

# DXARTS

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## DXARTS PROGRAM REVIEW | RESPONSE TO GRADUATE SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORT

08. 08. 08.

Dear Program Review Committee:

The faculty, staff and students of DXARTS would like to offer our most sincere appreciation for the superlative work done by the review committee. The thoroughness and careful consideration given to all facets of DXARTS historical evolution, its unique program goals, status as a UIF, and dramatic impact on campus highlighted during this process is evinced throughout the summary documents. We heartily concur with the primary observations and recommendations of the review committee, and were pleased the review resulted in a dramatic punctuation of many long held opinions about the importance and centrality of DXARTS, and also reinforced the University's need to highly value and permanently support this path-breaking program. We are also honored that some of the reports primary recommendations - such as permanent resources for two new faculty lines - have already been approved by the College of Arts and Sciences reemphasizing their full commitment to the program as well. These resources however do not begin to address some of the equally pressing recommendations illuminated in the report such as the need to formally transition DXARTS to full departmental status, which the College will act on once the review is finished, and the tremendous need for increased permanent space and staff required to support the burgeoning program and further enhance its stability and impact.

Our response will be brief, as the report is universally supportive, and our exhaustive Self-Study provides a very accurate reflection of the value, impact, goals and needs of DXARTS. The issues that require detail inserted or would benefit from further discussion will follow the general order of the Review Committee's Summary Report. In most cases, excerpts of the Summary Report are shaded and included in italics with our response; this is done in an effort to give greater clarity and contextualization to our response.

### Section II

Introduction, Vision, and History of DXARTS program

*In the relatively short time that DXARTS has been a degree-granting program, faculty, students and staff have been hand-picked to fit in with the tightly executed vision of the Center's founders. The curriculum reflects their vision and experience, and interdisciplinary collaborations are based on fulfillment of DXARTS' vision. The very strong leadership of DXARTS has been successful at forming a clearly focused, nationally and internationally recognized Center that is educating students and mentoring faculty in a novel way. It is the hope of the Committee that this strong, focused start can now be broadened to include not only new artistic paths, but also engage more openly the faculty and students in arts and other fields.*

We completely agree with the spirit of this "hope", as it is a cornerstone of our unique educational and research philosophy. DXARTS has had numerous successes in this direction, which are fully documented in the Self-Study, and we are eager as well as strategically prepared to do more which is also outlined in the same document. However, further interdisciplinary work in these directions as noted by the report shows any expansion of the DXARTS enterprise to be almost entirely predicated upon the practical issues of the University providing new permanent faculty, staff, space and resources, and significantly scaling DXARTS upward. The

report clearly states that DXARTS warrants increased resources given our deep impact and stellar successes, but it also shows the current faculty and staff complement are spread precariously thin, and only the significant scaling of DXARTS upward across the board will allow us to successfully attempt pioneering new relationships and activities beyond what we were mandated to do, and have demonstrated we do extremely well. The start-up calculus of DXARTS was designed to target the most innovative art, science and technology horizons in a rapidly growing interdisciplinary field by offering what is offered nowhere else in the academy, and at a level of rigor and virtuosity that is unsurpassed. In right-sizing DXARTS from the beginning to the unique economy of the UIF and the educational ecology of the University of Washington, we have been able to guarantee and even surpass the accomplishments we promised at the outset. These accomplishments have now been witnessed by the committee and applauded by our colleagues nationally and internationally. The ability to broaden our focus is designed modularly into the DNA of DXARTS, we are widely extensible and collaboratively exportable, but the next level of sustainable engagement with the campus beyond what is currently underway is primarily a matter of size and resources. With an unprecedented state and federal budget crisis unfolding, the issue of becoming more self-sustaining is increasingly important for us too, and a matter of scaling DXARTS to an effective size for this essential task. If we are to successfully compete and subsequently manage large external peer reviewed funding opportunities such as an NSF IGERT for example, we will need the University's assistance in reaching the initial critical mass necessary to accomplish this task, and at our current size we can't quite reach this goal. This larger size will effectively be the "tipping point" we need to achieve the committee's hopes and to migrate to a fully naturalized and sustainable academic unit in the College and University.

