

**Graduate School Review**  
**Center for Digital Arts and Experimental Media (DXARTS)**  
**Report of the Review Committee<sup>1</sup>**

**April 29, 2008**

**Executive Summary**

Upon completing its review of the Center for Digital Arts and Experimental Media (“DXARTS” or the “Center”), the Review Committee (the “Committee”) has been favorably impressed with the progress of this innovative and internationally renowned program. The Committee conducted interviews with faculty, staff, students, and other stakeholders of DXARTS in February and March of this year. The Committee also reviewed DXARTS self-study and conducted its review in accordance with the charge of the Graduate School. Based upon the foregoing, the Committee hereby recommends that: i) the B.F.A. and Ph.D. degrees offered by DXARTS be continued; ii) DXARTS becomes a department with control of its own faculty lines in the College of Arts and Sciences; and iii) the Graduate School review this new department after five years.

**I. Overview of the Review Process**

DXARTS was created in 2001 under seed funding from the University Initiatives Fund (“UIF”) and administratively housed in the College of Arts and Sciences. It was authorized to offer Ph.D. and B.F.A. degree programs in 2003. The first group of graduate students and undergraduate majors were admitted to the program in Autumn Quarter 2004.

This review occurs five years after the BFA and Ph.D. programs were proposed, and three and a half years after the beginning of instruction.

The Committee was charged to consider the following questions: 1) Is DXARTS providing high quality education in digital and experimental arts? 2) What is the standing of this program nationally and internationally? 3) Who are the faculty and how are they doing? 4) How does DXARTS connect with other units on campus, in particular what are the relations among DXARTS and other Arts units? 5) What are the facilities like and what are needed? 6) How is the center governed? 6) What recommendations can be made to strengthen the educational programs of this center?

The Committee first met on 30 January 2008 to discuss the charge from the Graduate School and review process.<sup>2</sup> Tom Gething Interim Associate Dean for Academic Programs, introduced the

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<sup>1</sup> The Review Committee consists of: Elizabeth Van Volkenburgh, Professor, UW Biology (Committee Chair); Sean M. O’Connor, Associate Professor, UW Law; John Sylvester, Professor, UW Mathematics; Jon C. Nelson, Professor, College of Music, University of North Texas; and George Legrady, Professor, Media Arts & Technology, University of California, Santa Barbara.

<sup>2</sup> Jon Nelson and George Legrady were present by teleconference.

Charge Letter, which was considered and approved by the Committee. Also in attendance were Janice DeCosmo, Associate Dean Undergraduate Academic Affairs, Robert Stacey Divisional Dean for Arts and Humanities College of Arts and Sciences, and David Canfield-Budde, Academic Program Specialist. The Committee members were polled as to which members of the DXARTS community should be invited for interviews both before and during the site visit. Bob Stacey asked the Committee to assess impact, governance, and directions for future growth of DXARTS.

On 5 February, David Canfield-Budde met with Committee Chair Liz Van Volkenburgh to draft an interview schedule for both preliminary meetings with the UW members of the Committee and site visit meetings with the full Committee. Following email consultation among the whole Committee several more suggestions were made and a final schedule was established for the internal meetings of 25-26 February as well as the site visit of 2-4 March.

At the 25-26 February meetings, the UW Committee members met with: Shawn Brixey, for an overview of the self-study findings and his perspective of how DXARTS is currently positioned; Melissa Austin, Director of the Institute for Public Health Genetics (also a UIF program), to discuss interdisciplinary programs and governance; B.F.A. students and staff from DXARTS; two faculty members from Engineering who interact with DXARTS students; Bob Stacey; and chairs and faculty from related Arts departments.

The site visit commenced with an opportunity for all of the Committee members to meet each other in person at a working dinner on 2 March, followed by two days of interviews on 3-4 March. During these two days, the committee was also shown the facilities in Raitt Hall and at the off-campus Fremont facility. The site visit concluded with a two-phased exit interview with Shawn Brixey and Richard Karpen of DXARTS, Ana Mari Cauce Executive Vice Provost, Ron Irving Interim Dean of Arts and Sciences, Tom Gething, Bob Stacey, and David Canfield-Budde. During the first phase, Shawn and Richard spoke about DXARTS – its successes and challenges – and the Committee briefly presented its findings. After Brixey and Karpen were excused, the Committee entertained questions, clarified recommendations, and made plans for collaboratively writing the review report.

