

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF ART AND DESIGN
B.F.A. UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR AY 2010-11

I. Program's Mission

Offered by the College of Fine Arts (COFA) at Marshall University, the Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) degree is the professional undergraduate degree for the visual and performing arts. The emphasis of the BFA in Art program in the Department of Art and Design is to prepare students for advanced study and careers in visual art and design.

Accordingly, the goals for the BFA program in art and design are to:

- Provide students with a sequential skill building curriculum in art and design foundations that introduces them to the techniques, materials, and concepts required for advanced study
- Broaden the context and criteria by which students measure their work
- Foster rigorous and supportive learning conditions which inspire lucid visual, verbal and written expressions by students
- Graduate students with competitive dossiers suitable to gain entry into graduate art programs and/or for entry-level positions in art and design

The BFA in Art supports the institution's mission by:

- Providing artistic and cultural programs that further the intellectual, artistic, and cultural life of the individual, community, and region
- Facilitating learning through the preservation, discovery, synthesis, and dissemination of knowledge
- Fostering a climate that appreciates and cultivates diversity and difference
- Engaging faculty, staff, and students in campus and community outreach
- Enlisting faculty who actively engage and mentor students in scholarly, artistic, and creative endeavors
- Preparing art and design students to be adaptive thinkers, producers, and leaders that contribute to society
- Challenging students to apply their knowledge, creativity, and skill to confront vexing questions and solve everyday problems
- Helping students develop a competitive dossier for their chosen career track

II. Program's Student Learning Outcomes

Students who complete the BFA in Art and Design will:

- A. Adeptly use advanced design principles to create original art and design work using traditional and non-traditional media
- B. Clearly articulate themselves using appropriate art and design vocabulary in written or oral communication
- C. Assemble high-quality dossiers that include digital portfolios suitable for advanced study and/or careers in the visual arts
- C. Evaluate one's own artistic output by organizing a public exhibition, supported by a one-page statement of one's creative intentions and/or that establishes an awareness of current practices and historical context

III. Assessment Activities

This review cycle will assess **Student Learning Outcome D** using two assessment measures. *Assessment Measure 1* looks at the combined data from two foundations courses: Art 298: Portfolio Review—BFA (a new one-credit course for visual art majors introduced this year) and Art 299: Portfolio Review (a zero-credit course now designated for art education majors). *Assessment Measure 2* will consider blended data from Art 498: Senior Capstone Project—BFA (a three-credit course for visual art majors) and Art 499: Senior Capstone Project (a one-credit course for art education majors).

Assessment Measure 1: Portfolio Review (*Learning Outcome D*)

The portfolio review is a gateway from the foundations courses that prepare students for upper division courses and their capstone experience. In consultation with the department's foundations coordinator, visual art majors and art education majors who have earned a "C" or better in the art core (comprised of five 3-credit courses: Art 101, 214, 215, 217, 218 and 219) and one 300-level studio art course, are ready to enroll in the appropriate foundation course. While the cadence of an individual students' four-year trajectory may vary, the portfolio review, generally occurs during the third or fourth semester. However, provided the aforementioned art core prerequisite has been met, students should enroll in the portfolio review before they complete their fourth studio art course at or above the 300-level.

Foundations courses are designed to furnish students with core art and design vocabulary, techniques and skills. Desired competencies are illustrated in textbooks and used to describe and evaluate art and design projects. Standards are also determined by critical literature and current practices in the profession, coupled with the training, experience and expertise possessed by the collective departmental faculty.

Students enroll in one of the portfolio review courses after completing studio-based foundations courses (Art 214, 215, 217, 218 and 219 and at least one, but not more than four, 300-level studio course). Students participating in the portfolio review present art and design work to the faculty for review in three ways: a) displaying select works from their foundations classes in the Birke Art Gallery to showcase their creative abilities and technical skills, b) writing a statement that summarizes pertinent goals, concepts, materials and processes, and c) delivering a reflective oral presentation (with images of their work) that touch on their perceived strengths, weaknesses, and intentions. They are expected to exhibit basic competencies in representational and abstract drawing and 2D design, traditional visual language and varied processes, show evidence of original exploration of concept and form in 3D design (and 3D virtual modeling), and convey an overall competence and confidence in their visual, written, and oral abilities.