### Section III Faculty and Staff

*While DXARTS and affiliated units that host DXARTS faculty appointments should be commended for their willingness to work creatively and flexibly to advance a worthy goal, the necessity of such arrangements may create administrative friction that is unhelpful. In some cases, there may be a valid substantive reason for DXARTS faculty to hold appointments in other units, and those cases should not be discouraged. But if the sole driver for such appointments is because DXARTS cannot host its own appointments as an administrative matter, then this may become problematic for DXARTS, the faculty member, and the other unit "hosting" the appointment.*

DXARTS acknowledges and honors the importance of the historical disciplines it emerged out of and encourages a wealth of ongoing contact and continued collaboration, however, it should no longer be expected to rely, for issues of such strategic and academic importance, on the well meaning but less than qualified judgment of those whose fields of research have only in common the word "arts" associated with it. It is unsound for DXARTS, for the host departments of DXARTS' faculty, and for the strategic needs of the University to continue to vest authority in departments without unquestionable knowledge of every aspect of DXARTS to determine the needs, strategic hiring, merit, and the tenure and promotion of its faculty. While a useful initial mechanism to allow the program to start, to hire new faculty, and to achieve the current phase of success, this temporary host system is now impeding DXARTS' needed autonomy and its ability to serve its rapidly growing community and the larger University. The University cannot reasonably allow departments without the daily realities of managing future Federal funding, human subjects, laboratories, and extensive advanced computing facilities that often equal those in the sciences and engineering to accurately gauge the importance on the widest range of emerging disciplines and programmatic investments DXARTS needs to make, and where they rightly have no vested interest other than earnest collegial support. The Review Committee clearly recognizes DXARTS is poised to continue to make historical contributions to the future of the arts and sciences by making as yet unforeseen discoveries. An essential next step is for DXARTS to transition to a sustainable department or school as soon as possible, and with two new faculty searches underway, we ask that the College of Arts and Sciences expedite this recommendation immediately.

### Section IV B.F.A. Degree

*The undergraduate enrollments in DXARTS classes draw from a wide range of departmental majors, and the students we spoke with appeared as diverse as one could expect in a highly technical field. Noticeable however was outspokenness on the part of the male students, and hesitance combined with failure to be recognized as speakers on the part of the female students. DXARTS may need to make some concerted efforts to avoid what can often become a gender gap in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering and math) among students. The*

*imbalance was not noticeable among the graduate students, and DXARTS has appointed a female manager of the Fremont machine shop. Further strategies to address this issue may include modeling inclusive behavior and respect for different styles of interaction among the faculty.*

This is an interesting observation, but not a pattern the faculty or students have observed or commented on. There are often interview artifacts introduced in brief contact focus groups like this, especially led by outsiders and authority figures that likely introduce situational quietness on the part of some undergraduate students. As highlighted in the report, DXARTS in general has a high level of diversity, equity and parity at the doctoral, staff and faculty level, which is a fractal of the undergraduate environment. The current graduate cohort of 20 doctoral students is now approaching a ratio of 75% female, 25% male, which is excellent for an emerging STEM equivalent discipline. The staff cohort is steady at 50% female. As a consequence of these superb numbers we have added to the lower division courses a larger number of lead female TA's and believe it reinforces the inclusive culture of DXARTS, as well as helps recruit women into our very rigorous, supportive and friendly undergraduate major. The department's newest appointment to senior lead doctoral TA is female, and we have also started hiring female undergrads as research assistants and pedagogy students who are embedded as junior TA's in some of our upper division courses that help side by side with the doctoral students. We have also begun work with engineering and science department academic advisers to look at creating targeted prerequisite courses that we both use for our majors. These courses could also be designed to support and recruit young women and under represented minorities into DXARTS and growing STEM disciplines.

## Section V Ph.D. Degree

*The graduate program is based on preliminary coursework, which overlaps with the undergraduate courses; there are no graduate-specific courses. The graduate students wish for courses in advanced graphic processing, telematics, wireless data communication, etc. Currently, the way this need is being solved is for the program to hire a student as T.A. to teach what is asked for ad hoc.*

