

**MARSHALL UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF ART AND DESIGN**  
**B.F.A. UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT**  
**Submitted December 2007, Assessment for AY 2006-07**

**1. Assessment Activities**

**A. Program Goals**

The Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) is a professional undergraduate degree within the fine arts discipline. The mission of the undergraduate program in the Department of Art and Design is to prepare students for advanced study and careers in visual art and design. Accordingly, goals for the (BFA) program include:

1. Providing comprehensive art and design foundations experiences that ready students for advanced study in a range of media.
2. Broadening the context by which students measure themselves and their work in the world.
3. Fostering rigorous learning conditions that procure lucid visual, verbal and written expressions.
4. Graduating students with competitive dossiers for advanced study or careers in art and design.

**B. Learning Outcomes / Data Collection**

**Art 299: Portfolio Review**

Students are eligible to enroll in Art 299 after they successfully complete the Art Foundations Core: Art 214, Art 215, Art 217, Art 218, Art 219 and a minimum of one three credit 300 level studio course (18 credit minimum). However, in order to pass Art 299, students must demonstrate basic competency and the reasonable promise of future creative growth before they complete 27 credits in studio art. Students who do not meet this standard will not be allowed to enroll in additional art and design courses.

Learning Outcome:

A comprehensive merit-based portfolio review, when used over time as a program advancement portal, benchmarks student preparedness and performance for advanced study. Held bi-annually, this review evaluates student work samples in the following foundations areas: 1) beginning and intermediate drawing, 2) two-dimensional and three-dimensional design, and 3) print and motion computer graphics. Students must show basic competencies in representational and abstract drawing and design, integrate color into their projects, and convey concepts using traditional and non-traditional media and processes.

Data Collection:

Fall 2006 shows 11 students enrolled with 3 students (27%) passing and 8 students (73%) who did not pass. Spring 2007 grade summaries show 20 students enrolled with 6 (30%) who passed, 9 (45%) who did not pass (NC) and 5 (25%) withdrew. Evaluation forms use a 5-point scale over five areas. A total score of 15 points or better (*with a minimum score of 2 pts. in each area*) is required to pass. Despite considerable strides made in the foundations program in 2006-07 there is room for improvement. Incongruent objectives, and/or inflated grading in prerequisite classes supplied students with inaccurate performance reports and flawed expectations for advancement. Accordingly, course reassign time was issued to Professor Sherwood (Foundations Coordinator) to improve delivery consistency and reduce grade inflation with adjunct and graduate instructors. Preliminary indicators (from Fall 2007) suggest the increased coordination has improved student's understanding

of review expectations and tightened a perceived gap in delivery consistency and performance.

Action Taken:

To further these aims, the faculty voted to introduce rubrics to all of art & design classes (enacted Fall 2007). We will collect data over several years for comparative analysis.

**Annual Juried Student Art Competition**

Each spring, two outside professionals in the art field evaluate the Annual Student Juried Exhibition. Art works judged strong in concept, style and/or in the principles of design are exhibited in the Birke Art Gallery.

Learning Outcome:

Demonstrates command of advanced art and design principles and/or vocabulary.

Data Collection

There were 100+ entries with 20 total awards (eight secured by lower division students). Jurors are asked to complete evaluation forms to rate the overall quality of the exhibit and strength of individual areas represented (which may also include an optional written comments for individual contestants) but this practice has not been enforced.

Over time an annual student juried art competition can be a good indicator for gauging the degree of creativity and critical thinking in a studio arts program. However, in order to improve student learning a more concerted effort needs to be placed on gathering completed evaluation forms and summative statements from jurors and sharing those results with students. Over time these records can assist the department in benchmarking the data and shaping student and unit improvement plans.

Action Taken

We revised categories and criteria for the Annual Student Juried Exhibit. Awards and jurors evaluation forms/statements will be centrally housed in the department office. To further these aims, the faculty voted to introduce rubrics to all of art & design classes (enacted in Fall 2007). We will collect data over several years for comparative analysis.

**Annual Juried Student Art History Essay Competition**

Each spring (last year being the first) two outside professionals with art history acumen, Kateryna A. R. Schray, Ph.D. Professor, MU Department of English and Jenine Culligan, Senior Curator Huntington Museum of Art evaluated submissions to the Annual Student Juried Writing Competition. Essays (5-15 pages) could be submitted and assessed on one of two levels (200 and 400) so lower and upper division students can compete with peers at similar rank. Works deemed strong in concept, style or structure received prizes.

Learning Outcome:

Demonstrates command of advanced art and design principles and/or vocabulary.

