

Marshall University Department of Art and Design, Masters of Art, Graduate Program Assessment Report

Submitted October 18, 2006, for Academic Year 2005-06

1. Assessment Activities

A. Program Goals

The aim of the M. A., Masters of Art in Art, degree program is to expand a student's knowledge of the principles of art and design and art history and to strengthen the artistic skills and problem-solving abilities needed to create successful, thoughtful, individual artwork. The M. A. is not a terminal degree. It is a choice typically made by those interested in building a body of work for an application to an M. F. A. (Master of Fine Arts) program, which is the terminal degree in studio art; for art educators seeking new skills and university credit; and for artists attempting to improve their studio work for sale and/or exhibition. Students concentrating in the graphic design area acquire skills that can apply directly to a variety of jobs, including those in print graphics, multimedia, and web design. Students opting for a concentration in art education (not appropriate for those seeking certification), often have broad interests, which include museum education programs or community arts education programs.

B. Learning Outcomes / Data Collection

9 and 18 Hour Reviews

Outcome: Students should be conversant about ideas central to his/her work and exhibit the concepts and processes he/she is exploring to create a thesis or a body of work for a final project. He/she must display work in progress, give an oral presentation of his/her ideas, including historical references, as well as, articulate artistic and educational goals.

In 2005-06, the Department of Art and Design continued the faculty review of the student's work after a completion of 9 hours, and then again, after the completion of 18 hours. The review is facilitated by the Graduate Director. Professor Michael Cornfeld acted in this role in the fall of 2005 and Professor Peter Massing has been selected to serve as Graduate Director for 2006-07. The reviews take place on one day, the study day, during final exam week.

The studio faculty meet in the studio space that houses the equipment and/studio for the student's area of concentration, where the student displays or presents his/her work. The faculty evaluates the artwork, after the student makes an oral presentation, explaining the techniques and processes used, as well as the

concepts considered in the pieces. The student's advisor is also present. Faculty offer ideas on how to improve the work, comment on work habits, and constructively criticize the work, referring to art historical movements, traditions and concepts, and contemporary issues, which the student might find helpful. The advisor contributes his/her concerns about the student's progress. As Professor Clercx suggested last year, all graduate students are now invited to attend the reviews of their fellow students to prepare them for the review process.

A Review Form, which rates the student's work from excellent to poor, is completed by each faculty member. Written comments are included on the form. The Graduate coordinator collects them and copies them for the advisors. The advisors share the comments and rating with the students. The chair keeps the original forms in the art office and puts a copy in the student's file.

The reviews are considered useful in determining whether a student is progressing well in his/her areas of concentration. There are times when students will ask faculty whether they are studying in media that best suit their talents and skills. Faculty members offer opinions and suggestions. Even when a student receives strong or discouraging criticism, a plan of action is developed to assist the student in improving their artwork and efforts. Students frequently accept the suggestions and improve dramatically over the following semesters. At times, it is a matter of changing instructors, to better match the interests and approaches of the student.

The 9 hour review is an important event in the M. A. degree curriculum, since it tends to give shape to the remainder of a student's program. ***In years 2003-2005 17 students participated in 9 hour reviews. The average score on the rating forms was 2.87 out of a possible 4. Individual scores ranged from 1.66 to 4. In 2005-2006, seven students participated in the 9 hour reviews. The average score was 2.74 and individual scores ranged from 2.33 to 3.30.*** By the 18 hour review, a student must file a plan of study for the remaining 18 hours and select two faculty members who, along with the department chair, will continue to advise the student and read the final comprehensive exam. At this point a student is well on his/her way toward developing the work which defines his/her program, thesis, or exhibition. The work is often progressing very well, unique, and exciting to discuss and view. Most students gain confidence in the time between reviews and present the work in much more professional manner at this review. ***In years 2003-2005, 12 students participated in 18 hour reviews. The average score on the rating form was 2.57 out of 4, with individual scores ranging from a 1 to 3.8. (The faculty appears to expect more from students farther along in the program. Or, perhaps the group of students is too small a sample.) In 2005 – 2006, five students presented 18 hour reviews. The average score was 2.76, with individual scores ranging from 2.25 to 3.35. There is greater consistency this year than in past years within the two data collection reviews and in comparing the two sets of scores.***