When enacted, the reports conclusion for DXARTS to be awarded departmental status, increased faculty size, increased staffing and space resources will allow us to roll out a significant number of already planned "graduate only" courses. The addition of these new resources will also allow us to restructure and reschedule the majority of our larger "campus centered" service courses primarily taught in spring, freeing up necessary faculty, graduates, laboratories, and classrooms to participate in the expansion of "graduate only" courses. However, with slightly deeper analysis of the report observation on this topic, one will also find the characterization of these preliminary doctoral courses is not entirely accurate, nor does it reflect the necessary and deliberate nuance in our course construction. The majority of DXARTS doctoral students that are admitted are already world-class artists, composers, designers, engineers, and performers, many with celebrated careers, and a number who have held ladder rank at other peer institutions before becoming doctoral students in the program. The implied preliminary nature of the courses are more than that, they are advanced courses that rapidly cover the foundations of "new knowledge" for experts from allied fields, and accelerate them specifically toward the integration of this new knowledge from across the disciplinary spectrum into their research. This group of courses would be more accurately described as geared toward expanding and intensifying the research of doctoral students who are already high-level experts in numerous digital arts and experimental media frontiers. Furthermore, this arrangement of our courses clearly has prepared our doctoral students to successfully step outside of DXARTS into the wider collaborative laboratory of the campus as witnessed by the committee. This strategy builds better research, more interdisciplinary bodies of knowledge, reduces siloing and campus infrastructure redundancy, and reinforces the unique learning goals of the program. Those DXARTS courses, which are graduate specific, have occasionally experimented with (and with excellent results) allowing a few highly exceptional undergraduates admission to the course. This practice is an exception, not the rule and we will continue to experiment with our curriculum. While the numbers of graduate specific courses in DXARTS is tied to our current size and funding model, there are still a number of excellent "graduate only" courses being taught. In 2008 our "graduate only" courses include, Advanced Spectral Modeling of Sound, Stereo 3D Immersive HD Digital Video and the new jointly designed and co-taught (with CSE), Embedded Performance Systems, all of which senior faculty members are teaching.

*Some students expressed a sense of isolation, and need for connections with other, similar programs in the U.S. and abroad.*

The faculty anticipated that a very small minority of students in our graduate cohort might experience a temporary sense of academic isolation as they migrate from the known tradition and culture of MFA models to the more rigorous pattern and requirements of doctoral level education. The leadership in DXARTS has worked very hard to successfully build meaningful research connections and close working relationships among numerous allied departments and colleges to help close this gap. We have also begun the construction of an excellent visiting artist and researcher program to promote broad connectivity, as well as building national and international alliances with important institutions that are professionally appropriate and equivalent for the discipline. However, the genesis of this particular issue is far more complex and nuanced than just encouraging contact or expending increased energy to keep our students connected to communities outside of DXARTS. As noted, we believe the issue is primarily rooted in the older and increasingly outmoded MFA culture specific to the academy, and from our vantage point has little to do with the mechanics of the DXARTS program, its curriculum, or its faculty. We believe a substantial portion of this impression can simply be traced to the dramatic "sea changes" in the arts, and in arts education not seen for nearly a century.

Two important examples from a list of many "sea changes" highlight fundamentally different levels of rigor, autonomy and virtuosity required in a doctoral program versus that of the older arts MFA. This specific example also punctuates the massive shift in time commitment required to earn an MFA (2 years unfunded) versus a Ph.D. (5-10 years funded). This change alone among "many" completely recalibrates every existing model of creative and professional interaction from conferences, commissions and funding, to collaboration, publishing and exhibition. The necessary reorientation toward STEM like disciplinary models of rigor, research structures, professional organizations and collaborative interactions temporarily reinforces this modest sense of isolation from their previous experience participating with the older graduate "arts studies" model. Further analysis also highlights the current lack of a critical mass of true peer academic "arts" institutions worth interacting with, especially in the advanced fields that DXARTS is pioneering. Currently, there simply are no equivalent programs that truly compare to DXARTS. In this sense UW claims both the distinction and the responsibility of being "first". The committee report portrays this accurately, and states that DXARTS is inventing the leading edge of a rapidly emerging disciplinary horizon. While we evolved in part out of the forward edges of historical disciplines, the emerging discipline as it is practiced is relatively "new" and is not populated with dozens of academic programs, societies and institutions that support our bodies of knowledge or our unique cultural history. The few evolved academic institutions that have modest parallels (programs like UCSB, UCSD, RPI, etc.) are often far less rigorous, and not equivalent environments for our doctoral students to currently invest significant time and limited funds collaborating with. Others are wholly technical (like MIT, CRMA, EVL, etc.) and have zero commitment to developing an expansive or pioneering arts practice. A few other programs are in allied fields, such as rhetoric, philosophy, or history, but are primarily scholarly, analytical or interpretive disciplines and place their emphasis in a different direction than needed in DXARTS. Design and architecture are interesting crossovers, but are not wholly equivalent in the generative research sense, i.e. they function in compound relationships with commercial clients, and are typically not focused on "high-end" and technologically centered speculative research. Similarly there are very few current international societies (Leonardo), conferences (ISEA, SIGGRAPH, ASIAGRAPH), etc. that are "directly" relevant. The exceptional few that are standard bearers already have our students and faculty appointed as major leaders, either as standing committee or panel chairs, presenters, or keynote speakers, etc.

