Program Review
Follow-Up Report

Master of Arts in Art

College of Arts and Media

November 2014

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY

Program Review
Marshall University

Date: October 30, 2014

Program: Master of Arts in Art

Date of Last Review: Academic Year 2013-2014

Recommendation
Marshall University is obligated to recommend continuance or discontinuance of a program and to provide a brief rationale for the recommendation.

Recommendation
Code (#):

1. Continuation of the program at the current level of activity; or

2. Continuation of the program at a reduced level of activity or with corrective action: Corrective action will apply to programs that have deficiencies that the program itself can address and correct. Progress report due by November 1 next academic year; or

3. Continuation of the program with identification of the program for resource development: Resource development will apply to already viable programs that require additional resources from the Administration to help achieve their full potential. This designation is considered an investment in a viable program as opposed to addressing issues of a weak program. Progress report due by November 1 next academic year; or

4. Development of a cooperative program with another institution, or sharing of courses, facilities, faculty, and the like; or

5. Discontinuation of the program

Rationale for Recommendation: (Deans, please submit the rationale as a separate document. Beyond the College level, any office that disagrees with the previous recommendation must submit a separate rationale and append it to this document with appropriate signature.)

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Recommendation: Signature of person preparing the report: [Signature]
Date: 10/30/14

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Recommendation: Signature of Program Chair: [Signature]
Date: 11/3/14

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Recommendation: Signature of Academic Dean: [Signature]
Date: 

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Recommendation: Signature of Chair, Academic Planning Committee: (Baccalaureate pgms only) [Signature]
Date: 1/30/2015

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Recommendation: Signature of Chair, Faculty Senate/ Chair, Graduate Council: [Signature]
Date: 3/11/14

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Recommendation: Signature of the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs: [Signature]
Date: 4/3/15

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Recommendation: Signature of the President: [Signature]
Date: 

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Recommendation: Signature of Chair, Board of Governors: [Signature]
Date: 

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College/School Dean’s Recommendation

Deans, please indicate your recommendation and submit the rationale.

Recommendation:

Discontinuation of program

Rationale:
(If you recommend a program for resource development identify all areas for specific development)

I support the decision of the faculty in the School of Art and Design to discontinue the MA in Art program. There has been a full discussion and the decision is made with considerable thought and an eye toward the future. As noted by the faculty, there has been a steady (and lengthy) decline in enrollment in the program. The degree has had limited appeal for many years and has typically attracted only local applicants. As that pool has diminished so has enrollment.

The inability to attract applicants from outside the immediate region underscores the fact that the degree is not attractive to students. Marshall University has a strong visual arts program with excellent educators/artists offering compelling educational opportunities for students. The simple fact is the MA in Art is not typically a degree students who are going to move into art and arts related careers will pursue. The exception to that would be for students who are seeking opportunities in art history, but our program was not designed to support a graduate degree in art history. We simply don’t have the resources (at the program or university levels) to support serious graduate study in art history.

Moreover, limited resources impact the ability to recruit outside the region – graduate stipends are not competitive and the faculty have made the decision that what resources they have will be devoted to the undergraduate degree program. There is considerable wisdom in that decision – particularly with the opening of the Visual Arts Center.

The faculty indicate they have not abandoned future possibilities in graduate art education. However, their immediate focus is, appropriately, on undergraduate education and fully realizing the potential for program development and enrollment growth afforded by the Visual Arts Center.

I applaud the courage of the art and design faculty to discontinue this program, and I fully support their decision.

Signature of the Dean

Date

11.3.14
Friday, October 17, 2014

To the Board of Governors,

The faculty of the School of Art & Design voted on Friday, October 3, 2014 to terminate its Master of Arts in Art program of study. This includes both the Studio Art and Art Education emphases.

This is subsequent to the faculty vote in Fall 2013 to suspend admission to the program, which was granted for a one-year period. Various factors led to the decision to suspend admission, including a steady decline in enrollment. The decline is attributed in large part to the limited appeal, audience, and career relevance of a Master of Arts in Art. For instance, between 2008-2009, there were annually three or four students graduating from the program; in 2012-2013, there were only three students enrolled; and at the moment, the final two students are completing their course work. It became apparent during these past five years that the relevance and vigor of the program waned. Although assessment, evaluation, and policies were identified as weaknesses of the Master of Arts in Art by the faculty, due to its limited reach, purpose, and scope, the decision to redirect energy to other existing and future programs was made.

The diffuse nature of the Master of Arts in Art with a Studio Art emphasis might be seen as its strength, allowing a candidate to combine various areas of practice, and yet, the reality is that students want to see a return on tuition investment and the open character of the program struggled to attract those who valued and could afford this opportunity. Additionally, the Master of Arts in Art is not a terminal degree.

The Master of Arts in Art with an Art Education emphasis had little appeal to K-12 art educators who readily earn continuing credit at a lower price point than Marshall University tuition. Art educators are purposeful in selection of programs with substantial and/or direct relevance to their daily practice as educators. Even with recent modifications to focus on a final graduate project rather than a graduate thesis, the program appeal was nearly non-existent.

The decision of the faculty to terminate its Master of Arts in Art degree is also a decision to invest resources in undergraduate education. The Visual Arts Center reflects the attention given to the needs of the growing undergraduate programs, the progress toward the BA in Fine Arts degree, and the new Foundations curriculum. In its fourth semester, the faculty expresses readiness now to restructure the third and fourth year programs. The faculty of the School of Art & Design is not done with graduate education, however. We speak of other types of graduate degrees in which art & design coursework would be a part, just not the Master of Arts in Art. Programs that align with our resources and with opportunities for courses of study that bridge between multiple schools will distribute responsibility and instructional assignments in a way that we envision as sustainable. Further, the coursework offered in affiliate areas, such as Journalism and Mass Communication, creates the possibility for selection and
combination into a graduate program of study that is relevant and engaged through technology and media applications.

We respectfully submit this report and decision to terminate the Master of Arts in Art as follow up to last year's decision to suspend admission to this same program.

The Faculty of the School of Art & Design
College of Arts and Media
Marshall University