## **II. Introduction, Vision, and History of DXARTS program**

DXARTS is an interdisciplinary program carried out by a small group of faculty who are building a new discipline from the ground up. They are working at the cutting edge of their respective arts fields, creatively incubating new artistic approaches, bringing scientific thinking and methods into their art, and developing a large student demand for their programs. DXARTS offers two degree programs: i) an undergraduate Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.); and ii) a graduate Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.). Its founders convincingly argued to establish a doctoral practice-based program in 2003, third in line following the venerable MIT MediaLab, and Electronic Visualization Lab at University of Illinois in Chicago (“EVL”). DXARTS has taken pioneering steps with its Ph.D. program by prioritizing the Arts (artistic research, performance, and production), but has built off a significant backbone of knowledge in, and intersections with, engineering and the sciences. At this time, there are seven U.S. institutions offering Ph.D.’s in

Media Arts with many more in the making; it is relevant to refer to them briefly to contextualize DXARTS' advanced standing in the scheme of things.

The two mentioned programs (MIT MediaLab and EVL) had their early start based on the potential role of aesthetic inquiry to advance engineering research interests, and they continue with this approach today. Georgia Tech's Digital Media Ph.D program (2004) resides in the School of Literature, Communication & Culture. The Media Arts & Technology program (2006) at UC Santa Barbara is jointly administered by the College of Engineering and the College of Letters & Sciences (Humanities). The two most recent additions at UC San Diego (2007) and Rensselaer (2007) have home bases in Visual Arts and Electronic Arts departments. Whereas many of these programs evolved as the result of academic conditions, DXARTS' uniqueness lies in its program implementation: it was designed from the bottom up according to the visions of its founders, electronic composer Richard Karpen, now Divisional Dean for Research in the College of Arts and Sciences, and visual/spatial artist Shawn Brixey, the current Director of DXARTS.

The discipline of digital media arts can best be understood as the outcome of the intersections of artistic experimentation and production with computer-based technological tools, scientific/engineering methods, and theory-based resources. It is a new and still evolving discipline that has seen exponential growth since the early 1990's, driven by the internet and the mass integration of computer technology into contemporary society. The discipline encompasses a broad range of directions. DXARTS' particular mix is generally focused on aural, visual, spatial performance, 3D environments, electronic vision/perception, interactivity, augmented reality, objects, and machines through mechatronics.

DXARTS is clearly built on a vision that has been consistently and concertedly pursued by its leadership. The aim of the Center's research and degree programs is to develop artists who can discover what it means to be human now, and document these discoveries in enduring and radical ways. The vision includes the articulation and teaching of an artistic method which can be described and implemented with the same rigor, success, and recognition as any of the scientific methods. Artistic exploration is privileged in having the freedom to appropriate, segment, transform, turn inside out, and in essence hybridize borrowed methodologies. DXARTS's interdisciplinary approach is to embrace such appropriations at multiple levels of emulations. Richard Karpen's description of the method includes repetition and controls in analyzing deeply existing and past great works (core knowledge). This process leads to an understanding of why that work is great, and provides a way to measure new work against these existing great works. Explicit characterization of an "artistic method" of research is probably new for faculty and students in the arts. It is also one of the rationales for creating a new Ph.D. in the arts, and potentially serves to draw recognition for the arts' academic endeavor in the strongly science and medicine-based research setting of the UW.

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.

### **III. Faculty and Staff**

Research and teaching in DXARTS are conducted by five core UIF-funded faculty (Brixey, Karpen,<sup>3</sup> Andrews, Coupe, and Pamplin), three non-funded ‘zero percent’ core faculty (Berger, Hannaford, and Mones), research fellows, and affiliate faculty. However, because DXARTS does not currently have a departmental or program status that allows it to host its own faculty lines, even the UIF funded faculty are not housed in DXARTS as an administrative matter. Their formal appointments must be in other units that do have faculty lines; their time can then be partially or entirely “bought out” by DXARTS. 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.