Four new graduate students joined the eleven more advanced graduate students from this year. *(Three additional students accepted into the program did not materialize. Three students from the last academic year appear to be sitting out this semester, fall 2006, for personal reasons. Two students graduated. A third completed all the requirements for graduation but never applied for graduation. Three students are preparing to graduate this fall, 2006. Two more may graduate in the spring, 2007.)* They will participate in these reviews and add to the depth, variety and excitement of the department's individuals participating in the graduate program. During academic year 2005 - 2006, ten total graduate students, one in ceramics, two in sculpture, two in art education studio concentration, three in painting and one each in photography and weaving, were reviewed in 2005 - 2006. No students received less than a 2.25 rating. One student did not participate as he was urged to and he did not return this fall. Another student, whose work was of concern last year, displayed work that was considerably improved.

Art 500, Co-Curricular Experiences

Outcome: Students will attend art and cultural events to broaden their exposure to art and increase the breath and depth of their art knowledge.

5 out of 10 students completed Art 500, Co-curricular Experiences, in the fall, 2005, and 4/8 students completed it in the spring, 2006. Art 500 is identical to Art 200 for undergraduates, in that students are required to attend 3 art/cultural events each semester. The list of events is posted at the beginning of each semester, in the department and on the website. The list includes artists' and historians' presentations in the Birke Art Gallery, the Huntington Museum of Art, The Putnam County Museum in the Community, and other visual arts events as they arise in the region. Although the course is 0 credit, students are required to complete 3 semesters of Art 500 during their program. Records of their Art 500 attendance are kept in their student files in the Art and Design office. For the spring, 2006 semester, Professor Clercx had instituted a new method of determining who is attending events by requiring a written report on the event delivered via WebCT e-mail. This did not seem to be successful and a number of graduate students ignored the requirement. Only 50% received credit each semester as opposed to 95% last year. The method used in the past to ascertain participation has been reestablished.

Art 670, Seminar

Outcome: Students will gain research skills on topics related to their artwork or courses of study, and become conversant in issues surrounding their artwork or courses of study.

Students form a small group and work closely with a faculty member, typically an art historian, who guides them through the research process, resulting in a

research paper. They also spend time presenting and discussing relevant art issues.

In 2004-5, 6 students completed Art 670 and one received an “Incomplete”. In 2006, 7 students completed Art 670 with an “A” or “B”, and, again, one received an “F”. Two of the successful students are planning to graduate in the fall, 2006.

Discussion with the students finishing Art 670 and graduating during 2003-04, resulted in the suggestion that this course would be most beneficial to students if it was completed during the first year of a student’s graduate work rather than at the end of the second year. The Graduate Director now strongly urges students to complete the course during the first eighteen hours of course work. This year it appears that half the students enrolled in Art 670, during their first 18 hours.

Exhibition/Thesis

Outcome: Students present a professional body of artwork in the Birke Art Gallery, document it, and write artists’ statements or write theses, and submit them prior to graduation.

Students completing their M. A. in Art degree, in either studio, or art education, with a studio option, exhibit in the Birke Art Gallery. Those pursuing an M.A. in Art, with art education or art history as an option, complete and submit a thesis project. Since the inception, three years ago, of the art education program with a studio and exhibition option, it appears that there will be a very limited number of these students choosing to research and write a thesis. No one graduated with this option the past two years nor is anyone working in this area currently. In the past few years the faculty member responsible for Art Education did not encourage the writing of theses. She has now retired and the department is conducting a search for a new tenure track person to fill that position.

The students in studio areas receive guidance from their primary advisor, the Graduate Director, the department chair, and the gallery director in planning the graduate exhibition. Graphic Design students work with the graphic design faculty to select an appropriate exhibition venue.