Benchmarks:

Given the subjective nature of art and design production, appreciation, and valuation, that arts organizations affiliated with higher education like Foundations in Art: Theory and Education (FATE), The College Art Association (CAA), and the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) have not established uniform benchmarks for student performance.

However, despite the lack of existence of external guidelines to help establish student achievement benchmarks, the department addressed several shortcomings in how the portfolio review was organized, taught, and evaluated to include:

- Establishing a common syllabus with clearly articulated rubrics and expectations for foundations courses, to help reduce delivery and grading inconsistencies
- Providing more training for part-time faculty and graduate teaching assistants teaching foundations courses that are not covered by full-time faculty
- Continuing the freshman 'success and survival skills' orientation (held each semester) to help students develop a better rapport with their advisors and peers and acclimate to university life
- Impressing upon students the importance of taking an active role in their advising and the connection between their performance in the portfolio review and the tone this sets for advanced study and their chosen profession
- Conducting the review in the Birke Art Gallery, a dedicated display space that students, faculty, and external reviewers feel adds professionalism to the event

- Mitigating grade inflation and providing better feedback to students the portfolio review evaluation. Improved forms feature areas for faculty to provide narrative comments that are aligned with their numerical assessments
- Tightening the feedback loop by having students meet with the foundations coordinator and/or chairman to receive/discuss numerical scores and narrative comments (e.g., strengths and areas for improvement)

Assessment Measures (Tools):

Student performance in Art 299 and Art 298 is assessed in two key areas:

- The quality and development of artwork presented in the gallery space, and
- The clarity and sense of purpose evident in the statement and oral presentation.

Art and Design faculty evaluate student projects from foundations courses. Five competency areas are measured using a form with a 4-point scale. The rating form has five numerical possibilities (4 Excellent, 3 Good, 2 Satisfactory, 1 Poor, and 0 Fail), each of the following five categories is scored on the same range: a. Drawing skills, b. 2D Design skills, c. 3D Design skills, and d. Display of work, e. Oral presentation); with space for narrative comments that list strengths and weaknesses (1 = low and 5 = high) with 25 total points possible. An aggregate score of 15 points (with a minimum score of 3 in each category) is required to pass. A specific rubric is written for each competency measured and the example below (for the drawing component) illustrates how outcomes might also be assessed in each of the ensuing four categories:

A. Drawing (Art 217 & Art 218): Emphasis on line and value, spatial depth, representational skill, and perspective (4 points)

4 = Clearly excels in fabrication, creativity, and organizational skills. Displays a mastery of materials and strong understanding of line, value, color (if applicable), and the creation of space

3 = Shows some semblance of creativity and insight. Displays a good understanding of materials, line, value, color (if applicable), and space

2 = Shows some understanding of materials. Is lacking in creativity, insight, and organizational skills. Displays some understanding of line, value, space, and color (if applicable)

1 = Has clearly not mastered the materials. Shows little creativity or organizational skills. Displays a lack of understanding in terms of line, value, color (if applicable), and/or space

0 = Has little or no comprehension of materials or processes. Demonstrates a lack of understanding in terms of line, value, color (if applicable), and space

B. Two-dimensional techniques (Art 214 and Art 219): Emphasis is on critical thinking,

problem solving, overall composition, elements and principles of design, and basic computing skills (4 points)

- C. Three-dimensional techniques** (Art 215 and 219): Emphasis is on craftsmanship, media use, scale, spatial awareness, and movement (4 points)
- D. Display of Work** (Overall): Evidence of judgment, craftsmanship, professionalism, organization, and planning (4 points)
- E. Oral Presentation:** Poise, organization, ability to evaluate one's visual works and convey this orally, and overall preparedness for advanced study (4 points)

Results/Analysis:

While our program learning outcomes, rubrics, and assessment are not driven by individual student performance, pass/fail rates (or corresponding grades); we designed a new one-credit portfolio course (Art 298) for visual art majors, graded on an A-F scale. Faculty felt students were under-committed and underachieving, and sought a more nuanced system to rate and rank student performance within our major. It also responds to comments from visual art majors who stated they felt less incentive to strive for exemplary performance in a zero credit course graded (CR/NC) than they did in classes with letter grades and credit hour weight. Plus, the existing portfolio course (Art 299) remains the requirement for COE art education majors, and we could not easily alter the grading system or credit hour designation.