The teaching load of DXARTS faculty is similar to that for others in Arts and Humanities (approximately five courses per academic year), but delivery of the content relies greatly on technical staff and T.A.s as is the case in courses in the natural sciences. The intense use of equipment, technology, and laboratory space increases both the investment of faculty and staff time and financial, space, and equipment resources needed for the curricular offerings.

The complementary areas of research expertise and educational backgrounds of the individual faculty members provide DXARTS with a broad knowledge base upon which to build a strong digital and experimental arts program. Through strategic faculty hires DXARTS has created a strong program with good coverage in most areas of digital arts. The faculty seem to work effectively together. They share a strong and unified vision regarding the direction DXARTS should take as it continues to develop. Similarly, the Teaching Fellows within the center seem bright and creative and appear to perform admirably in their teaching duties. The personnel within DXARTS are quite impressive. However, the DXARTS faculty are spread thin, and need at least one or two new faculty positions: Shawn Brixey’s position as Associate Director needs to be filled, and the program needs a position in Media Theory firmly anchored in DXARTS but shared with CHID.

DXARTS has also been effective in strategically making staff hires. The staff seem to work well together and at a high level; they evoke the same exuberance and dedication that is seen in the faculty and students. The office staff carry out all budget, administrative, and student advising tasks. At the same time, they are developing a good network of outreach to students in other programs, as well as advertising the programs and working on development projects. The

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<sup>3</sup> Karpen is currently Divisional Dean for Research in Arts and Sciences, however, and therefore not fully available to DXARTS at this time.

expertise of the various technical staff members effectively support the activities of DXARTS. The Fremont staff described themselves as a professional family. The tech support staff are spread pretty thin, however, so each person does several jobs. Links to other UW tech staff could ameliorate this situation, e.g. UW Technology, UW Digital Initiatives. The suggestion was made to hire a media librarian to handle digital archives.

#### **IV. B.F.A. Degree**

The DXARTS program currently enrolls 15 Ph.D. students and 45 B.F.A. students majoring in DXARTS.

The undergraduate program is intentionally very challenging. Most of the advanced courses include projects and extensive critiquing of these projects by faculty and students. As a result the undergraduates are a highly motivated, intelligent, and extremely hard working group; they might well be compared with students in an honors program. All of the six undergraduate majors in the first graduating class were admitted into graduate programs. The undergraduates we spoke with had extremely varied interests and backgrounds (including electrical engineering, computer science, Spanish, music, dance, literature, film, design). Many were pursuing more than one major. Those who spoke with us were highly motivated and very eloquent in communicating their aims and the distinctive nature of the program.

Half the seats in DXARTS courses are available to students from other units; the intention is to maintain a continuous flow of ideas in and out of the DXARTS ‘incubator.’ DXARTS students express that they feel welcome in upper level courses in other units including engineering.

The undergraduate majors spend many hours working both individually and collaboratively on projects. They have formed a close community, and would benefit from a communal space where they could meet. The undergraduates were uniform in their praise of the graduate students, whom they described as always accessible and always helpful.

The students testified to specific benefits of the program such as: the high standards of their coursework; the effect of rigorous criticism which led to their growth as scholars and artists; and the sense of responsibility they gain as artists. They described that this program causes them to face failure, to experience discomfort, and to learn from these experiences. They also expressed a wish for more explicit education in the history and criticism of great works of art and music.

Some undergraduate students are appointed as “super undergrads” and receive fellowships to assist in instruction (as TAs); the funding is obtained from development efforts, Venture grants and Mary Gates scholarships.

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 an 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.

## **V. Ph.D. Degree**

Fifteen Ph.D. students have enrolled in the DXARTS Ph.D. program and one has completed the Ph.D. and was recently hired as an assistant professor in DXARTS (J. Coupe).

The DXARTS graduate students are appreciated not only by the DXARTS undergraduates, but also by a number of faculty in various units around campus. They play a unique and fundamental role in this interdisciplinary Center. They are the agents who search out and initiate interactions with other units around the campus. We have heard from faculty members in Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Computer Science, and Biology. All gave us essentially the same message: all have worked with DXARTS students who enrolled in their courses or sought their advice independently. Each described the DXARTS students as independent and engaging, and emphasized how the engineering and science students benefited substantially from exposure to, and collaboration with, DXARTS students. All are anxious to continue interaction with these students and to interact more with DXARTS faculty as well. Several of the DXARTS zero-percent faculty started their association with the Center in this way, and there is clearly potential for many more such collaborations.