There is massive research, intellectual and academic growth in our field and the majority of these new programs, societies and conferences are maturing and heading quickly in the right direction. While there are many factors contributing to the issue of isolation, we are confident it is temporary and primarily due to the massive cultural shifts of new rigor and responsibilities of doctoral studies in the arts. Our entire faculty who experienced the environment of doctoral research simply respects this as a necessary and noble challenge among pioneering graduates of the earliest doctoral program in the emerging fields of arts technology. While it is not an immediately resolvable issue, the responsibility to chart these "sea changes" has fallen on their shoulders and ours, and requires DXARTS create the most thoughtful, balanced, and nourishing environment to do so, and the Committee Report is a testament to the fact we have.

*They also struggle with questions about how to learn to teach; they are thrust into teaching roles as T.A.s and wish for more guidance.*

Teaching as a doctoral student in DXARTS is exciting and demanding, and can be considered generally equivalent to other STEM and humanities disciplines. DXARTS is committed to providing a thoughtful, humane, and supportive teaching environment. It is simply the lack of comparative experience that ensures most graduate TA's at major research universities tend to feel somewhat overwhelmed their first few years teaching. First and second year doctoral students in DXARTS do not teach anything solo, except possibly short discovery courses of their own design in the summer quarter. After an intensive fall orientation in the program, and a full week of working with CIDR to help prepare for teaching, they are placed primarily as junior TA's in year-long sequences. The sequences are all lead by senior faculty members, and typically include a second or third year doctoral student as primary TA, and have a maximum course enrollment of 25 students. Their role as junior TA is to learn to teach first by watching, absorbing, and assisting, then diving in when comfortable, and finally to lead (with close faculty assistance) one reading, one assignment and one lab in a single year. Typically twelve readings, twelve assignments, and twelve labs are given a year in each of our sequence courses. A minority of doctoral students who have held ladder rank at other universities, or have years of teaching experience are allowed to teach solo, but only in short discussion sections of DXARTS lecture courses, never laboratory or studio courses. After three or four years, some but not all doctoral students teach solo in one quarter intensive service courses, or with other senior TA's in larger courses, but only after they have demonstrated with numerically high student assessment rankings and superior research outcomes that they can sustain the quality and rigor of a DXARTS course. DXARTS also funds a senior lead doctoral TA who is the manager of the graduate TA's. This individual is a highly experienced and skilled instructor, and they are on-call to assist new graduate students in both research mentoring and in supporting their teaching development. Graduate students meet every two weeks as a group with the Executive Staff to discuss teaching activities, challenges, scheduling and successes. Graduates also have very close contact with their faculty mentor who invests a great deal of time with students both in terms guiding research goals and balancing teaching expectations. New teaching initiatives to support doctoral students can be easily handled in the program when more sustainable numbers of faculty are hired, and the proper resourcing of these new faculty positions with staff and space are in place. We are expecting two new faculty positions to be filled this following year.

*The only personal space assigned to graduate students is in a common room with several computers; the Committee observed that assigning private or additional shared office space would be beneficial.*

Space on campus for almost every unit is a perennial and vexing problem with no clear solution. DXARTS has presented numerous and well thought out space plans over the past few years requesting increased campus space for graduates, undergraduate honors, classrooms, laboratories, staff and storage without a single positive response. The situation was so dire that in 2004 the faculty with campus approval used funding from a DXARTS visiting faculty line to lease 6000 sq. ft. of prime industrial research space in Fremont to build shared laboratory studio facilities for our doctoral students. This space is extremely important, but very expensive, daringly funded out of the departmental budget, and while the DXARTS leadership has negotiated favorable lease terms, the ultimate costs of commercially leased property in Seattle for our long term needs will prove unsustainable in the very near future. This is increasingly an unacceptable position for DXARTS in terms of demand, access and parity with other arts programs who have substantial space resources but struggle to fill courses when DXARTS turns away 100's of students a year. In direct response to the Review Committee report concerning additional graduate space, the faculty expanded the existing Fremont facility in August 2008 by leasing an extra 2000 sq. ft. and significantly increasing the cost of the current lease. The viability of our department will be fully at stake when the cost/benefit of leasing commercial space evaporates. Replacement space of approximately 8000 sq. ft. of contiguous campus space that can be appropriately renovated and used to replace our Fremont facility will take the massive financial burden off the program and is desperately needed. The University in this case simply needs to make hard choices about space use among historically contracting programs and sunrise disciplines whose needs are increasingly dire. If DXARTS is to begin collaborating as well as sharing sponsored research funding such as NSF IGERT's with other allied science and engineering units, space is essential to the ability to proceed and succeed. The University needs to act on the clear recommendation of the Review Committee and reinforce with action that DXARTS is highly valued and worthy of fair and permanent space and resource support, both of which will increasingly allow DXARTS to grow and become more self-supporting.

