

Comprehensive Program Review
Millikin University, Department of Visual Arts
External Reviewer's Report

Submitted May 19, 2016

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A self-study of the Department of Visual Arts was made available and read by the outside reviewers before the campus visit, which took place on April 7, 2016. Department Chair, Lyle Salmi provided a guided tour of the facilities. Students and faculty were interviewed throughout the day. A private interview was held at the end of the day for approximately one hour with no less than eight art majors (some came and went). Three classes were observed in session, Three-Dimensional Design, The Art of Publishing, and Printmaking. Some additional data was gathered after the visit via email, on-sight, and by general research. Along with his observations, Professor Griffin offered excerpts from The National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) Handbook 2015-16, to help guide and illustrate any discussion between department and administration as to the pros and cons of NASAD accreditation. We the reviewers believe that we have made a thorough examination of the department and offer the following joint observations and recommendations.

We are thankful for the opportunity to participate with the department review. The campus visit was inspiring. There seems to be a deep sense of camaraderie within the faculty. The student's comments and behavior in and about the art studios echo a sense of confidence in their professors. There is a healthy level of competition amongst students. Studio production is good. The emphasis on performance learning is outstanding. We were impressed with the integration of student learning within the local community i.e. the Decatur Memorial Hospital and the Cancer Care Institute.

The faculty is a remarkable group of highly trained artists. With all but one professor having at least two decades history at the college and in some cases three decades they operate with a keenly guided compass and a profound sense of intellectual authority. There is however, need for an additional full-time professor in the area of Photography given the importance of photography in the growing area of digital media. The demand for a full-time administrative assistant will be articulated later in the report.

Although, the department enjoys a variety of physical advantages such as three gallery spaces and spacious and well-equipped sculpture and ceramics facilities, there is obvious cause for concern over facilities in the Kirkland Art Center.

Considering the remarkable experiential learning culture within the department and the rarity of the Art Therapy program and the emphasis on entrepreneurship I found it a bit unusual that the department does not offer a minor in Art History. By all other measures of the Department's academic successes I would assume the department already had in place a *major* in Art History. A minor certainly seems like a well-advised goal.

(Huber)

Regardless of which key educational phrases such as, "student-centered learning" or "integrative learning", a university is currently employing to address their focus on the student's educational involvement, achievements and outcomes, the result for the Arts is generally easily illustrated if the programs are true to their stated missions and fully supported by the infrastructure of the university. During the program review of the Art Department at Millikin University, I found this attention to "student-centered learning" to be very much at the stated core of its program and practice. (Griffin)

The BFA and BA degrees offered are in line and consistent with like programs throughout the state and the various majors are consistent as well. The department's curriculum, expectations and student-centered outcomes appear to meet National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) standards. The addition of the Art Certificates (Art Minor) in all the areas of study should help increase student enrollment and exhibits that the department is actively seeking to expose and integrate itself to the university and increase its educational roll within the university's overall curriculum. (Griffin)

The department's (2) notable differences from other state institutions are the Art Therapy major and the student-centered entrepreneurial opportunities: design studio (*Ignite Design Studio*), student managed publishing company (*Bronze Man Books*) and student run gallery (*Blue Connection Gallery*). (Griffin)

The ability to use this well-established and existing Art Therapy major as a recruitment and marketing tool to illustrate what sets Millikin's Art Department apart from other state universities should not be overlooked. I have witnessed over the last three years a significant rise in student interest for this educational area as students and parents enquire as to its employment potential. This rise is reflected in the department's own self-study. (7. Enrollment Trends) To further add creditability to this trend and observation please review the following excerpt and web link to the United States Department of Labor / Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook. (Griffin)

<http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/recreational-therapists.htm>

Job Outlook

Employment of recreational therapists is projected to grow 12 percent from 2014 to 2024, faster than the average for all occupations. As the large baby-boom generation ages, they will need recreational therapists to

help treat age-related injuries and illnesses and to help them maintain a healthy, active lifestyle.

Pay

The median annual wage for recreational therapists was \$45,890 in May 2015.

