



- Division of Art
- Division of Art History
- Division of Design

**Response to the  
Report of the Art / Art History Program  
Review Committee ( July 1998 )**

**Christopher Ozubko**  
*Director, School of Art*

In response to the Program Report, I would first like to thank the members of the 10 year Program Review Committee for their time, energy and assessment in reviewing the School of Art and the programs in the Divisions of Art, Art History and Design. Understandably, it was a difficult task to review a unit of this size and complexity, but the faculty felt that a fair and objective analysis had been made. This document is a compilation of responses (not in any particular order), summarized from the three divisions, and reflects comments and concerns of the faculty as a whole.

Although the final committee report addresses a full range of issues and offers 16 recommendations, it would be important to restate items of paramount importance to the well-being and future of the School of Art, as a final voice that will be considered as a possibility for positive change. The review committee clearly identified four main issues of great concern: **salaries, equipment, operating budget, and space.** Conversely, the committee repeatedly remarked that they were impressed with the exceptional degree of commitment by faculty and staff and the dedication to excellence in education despite the financial hardship that has prevailed. I too believe our greatest resources are the dedicated faculty and staff of the School of Art. It was stated in the initial report that issues of salary and budget were clearly evident but not to be dwelled upon. Inadequate salaries and budgets have affected the entire operations to the detriment of the educational mission of the school, college and university. Issues of faculty recruitment, retention, lack of faculty incentives, and morale as they affect pedagogy are topics of major concern. With this strain on resources, it is difficult to continue to foster an environment supportive of educational and scholarly research, creative activity, and community service.

A specific example of the endemic problem of low salaries and insufficient budgets directly impacted our school this past summer with the resignation of Assistant Professor Shawn Brixey. He left the School of Art for a persuasive offer from Berkeley of close to double his UW salary, the support of two technicians, enormous lab space with CPUs in place, \$100,000 start up funds, reduced faculty teaching load and a favorable mortgage loan. The counter-offer from the UW was far from competitive. If this financial situation remains the same we can expect more faculty losses to other institutions.

The unfortunate departure of Professor Brixey in August impacted the entire school and brought to the forefront many of the issues identified in the 'Recommendations' section of the review report. But fortuitously, it now presents us with an opportunity for reevaluation of the cross-disciplinary emphasis that Professor Brixey was hired to address. Additionally, we will look at the potential of using innovative ideas to teach introductory non-major studio classes, possibly with the aid of technology. Therefore, this Autumn Quarter, Professor Paul Berger was appointed chair of a seven member Task Force and Planning committee to explore and examine possibilities and modifications, and to propose various options on the interlinked issues of:

1. the IVA program
2. the vacant "Brixey" position
3. role of technology in the school, and
4. non-major classes

Despite the complexity and interrelatedness of these issues, this committee will take a major step to broach the situation to effect positive change to the curriculum by addressing the current issues and needs, while establishing firm footings for the future.

The graduate degree programs in Art + Design have continued to evolve in a positive manner with many new offerings and activities leading to educational enrichment. This was a direct result of the previous program review in 1984. Unfortunately, the present and future problems we face in developing a superior program specifically relate to the lack of resources, faculty, and space. The "lack of space" issue might possibly resolve itself if the Sandpoint facility becomes a reality with the relocation of the graduate studio spaces. We are hopeful that the University will move forward on this endeavor in the near future, which will also enable us to reallocate space throughout the Art building to address desperately needed faculty office and studio teaching space. Dedicated faculty time for graduate courses may also be possible if adjustments to the foundation curriculum are implemented. Presently, most studio faculty piggyback graduate classes in addition to their yearly six class teaching load. The graduate board and students are tireless in seeking funding sources to assist with educational programming. The most recent is a proposal to the Graduate School for the funding of a 5 year planned project to assist with quality program recruitment, and to provide grads with a more fulfilling experience while in residence.

As indicated in the self study, from the time of its inception in 1966 until 1998, the Division of Art History degree programs were never given a comprehensive outside review. The Art History graduate programs were reviewed in 1977 by a team that included two distinguished art historians, but the program as a whole was not assessed until the present review. Under these circumstances, the division's faculty hoped for more than the one-and-one-half pages of commentary allotted to Art History in the report. Much of the text focused on a single issue: speculation about why our program ranked (unjustifiably) low in National Research Council ranking. Since the Council does not supply justification or evidence for its ranking, the review committee guessed the negative rating might be based on the program's:

1. location on the West Coast
2. relationship to the School of Art
3. balance of Western and non-Western specialties among the faculty, and
4. curriculum that does not appear to be "theory-driven."