Data Collection

There were 15 papers submitted with seven awards: 1 First Place Award, 1 Second Place Award, 2 Third Place Awards (tie) and 2 Honorable Mention Awards (tie) and one Originality Award). Jurors were asked to complete evaluation forms to rate the overall quality of the exhibit and the strength of individual areas represented (which may also include an optional written comments for individual contestants). The jurors were pleased with the range and rigor of the essays. In fact, they even

invented a special category (Originality Award) that was ranked as the equivalent of a second place award.

Over time an annual juried student writing competition can be a good indicator for measuring the degree of critical thinking evident in a studio arts program. However, in order to improve student learning a more concerted effort needs to be placed on gathering completed evaluation forms and summative statements from jurors and sharing those results with students. Over time these records can assist the department in benchmarking the data and shaping student and unit improvement plans.

Action Taken:

We established entry and evaluation criteria for the Annual Student Writing Competition. Awards and jurors evaluation forms/statements will be centrally housed in the department office. To further these aims, the faculty voted to introduce rubrics to all of art & design classes beginning Fall 2007. We plan to collect data over several years for comparative analysis.

**Art 489: Graphic Design Portfolio**

During their senior year, graphic design majors may enroll in Art 489 (2 credits). This course helps students learn how to professionally prepare and present their work to prospective clients. They must earn a grade of C or better on a portfolio to be used as a tool for job interviews. Near the end of each semester regional designers review students presentations and portfolios. Consistent with Marshall's grading policy, graphic design faculty use the A to F grading scale to grade a student's portfolio.

Learning Outcome:

Assembles a competitive digital design portfolio and can convincingly respond to questions during job interviews with field experts.

Data Collection:

Fall 2006 shows 6 students enrolled with all (100%) receiving passing grades. Grade distributions are as follows: A's = 3, B's = 2, C's = 1 (and there were no D's or F's). Spring 2007 summaries show 10 students enrolled with all (100%) earning passing marks. Grade distributions are as follows: A's = 6, B's = 2, C's = 2 (and again there were no D's or F's).

*Evaluation forms rate students using a five value system: Excellent, Good, Average, Poor and Failed in categories that include: a) Quality of work, b) Execution/Craft, c) Presentation, d) Variety of work. There is space for reviewer's to comment on his/her accomplishments and areas for improvement.*

Action Taken:

No major changes we enacted but with adjustments in the assessment approach (including more comprehensive data collection with narrative evaluations by external reviewers) we should get a more accurate picture of program strengths and areas for improvement/growth.

**Art 490: Apprenticeship / Field Training**

Graphic design students should be able to complete successfully an internship in a professional venue with an average score or better and a supervisor's positive recommendation and evaluation. In Art 490 (1 credit) students work off-campus at a professional site related to their area of specialization. After finishing the apprenticeship/field training, the student's supervisor completes an internship evaluation form. The completed forms are on file in the Department of Art and Design.

Data Collection:

Fall 2006 shows 18 students enrolled with 15 (83%) receiving passing grades and three students (17%) not earning credit. Grade distributions are as follows: A's = 13, (B's = 0), C's = 2 (no D's or F's) and I's = 3. Spring 2007 summaries (although 1/3 the size the ratios mirror the previous semester) showing 6 students enrolled with 5 (83%) receiving passing grades and one student (17%) not earning credit. Grade distributions are as follows: A's = 5 and I's = 1 (there were no B's, C's D's or F's).

*Evaluation forms rate students using a five value system: Excellent, Good, Average, Poor and Failed in categories that include: a) Ability to work with others, b) Follows instructions, c) Adapts to job, d) Enthusiasm, e) Appearance, f) Academic preparation, g) Technical preparation/Art skills, and h) Writing/Communication skills. There is space for supervisor's to recount the interns' responsibilities and list his/her accomplishments. Other narrative comments are solicited in the following areas: 1) A comparison of expectations vs. outcomes, 2) The value of the project to the business or entity, 3) effort expended by the supervisor vs. return value, and 4) Suggestions for improving/expanding the internship relationship.*

Action Taken:

No major changes we enacted beyond better data collection and analysis.

**Art 499: Senior Capstone Project and Review**

During the graduation semester, students enroll in Art 499 (Senior Capstone Project—1 credit). An articulate artist's statement, participation in a senior exhibit, and documentation of his or her work are requirements in this course. The department receives a copy of each statement and visual documentation (slide or digital format).

Learning Outcome:

Produces and presents an original body of art or design work and a statement of intent that demonstrates a mastery of design principles, comprehension of established practices and new trends in the field.

