

VISUAL ARTS AND ART HISTORY - PROGRAM REVIEW

PROGRAM REVIEW SELF-STUDY HIGHLIGHTS:

The Department of Visual Arts and Art History is dedicated to the advancement, practice and theoretical understanding of the Visual Arts.

Headcount statistics 2015-16:

- Undergraduate majors – 476 (decline from 575 in 2012)
- Graduate students – 16 (up from 14 in 2013)
- Full-time Faculty – 18 (14 TT, 4 NTT)
- Adjunct Faculty – 22

Visual Arts and Art History Degree Programs

BA – Studio Art
BA – Art History
BFA – Studio Art
BFA – Graphic Design
MFA – Visual Arts

First year retention rate was 74.6% in 2015 and is slightly lower than the College rate of 77.7%

Graduation rate is a concern 6 yr. rate is 41.5% and is lower than the college rate of 55.3%. However, that is an improvement over the previous 6yr rate of 39.1%

Highlights:

- Graphic Design is a BOG Program of Strategic Emphasis
- The faculty are actively engaged in creative research with work peer reviewed for inclusion in 401 regional, national and international exhibitions during the period in review.
- Faculty recognition for creative scholarship includes a Guggenheim award, seven South Florida Cultural Consortium Visual and Media Artists Awards and 3 nominations for the US Artist Award.
- Curriculum was reviewed and revised for all undergraduate and graduate degree programs to meet best practices.
- The Fine Arts Festival as a fund raising and alumni outreach initiative launched in 2010 with subsequent festivals in 2011 and 2012.
- Several studio art and design classrooms received support from the Tech Fee to integrate smart classroom technology into these dedicated instructional spaces.
- The Photography studio classroom was renovated to support course offerings in both traditional and digital photography.
- Areas that pose safety concerns due to chemical use or equipment received funding to employee lab technicians to oversee equipment maintenance, area safety and to monitor use by students.

Community Engagement:

- In collaboration with the University Galleries faculty and students in the Department co-curate and host exhibitions throughout the year that are free and open to the public.
- The Department's community partners include the Boca Art Museum, Norton Art Museum, Women in the Visual Arts and the Boca Raton Artist Guild. Students benefit from these partnerships through internships.

PROGRAM REVIEW TEAM REPORT (SUMMARY)

Program assets:

- Faculty are dedicated to the educational mission of the Department and committed professionals with ample evidence of scholarly and artistic/design research.
- The gallery programs in general, and the Schmidt Center Gallery in particular, appear to provide excellent exhibitions, superb student work experiences, and opportunities for institutional outreach.
- The use of emerging art and design technologies embraced by faculty is expanding across disciplines with 3D printers and digital output facilities. The faculty are engaged in learning, maintaining, and developing curricular or entrepreneurial uses for these technologies.
- The proposed fabrication lab could provide an important and much needed revenue stream for the department.

Review Team key observations and recommendations for the Department:

- The Department needs to address facility issues including pest infestations.
- Engage the FAU health and safety professionals for annual safety inspections that include air quality evaluations especially in areas using solvents and chemicals. Make sure all faculty and graduate students working in these facilities are trained in EH&S standards.
- The Department should seek institutional accreditation with the National Association for Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) which would provide a framework for ongoing review of program competencies, operational conditions and institutional accountability.
- Resolve scheduling conflicts so that student can complete their degree in a timely manner.
- Develop a hiring plan that aligns with University Pillars and Platforms such as Healthy Aging and Environmental Sciences encouraging opportunities for cross-disciplinary projects.
- The proposed Design Center in Fort Lauderdale is a worthy investment for the department.

Observations and recommendations for College and University:

- Funding for technical support positions in the studio arts areas that use equipment and chemicals. This is needed to meet and maintain minimal health and safety standards as well as to provide supervised lab time for students to work on projects outside of class.
- Fund new faculty lines to address the high faculty to student ratio (27:1). NASAD accreditation requires a maximum 20:1 ratio.
- Students believe the current multi-campus system undermines a sense of community, consider the feasibility of a shuttle/bus system, develop the Design Center in Ft. Lauderdale as its own College, and/or relocate all art and design components to a single campus location.

Top critical issue for Visual Arts and Art History Department:

- Develop a strategic plan across the entire range of the department's activities. Consider rethinking the relationships between resources and programs, with future planning exercises to focus on sustainable programs and leveraged collaborative efforts. Engage in a candid appraisal of current curricula and ask difficult questions including:
 - BA degree – what is its purpose and articulate a value for the program?
 - BFA degree – are the distribution and descriptions of tracks sustainable given the resources and areas with only one faculty member?
 - MFA degree – is this program sustainable?

PROGRAM REVIEW RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN (SUMMARY)

The Department of Visual Arts and Art History Department

Actions items:

- The department will re-evaluate component to the current assessment criteria as well as create an action plan for the incorporation of more meaningful evaluative procedures. A plan is expected no later than the end of the 2017 fall term.
- The department plans to bring in a consultative team in the spring semester of 2018. Based on input from the consultation, the department will evaluate its preparations for a full accreditation visit by NASAD in 2018-19.
- The department will maintain a more organized collection and evaluation of work orders and facilities issues to better track facilities pressures and challenges.
- Department will continue to work with EH&S to ensure safety is a priority.
- Utilize the half-time position in the office to manage social media and improve the usefulness of the website to facilitate student and community engagement. This effort can also serve our recruitment efforts.
- Establish and maintain graduate tracking information. This will contribute to a fuller picture of the department and its efforts and assist in compliance with outcome-driven metrics.
- The department will convening an ad hoc undergraduate curriculum committee tasked with evaluating the curriculum with specific attention to progress toward graduation and make recommendations for changes to the curriculum that will streamline progress while enhancing program effectiveness.
- The department will redefine the service assignment of Graduate Coordinator to have a more centralized approach to the recruitment, matriculation and oversight of the graduate program.
- Graphic Design faculty will identify strategies for attracting a larger and more consistent candidate pool for the MFA Graphic Design concentration.

Recommendations requiring College and University support:

- Address health related issues with appropriate action
 - regular pest control services
 - ventilation and HVAC problems
- The Design Center to be located in downtown Fort Lauderdale will require University support and investment.
- Funding for permanent tech positions in studio arts facilities that pose significant safety risks without this type of dedicated oversight.
- Faculty lines to reduce the student-faculty ratio to meet NASAD accreditation standards.