However, despite the separation, we will continue to assess student outcomes jointly, because course composition is blended and the rubrics are consistent. The main difference in the two courses (aside from final grades and credit hours) is how numerical values were assigned to student performance in each of the five competency areas. Art education students (in Art 299) were scored using a five-digit scale: (5 = Excellent, 4 = Good, 3 = Satisfactory, 2 = Poor, and 1 = Fail). Visual art majors enrolled in Art 298 were also scored using a five-digit system, but the value at each of the five performance levels was reduced by one integer (4 = Excellent, 3 = Good, etc.). Next year we plan to align the numerical values in Art 299 with those used in Art 298. However, to mitigate confusion this year and to help us benchmark outcomes for ensuing years, the scores for art education students were adjusted downward by one point (5=4, 4=3, 3=2, 2=1 and 1=0). This aligns art education scores with the results tabulated by visual art majors. Accordingly, the combined adjusted results for 2010-11 are as follows:

Drawing (Art 217 & Art 218) = **3.04**

Two-dimensional techniques (Art 214 and Art 219) = **2.79**

Three-dimensional techniques (Art 215 and 219) = **2.84**

Display of Work (overall) = **3.19**

Oral Presentation = **3.02**

At present, students who earn an average score of 2 or better are allowed to move on and enroll in other upper division studio art courses. However, in cases when students do not earn sufficient scores in one or more competency areas, but the faculty determined a portion of their portfolio was acceptable, students may be asked to rework and *resubmit* projects in those areas deemed deficient. In more severe cases, where students show significant deficiencies in many or all areas in their portfolio, and *fail* review, they are required to retake the review in its entirety. These students are issued a detailed improvement plan in writing and are required to meet with the foundations coordinator and chair (and art education faculty for art education majors) to discuss next steps. These discussions focus on the student's grades, role in advising, amount of progress toward graduation (review of 4-year plan and student records), impact on financial aid (as applicable), goal setting, time management, school and other priorities, aptitude, and attitude, and may include a discussion about other degree choices, etc.

Analysis/Planned Action:

This year we charted the points that each student was awarded by the faculty across each of the five competency areas. While not conclusive, the data from 2010-11 revealed some interesting trends (both in the way individual faculty scored the review and where there may be inconsistencies or under-performance in student performance). For example, if 3.0 was our program performance achievement goal for each of the aforementioned areas, we could go back to the data and try to determine why students underperformed in their execution of: Two-dimensional techniques (2.79) and Three-dimensional techniques (2.79). Sample questions might explore whether we could identify inconsistencies in the way the material was delivered by the various instructors; or, whether the learning outcomes, achievement distinction and/or assessment criteria was fully understood by the faculty evaluators. This process of gathering, considering, and acting upon data, in a more detailed and deliberate fashion will help the department establish internal benchmarking for portfolio review at the program-level which in turn should fuel improved assessment compliance, conclusions and results.

One thing we plan to do next year is establish a uniform scoring system for both courses and use this to measure the aggregate scores students earn in each of the five competency categories against our internal benchmark. A second area we plan to consider for next year is breaking down of the way points are assigned within each of the five areas. Currently, we list some of the competencies we are looking for in a given area (defined in narrative list under each heading) and award points for the entire category (from 0-4) based on the reviewers overall impression of the works a student presents in that category. In fact, if these sub-criteria narrative descriptors were listed as individually weighted line items (as in the example below illustrates), it would more accurately identify which specific components were present or lacking in each student's portfolio (which makes it easier to identify and introduce corrective measures at the programmatic level).