Faculty complete Review Forms, with a rating scale of excellent to fail and written comments. The forms are collected by the Graduate Director and kept on file in the art office and also in the student’s file. Students have access to their records. The advisor in the student’s area shares the Review Form with him/her. Since the advisor helps prepare the student for the exhibition, it is unusual that a student would do poorly in the exhibition part of the program. Given the success rate, the department has not found it necessary to define what would happen if a student were to do poorly. The departmental committee will meet this semester and the Graduate Director will present this situation for consideration and suggest

that a student could be given an additional opportunity as one would be granted in failing a portion of the comprehensive examination. *The average rating score for the last 15 graduates was a 2.77 out of a possible 4. Scores ranged from a 1.66 to 3.8. Fortunately, the three lowest scores were almost two years ago. The 2004 single graduate was rated at a 3.63. In the fall, 2005, one student presented a graduate exhibition and received a average score of 2.97. In the spring of 2006 two students presented exceptional exhibitions and excellent artist's statements. Unfortunately in the transition from one Graduate Director to another evaluations were not requested of or collected from faculty and data was not collected.*

During the 2002-03 academic year the Artist's Statements were the weakest part of some of the exhibitions according to the Review Forms. Therefore the Seminar, Art 670, class has been restructured so that an abstract of the student's research paper could become a major part of the exhibition's artist's statement. The 2004 2005 graduate wrote an exemplary Artist's Statement. The three statements written to accompany the 2005 - 2006 exhibitions were also very competent.

Comprehensive Examination

Outcome: To write a paper which displays basic writing skill, and articulates an understanding of major influences in the student's work, as it relates to the history of art.

Three students planning to graduate in the spring, 2006, took the comprehensive exam in April. As in the past, they were furnished with a computer and technical staff to aid them with any technical problems they might encounter. They had three hours to write a paper on the major art historical influences, the traditions, the techniques and technology, audiences and content had on their artwork. The chair, the Graduate director, the advisor and an art historian read their papers and graded it with an Excellent, Pass, Pass with conditions, or Unsatisfactory. This year's graduates all passed the exam. Again, earlier concerns about the relevance of this exam have lead to a focusing of the Seminar class on the issues addressed by the questions on the exam. Recent examination papers produced have covered these issues with greater confidence, conviction and style. That was true again this year. Two of the 2005 - 2006 students taking the comprehensive exam have received a "Pass". One student received a conditional pass and was given the opportunity to rework the exam so that it corrected those areas that were deficient. That student subsequently passed the exam. The other two papers came very close to achieving "Excellent" ratings. In each case one faculty reader indicated an excellent rating.

C. Results

There are no nationally accepted standards or norms for graduate art programs. As with the undergraduate program, the department looks to NASAD, National Association of Schools of Art and Design, and the CAA, College Art Association, for recommended standards of conduct, safety, contact hours and curriculum.

The methods the faculty are using to assess student progress and participation are the 9 and 18 hour reviews, class critiques, completion of Art 500 (Co-Curricular Experiences), Art 670 (Seminar), the Comprehensive Examination, and the Exhibition or Thesis.

The additional requirements in the Graduate Catalog put into place last year (and indicated in our last assessment report) may have resulted in fewer applications for graduate study by students inside the university and beyond who have not already earned degrees in art and design.

These additions were requested because the department has had an increasing number of applicants to the Graduate program who had not earned an undergraduate degree in art, had no art history background, were coming to the graphic design program from journalism or marketing, had difficulty writing research papers, or were international students with difficulties in using the English language. One or more of these deficiencies caused some students to struggle with aspects of the program and created additional work for faculty. Invariably the students managed to complete the degree and become successful artists and designers. The faculty agreed these additional requirements would better prepare students for the rigors of our program. (One student was admitted in 2005 conditionally because she did not have the proscribed undergraduate background. She is completing the requirements.) To my knowledge no additional students without background in art have asked for admittance to the program.

Restructuring the Art 670, Seminar, class on personal research pertaining to each student's artistic interests has resulted in more appropriate artists' statements and comprehensive exams that indicate that each student can express coherently his/her intent, ideas, and concepts as well as produce art that should visually represent those same concerns. The 2005 - 2006 graduates continued the improvements over those preceding semesters as evidenced by the evaluation forms filled out by the faculty.