We are impressed with the financial support that DXARTS is able to provide to students. Graduate students are guaranteed T.A. support for three (nine month) years, and most are further supported by GSA and RA stipends. This is largely made possible by the UIF funding and may be jeopardized when UIF funding ceases. DXARTS graduate student T.A.'s teach with Art, Dance, and Music faculty. They also teach "service" courses which enable performers to use some basic technology. Here too, Music, Dance, and Arts faculty have been effusive in their praise of the students work and there is an unfilled demand for their collaboration in teaching such joint courses.

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. After completing required coursework, graduate students must pass the Qualifying Critique, the General Exam, conduct research, create and show works of art, and finally write a dissertation. The DXARTS dissertation is breaking new ground; it is likely to include text describing development of intellectual property, and maybe also code that is now not formalized or readable. Guidance for changing expectations and regulations on the form of the dissertation must be coordinated with the Graduate School.

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

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.

## **VI. Interactions on Campus**

DXARTS is a new unit on campus. Its start can be traced back to the mid-1980's and the development of what became Center for Advanced Research Technology in the Arts and Humanities (CARTAH) under the leadership and vision of Richard Karpen. Karpen then led a collaboration of key faculty in Art, together with artful interaction with the College of Arts and Sciences, to create the vision of DXARTS that then became reality with UIF funding only five years ago. As mentioned above, the Center is interdisciplinary, with its core faculty appointed in related home departments of Art, Design, Music, and Dance. Non-core faculty reside in Art, Electrical Engineering, and Computer Science & Engineering. However, as also noted above, some of this hosting of DXARTS faculty by other units is driven by the fact that DXARTS cannot currently host its own faculty appointments as an administrative matter. In theory, though, this structure sets the stage for a smooth spin-off of a new discipline from the older, well-established arts disciplines.

There is a dynamic tension between DXARTS and its partners and collaborators around campus. Within DXARTS there is a strong sense of community and a feeling that everyone – faculty, staff, and students included – is working together to carry out research and create art. Many faculty from related Arts departments expressed enthusiasm for the novel research and technical directions being explored by students and faculty in DXARTS. Faculty from Engineering and Arts departments expressed enjoyment in their interactions with DXARTS graduate students. As mentioned above, cross-campus interactions are most often initiated by DXARTS graduate students. 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.

Two components contribute to this friction. The first is that one goal of other units is generally to equip students with the technical skills necessary to work successfully in that field, whether that be, acting on the stage, developing software, choreographing dance, or interpreting musical composition. In contrast, the second is that a main goal of DXARTS students is to incorporate the methods of those other fields into their artistic work, but acquiring depth level of fundamentals is dictated by the needs of the projects. This disjuncture in learning objectives is exacerbated by the difference between the attitudes of DXARTS students – who come to a discipline from the outside – and the attitudes of students majoring in those other disciplines.

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. On the other hand, the friction, 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.

There is also a need for more sharing of technical expertise with other programs. One example raised was the need for a course offered for K-12 educators, Music Education Technology. When offered, this course has been taught by an instructor from Music. It was suggested that a T.A. or instructor from DXARTS would be better suited for this role.

New faculty hired into related Arts departments are excited about the research opportunities offered by DXARTS. To an increasing extent, DXARTS is an attraction for recruiting new faculty into UW Arts programs – this will be even more true when frictions are reduced among the units. An appeal of DXARTS is that it is pioneering the formation of art without traditionally limiting structures; this was described as the ‘democratization’ of art. A strongly positive view of DXARTS impact on Arts at the UW was stated by one new faculty member unrelated to DXARTS (paraphrasing the comments):

DXARTS is creating a new path in what could be described the Pacific Northwest style, thoughtful responsible scholarship with brave innovation. The DXARTS students need to think broadly, they obtain basic training in art and technology, they are given autonomy and responsibility to create, they are criticized and grow as artists.

It was suggested that a combination of effort from DXARTS and related Arts departments could work to ‘meet in the middle,’ to bend traditional curricula toward DXARTS, while DXARTS incorporates respect and utilizes the depth of traditional curricula.