## Section VI.

### Interactions on Campus

*Often the external faculty have never met any of the DXARTS faculty. One reason for this may be that the DXARTS faculty are few, and busy with internal matters. However, one consequence is that the external faculty who are contributing considerable amounts of effort and creativity toward the work of DXARTS students are neither guided, nor thanked by DXARTS. Although there are considerable efforts to reach out from DXARTS to others, faculty and students outside DXARTS feel some frustration and exclusion.*

The faculty, staff and students of DXARTS recognize and greatly celebrate the substantial time and effort others invest in direct guidance and development of our doctoral students. Our doctoral cohort works at an unsurpassed level of originality and complexity simply not exhibited at other arts institutions partly because of this dedication, and we are thankful for the commitment offered by our campus colleagues. Concurrently, the DXARTS faculty also invests the same amount of time and energy as these colleagues with other department's graduate students and from every discipline on campus. All of this is reflected in the unique bond and value of each faculty and student success, and is viewed in DXARTS as simply another part of the joy and underlying moral contract of a life dedicated to education.

Still as a strategic choice, DXARTS has made a concerted effort "not" to contact or recruit faculty from other departments and colleges in support of our graduates, but instead encourage them to find us based entirely on the rigor, ingenuity and quality of our research and our remarkable students who introduce them to DXARTS. This strategy has been very successful and is a signature of our unique style of research interaction documented throughout the report. In the highly individualized case of doctoral student research we have purposefully stayed away from prearranged relationships or complex departmental agreements that may work in one case or for a period of time, but not another, and in most cases maintaining these top-down relationships level unnecessary stress, and overhead on everyone including students and faculty outside of the program. We believe this more organic structure of collaborative evolution allows the intrinsic value of the research and the individual relationships built over time between each graduate student and the faculty who have decided to work with them to be the singular driving force, and the necessary reward that ensures continued commitment.

*The very bright, ambitious and visionary students in DXARTS – and to some extent the graduate students and faculty – present an elitist manner which interferes with the willingness of others to collaborate with them... The dynamic tension existing between DXARTS and related units is, in fact, an important tool for growing the new discipline. Recognition of this was made explicit by adjunct and external faculty working with DXARTS students on various productions and coursework. The effectiveness of this tool will be strengthened by development and display of respect for the adjacent disciplines by DXARTS faculty.*

DXARTS faculty, staff and students joyfully carry with them an authentic sense of self-assurance, determination, and collective daring that is unusual, all of it however carefully informed and nurtured directly through hard work, experience, knowledge and tangible results. Very few individuals on a campus such as ours that is so saturated with distinction could misperceive the healthy drive and fearlessness among our cohort as anything akin to arrogance. In general, huge demand for access to DXARTS courses, faculty, and collaboration continually reinforce the "lived experience" of these characteristics as overwhelmingly positive, and simply recognized by most disciplines as important ingredients in "excellence". DXARTS in large part is populated by some of the most capable and resilient arts practitioners and researchers in the world who are risk-takers and true pioneer's, this however is another way of saying their well honed instincts frequently challenge the status quo of "knowing what is" for the frontier of "imagining what can be".