With the wide range of possible and required student involvement in such well-coordinated and curriculum-integrated activities, it is clear that the department is seeking to expand and enrich its students in student-centered learning.

Department Mission

The department's stated mission and expanded bullet pointed list in the self-study run similar to the NASAD *Common Body of Knowledge and Skills for All Professional Baccalaureate Degrees in Art and Design*. (Griffin)

Excerpt of NASAD Handbook 2015-16 96 VIII.B.

Irrespective of major or specialization, students must:

- a. Gain functional competence with principles of visual organization, including the ability to work with visual elements in two and three dimensions; color theory and its applications; and drawing.*
- b. Present work that demonstrates perceptual acuity, conceptual understanding, and technical facility at a professional entry level in their chosen field(s).*
- c. Become familiar with the historical achievements, current major issues, processes, and directions of their field(s).*
- d. Be afforded opportunities to exhibit their work and to experience and participate in critiques and discussions of their work and the work of others.*

Studio work normally begins at the freshman level and extends with progressively greater intensity throughout the degree program.

There should be opportunities for independent study at the advanced level that includes appropriate supervision and evaluation upon completion.

(Griffin)

Curriculum

The department's current curriculum for its degrees and majors appears consistent with the requirements for NASAD accreditation.

Excerpt of NASAD Handbook 2015-16 84 IV.C.4.5.

Liberal Arts Degrees

Curricular Structure and Title. Degrees in this category include Associate of Arts or Bachelor of Arts with a major in Art or Design and Associate of Science or Bachelor of Science with a major in Art or Design. Normally, 30-45% of the total course credit toward the degree is required to be in the creation and study of the visual arts or design.

Professional Degrees

Curricular Structure and Title. Degrees in this category include Bachelor of Fine Arts and Bachelor of Science in Design, and normally require that at least 65% of the course credit be in the creation and study of art and design. The Associate of Fine Arts or Associate of Applied Science, if requiring 65% of the course credit in the creation and study of art and design, and if otherwise structured to transfer to a professional baccalaureate, may be considered a pre-professional degree.

For standards on specific majors both BA and BFA please refer to the NASAD Handbook 2015-16. In the program review it appears that the department is again meeting NASAD standards for the specific degree and major requirements.

http://nasad.arts-accredit.org/site/docs/Handbook/NASAD_HANDBOOK_2015-16.pdf

BFA Studio page 96

BFA Graphic Design page 117

BFA Art Education page 126

BFA Art Therapy page 129

Faculty

With the retirement of Annette Russo (Art Therapy), it is imperative that a suitable and qualified replacement be in place prior to Fall 2016. Full support of the university's resources should be focused on a successful outcome to this search for qualified candidates. The search was approved and ongoing presently (position listing was supplied in departmental documentation).

The current FT and PT faculty appear to meet NASAD standards. (Griffin)

Excerpt of NASAD Handbook 2015-16 59 II.E.

Qualifications

a. Standards

(1) The institution shall maintain faculties and staff whose aggregate individual qualifications enable the art/design unit and the specific educational programs offered to accomplish their purposes.

(2) Faculty members (including part-time faculty and graduate teaching assistants, as applicable) shall be qualified by earned degrees and/or professional experience and/or demonstrated teaching competence for the subjects and levels they are teaching.

(3) All faculty must be able to guide student learning and to communicate personal knowledge and experience effectively.

(4) Faculty members teaching graduate-level courses must represent the professional standards to which graduate students aspire in specific fields and specializations.

(5) It is essential that a significant number of faculty members teaching graduate-level courses be active, or have been active, in presenting their work to the public as scholars or professional artists or designers.

Program Assessment

The amount of time and attention spent in assessing the students at the various required levels for both the BA and the BFA is extremely impressive.