Data Collection:

Art 499 Senior Capstone Exhibit in three areas: Artwork Presented, Statement of Intent and Presentation of Work. Rating forms completed by faculty have five values: (4 Excellent, 3 Good, 2 Satisfactory, 1 Poor and 0 Fail with spaces for narrative comments) and a score of 2 or better in all areas needed to pass. Faculty scores are averaged into one grade for the student's exhibition. The capstone professor, the student and the student's advisor meet to discuss the results of the evaluation. Students must earn a grade of C or better on studio faculty critiques. Statistically, Art 499, like most capstone courses, is often comprised of talented and driven students who have successfully navigated the program and are preparing to graduate. Fall 2006 shows 23 students enrolled with 22 students (96%) passing and one student (4%) who withdrew. Spring 2007 grade summaries show 28 students enrolled with 25 (89%) passed, zero (0%) failed (NC) and 3 (11%) withdrew. However, without more information, like gathering comments from external reviewers and/or a student satisfaction survey for the capstone experience, little else can be extrapolated from these statistics.

Action Taken:

We are considering curricular changes to Art 390 in Fall 2007 to make it more aligned with the goals in Art 499, which is a matriculation portal out of the program and into the world. This would include more emphasis on practical skills for artists and designers (grant writing, copyright law, taxes, price structures, branding, marketing, etc.).

### **C. Results**

No sets of standards/benchmarks have either nation-wide acceptance or general adoption by art departments in colleges and universities. The College Art Association (not an accrediting organization) and the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (the premier art and design accrediting agency) do make recommendations; however, neither offers standards that have been widely adopted nationally. More accurately, the success of college/university art programs seems to be more closely tied directly to the quality of the individual programs advising practices, faculties, facilities, degree offerings, and peer reputation, steeped in sound recruitment and retention practices.

While a majority of the faculty believes that competent visual, verbal and written articulation is accurate and desirable benchmark of successful art and design professionals; in a number of cases student visual output is more advanced than the conceptual framework. Whether Marshall students' are under prepared and/or disinclined to commit themselves to researching and writing about art and design history and theory or we do a poor job of conveying the importance; we can, and need to do a better job of introducing, requiring, measuring and rewarding more rigorous research/writing activities. If we are successful students should see reading, writing, thinking and making as interdependent activities; gain confidence, and see improvement in their studio work.

### **II. BOT Initiative 3 Compliance**

Essential skills and knowledge learned in the art program are: the principles of art and design and how to apply them to the study of production of art and design; the history of art and design and how they shape contemporary thought about art and design; the language of art and design—how to read art and design theory, how to reflect upon them, how to write about them and perhaps most importantly, how to apply them in the world to improve. Course syllabi, student work, evaluations by instructors, outside jurors, employers, and collected data allow us to measure the success of student learning and the effectiveness of the program.

### **III. Plans for the Current Year**

Program assessment is an ongoing reflective process: Changes that emerged from observations made over the previous two years proved insightful and led to some encouraging discussions in 2006-07. We recognize that we need to do a better job in:

- a) Tracking students who enter graduate or otherwise leave our program,
- b) Looking deeper into objectives to determine if they are appropriate and can be evidenced by observable outcomes,
- c) Developing qualitative and quantitative benchmark assessments,
- d) Determining if outcomes can be improved by adjusting the curriculum and/or delivery; and
- e) Involving external reviewers in all phases of assessment.

### Art 101: Introduction to Art:

This required class for art majors provides an in-depth study of the medium, elements, and composition of artworks as well as some aspects about their cultural/historical context and relevance. However faculty expectations (about the value of art history and writing) and effort seems disconnected from the students' perceptions of their degree and career ambitions. As a whole, student attendance is spotty, they do not appear committed to (or competent with) composition writing, lack an ability or desire to analyze works of art, and pass rates are not at

acceptable levels. We placing more emphasis on ensuring success during advising and have made this course a pre-requisite for advancement to Art 299: Portfolio Review. We have discussed modifications in delivery assignments/style and course content but no immediate changes are planned.

Last year a new design history course titled, 'Special Topics: The History of Design 1850-present' was offered by Heather Stark (an adjunct instructor) as a design-centered compliment (or alternative) to the material covered in Art 412 (which is more art-centered). These new course offerings challenge and charge both faculty and students and are encouraged.

The faculty continues to assess programmatic strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum (including the aforementioned possibility of converting Art 499: Senior Capstone Project from a one to three credit class) but this is part of a larger curricular discussion that will resume in Spring 2008 (and as expected take time, more thought, careful planning).