In general, the good-natured faculty and students of DXARTS find it inconceivable that a program built on a model of such extraordinary goodwill; absolute openness, respect, sharing and inclusiveness could possibly be labeled in action or in design as "elitist". This report and our colleagues quoted in it consistently reiterate that DXARTS works tirelessly to share our resources with the entire campus for no purpose other than the enduring promise of shared discovery, that we serve the campus with committed staff and unparalleled facilities designed specifically to help others undertake research that is undervalued or can't be accomplished in their own departments, and that for no reason other than best practice we reserve a full 50% of "all" our seats in our courses for non-majors. This is only a fraction of the net positives we bring to the University as a whole. In contrast, a tiny minority that might occasionally project this as "elitist" behavior typically provide absolutely zero access to any of their courses for DXARTS students, nor do they even allow one time access for

something as simple as a practice room and a piano for a DXARTS doctoral student who by any standard is a world class pianist. These comparisons could not be more telling.

DXARTS was in part created by the University as a well designed alternative to the frequently insular and elitist institutions created and managed by the historical arts disciplines. Often for anything but the arts canon these institutions created intolerable conditions, placing important new arts frontiers in dark dank basement offices and classrooms for decades, systematically denying them equal funding, voice and access, creating a sub-class of academic citizens, and at best using them for window dressing. DXARTS rapid ascent and success story has illuminated this difficult legacy and in part has been amplified by DXARTS turning precisely "away" from those practices. We are certain the label of "elitist" used here is a distortion, rarely seen in reality, and more likely presented as a perceived future threat or preemptory anxiety exhibited in irrational fear, a fear that the emerging arts disciplines new equality could continue to advance and somehow overturn the existing hegemony, and that we could possibly act toward the canon as they chose to act toward us. DXARTS is certainly not unusual, ours is frequently the story of any discipline that has emerged from the nest of a tradition through the natural tensions and resentments of shared history to become a full and equal partner. The creation of DXARTS was both the University's opening and closing argument in this debate, and the triumph of this review is the full affirmation that the University has made a bold, clear and wise decision in creating and sustaining DXARTS.

## Section VII

### Resources and Facilities

*A). Ideally, a space similar to Fremont should be found near the main campus. Either the purchase of a new facility with the required open floor space, or renovation of an existing space on campus would provide solutions to address this facilities problem.*

As discussed in detail in our response in Section V, space is of singular importance for the program and its future. The purchase of a building would be the single best solution as space is so tight on campus that future solutions seem years away or are simply impossible. Purchase however would require the University to embark on fund raising in order to accomplish this goal, and while we believe in this case it is fully warranted, the current national economy and budget climate might place DXARTS too low on the list of campus priorities to address this in the timeline we need. Also, numerous proposals have been put forward by DXARTS for new space, including novel proposals for the use of space in the basement of Blodel Hall. This was under serious consideration until the new College of the Environment was selected to occupy that space. Other options include the use of unused space in the School of Art, as well as a reorganization of space in Raitt Hall currently used by Anthropology. These discussions are underway in with the College of Arts and Sciences Dean for Research and Infrastructure, but would benefit greatly from the insistence of addressing this problem by the Graduate School in its final report on the program.

*A). DXARTS could also benefit from a dedicated performance space that is equipped with supporting technologies. This would help minimize the wear and tear on its equipment and provide a laboratory environment that DXARTS does not currently have.*

Integrating a world-class performance space into the DXARTS master design was envisioned from the very beginning, but the narrow space allocation and the architectural limitations of Raitt Hall did not allow for these functions to be built into the existing classrooms and laboratories. Fremont is the most likely space to fill this solution, but the current over subscription makes it nearly impossible. A possible effective short-term solution would be to install portable lighting grids and sprung floors that can be easily assembled, used and stored. DXARTS has looked into this and found it feasible but the cost while not prohibitive would need to be provided to the program in lieu of more space. The highly positive aspect of this approach is that it integrates these functions into the existing space and can also be removed and reused in other space once it is found.

*C). Attracting funding from federal agencies, particularly those supporting experimental science (e.g. NSF), will require evidence that DXARTS is doing research in conjunction with scientists and engineers. Other possibilities, including an IGERT proposal made jointly with Engineering, appear less likely to go forward until DXARTS faculty and staff expand sufficiently to handle the extra work.*

This is a very prescient observation, and clearly reinforces the future issues of DXARTS sustainability is basically about "size". The University and the DXARTS program have done everything correct up to this point, and all indicators read DXARTS is poised perfectly to transition to a more manageable size. The Committee Review highlights that the obstacles remaining are a modest adjustment of the program upward from its current space and personnel compliment, to a slightly larger and more natural creative economy. It is clear to the Review Committee this scaling upward is critical for DXARTS future ability to manage its natural growth demand, engage with the campus in the most fruitful ways for both DXARTS and the University's growing needs, as well as to become increasingly more self-sustaining. As in our comments above in Section II we reiterate that if the University does not act on this simple calculus, the program, its faculty and the remarkable momentum achieved will be recruited away or simply dissipate. The University of Washington has seen this happen many times, and should guard against its most common failure. We frequently ignite great initiatives and then subsequently fail to properly resource them, and then tragically watch them grabbed up by other universities eager to use our hard won knowledge and expertise with even greater success but without any of the initial overhead.

