



# THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

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## UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

January 26, 2011

To: Mary E. Lidstrom, Interim Provost and Executive Vice President  
Douglas J. Wadden, Executive Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Planning

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

RE: Review of the School of Art

This memorandum outlines the Graduate School's recommendations on the ten-year review of the School of Art—Division of Art, Division of Design and Division of Arts History, in the College of Arts and Sciences. The School offers the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Master of Arts, Master of Fine Arts, and Doctor of Philosophy degree programs. More detailed comments on the school can be found in the documents referred to below. The review included the following milestones and documentation:

- Art self-study (January 11, 2010 )
- Charge meeting between review committee and administrators (October 14, 2009)
- Site visit (March 1-2, 2010)
- Review committee report (April 1, 2010)
- School response to the report (May 5, 2010)
- Graduate School Council consideration of review (November 4, 2010)

The review committee consisted of:

Alex Anderson, Associate Professor and Associate Chair,  
Department of Architecture, (Committee Chair)  
Catherine Connors, Associate Professor, Department of Classics  
Robert Crutchfield, Professor, Department of Sociology  
Thomas Berding, Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Art  
and Art History, Michigan State University  
Steven Ostrow, Professor and Chair, Department of Art History,  
University of Minnesota  
Robert Swinehart, Professor, School of Design, Carnegie Mellon University

A subcommittee of the Graduate School Council presented findings and recommendations to the full Council at its meeting on November 4, 2010. The Council commended the faculty and staff for their collegiality in the face of economic restraint. They commended the school also for its clear and compendious self-study which elicited a thoughtful, detailed evaluation.

Specific comments regarding the school and its degree programs include the following:

### **Program Strengths**

- The school has a complex but legible curriculum; students are prepared to work in an appropriate mix of traditional and new media, training both non-artists as well as practicing artists.
- The faculty exhibit impressive levels of productivity and excellence, managing to retain much of their strength under adverse conditions and demonstrating the academic value of creative work in a Research 1 University.
- Through its three divisions, the school inculcates a passion for art, design, and art history among students, who are engaged, well-spoken, and enthusiastic about the school.
- Although its operating budget has been halved since the 1998-1999 review, the school has made numerous hard choices while still achieving consensus among the divisions on the direction of the school.
- Faculty, students and staff exhibit a high degree of collegiality and commitment to the school. Having served nearly three five-year terms, the director is perceived as providing excellent leadership within the university and nationally.
- The Art History Library is an extremely valuable resource for faculty and students as is the digital lab and MDID visual resources collection.

### **Challenges and Risks**

- Faculty hires have not kept pace with needs due to changes in the field and recent faculty losses. Consequently, junior faculty in art and design are overburdened by service—an area the school has begun to address. Junior faculty in design are stretched to their limits and unable to seek out career development opportunities.
- Areas of the curriculum that require attention, include the lack of critical theory and methods in art history, a gap in the history of Western art, a lack of focus and depth in the Interdisciplinary Visual Arts program, and the future of the Fibers and Small Metals programs.
- Divided among three buildings, the quantity, quality, security, and adjacency of the school's physical facilities are inadequate. Art history has no space of its own, including for PhD students; BFA students and many design students lack appropriate studio space; and undergraduates need research space. Students who must be able to access their studios 24/7 lack security. Students also have insufficient resources and space to exhibit their work. Finally, the location of graduate students at Sand Point minimizes their contact with undergraduate students.
- Some problems with student advising were reported, especially for undergraduate students attempting to plan coursework; Art History lacks written materials for graduate students that explain expectations and procedures. The school has begun to address these issues.
- The school's ten-year self-study does not document cultural diversity, referring only to diversity of artistic disciplines, generational diversity, and gender diversity.

## **Areas of Concurrence**

In general, the School of Art concurred with the review committee, but felt that greater clarity was needed in articulating four major areas of concern which include the following:

### Space and Facilities:

- The lack of individual workspace for students, communal meeting space, and research space for undergraduate and graduate students is critical.
- Safety must be improved after hours and on the weekends, and that installation of a card swipe system should be a top priority for all three facilities
- An issue not mentioned by the committee, which the school noted is the problem of maintaining its three facilities on an underfunded operating budget. The school recommends a cost-sharing plan to help with the upkeep of equipment.

### Staffing:

- New faculty positions are needed in all three divisions and should be areas with the largest growth (Industrial Design and Interaction Design; Photography, Painting and Drawing, and 3D4M).
- New faculty and staff hires ranked across divisions, and that a strategic plan is needed to hire individuals whose approach is interdisciplinary in nature and who can work to further new alignments across divisions.
- A technician is needed in the 3D4M (Ceramics, Sculpture and Glass) facility. Additional staffing needs were noted including: a technician in the woodshop; technical staff to oversee the larger number of students who now use the woodshops, workshops, and studios; in the computer lab which serves engineering, computer science, and architecture students; and in its administrative office, which maintains 140 budgets, serves 42 faculty and 20 staff, and manages three facilities comprised of over 100,000 square feet.

### Salaries:

- Faculty salaries are low (among the lowest in the university), further compounded by the lack of support for faculty research and travel. Additionally, compression exists at the associate and full professor ranks and should be addressed.

### Financial Support:

- Graduate funding should increase if it is to attract and retain top graduate students. Junior faculty also need financial support for their research and creative endeavors.
- Strides have been made in funding transport costs for exhibiting faculty work and in covering expenses related to reproduction rights.

### Miscellaneous:

- A review of requirements for the Interdisciplinary Visual Arts (IVA) degree will be undertaken to assess how courses fit into the division's curriculum.
- The school will pursue a name change to Art, Art history, and Design that more accurately reflects its programs.
- The University should assist in finding and funding exhibition space, on or off campus.
- Regarding the recommendation to pursue National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) accreditation for all divisions, the school noted (a) the Division of Design has initiated this discussion, (b) Art lacks the wherewithal for increased

curriculum, faculty and facility resources that accreditation would require, and (c) Art History was not interested in pursuing NASAD accreditation at this time.

- The school disagreed about opening access to MDID visual resources collection, noting that the collection is supported by a fee on all Art History and cross-listed courses and it lacks the staff to provide round-the-clock support to maintain additional user accounts.
- The school disagreed that it lacks diversity within the faculty and student body.
- It disagreed that students in the Art History honors program lack clear direction and information about requirements, pointing out that five to seven students per year meet regularly with advisers and faculty.

### **Graduate School Council Recommendations**

- The Council recommended continuing status of the School of Art's BA, BFA, MA, MFA, and PhD degree programs, with a subsequent review in 10 years (2019-2020).
- The Council recommended that the school's staffing, space, and salary needs be given high priority.

We concur with the Council's comments and recommendations.

- c: Ana Mari Cauce, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences  
 Ed Taylor, Vice Provost and Dean, Undergraduate Academic Affairs  
 Robert Stacey, Divisional Dean for Arts and Humanities, College of Arts and Sciences  
 Janice DeCosmo, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Academic Affairs  
 Christopher Ozubko, Professor and Director, School of Art  
 School of Art Review Committee  
 Graduate School Council Members  
 Augustine McCaffery, Senior Academic Program Specialist, The Graduate School  
 Sarah Reyneveld, President, Graduate and Professional Senate