The department is to be commended on its attention to and use of portfolio reviews throughout the curriculum. This is a time consuming endeavor on the part of the faculty and staff but it is an essential and vital component of the program that all the faculty must take responsibility and help/participate in its administering. (Griffin)

- The Admissions Portfolio requirements appear to meet NASAD standards. (Griffin)
- The Sophomore, Junior and Senior Reviews appear to meet NASAD standards in both topic and expectation. (Griffin)

Excerpt of NASAD Handbook 2015-16 97 VIII.C.

Results. *Upon completion of any specific professional undergraduate degree program:*

- 1. Students must demonstrate achievement of professional, entry-level competence in the major area of specialization, including significant technical mastery, capability to produce work and solve professional problems independently, and a coherent set of artistic/intellectual goals that are evident in their work.*
- 2. Students must demonstrate their competence by developing a body of work for evaluation in the major area of study. A senior project or final presentation in the major area is required.*
- 3. Students must have the ability to form and defend value judgments about art and design and to communicate art/design ideas, concepts, and requirements to professionals and laypersons related to the practice of the major field. They are able to work collaboratively as appropriate to the area(s) of specialization.*

Recommendations. *Students engaged in professional undergraduate degrees in art/design should have opportunities to:*

1. Gain a basic understanding of the nature of professional work in their major field. Examples are: organizational structures and working patterns; artistic, intellectual, economic, technological, and political contexts; and development potential.

2. Acquire the skills necessary to assist in the development and advancement of their careers, normally including the development of competencies in communication, presentation, and business skills necessary to engage in professional practice in their major field.

3. Develop teaching skills, particularly as related to their major area of study.

4. Explore areas of individual interest related to art/design in general or to the major. Among the many possible examples are: aesthetics, theory, specialized topics in art/design history, analysis, and technology.

5. Explore multidisciplinary issues that include art and design.

6. Practice synthesis of a broad range of art/design knowledge and skills, particularly through learning activities that involve a minimum of faculty guidance, where the emphasis is on evaluation at completion.

Portfolio Reviews

The three part portfolio review does appear to set standards for the department as the self-study suggest. This was best articulated during our discussion with the art majors. Students that had passed the BFA review sophomore year spoke proudly of their accomplishment and felt the expectations of them by their professors and peers was significant. Some said that the BA students simply did not have the necessary work ethic to be successful in the BFA program. The biased bravado of this statement is likely the result of the climatic ascent to the BFA from the initial portfolio review for admittance into the program.

When asked about formal lessons in aesthetics and art criticism the students said such lessons were disseminated randomly in critiques and during studio and art history classes. It was not apparent that the students had a common understanding of popular lessons in aesthetics and art criticism. Although, I believe such information has been provided for, a review in the form of a seminar course might provide the framework for a more cohesive exploration of philosophical platforms, portfolio development, and graduate school application processes. A structured format such as this might also alleviate some of the anxieties students expressed about confusion over degree requirements. Transfer students might become better acclimated to the Department's unique learning environment through a formal seminar. A course of this nature might complement the Art History sequence lending further support to the creation of an Art History Minor. (Huber)

Enrollment Trends / Program Potential

Millikin University's Art Department appears to be experiencing the same enrollment trends as other regional Illinois state universities. The numbers presented in the self-study for each degree and major is indicative to what EIU has witnessed over the same time period.

- The Art Therapy major is growing and as stated and supported earlier is a program/major on the rise nationally. This should be encouraged and used to its advantage to recruit and market the whole department.
- To identify why art students are not coming to Millikin specifically would require the help of the Admissions Office or the Department's administrative assistant to follow up on active prospects with survey cards and or response emails which could be circulated and then coordinate the responses. The Department's administrative assistant would be the ideal person for this position, as prospective candidates would often necessitate the scrutiny of the Department Chair and other faculty.