#### Art 499: Senior Capstone Project:

While a number of our students secure positions in their chosen field and/or gain admission to respected graduate programs to study in art, design or art history collecting data on students after graduation has proven difficult at best. Many students move on after graduation and do not apprise us of their employment or school status. That said we are striving to improve communication lines with alumni as it can give us a more accurate picture of program quality. These connections would also enhance recruitment and retention outreach/outcomes.

However, there are other pragmatic challenges. Chiefly, with the exception of graphic design, we are primarily one deep in our emphasis areas. In the past, faculty with full teaching and service loads are expected to absorb this rotating responsibility (which further erodes time for creative and scholarly work). This approach saps morale and does not engender the desired learning outcomes; because either students in the subject area of the faculty with the 'extra assignment' get less time/instruction or those enrolled in the capstone class). One solution might be to increase the credit value (from 1 credit to 3 credits), which would be more inline with expectations for both teachers and students. Another might be more involvement with external reviewers and internship supervisors in qualitative and quantitative assessments. We would also be wise to solicit and act on student observations as well as looking for additional instruments/approaches to gauge program quality. Lastly, we need to look to programs (both in and out of our field) with recognized capstone experiences and identify meaningful and measurable ways we can elevate student expectations outcomes.

#### Annual Juried Student Art Exhibition/Annual Juried Student Art History Essay Competition:

The Annual Juried Student Art Exhibition event is one indicator for measuring success a studio arts program. In order to make the process more credible as an assessment tool, the juror(s) must be required to furnish a written evaluation of the overall exhibit and individual assessments of student participants. Although it has been run effectively for a number of years we need to identify ways for it to improve (like introducing a rubric).

One significant change is the addition of the Annual Juried Student Art History Competition that parallels the timing and tone of the studio arts event. Our aim is to reward student scholarly achievement and faculty expertise in art history. This augmentation is being driven, in part, by an alarming lack of commitment and performance in our Art History core by our majors, especially in the entry level (Art 101) and Art 201 and Art 202. The entire faculty recognizes a need to

collectively share responsibility for the visibility, viability and connectedness of our art history program to our curriculum. We agree this change cannot be cosmetic, is only one step, will take time and effort and is vital to our goals of enhancing student visual, verbal and contextual competencies.

On/Off Campus Partnerships: The department also seeks to develop alliances that will name brand the institution, advance our unit's vision, increase opportunities for all students, and strengthen value and viability of art and design both on and off-campus. A few examples of forthcoming projects that will involve art and design students include: The City of Huntington (print design work identities for an array of local clients like Huntington Symphony Orchestra, PRISM LLC, Knuckles Sandwich Co., SHARING Hospice Magazine, etc.) as well as designing a forthcoming archway over 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave., public artwork to adorn the flood wall and several projects along the Old Main Corridor), MU President's Office (design competitions for an annual holiday card, a commemorative glass plate and a forthcoming motion graphics competition), and the State of West Virginia (design work for a voting poll worker training project).

**IV. Assistance Needed**

My unit would benefit from a workshop/training session tailored to the unit/field and I would appreciate reading/discussing a successful art and design program assessment reports and/or the opportunity to secure funding to attend a conference on assessment.

**V. What one lesson has this Assessment Report taught the reporter?**

That program assessment is a valuable but misunderstood process and that we have a long way to go on individual, departmental and institutional levels.

Submitted by \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Byron D. Clercx, Chair,  
Department of Art and Design*

**Marshall University**  
**Assessment of Student Outcomes: Component/Course/Program Level**  
**Component Area/Program/Discipline: B.F.A. Visual Arts, College of Fine Arts 2006- 07**

Component / Course / Program Level

Program Goal	Student Outcome	Person or Office Responsible	Assessment Tool Or Approach	Standard/Benchmark	Results/Analysis	Action Taken
1) Providing a comprehensive art and design foundations experience that readies students for advanced study in a range of media.	Applies basic design principles in visual art and design projects in various media.	Chair, Foundations Coordinator, and faculty	Art 299 Portfolio Review (Art 101, 214, 215, 217, 218 and 219) and at least one 300 level class.  Evaluation forms use a 5-point scale over five areas. A total score of 15 pts. or better ( <i>with a minimum score of 2 pts. in each area</i> ) is required to pass.	Design fundamentals for basic, intermediate and advanced skill levels are illustrated in textbooks and used to describe and evaluate projects.  There are no accepted benchmarks for art and design performance. Data will be gathered for several years and measured against program and peer institution trends.  Art and design standards are also determined by current practices and critical literature in the profession coupled with the training, experience and expertise possessed by the collective faculty.	<i>F/06</i> : 11 students participated. 3 passed (CR), with 4 resubmits (NC) in specific areas a, 4 failed (NC) on entire portfolio.  <i>Sp/07</i> : 20 students participated. 6 passed (CR), with 9 resubmits (NC) in specific areas, and 5 withdrew (NC).	Coordinator issued reassign time to work with adjunct and grad instructors to raise the consistency of course content, delivery and grading) in Foundations classes).  Advised students on how to prepare for the review and clarified the criteria and scoring system faculty use to evaluate portfolios.  Voted to introduce rubrics to all art and design classes F/07.