## **VII. Resources and Facilities**

DXARTS is to be commended for its extremely efficient use of UIF funds, combined with additional fundraising and corporate support, which has led to efficient and productive use of the resources available to the Center. These resources include: personnel whose primary workload serves DXARTS (described above in Part III); physical facilities that DXARTS utilizes in support of its activities; equipment that supports ongoing DXARTS research activities; and financial resources available to the Center.

A. Physical facilities. The physical facilities that DXARTS occupies in the Main Quad on campus are quite impressive. The recent renovation work in Raitt Hall included focus on minute details of modern building methods, laboratory design, materials, and colors. The



entrepreneurial efforts of DXARTS to help refurbish classrooms with technological updates in exchange for 50% use by other units benefits both DXARTS and the greater campus.

The Fremont facility is an ideal mixed environment containing a studio cinema stage, along with production and robotics shops. The space provides a unique work environment for DXARTS students and faculty. The staff here work effectively to make newly purchased equipment quickly available to students. The staff is responsible for unpacking and setting up equipment, ensuring compliance with OSHA and other regulations, and training the students to use the equipment safely. Unfortunately, having to pay annual rental expenditures dramatically reduces the financial resources for DXARTS that could be used to support research activities directly. Although some enjoy being in Fremont and away from the UW campus, lack of physical proximity of Fremont to the rest of the campus creates problems for others. 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.<sup>4</sup>

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.

B. Equipment. DXARTS has also exhibited great thought in its strategic purchasing of media technology to support its research endeavors. The equipment resources that are available to support the Center's research and creative activities are impressive. The equipment purchases further provide extensive support for an incredibly wide array of creative and research projects.

C. Financial resources. DXARTS has been entrepreneurial in seeking external funding for the Center. It has been incredibly successful in obtaining Student Technology Fee ("STF") funding to support its activities. By continuing to serve the rest of the campus with CARTAH, DXARTS has also found a positive way to generate funding for the purchase of equipment, which must be upgraded frequently in the rapidly changing landscape of digital media technology.

Efforts to identify and set up positive relationships with donors are ongoing and optimistic. Although DXARTS does not have any specific endowments yet, some possibilities are being explored. The Committee was not given detailed information about development efforts. The differences between donor-based, and peer-reviewed funding sources was discussed. Mention was made of the NSF "Creative IT" program, and efforts being made by Brixey and others to develop proposals for this program. Attracting funding from federal agencies, particularly those supporting experimental science (e.g. NSF), and 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.

## **VIII. Governance**

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<sup>4</sup> At the same time, one Committee member believes that there is some extra value in locating the extra DXARTS studio space in Fremont, as that Seattle neighborhood is well known as a major hub of the arts in the city.

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.

These issues are especially critical for DXARTS as Karpen has taken on the role of Divisional Dean for Research in the College of Arts & Sciences, which removes him from active leadership of the Center. Brixey is clearly highly energetic and motivated and so he has been able to successfully assume sole leadership of DXARTS. However, as an internationally renowned artist and faculty member, one might question whether the heavy administrative role of Director of DXARTS is the best use of his talents.

Both Brixey and Karpen acknowledged these natural challenges and further asserted that they are actively working on transition strategies. The Committee notes that Brixey and Karpen could be enormously assisted in their growth management plans by a decision of the Graduate School and College of Arts & Sciences to grant full departmental status to DXARTS, allowing it to not only control and host its own faculty lines, but also to advocate for itself as a peer of other established departments and faculty hosting programs. DXARTS has admirably discharged its duties under the UIF to create a cutting edge, internationally renowned program; it should now be rewarded with the status and authority of a department or other faculty hosting academic unit.

Full departmental status will also enhance DXARTS governance in that Center faculty other than Karpen and Brixey will be more formally given “voice” in DXARTS affairs. It seems clear that these other faculty members currently have substantial informal input into DXARTS governance. This is effective when all faculty members generally agree on all issues, although infrequency of faculty meetings, and failure to include adjunct faculty on some email lists limits discussion and joint decision-making. There may well come a time when there is healthy disagreement among faculty members on an issue. In that context, formal voting and governance structures, such as those available in a faculty hosting unit, are the key to proper functioning of a unit. Further, junior faculty working primarily in DXARTS should be evaluated for promotion and tenure by senior faculty in DXARTS, rather than faculty in other units which host their appointments out of administrative necessity.<sup>5</sup> Finally, the formal governance structures available to a full department may also help give students and other stakeholders formal procedures and “voice” in Center decisions which can strongly impact them.