This past academic year has seen two students complete the graduate program. This academic year, 2006 - 2007, will, in all probability, see five more students graduate. While the total number of graduate students has decreased from 16 to 14, of that nine are full-time students, a number the same as last year. The remainder work full-time as teachers, in graphic design studios, in offices, and at the Huntington Museum of Art. Consequently there continues to be a greater cohesiveness than in previous years. The department would like to be able to

continue to support the graduate program at this level. Our inability to pay significant graduate stipends and to offer a terminal degree (M.F.A.) may account for yearly fluctuations in the number of students in the program. More active recruitment will be necessary to attract qualified students from colleges and universities other than Marshall. (Currently nine of the sixteen students were Marshall undergraduates.) Professors Clercx and Massing plan to advertise the program in publications reaching a wide audience throughout the country.

Now that Art education students have the choice of either a thesis option or a studio option to satisfy program requirements, it appears that there will be very few theses produced. (Perhaps none.) More specific data will be forthcoming in the next few years.

Studio contact hours have been increased from three/four hours per week to six hours per week to be consistent with undergraduate class contact hours and NASAD standards. A new suggested four semester course curriculum has been developed for studio majors. The creation of an area of emphasis for Art Education within the M.A. Art Degree has been completed. New digital projection equipment has been mounted in three studios and made available in three more. Faculty development presentations on "Powerpoint" have been made by Susan Jackson to all interested faculty, particularly those teaching Art History and Art Appreciation. Several graduate students teach sections of the latter. Enormous new studios are occupied by both undergraduate and graduate students in ceramics (currently 2 grad students) and sculpture (4 grad students) since September, 2004. For the first time in many years grad students will have considerable studio space of their own and certainly overcrowding in these areas will be a thing of the past. Efforts to increase the physical space for painting and much of the remainder of the departmental studio areas must now be made a priority.

Faculty in the department continue to sponsor trips to New York (museums and galleries), Chicago (sculpture), Columbus (graphic design), and Wooster, OH (ceramics) which are available to all students. Several graduate students participated. These trips also fulfilled Art 500 requirements.

The single graduate of the program in 2005 year will be completing an M. F. A. program at the University of New Mexico. One of the 2006 graduates will be teaching at West Virginia State University in the spring 2007. Another teaches part-time in the Marshall's Department of Art and Design and works full-time for Computing Services.

II. BOT Initiative 3 Compliance

Not applicable to graduate programs.

III. Plans for the Current Year

The Department of Art and Design's new chair, Prof. Byron Clercx, was able to fill two positions in graphic design with tenure track faculty members. After an unsuccessful search this past year, the position in art education has been advertised and the department hopes that a successful search will result in another tenure track faculty. Professor Massing assumes the position of Graduate Art Director. Personnel changes and position searches, as well as, new priorities on the part of a new chair have slowed progress on NASAD membership and accreditation applications.

The Graduate Committee along with the chair and the Graduate Director will continue study and assess the graduate program and particularly the changes that have been made in the past two years to determine additional ways to improve the program.

IV. Assistance Needed

Assistance is needed in the area of recruitment of new students from within and without our region and assessment of the success of our Masters graduates. It is necessary to seek those qualified candidates for our program from amongst the smaller colleges and universities in our region. The difficulties continue to be the lack of a terminal degree in the field, inadequate stipends, the redirection of assistantship funds into part-time faculty funds because our graduates are not always ready to teach (the department has a continuing need for faculty), and inadequate recruitment material. Tracking of former students who have completed our Masters program is also problematical. Over the past five years former students have graduated with terminal degrees from Pennsylvania School for the Arts, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Ohio State, Miami of Ohio, Memphis College of Art and Design, and Western Michigan State. Some have gone into higher education or back into the public school systems. Recently graphic design graduates have found corporate positions. However, the department has no systematic method of gathering information on its graduates, and could certainly use help in this endeavor.

The department continues to need a Visual Resource Staff member to catalog the slide library (indeed, just to keep it operational) and to bring new technologies to the faculty and students. Great strides have been made in preparing and utilizing digital technologies in our classrooms. Several studio /classrooms have been wired for digital/internet projection. The Drinko Library has purchased a subscription to a major collection of images to be used by the entire department and the whole university. This has certainly enhanced a currently limited slide collection.

V. Most Important Thing Learned

The Department of Art and Design's M.A. degree in Art is a slowly evolving program that continues to improve as its' structure and requirements are reconsidered and fine

tuned. The Graduate Committee has made important changes and contributions to the program as a result of the ongoing assessment we have put in place. The vagaries of student interest and enrollment, the challenges of studio space for grad students, new faculty and expertise, and the finances devoted to the area will require continuing review of the program.