Current scoring formula (4 points/overall category)

Two-dimensional techniques (Art 214 and Art 219): Emphasis is on critical thinking, problem solving, overall composition and craftsmanship, elements and principles of design, and basic computing skills

Revised scoring formula (4 points/1 pt. each component)

Two-dimensional techniques (Art 214 and Art 219): Emphasis is on critical thinking and originality (1 pt.), overall composition and craftsmanship (1 pt.), elements and principles of design (1 pt.), and basic computing skills (1 pt.)

We recognize that merit-based portfolio performance reviews (like Art 299 and Art 298) conducted on a representative sampling of students should, when benchmarked, measured and assessed over time, reveal useful insights into overall student preparedness and identify programmatic strengths and specific areas where adjustments are warranted. Moreover, we have mitigated the issue of grade inflation (detailed over the past several years) by having more full-time faculty teach foundations courses. The coordination and communication of rubrics in all courses has helped ensure that students better understand learning outcomes and assessment and that faculty numerical and narrative evaluations are more consistently aligned. On many fronts the department welcomes assessment because it improves teaching and our students chances of succeeding in graduate school and/or careers in art and design.

However, as stated previously, because we are refining our assessment focus, it will likely take several years to collect sufficient data before any meaningful conclusions about retention and student performance and preparedness can be drawn. Therefore, this report will not reflect on the previous years (as was the case in previous reports) but will serve as the groundwork for establishing a benchmark for ensuing years. In addition to aligning and expanding the scoring systems for both courses (Art 298 and 299) as outlined above, other actions under consideration for next year include:

- Revising the curriculum for several foundations courses
- Review data in both courses (Art 299 and Art 298) to help us determine whether art education majors and BFA visual art majors are being adequately prepared for advanced study, their capstone experiences, and their chosen profession
- Look for potential curricular deficiencies in courses by competency category and by instructor
- Charting feedback from external evaluators to help us identify strengths and shortcomings in our various competency areas

Moreover, we also face some real and recurring challenges in meeting our assessment goals, in the current environment where all units (which are not created equal) are mandated to furnish a proportional quota of full-time faculty to teach FYS 100 and Honors College courses. While we do not question the value of these programs to the institutions mission, rather it is the one-size-fits-all policy that puts our unit in a staffing predicament that actually contradicts our assessment findings and threatens some of the recent gains we have observed in student outcomes and satisfaction. In a number of ways our pedagogical model is unique in higher education (e.g., class size limitations in hands-on studio based courses driven by space limitations, safety requirements, and the nature of our discipline, which hinges on individualized instruction). The vexing part is how to deliver credible specialized upper division coursework in emphasis areas where we are essentially one faculty deep, when the pool of part-time faculty in the region cannot provide suitable replacements. Thus, we are faced with the unenviable position of reverting to a staffing model that issues course reassignments for most full-time faculty at the foundations level, which lead to weakened student preparedness and outcomes identified in previous assessment cycles.

Accordingly, we are concerned that our program could (again) be adversely affected by having too many full-time faculty teaching in areas outside their area of specialty; which can water down student preparedness for advanced study, result in fewer upper division offerings (which impedes timely progress graduation), diminishes student satisfaction and achievement, and hinders our ability to increase enrollment and improve retention with the pending move to the Stone and Thomas building.

Assessment Measure 2: Senior Capstone Project (*Learning Outcome D*)

In consultation with the department chair and chosen area of emphasis faculty mentor, and after a student has undergone a graduation credit audit at the college level, visual art majors enroll in *Art 498 Senior Capstone Project—BFA*. Art education majors, in consultation with the department’s art education specialist and chair, enroll in *Art 499: Senior Capstone Project*. Course requirements (for both Art 499 and Art 498) include assembling a senior capstone exhibition in the Birke Art Gallery supported by an articulate exhibition statement and a public oral presentation. The department retains a dossier on each student that chronicles their accomplishments during the semester.

The capstone exhibition, conducted in the Birke Art Gallery, typically occurs in a student’s final semester. However, because art education majors must complete student teaching requirements in their final semester (which take them off-campus to onsite locations during traditional school hours for children) they tend to complete their capstone experience in their second to last semester. We have also observed a similar trend with graphic design students, who increasingly enroll in capstone during their second to last semester (citing the demands and importance of their portfolio course— Art 489).