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<sup>5</sup> DXARTS faculty who have substantive reasons to desire joint appointments in other academic units should not be discouraged to do so, and in those cases promotion and tenure decisions may still need to be made jointly between the appointment units (depending on the exact terms of the joint appointment).

## **IX. Conclusion & Recommendations**

### **A. Conclusion.**

The Committee is favorably impressed by the progress that DXARTS has made in its relatively short life to date. The Center has created an internationally known, high impact research and teaching program. It has proven to be an excellent steward of UW UIF and other funding and resources, leveraging such resources to establish faculty, facility, students (and scholarships), and equipment that seem to add up to greatly more than the sum of the input resources. This progress has not been without “growing pains,” but that is to be expected of any ambitious cutting edge new program. In sum, the Committee believes that the program should not only be continued, but would also be best served by the University by awarding it full departmental status and supporting its transition from “start-up” mode to established, permanent unit mode. Specific recommendations follow this general conclusion.

### **B. Primary Recommendations.**

- 1) The B.F.A. and Ph.D. degrees conferred by DXARTS should be continued.

These are well-designed and executed degree programs, leading to graduation of bachelor and doctoral students uniquely educated to contribute as experimental artists.

- 2) DXARTS should be elevated to full departmental status with full control of its faculty lines.

DXARTS has built itself into a strong independent undergraduate and graduate degree program. It has attracted strong junior faculty, post-doctoral researchers, graduate students, and undergraduate students. Its faculty currently have appointments in Music, Dance, and the School of the Arts, but not within DXARTS itself. Because sophisticated technological components play an essential role in the work of its junior faculty, decisions about promotion and tenure should be made by DXARTS faculty, who have the proper expertise to evaluate this work.

- 3) The College of Arts and Sciences is the proper venue for a DXARTS department.

DXARTS has close research and teaching method ties with the other Arts and Sciences departments. Although it has developed strong ties with engineering departments and other units outside of the College of Arts & Sciences, it is firmly grounded in the arts and sciences, and in particular serves as an important resource for Music, Dance, and the School of the Arts.

Relationships between DXARTS and other departments are good. We heard several times that the presence of DXARTS would help Arts departments attract new faculty whose scholarship had some overlap with DXARTS, and how courses taught by DXARTS play an important role in the curricula of other departments. However, such overlaps and

interdependencies might become a source of conflict. Should such conflicts arise, they will be easier to resolve if fewer layers of administrative structure separate the units involved.

- 4) The College of Arts and Sciences should review the new department of DXARTS in five years.

The vision, design, and initial implementation of the DXARTS degree programs have been undertaken in a concerted, powerfully driven, and sometimes necessarily narrowly focused way. At this juncture, the program's leadership, faculty, number, and diversity of students will all increase, leading to a broadening of curricula, interactions, and outputs. The mode of progress may change, and the interaction of DXARTS with its potential home college will also change. It will be important to consider these changes in a relatively short time, in this case a recommendation of five years, in case DXARTS at that time needs further support for its mission.

### C. Further Considerations.

- 1) Two new faculty positions should be made available to DXARTS: one to fill the Associate Director position vacated by Shawn Brixey, and the second a permanent half-time or full-time Media Theorist.
- 2) DXARTS should continue monitoring whether the costs outweigh the benefits of the Fremont facility. Preliminary investigation into the cost and availability of equivalent space closer to campus is warranted.
- 3) DXARTS could consider whether the addition of a fiscal specialist who can focus on budgets, development, grant proposal submissions, and awards would be an efficient use of resources that could free up faculty and other staff time for their respective core functions.
- 4) DXARTS should evaluate its formal and informal mechanisms for maintaining ties, and avoiding potential conflicts of interest, with other units on campus, especially in the Arts. Such mechanisms could include an advisory board of UW and/or external community stakeholders. However, clear expectations of the role and authority of such a board must be established by DXARTS in advance, and in a way that is most helpful – and not a hindrance – to execution of its vision.
- 5) DXARTS should seek communal space for both graduate and undergraduate students to interact and relax. This could be one shared space for both groups or separate spaces.