If these indeed are the reasons for the program's low ranking, standards for achievement invoked by the National Research Council are in conflict with those upheld by the University of Washington, which supports cultural diversity and the kind of interdisciplinary teaching facilitated by Art History's relationship with the School of Art. Contrary to the assumption of the Art/Art History Program Review Committee, the balance of specialties within our faculty is the result of a deliberate, self-conscious and purposeful vision by Professor Millard Rogers and other founding members of the division. Many of our best graduate students have been attracted to the program because of its distinctive range of specialties. This past year, for example, we recruited two outstanding graduate students in Chinese art history who had strong competing offers. Another significant index of our program's strength is provided by the last three M.A. program graduates—all specializing in Western art history: these students were accepted with scholarships into Ph.D. programs at Michigan, Princeton and the Courtauld in London. A

survey of job listings in the field leaves no doubt that Ph.D.s who can teach widely in both Western and non-Western art are being sought in increasing numbers by universities all over the country. As documented in our self-study report, the employment record for our Ph.D.s is excellent. In short, the relevance of the National Research Council's ranking to the conduct of our program is unclear, and we regret that this issue may have diverted the committee from making other substantive recommendations.

The issue of the name change from its present title of School of Art to '**School of Art, Art History and Design**' was an item discussed and recommended at the exit review but unfortunately was not listed in the report. This change is essential and we are asking for approval to move ahead with the process immediately. In April 1995, a revised administrative code was proposed by the former director Jerome Silbergeld and approved by School of Art faculty vote. This new organizational structure of three distinct divisions was created to address the **hybrid constituency** of the school and to allow independence and autonomy with regard to issues that pertain to budget, merit review, faculty appointments, promotion and tenure. To further clarify the distinctions between the divisions to those outside the department, college, and university, a name change of **School of Art, Art History, and Design** was proposed in November 1996. This too was approved by School of Art faculty vote and forwarded to Dean John Simpson for review and approval. We would now ask the Graduate School to forward its approval to the College Council, the Board of Regents, and finally to President Richard McCormick.

As stressed in the review, the School of Art, having the largest number of majors in the College, needs to seriously assess the staffing problems in the office of Academic Advising and Student Services. With close to 1200 majors to advise and multiple programs to supervise, the staff is overloaded. As student enrollments rise, advising duties increase. Therefore upgrading of present staff and creating a full-time advisor for grad students will become necessary.

Professor John Young co-chair of the Art Division, and member of the Provost's committees on Salaries and Accountability, has lead the school in pursuit of equity in salaries, as well as commensurate teaching loads. He states that 'a significant problem facing the University's salary structure is the (market) disparity of salaries when compared to peer institutions and when compared internally (units).' Based on his statistics from UW sources, the faculty at the School of Art are lagging behind their peers between 10-20%. Furthermore, according to the HEC Board, as quoted in the Seattle P.I., the average of all faculty salaries in the School of Art are the sixth lowest at the University of Washington. Professor Young also cites that studio faculty are one of the few units at the university that have a course load of six (studio) classes per year, in addition to graduate students. In short, the School of Art faculty works harder, longer and gets paid less than most of its peers. In spite of this difficult situation, it is quite phenomenal that this dedicated and committed faculty and staff have persevered to play a key role in the continued success of the school.