Program Goal	Student Outcome	Person or Office Responsible	Assessment Tool or Approach	Results/Analysis	Standard/Benchmark	Action Taken
2) Broadening the context by which students' measure themselves and their work in the world.	Demonstrates an awareness of context (both historical and contemporary) in visual, verbal and written expressions.	Chair and faculty	Numerical and narrative responses from external jurors on work submitted to the Annual Student Juried Art Competition.  Supervisor evaluations of interns in Art 490 Apprenticeship/Field Training, and Art 491 Gr. Des. Workshop  Evaluation of writing samples from Art 499 Senior Capstone.	This is a new program goal category and data has not been collected or measured.	There are no accepted benchmarks for art and design assessment. Data to be compiled and analyzed/benchmarked  Standards determined by current practices and critical literature in the profession coupled with the training, experience and expertise possessed by the collective faculty.	Students advised to research, and write more about their work (assignments folded into some existing classes).  Faculty procure out-of-class service learning design projects for students.  Voted to introduce rubrics to all art and design classes F/07.
3. Fostering rigorous learning conditions that procure lucid visual, verbal and written expressions.	Demonstrates command of advanced art and design principles and/or vocabulary.	Chair and faculty	Numerical and narrative responses from external jurors on work submitted to the Annual Juried Student Art Exhibition  External readers fill out similar response forms to rate essays turned in for Annual Juried Student Art History Essay Competition.	There are no accepted benchmarks for art and design assessment. Data to be compiled and analyzed/benchmarked  Standards determined by current practices and critical literature in the profession coupled with the training, experience and expertise possessed by the collective faculty and external readers.	Juried Student Art Exhibition: Jurors noted scope and substance of the 100+ submissions with 20 awards for distinction. Ongoing event. Reviewing awards and benchmark.  Juried Student Essay Competition: This is new category (15 entries with 7 distinction). Data will be collected and analyzed/benchmarked.	Reviewed categories and criteria for the Annual Student Juried Exhibit.  Established criteria for the Annual Student Writing Competition.  Voted to introduce rubrics to all art and design classes F/07.

Program Goal	Student Outcome	Person or Office Responsible	Assessment Tool or Approach	Results/Analysis	Standard/Benchmark	Action Taken
4) Be recognized for turning out students' with competitive digital portfolios.	Assembles a competitive digital design portfolio and can convincingly respond to questions during job interviews with field experts.	Chair and faculty	Art 489 interns report weekly to design faculty and reviewed by field supervisors.  490 evaluations forms include numerical and narrative assessments from faculty and field professionals during (mock) interviews.	Portfolio standards vary widely and are defined by resident faculty and industry professionals.	100 % of students enrolled in Art 489 passed (+ 4% change from last year)  83% of those enrolled in Art 490 passed (7% change from last year)  Students in studio art often go on to respected graduate schools and design students have a good history of securing professional positions. However recently data collection has been inconsistent (and yields no solid benchmark).	Introduced new studio and design history classes.  Voted to introduce rubrics to all art and design classes F/07.
<i>Incorporates aspects from program goals (1, 2, 3, and 4).</i>	Produces and presents an original body of work and statement of intent that shows a mastery of design principles, and comprehension of established practices and trends in the field.	Chair and faculty	Art 499 Senior Capstone Exhibit: Assessment based on work, statement, and display.  Faculty fills out rating forms with five values: (4 <i>Excellent</i> , 3 <i>Good</i> , 2 <i>Satisfactory</i> , 1 <i>Poor</i> and 0 <i>Fail</i> ). A score of 2 or better in all areas needed to pass.	There are no accepted benchmarks for art and design performance. Data will be gathered and analyzed for several years.  Standards are also determined by current practices and critical literature in the profession coupled with the training, experience and expertise possessed by the collective faculty.	93 % passed the Senior Capstone Project Show (no change from last year).  Students in studio art often go on to respected graduate schools and design students have a good history of securing professional positions. However recently data collection has been inconsistent (and yields no solid benchmark).	Grade inflation discussed. Voted to introduce rubrics to all art and design classes F/07.  Evaluation forms revised to be more consistent.  Emphasis placed on reading and writing in Art 390: Prof. Practices (a pre-req. for Art 499).