Submitted by: _____ Date: _____

Michael Cornfeld, Past Director, Art and Design Graduate Program

Marshall University
Assessment of Student Outcomes: Component/Course/Program Level

Component Area/Program/Discipline: M.A. ART, Department of Art and Design

Component / Course/ Program Level					
Student Outcome	Person or Office Responsible	Assessment Tool or Approach	Standards/Benchmark	Results/analysis	Action Taken
1. To exhibit work and/or describe issues central to artwork or thesis to faculty	Graduate Director, chair, advisor, faculty	9 hour review of student work by faculty, rating form completed	Comparisons to previous M.A. work and professionals in the discipline – 2.87 score of 4 seems an appropriate benchmark	Students are defining ideas and skills that will mature before the 18 hour review – 3 out of 7 achieved a better score (2005-06)	Students given specific artists to research in consultation with advisor
2. Same as above	Same as above	18 hour review of work, rating form completed	Same as above – 2.57 score out of a possible 4 seems an appropriate benchmark	Students exhibit growth from the 9 hour review- refine concepts and medium – 3 of 5 (2005-06) achieved a better score	Written suggestions from faculty to further growth of work.
3. To attend art and cultural events in the region	Chair	Art 500 slips collected from students indicating participation at events Spring 06 – written reports filed electronically were required	Departmental- students required to attend 3 events/ semester to receive credit – 80% rate seems an appropriate benchmark	Graduate attendance is high at regional events- students often participate in events – Fall – 5/10 , Spring 4/8 achieve credit (2005-06)	Students are encouraged to attend workshops, demonstrations. Major trips to cultural centers also encouraged
4. To acquire research skills and learn about contemporary issues	Faculty	Art 670- Faculty member works with students, evaluates and grades the papers, gives quizzes and tests	Grading consistent with academic courses	Course now focused on research and writing concerning student's own work. 7 earned "A" or "B", 1 earned "I"	An individualized research paper, an abstract, an artist's statement now required

5. To present professional research in the form of an exhibition or thesis	Advisor, Gallery Director, Graduate Director, chair, faculty	Documentation of art work, written papers, orals, faculty complete evaluation sheet	Comparisons to previous M.A. work - 2.77/4 seems an appropriate benchmark	1 displayed the results of creative research – scored 2.97/4 2 exhibitions inadvertently missed evaluation (2005-06)	Abstract of content and documenting slides required, or professionally prepared thesis
6. To write a coherent and inclusive comprehensive examination	Advisor, Graduate Director, chair, additional faculty member	Written test, evaluated by advisor, chair, Grad Director and additional faculty member	Departmental standards	Improvements has been shown in recent tests with changes in Art 670 class- two students did very well, one student passed conditionally (2005-06)	Greater focusing of 670 class has improved preparedness for exam

MEMO TO: Frances Hensley, Associate Vice President
Academic Affairs

FROM: Michael I. Cornfeld, Associate Dean
College of Fine Arts

DATE: November 20, 2006

RE: Addendum to the Master of Arts in Art Assessment Report of
2005-2006

In the Assessment Report of 2005-2006 for the Master of Arts in Art, submitted on October 18, 2006, I wrote the following on page 5:

In the fall, 2005, one student presented a graduate exhibition and received a average score of 2.97. In the spring of 2006 two students presented exceptional exhibitions and excellent artist's statements. Unfortunately in the transition from one Graduate Director to another evaluations were not requested of or collected from faculty and data was not collected.

I now find the last sentence of this statement is not accurate. Faculty did do evaluation forms for our two Spring, 2006, graduates. (I just found them under a pile of papers, obviously misplaced.) **The scores resulting from faculty evaluations of these two graduates on their graduate exhibitions, covering their art work, the presentation of the work and their artist's statements were respectively 3.92 and 3.67 based on a scale using a 4 as excellent.**

This information should also appear in table accompanying the report rather than the notation that evaluations were inadvertently missed.

Please add this Memo as an addendum to the Master of Arts in Art 2005-2006 Assessment report. Thank you.