- To be sure, one of the most effective marketing strategies is for the Department to create ways to further collaborate with regional high schools for on-campus recruiting events.
- It is my estimation that the initial tour of the art facilities is compromising the department's ability to effectively recruit prospective students. Although the ceramic and sculpture studios are newer (12 years old) and more spacious, these are not the first point of contact as prospective students engage with the department. The drawing, painting, printmaking and down stairs studio spaces are not conducive to capturing the minds and imaginations of prospective students/parents who are touring campuses and weighing their educational options. The graphic design computer lab is also in a transitional space as the new student center is being constructed. The department needs to market this new addition and dedicated space and upgraded technology. This should be highlighted on the Department's web page.
- The conclusions drawn within the self-study are valid and not out of line with the current climate and culture within the state. In regards to transfer enrollment, the challenges that this demographic of students presents to departments in terms of holding and expecting a level of quality that transfer students are not used to having to necessarily achieve is problematic. But as the numbers of overall students are dwindling and evaporating, working the transfer student into the curriculum and integrate them as easily and seamlessly as possible is the new task of departments statewide.
- Increasing the photography area with a FT faculty, resources and increased course offerings will help enrollment by attracting and maintaining prospective art students and introduce more students from across campus. The foundation of this area addition is currently in place and would see dividends on the university's investment if so supported.

II. Site Visitation

Facilities

Kirkland Fine Arts Center:

Painting, Drawing, Printmaking, Foundation/Art Education/Art Therapy and Photography Studios are in serious need of attention and resolution. These studios first and foremost appear to be seriously deficient in terms of appropriate health and safety concerns. (Griffin)

The painting lab is appropriately divided into individual works spaces. However, students are restricted to acrylic paint as ventilation is nearly non-existent. Oil paints are an essential media for painting majors. It has historical relevance and offers an entirely different set of outcomes in terms of color mixing, layering, and application. The art majors at Millikin should have the opportunity to work with oils safely. The painting studio is cramped. Increases in general enrollment and PACE will only exacerbate the over crowdedness of the studio. The florescent lighting in the painting studio is perhaps the worst scenario for color studies. Natural, north light is ideal. If that cannot be achieved then daylight balanced artificial lighting is advisable. Professor Salmi would be the best resource for information regarding lighting needs. (Huber)

Beyond the obvious space, ventilation, lighting and hazard waste issues are the limitations of the departmental equipment in the various studios and available resources to allow the students to maximize their talents and grow professionally. Even though Millikin's Art Department is not currently NASAD accredited, the majority of the other regional universities are accredited and thus Millikin is falling behind in regards to facilities as more and more emphasis is focused on health and safety, studio space and the attention to upgraded equipment/technology. These studios would not appear meet NASAD accreditation standards. (Griffin)

Excerpt of NASAD Handbook 2015-16 62 II.F.

Facilities, Equipment, Health, and Safety

1. Standards

- a. Facilities, equipment, and technology must be adequate to support faculty needs, all curricular offerings, and all students enrolled in them, and be appropriately specialized for advanced work.*
- b. Space, equipment, and technology allotted to any art/design unit must be adequate for the effective conduct of that function.*
- c. The number of studio and classroom spaces and the amount and availability of equipment must be adequate to serve the scope of the program and the number of students enrolled.*
- d. Budget provisions shall be made for adequate maintenance of the physical plant and equipment as related to the size, scope, and purposes of course and curriculum offerings, and to conditions related to health and safety.*
- e. Art/design units with goals and objectives in disciplines and specializations that require constant updating of equipment must demonstrate their capacity to remain technologically current.*
- f. Students enrolled in art/design unit programs and faculty and staff with employment status in the art/design unit must be provided basic information about the maintenance of health and safety within the contexts of studio practice, exhibition and performance. For art/design majors and art/design faculty and staff, general topics include, but are not limited to, basic information regarding health and safety issues, hazards, and procedures associated with making and presenting art and design. They also include instruction on the use, proper handling, and operation of potentially dangerous materials, equipment, and technology as applicable to specific program offerings or experiences. Beyond the provision of basic general information, and the identification of available resources, decisions regarding topic areas and breadth and depth are made by the institution, and normally are correlated with the nature, content, and requirements of specific areas of specialization or specific courses of study. For non-majors enrolled in courses offered by the art/design unit,*

topics chosen are directly related to health and safety issues associated with their specific area of study or activity in art/design. Art/design program policies, protocols, and operations must reflect attention to maintenance of health and injury prevention and to the relationships among: the health and safety of artists/designers; suitable choices of equipment and technology for various specific purposes; appropriate and safe operation of equipment and technology; and other conditions associated with health and safety in studio and other facilities. Specific methods of providing information and addressing injury prevention, technology, and facilities are the prerogative and responsibility of the institution.

