice M. DeCosmo, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Academic Affairs  
Shawn D. Brixey, Director, Center for Digital Arts and Experimental Media  
DXARTS Review Committee  
Graduate School Council  
David Canfield-Budde, Academic Program Specialist, The Graduate School  
Jake Faleschini, President, GPSS