Assessment Measures (Tools):

Beyond meeting or exceeding the basic course requirements outlined in the syllabi for both courses (e.g., attendance, participation and progress in class critiques, a position paper on their work and support materials to include: a cover letter, resume, exhibit post card, etc.) student performance is assessed in two key areas:

- The quality and development of artwork presented in the gallery space, and
- The clarity and sense of purpose evident in the statement and oral presentation.

Benchmarks:

Statistically, the capstone course/s, often reveal a high pass rate, in part, because the class is comprised of talented and driven students who have successfully navigated most of the degree requirements leading to graduation. Likewise, similar to the aforementioned portfolio review, there are no established external benchmarks that have been universally adopted for gauging student performance at the capstone level. Consequently, the department is gathering data using internal measures to help set realistic benchmarks for first-time and repeat participants in the capstone class.

Our rating forms have five numerical values (4 Excellent, 3 Good, 2 Satisfactory, 1 Poor and 0 Fail) that are assigned to four categories (a. Quality of work presented, b. Quality of overall display, c. Clarity of concepts presented in written statement, and d. Clarity of oral presentation); with space for narrative comments that delineate strengths and areas for improvement (0 = low and 4 = high) with 20 total points possible. An aggregate score of 12 points (with a minimum score of 2 or better in each category) is required to pass. The scores for each student are averaged and the narrative comments are compiled by the capstone professor and distributed to the student and his/her emphasis area mentor/advisor.

Results/Analysis:

We collected and analyzed the data from each of the three competency areas: a. Artwork Presented, b. Exhibition Statement, and c. Presentation/ Display. The aggregate results (using a 4-point scale) from the 28 students enrolled in the department's senior capstone course for the first time during Spring and Fall 2011 are shown below. As mentioned before, while program assessment is not based on pass/fail rates All participants successfully completed their capstone requirements with a passing mark. Faculty and external reviewers have also commented that student outcomes have improved qualitatively over the past few years. Over time, improved data collection, analysis and action should improve instruction and student performance.

- A. **Artwork Presented** = 3.03
- B. **Exhibition Statement** = 2.86
- C. **Display (Presentation)** = 3.18
- D. **Group Aggregate Score** = 3.03

Like we projected in the portfolio review, if we decided on 3.0 as the benchmark for the senior capstone component, then we might deduce the sub-par data in the exhibition statement category might require further analysis and intervention. However, we understand that we are in the midst of adjusting out assessment data collection and analysis and while these adjustments may yield useful insights, the data needs to be gathered and analyzed over several years before any meaningful conclusions can be drawn. Also despite these similarities, most of the faculty feels the capstone exhibitions have improved qualitatively and grade inflation has been mitigated because:

- Expectations are clearly delineated to, and embraced by, students
- Students are making regular contact with their emphasis area mentors
- Faculty are more closely linking their numerical and narrative assessments
- Consistency in the gallery director's position

Analysis/Planned Action:

In the same way the portfolio review serves as a portal for students into the programs emphasis areas and advanced study, the capstone experience serves as a gateway from school and into their profession. Beginning Spring 2012 we will expand our data collection and analysis. The department will quantify and consider the aggregate total scores by semester/year and:

- Compile/consider data according to how students scored in the aforementioned five rubric areas
- Integrate external reviewers into our assessment events. This will furnish students with an external read on their strengths and areas where they could improve and do much the same for us at the unit level
- Solicit input from student leaders (e.g., Art & Design Student Ambassadors and other recognized departmental student groups) to assist us with several curricular, assessment, and recruitment/retention initiatives
- Identify additional instruments/approaches to gauge program quality

IV: Overview of changes implemented in your program this past year based on results and planned action specified in last year's report.