**Review the of the Recommendations as listed in the final report and School of Art action plans in progress.**

1. The IVA (Interdisciplinary Visual Arts) program is one of many topics being discussed by the Task Force this autumn. This (BA Art) program is the largest major with the most flexibility for modification, but changes will dramatically impact the school at large and must be carefully examined.
2. There is school-wide faculty consensus that continued emphasis be placed toward graduate education. With a tight operations budget, School of Art resources to support graduate programs are minimal to say the least. We continually seek additional funding, but these opportunities are forever shrinking and becoming more competitive. Additionally, it would also be important to enrich graduate studies through dedicated faculty teaching assignments if teaching loads could be restructured. These issues are being addressed by the Graduate Board committee
3. The Cross-Discipline studies and the vacant Brixey position are being discussed by the Task Force.
4. Industrial Design is moving ahead with its own strategic plan as part of a greater Design Division-wide initiative. The division faculty are presently exploring revisions to the design curriculum possibly linking courses to create relationships with other departments furthering its goal to establish itself as both a professional and research-based program. Additionally, the division will continue to strengthen connections to the professional community through its outreach as it has successfully done in the past.
5. Non-major introductory courses are being reviewed by the Task Force with the intent of developing creative solutions to address the growing interest in students desiring an art class. The School of Art is committed to continuing to offer and possibly expand the offerings of courses to non-majors. This will also need to dovetail with the school wide curricular discussions.
6. There is total concurrence that the School of Art would benefit greatly with the aid of a full-time fund raiser to help raise awareness of the school offerings and to assist with development specific to school needs. It would be desirable for the school to continue to build the bridges to our alumni, the professional community, and the public, to develop a shared sense of purpose. We have started this effort with the release of the new School of Art newsletter ARTIFACTS, to be produced quarterly, and mailed to alumni, friends of the school, prospective students, and potential donors.
7. A comprehensive technology plan of action will emerge out of the Task Force findings. This is a serious issue that impacts the future of many programs throughout the School. In particular, the direct effect of escalating technology on the design programs cannot be overstated. The entire academic program of design study has been altered dramatically in just a few short years. Computers are not simply an interesting alternative tool, they are fundamentally essential to the conduct of the design profession. The inadequacy of technical support and facilities may eventually result in significant deterioration of the ability to effectively provide a comprehensive professional design experience for students.
8. An interdivisional curriculum committee will be formed to address school-wide planning once the task force presents its suggestions. The involvement of the faculty committee would ensure cross-divisional dialogue and understanding of issues outside of disciplinary focuses.
9. A Building Space committee has been formed to deal with the space issues that may arise out of the Task Force and Planning committee findings. It is expected to convene winter quarter.
10. Directorial transition issues will be discussed in the upcoming year with the school council.
11. The interaction of students from different programs is presently being addressed with the implementation of an active lecture series program initiated by the graduate painting students and supported by the School of Art and the Simpson Center for the Humanities. This series, in addition to a number of other school events has had a positive impact on the graduate program and has stimulated and re-charged students and faculty. This has been a tremendous opportunity for intellectual enrichment and will bring students from the three divisions together. We expect the enthusiasm to continue with more lectures and presentations in addition to the Art History Colloquia planned for Spring Quarter.

12. The Directors of the Arts Division in the College, with the assistance of the Divisional Dean are presently working on a strategy that will link the UW Arts entities together to raise the profile of the arts at this University.
13. There is total agreement that in the interests of safety and educational access, all technical staff positions should be upgraded to 100%. Additionally, some programs have no technical assistance whatsoever and are in dire need of additional support to aid them with their studio and specialized equipment needs.
14. The administration of a unit the size and complexity of the School of Art is far too great for the Director to also be expected to continue with teaching, therefore, it is crucial that 100% course replacement be available for any faculty member, regardless of program size, who takes on the director position.
15. Lab fees (course fees) have too long supported the operations budget of many a program but this was done out of necessity and not by choice. To increase fees significantly would certainly be problematic and run counter to the student technology fee already in place.
16. The year-long process of review and analysis initiated by the 10-year program review process has had a positive impact on faculty and staff alike. The next step is to consolidate ideas into plans. Therefore, I will ask the faculty from the three divisions to participate in separate retreats to develop a mission statement with a strategic plan of action. The outcome of these retreats will enable us to understand and appreciate the differences and similarities of our hybrid constituency, as we develop a mission statement and plan for the school as a whole. My hope is that it will coalesce and galvanize the faculty into creating a parallel vision for the three divisions. Like any plan, it should be revisited periodically, to respond to new opportunities, to change what has not worked, and to expand what has.

**The ten year process has given us the opportunity to review our accomplishments, examine our curriculum, assess our graduate programs, and implement constructive objectives for the future. Our achievements over the last decade serve as important indicators of a vibrant school lead by devoted and committed faculty and staff, devising creative solutions to complex problems. It was apparent to the committee, as stated throughout the report and in particular in the concluding remarks, that the School of Art had surpassed expectations placed upon it from the previous review of 1984, despite the continuation of difficult financial conditions.**

"The School has managed to make improvements in its curriculum, the organization of its degree programs, in the areas of health, safety and technical support, and in its administrative functions..."

The report continues "...given this recent history, there seems no reason why this trend should not continue."

**We have a stellar track record for making positive change and we are confident that our resourcefulness and innovations will allow us to prove ourselves successful once again as we address the increased student demand on the horizon. Our continuing goal is to improve the quality of education at the School of Art to become the leader in research and scholarship. Our faculty is ready and willing to meet the challenge. We welcome your ideas and support to assist us in planning for the future.**