NOTE: *Health and safety depend in large part on the personal decisions of informed individuals. Institutions have health and safety responsibilities, but fulfillment of these responsibilities cannot and will not ensure any specific individual's health and safety. Too many factors beyond any institution's control are involved. Individuals have a critically important role and each is personally responsible for avoiding risk and preventing injuries to themselves before, during, and after study or employment at any institution. The NASAD standards above and applicable guidelines below, and institutional actions taken under their influence or independently do not relieve the individual from personal responsibility for appropriate, prudent, and safe behavior or action, nor do they shift such responsibility and liability for the consequences of inappropriate, imprudent, and/or unsafe behavior or action in any instance or over time to any institution, or to NASAD.*

g. Ventilation and safety treatments appropriate to art/design facilities shall be provided.

h. All instructional facilities shall be accessible, safe, and secure, and shall meet the standards of local fire and health codes.

i. The institution shall have a plan by which it addresses health and safety issues on a continuing basis.

2. Guidelines and Recommendations

- a. Facilities for the instructional and administrative aspects of the art/design program should be sufficiently localized to function cohesively and effectively.*
- b. Provision should be made for students to have access to adequate studio facilities at other than scheduled class times.*
- c. Adequate, safe, and secure storage space should be provided for instructional equipment.*
- d. Adequate office space for faculty and staff should be provided in close proximity to the instructional facilities.*
- e. There should be appropriate space and equipment for the administrative functions of the program.*
- f. All facilities and equipment should produce an environment conducive to learning and be sufficient to enable faculty and students to focus on academic and artistic endeavors.*
- g. Each art/design unit should maintain a plan for the regular maintenance of its facilities and upkeep and replacement of equipment. The plan should be developed consistent with goals and objectives, the size and scope of the art/design unit, and prospective changes.*
- h. Normally, institutions assist students to acquire knowledge from qualified professionals and authoritative medical sources regarding the maintenance of professional health and injury prevention, and to gain access to such professionals for treatment as may be necessary.*
- i. Normally, institutions or art/design programs have policies and protocols that maintain strict distinctions between the provision of general art/design-related health information in the art/design program and the specific treatment of individuals by licensed medical professionals.*
- j. Normally, institutions and art/design units develop their specific methods for addressing health and safety issues in consultation with qualified professionals in the fields of health and safety and any related areas.*

3D Arts and Theatre Center:

The Sculpture and Ceramics Studios exhibited a wholly different experience on the tour than that of the Kirkland studios. As newer construction they afford the prospective and current students many of the comparable techniques and experiences of the neighboring institutions. Health and safety aspects appear to have been addressed appropriately and would suggest that this facility is within line with NASAD standards. (Griffin)

Professor James Schietinger is to be commended for his leadership over the sculpture and ceramics facilities. The emphasis he has placed on teaching welding to his sculpture and ceramics students provides them with a significant advantage for graduate school admissions at other universities. I was particularly impressed to learn that his students were responsible for the steelwork on several of the department's atmospheric kilns. (Huber)

Key issuance and security appears to be an area of concern and discussion to this reviewer. From the outside viewpoint, the liability of checking out keys to students to the degree that occurs within the department is problematic and distressing. An E-lock system should be considered for both the safety of the students and protection of the university. (Griffin)

New Technology

The college might consider an endowment to ensure technology upgrades for the Graphic Design / Computer Art curriculum. The self-study revealed serious concerns about the Department's ability to stay current in technological advancements. There is a concern that the Millikin Graphics lab is less up to date than many high school graphics labs. This is indeed a serious threat to the stability of a program. The paradoxical problem lies in the fact that infrequent upgrades can lead to low enrollment numbers. Low enrollment numbers can appear to be an indicator of a lack of student interest in a program. The trickle down effect can mistakenly lead administrators to deem a program ineffectual.