Other than the two new courses, there were no significant changes introduced last year. We felt it was important to monitor the effect of introducing Art 298: Portfolio Review—BFA and Art 498: Senior Capstone Project—BFA because, while art and design majors and art education majors share many of the same basic foundations courses, they often

have different goals and expectations. Therefore, it will take a few years to determine what, if any, effect this separation of courses (299/298 and 499/498) has on student recruitment, retention, preparedness, and outcomes. In addition, we are still considering curricular adjustments to several foundations courses in response to previous assessment findings and emerging trends in art and design programming; coupled with significant and ongoing college and university driven discussions about curricular reform. Therefore, it seemed imprudent not to make any changes until we let the campus-wide process run its due course and we collect and analyze data on the aforementioned departmental changes we have in place or plan to introduce next year.

V: Specify any changes/modifications made to your program based specifically on data obtained during Assessment Day

This year, to help us gauge our effectiveness in areas we feel are important, with the help of the Office of Assessment, we distributed an electronic survey and our respondent pool grew. While the data we collected is inconclusive, it is not without meaning. The survey excerpts below from three categories (advising, curriculum, and faculty) reflect correspondingly to what many of us have been feeling, seeing, and hearing in recent years: that art and design students view their program in a favorable light.

Advising:

- 51 out of 57 (89%) art and design majors know who their art advisors are (21 Strongly Agreed, 30 Agreed, 4 responded Neutral, 2 Disagreed and 0 Strongly Disagreed). *This represents a slight uptick from last year when 84% of student respondents (43 out of 51) could name their advisor. While we are not where we want to be, the added effort we put into announcing, posting advising assignments and generally reminding students (hallway flyers, website, Facebook, Twitter, and in class verbally) who their advisors are, when advising takes place, what to expect and how to prepare, was paid off.*
- 42 out of 57 (74%) feel their advisors keep regular office hours so students can meet with them (20 Strongly Agreed, 22 Agreed, 13 responded Neutral and 1 Disagreed and 1 Strongly Disagreed). *This is an area where we can improve.*
- 44 out of 57 (86%) feel their advisors understand the curriculum and provide adequate advice (21 Strongly Agreed, 23 Agreed, 6 responded Neutral and 4 Disagreed and 3 Strongly Disagreed). *This shows a slight uptick from last year where the response range was 39 out of 52 (75%) but it remains an area where we can, and should, improve.*
- 49 out of 57 (86%) feel their advisors use electronic and paper resources adequately in the advising process. (25 Strongly Agreed, 24 Agreed, 4 responded Neutral and 3 Disagreed and 1 Strongly Disagreed). *On this point the response range 43 out of 52 (83%) is similar to last year. NO actions taken or expected.*

Curriculum:

- 44 out of 55 (80%) art and design majors felt courses are structured to encourage creativity (24 Strongly Agreed, 20 Agreed, 6 responded Neutral, 4 Disagreed and 1 Strongly Disagreed). *Last year the range was 42 out of 48 (87%). This is an area we need to look at, especially as we consider several significant curricular reform initiatives at unit and college level.*
- 46 out of 55 (84%) art and design majors felt courses are structured to encourage intellectual engagement and critical thinking (24 Strongly Agreed, 22 Agreed, 5 responded Neutral, 4 Disagreed and 0 Strongly Disagreed). *Last year the range was 43 out of 47 (91%).*
- 45 out of 55 (82%) art and design majors felt courses are structured to encourage reading, writing and talking about art (15 Strongly Agreed, 30 Agreed, 7 responded Neutral, 3 Disagreed and 0 Strongly Disagreed). *Last year the range was 39 out of 47 (83%). This is an area we need to get better (especially if the scores earned on the exhibition statement in the capstone course continue to be below our benchmark.*

Faculty:

- 53 out of 56 (95%) art and design majors feel the faculty attend gallery talks, opening receptions and related extra curricular events. (25 Strongly Agreed, 28 Agreed, 3 responded Neutral and 0 Disagreed and 0 Strongly Disagreed). *The data suggests this is a statistical wash with last year when the count was 47 out of 49 (96%) but whether this is accurate when taken at face-value is in question (because underclassman in our unit may only have a class or two with full-time faculty before the close of their sophomore year and many upper-classman only work with a handful of the full- faculty after they complete their portfolio review.*
- 51 out of 56 (91%) art and design majors feel the faculty demonstrate a genuine interest in the welfare of students. (23 Strongly Agreed, 28 Agreed, 4 responded Neutral and 1 Disagreed and 0 Strongly Disagreed). *These numbers approximate last year's 46 out of 49 (94%) and reflect a number of positive about the dedication of the faculty and the close interpersonal nature of our discipline.*
- 46 out of 56 (82%) art and design majors feel the faculty visibly contribute to the intellectual life of the university (19 Strongly Agreed, 27 Agreed, 7 responded Neutral and 3 Disagreed and 0 Strongly Disagreed). *Last year's numbers were markedly higher 45 out of 48 (92%). Regardless, if this is consistent in ensuing years it would warrant a closer look (to determine if we need to do a better job of advertising faculty accomplishments to students or if the faculty (or students) are less engaged on campus than their counterparts in other areas.*

- 46 out of 56 (82%) art and design majors feel the faculty treat students with respect (18 Strongly Agreed, 28 Agreed, 8 responded Neutral and 2 Disagreed and 0 Strongly Disagreed). *This category was not included in last years report but the data and category warrant a much closer look.*

Other pertinent curriculum survey questions not included in last year's report reveal:

- 44 out of 55 (80%) felt courses are structured to encourage making connections between art media (22 Strongly Agreed, 22 Agreed, 7 responded Neutral, 3 Disagreed and 1 Strongly Disagreed).
- 38 out of 55 (69%) said courses are structured to encourage making connections between art and art history (19 Strongly Agreed, 19 Agreed, 13 responded Neutral, 3 Disagreed and 0 Strongly Disagreed).
- 43 out of 55 (78%) believe courses built on material learned in previous courses without unnecessary repetition (21 Strongly Agreed, 22 Agreed, 10 responded Neutral, 2 Disagreed and 0 Strongly Disagreed).
- 48 out of 55 (87%) revealed every course students receive a syllabus and course policies that make expectations very clear (32 Strongly Agreed, 16 Agreed, 6 responded Neutral, 1 Disagreed and 0 Strongly Disagreed).
- 42 out of 55 (76%) feel grading is fair and objective based on the stated goals of the course (17 Strongly Agreed, 25 Agreed, 10 responded Neutral, 3 Disagreed and 0 Strongly Disagreed).
- 34 out of 55 (62%) agreed students receive frequent feedback on their progress in courses (16 Strongly Agreed, 18 Agreed, 11 responded Neutral, 9 Disagreed and 1 Strongly Disagreed).
- 35 out of 55 (64%) deemed courses are appropriate to the student's major concentration and career path (17 Strongly Agreed, 19 Agreed, 11 responded Neutral, 8 Disagreed and 0 Strongly Disagreed).

We plan to use the same survey and distribution method for several years to see if any trends emerge that we can act on. However, in order to determine if this will have an effect on performance or retention, the department needs to collect and analyze data for several years, in order to consider the data reliable and something we can act upon. While we can point to some improvements in student satisfaction and performance this year, we recognize that we need to do a better job of communicating our expectations to our students. On several occasions traditional methods of communication (email, hallway flyers, announcements in class, etc.) have not yielded sufficient results. This

does not mean we abandoned these methods. We updated our website to make it more current and accessible. We also took select students with us on visits to local high schools to help us field questions from prospective students. We hoped this would lead to future joint efforts that would improve communication and conditions and lead to better recruitment and retention practices and results. We also did a better job unit-wide of integrating rubrics into our syllabi and practices. The department also posted more attractive and visible reminders about art and design events in all hallways and classrooms and we broadcast them to all majors by email.

Next year we plan to fully integrate social media into our outreach efforts by working with students to design a department *FaceBook* page and to establish a department *Twitter* account (that links both social media tools). We also plan to integrate external reviewers into our foundations portfolio review (Art 299/298), our capstone experience (Art 499/498), our annual student juried exhibition, and in a revised adjudicated student writing competition.

VI: Assistance Needed with Assessment:

None

Submitted by _____ *Date:* _____
Byron D. Clercx, Chair, Department of Art and Design