## Section VIII Governance

*DXARTS, under the strong leadership of founders Karpen and Brixey, has been extraordinarily entrepreneurial to date. Concomitantly, the Center has been governed in a highly entrepreneurial fashion, which includes heavy involvement and control by the founders. The nature of "start-up" enterprises is that the founders must essentially "do everything" in the fledgling entity. The upside is that this can lead to creative and nimble governance as the founders can act decisively with the full vision of their enterprise firmly in their minds. The downside is that the "do everything" phase can be quite unsustainable for the founders in the longer run and can result in creatively cobbled together arrangements that may also be unsustainable in the long run. Thus, key issues for most start-ups are: i) how to recognize when the project should shift from start-up mode to a more mature "stewardship" governance mode; and ii) how to implement that transition.*

DXARTS has already begun administrative restructuring based in part on the Committee Report and also on the broad university governance experience of the programs founders. The transition from start-up mode to mature organizational structure will be far less complicated than anticipated by the Review Committee, as DXARTS only used a hybrid start-up process to temporarily redirect native research energy and institutional focus toward important and compelling new horizons. The successful DXARTS start-up posture was essentially laid over the standard organizational and reporting structure of a classical university department, making the current transition much easier. However, what the Committee does not mention in its observations is that the transition "into" a ten-year start-up mode that requires perpetual break-neck speed was substantially more taxing and difficult (especially in a university setting) than DXARTS settling into a mature and fully naturalized academic unit. More importantly once we are a department, we will need to actively foster the maintenance and retention of the more useful aspects of this hybrid start-up posture, especially those aspects that allow us to most effectively incubate new ideas and directions, as well as respond nimbly to consistent and dynamic changes in departmental and disciplinary needs, interests, resources and goals.

A two-day summer retreat yielded a shared governance blueprint designed to support the transition and future management structure of the program. The retreat also provided a clear system and process for executing it. Many of the retreat outcomes are already in place and working well, and others will rollout along an eighteen-month critical path. An important feature of the transition includes greatly increased responsibility and oversight by faculty mentors for components of each graduate students research, travel and performance activities. The new plan also maps out important restructuring of faculty standing committees, as well as key senior staff positions. The plan also defines the expansion of a current staff position to include responsibilities for day-to-day personnel and operational oversight (administrative staff, graduate staff assistants, student hourly), as well as liaison officer for many of DXARTS growing campus research partnerships such as CSE, Engineering, Law, Dance, Art, The Henry, etc. The position also has management oversight of the new master calendar (including; grants, publications, curriculum, reports, enrollment, events, etc.), as well as analysis and projections for organizational goals, timelines, strategic planning and event planning. Finally this position will also be responsible for the coordination and standardization of all incoming and outgoing assessment documents and reporting materials, greatly streamlining the Director's reporting and assessment process. This position is substantially different than our current departmental administrator, whose responsibilities include standard management of academic personnel files, payroll, purchasing, reconciliation, etc.



Stakeholder voices and shared responsibilities were a major focus of the new governance structure, and include mechanisms for regularly planned weekly meetings that alternate between tightly balanced mixtures of faculty, research associates, adjuncts, staff, and students. For example, "all" governance meetings are on Monday's reserved throughout the academic year from 12:30 to 2:00pm. The Executive Staff meet twice a month on alternating Monday's, and include the entire graduate cohort once a month. Faculty meetings on the alternating Monday's include rotating invitations to senior staff and the graduate lead TA for the first half of the faculty meeting, etc. Graduate students collectively have separate governance meetings, and the senior lead TA acts as the collective voice of the doctoral students at all departmental meetings. This process already has proven very effective both in planning and execution of the programs new goals, and has also advanced shared institutional knowledge and increased collegiality and efficiency.

## Section IX

### Conclusions and Recommendations

The faculty, staff and students heartily agree with the Review Committee's conclusions and recommendations, and are committed to actively working with the University to ensure their successful outcome.

Most Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shawn Brixey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Shawn" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Brixey".

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