New media arts are the throb of contemporary art departments. As the self-study suggest advances in the Graphics Design / Computer Arts curriculum coincides with the college's performance and entrepreneurial learning goals.

Whether an endowment is established or not the maintenance of the Graphics curriculum should be understood as a necessary strong card in the marketability of the program. (Huber)

Class Visitations

The class visitations consisted of observing Lyle Salmi's Printmaking course, Ed Walker's publishing course and Annette Russo's three-dimensional design course. Each class exhibited a rich display of professor driven demonstrations and or interaction and student self-directed activity. The students were highly engaged and clearly responded well to the overall atmosphere of the courses' structures. The student work displayed both in these courses and throughout all the studios exhibited a wide range of ideas, media and technique. The work evidences that the faculty are motivated and skilled in working with the students as individuals to bring out the aesthetic of the student artist without imposing their own will into the composition or technique and still impart the understanding and use the elements and principles of design. (Griffin)

Student Group Discussion

The visitation team met with 8-10 students who ranged from freshman to senior. The students were very well spoken and opened up to the review team with comfort and ease. A broad range of topics was discussed during the session.

Note: I am only relaying the following information as it was explained to the review team, I am not drawing any conclusions or making suggestions as this was only a one sided conversation/discussion.

- Overall, the students are very loyal and spoke highly of both the department and the university. Some strengths identified were: studio access, overall accessibility, supportive atmosphere, fostering growth and friendships, revitalizing the art club, Blue Connection/gallery work, design internships, and faculty and staff are great.
- Students expressed a frustration over the tightness of the curriculum suggesting they did not have enough exposure to professors outside of their major course work.
- Some weaknesses identified were: poor air circulation in Kirkland, general health and safety, computing and printing issues, feeling of disconnect between foundation courses to studio courses / could there be a better integration from one to another and format to bring freshman and upperclassmen together?
- Advising – This question opened a Pandora’s box of comments.
 - Art Therapy sophomores would like more advising guidance
 - Art Education majors would like more advising information
 - Help in locating “accredited” internships for Art Therapy
 - Art Education majors would like to have dedicated Art Methods courses
 - Degree plans or advising sheets that more directly designate what course numbers should or could be taken for requirements

(Griffin)

Art Department Web Site

In reviewing the web site for information pertaining to the department and related programming, I was pleased with the ease of use and navigation. I was readily able to move about and locate program curriculum and other information that prospective and current students will require.

In reviewing the web site after the student discussion, many of the advising questions would seem to be answered by the information found on the department web site. The student disconnect with these issues is puzzling and perhaps can be addressed with a departmental orientation at the start of each academic year. It may be as simple as they are just not scrolling all the way to the bottom of the page, and simply missing the links. (Griffin)

Recommendations

1. Web Site Review Critique

- a. Why is the Art Education specific degree plans attached on the Studio Art page? This could be some of the issue with the Art Education majors questioning what courses count for what. These degree links are not present on the Art Education page as the other majors are.
- b. News /Events is a year old, recruiting efforts require this information to be more recent and exciting as to what is happening this term.
- c. Professional Success / Alumni last entry 2006? / No current student listing? / No faculty listing? - recruiting efforts require this information to be more recent and exciting as to what is happening this term.
- d. Student Work – Where are other samples: books, graphic design, ceramic, sculpture freshman foundation work, and drawing?

2. Full-time Photo/Graphic Design Professor

3. Full-time Administrative Assistant

4. Establish an endowment for support of faculty and student travel.

5. Establish an endowment or seek some other means of ensuring annual technology upgrades in the area of Graphic Design and Computer Art.

6. Collaborate with area high schools for on campus recruiting events.

7. Create an Art History Minor.

8. Improve studio spaces:

For proper safety conditions

For better lighting

To alleviate over crowdedness

To facilitate the College's PACE program

To accommodate increases in enrollment