ONE-YEAR RESPONSE TO GRADUATE PROGRAM REVIEW
Texas Tech University
College of Visual and Performing Arts
School of Art
Spring 2012

School of Art Director Tina Fuentes

Program Overview and Vision: Good

Faculty Productivity: Satisfactory

Quality and Quantity of Graduate Students and Graduates: Good

Curriculum and Programs of Study: Good

Facilities and Resources: Poor

The School of Art is very appreciative of this opportunity to review and assess our graduate programs, and very grateful for the time and efforts of the review committee members, external reviewer, and the Graduate School dean, associate deans, and staff in making this a meaningful and effective process. The review committee’s report seems to strongly support several of our general conclusions regarding the challenges facing our three graduate programs as they strive to grow without compromising the quality of the educational experiences our students deserve, particularly the lack of high quality facilities for our programs, which the review committee accurately assessed as “poor”.

Actions taken in response to our graduate program review are follows:

• 3-D Annex: all 3-D programs are now located in this facility

  The 3-D Annex has provided excellent facilities for Metalsmithing & Jewelry Design, Ceramics, and Sculpture. These state of the art facilities have given much needed support towards our recruitment efforts within these programs.

• HVAC study for Art Building is underway

  Ventilation in these buildings must be improved in order for us to provide a safe and healthy environment for all our students, and well-equipped, up-to-date studio and office spaces are necessary for all the graduate degree programs. Assessments are to be performed by two external reviewers in spring of 2012. Once the consultants have the study and estimate established, the university has committed to moving forward in getting the issue corrected.

• Faculty hire priority list has been developed and two of three positions are new lines

  According to the SoA 2011-2012 Strategic Plan, we seek new faculty lines that will attract a diverse faculty, in areas of study identified by faculty and Director. Director has identified three highest, ranked priorities: 1- Art History position, in support of new MA program in AH; 2- Communication Design position, in support of understaffed area and potential development of a graduate degree; and 3- Digital/CAD Studio position. The first two have been approved by the CVPA Dean and searches are underway.
• Appearance of “low number of refereed articles/abstracts a School administering a Ph.D. program.”
  Only Art History (six faculty) and Visual Studies (four faculty) publish research primarily by articles/abstracts. This is 10 out of 32 full-time faculty, which may contribute to the appearance of lower publication numbers.

• Limited travel funding
  Our Strategic Plan, which advocates ensuring 40% of faculty time for research and increased opportunities for students, faculty and staff to participate in regional, national, and international venues. Limitations on research productivity caused by a lack of grant funding opportunities should be lessened now that we have a new Coordinator of Development for the College of Visual and Performing Arts, Micah Blake, and grant writer Allison Boroda joined the School of Art during summer 2010. New travel grants developed by the CVPA have contributed significantly to additional travel funding for faculty and students. This, coupled with international travel funds from the college, has extended faculty travel opportunities. The School of Art is presently allocating $750 for travel support.

• Light faculty service load
  Review of faculty service considered only our responsibilities/leadership in professional societies and service on graduate committees. The review committee notes that “…the school had from 3 to 5 faculty members serve as journal editors or editorial board members from 2003 to 2008, the number of officers in national organizations ranged from 1 to 3 over the same time period, and participation of professional society committees ranged from 1 to 2 annually. Three faculty members were editorial review members annually.” Fewer than half of our faculty have much of an opportunity to participate in the types of service in professional societies and editorial activities emphasized by the review. Our concern is that considering only professional service and service on grad student committees (we normally consider grad committees to be part of teaching) results in a narrow sampling of faculty responsibilities in the area of service. School of Art faculty regularly contribute service efforts and leadership in administrative and faculty governance committees at the departmental, college and university levels; maintenance and development of equipment and facilities; keeping studio labs functional, safe and accessible to students; serving on search committees, T&P committees; organizing course scheduling for their areas; determining and updating special instruction fees; advising students; training T.A.s and GPTIs; and many other tasks. By failing to include these activities in the reported service load, the format of the self-study encourages a misinterpretation in the area of faculty service.

  The Director has also reviewed workload calculations and determined that more complete attribution and reporting of workloads was needed, and implemented the following changes to accomplish this: credit is given to service as area representatives, service in support of self-study for the National Association of Schools of Art and Design renewal of accreditation, development of new degree programs, board membership on state and national organizations and conference organization for national professional associations.

• Uneven distribution of faculty service on graduate thesis/dissertation committees
  Some unevenness of distribution is inherent to the division of faculty according to degree programs (some programs accept more students per faculty member than others, but in the area of the Fine Arts PhD degree, our newly appointed PhD Committee Chair, Dr. Constance Cortez has continued to progress with more even distribution of faculty PhD committee membership service. Dean Edwards has recommended that the replacement of Visual Studies faculty vacancy be particularly tied to the PhD program, which may help with this problem. The search for this position will move forward in 2012-2013.
• Applicant pool quality and recruitment of graduate students in MFA and PhD program
University budget planning in the time period reported has not provided sufficient
departmental budget information for the next year to enable confident and accurate offers
to be made to the top recruits for each program. Consequently, we have had difficulty
securing attendance by our top applicants to the MFA program, because the offers we are
able to make are tentative, which places our program at a serious disadvantage and often
leads to late decisions which may leave us no time to accept well qualified applicants from
the next tier. It is important to note that studio space limitations for MFA students create a
finite number of spaces for incoming students.

It is simply not realistic for us to expect to enroll top quality graduate students unless our
financial awards make the costs of attending TTU at least competitive with other
institutions. We recently applied for additional scholarship moneys for graduate students
to the Helen Jones & CH Foundations without success.

The School of Art continues to address recruitment strategies needed to target
underrepresented groups, as specified in the Strategic Plan: 1.1.2 - Identify
underrepresented group source areas (high schools, community colleges and universities)
and implement the recruitment plan targeting two-year programs to provide an effective
matriculation of highly-qualified transfer students to the School of Art and to increase
awareness of the educational opportunities in art at Texas Tech University.

Our new MA in Art History prepares students for doctoral studies and for a variety of
careers. Recruitment for this program has begun in anticipation of the first group of MA
candidates entering the program in the 2012-2013 academic year.

• Increase graduation rates for the doctoral program
PhD faculty are employing new, distributed mentoring strategies and are targeting the 4
year maximum to graduation. Since most students who are in residence do receive
employment, the figures are probably distorted by the number of students who are ABD
and no longer in residence. By lessening ABD time and ensuring timely graduation, this
problem should be eliminated. New University policies which would decrease a high
percentage of tuition costs for PhD students employed at 50% should also be extremely
helpful in recruiting and graduation students in a timely fashion.

• Publication activity by doctoral students could be stronger
We have had transitions in PhD program leadership in the past year, and we will have the
new PhD coordinator evaluate the guidance and encouragement PhD students receive in
this area and consider implementation of a professional seminar for doctoral students to
increase publication and creative activities as suggested in the committee’s meeting with
students.

• The most pressing facility needs are space to accommodate graduate students
Some space was gained with the Sculpture area move to the 3-D Annex, and we are
working on allocating and renovating this space for office/studio space for PhD students
and increased space for the MFA and MAE students.