Graduate Program Review – Response Form
Texas Tech University

Program Reviewed: School of Art


Name of Reviewers:

**Internal: (Please include Name, Title and Department)**

Sharran Parkinson, Dept. Chair, Design; Brian Ott, Dept. Chair, Communication Studies; Janet Froeschle, Chair, Educational Psychology and Leadership

**External: (Please include Name, Title, Department, and Institution)**

William Condee, Ohio University; Rebecca Brienen, Oklahoma State University.

I. Academic Unit Description and Strategic Plan

Please evaluate the following departmental factors by clicking and selecting the appropriate rating descriptor:

*Vision, Mission and Goals:* Good

*Strategic Plan:* Good

Please comment on the positive components and suggested areas of improvement.

(1) Strategic plan is good, but lacks specificity: What are the strategies for achieving goals? And what are the benchmarks for assessing if those goals have been met? (2) There needs to be greater faculty ownership of strategic plan. The committee recommends greater communication between the Director and faculty around the strategic plan.

II. Program Curriculum

Please evaluate the following program curriculum factors for the masters and doctoral programs by clicking and selecting the appropriate rating descriptor:

*Alignment of the program with stated program and institutional goals and purposes:*

Masters degree: Good

Doctoral degree: Very Good

*Curriculum development coordination and delivery:*

Masters degree: Needs Improvement

Doctoral degree: Good
Program learning outcomes assessment:
Masters degree: Good
Doctoral degree: Very Good

Program curriculum compared to peer programs:
Masters degree: Needs Improvement
Doctoral degree: Excellent

Please comment on the positive components and suggested areas of improvement.

It is the judgment of the review committee that there is uneveness in the quality of the three Master of Arts degree programs. The strongest of the three programs is the MFA and the weakest is the MA in Art History (MA ARTH). The third program, the MA in Education (MAE), is struggling in large measure due to its recent relocation and a lack of well-developed facilities at the new location. The leveling in Art History classes for MFA students struck us as problematic by placing unnecessary barriers in the way of those students. A number of MFA students expressed a desire to be able to study during the summer and to have studio access during that time.

In our estimation, the School of Art would be well served by consolidating its efforts in its MA degree programs in the area of greatest strength, which in this case is clearly the MFA program. Given the dwindling enrollment of the MA-ARTH program, we invite the College and School to reevaluate the continuation of this program. Doing so might free up resources to help the MAE program address its concerns, a program that we believe has the potential for tremendous growth.

With respect to the PhD program, we would note that this program has shown a surge in growth since Dr. Kristi Humphreys has taken over as the coordinator. That Dr. Humphreys is leaving Texas Tech will be a real loss for the program. There were mixed messages from students about their ability to get into necessary classes, especially those that emphasized interdisciplinarity. Students greatly appreciated the unique interdisciplinary focus of the PhD program and it was a deciding factor in the decision to attend TTU.

III. Faculty Productivity
Please evaluate the following faculty productivity factors by clicking and selecting the appropriate rating descriptor:

Qualifications: Very Good
Publications/Creative Works: Good
Teaching Load: Good
External Grants: Good
Teaching Evaluations: Excellent
Professional Service: Good
Community Service: Good
Please comment on the positive components and suggested areas of improvement.

The faculty were, across the board, well qualified for the positions they occupied. The PhD faculty generally have active research programs, while the MFA professors are heavily involved in creative activities. The current teaching load in the School of Art is a 2-3 (we would note that a 2-2 would be ideal at a Carnegie Tier 1), though faculty praised the College for its ability to generate course releases in contexts (grants, sabbaticals, etc.) where it was appropriate.

The one place where we would note an inequality is with respect to the coordinator for each of the graduate degree programs. Each coordinator received one course release regardless of the size of the program or the amount of work involved. We would also note that the practice of having untenured faculty serve in the role of graduate coordinator struck us as unwise and we recommend avoiding this practice in the future. Given the unequal power relations between tenured and untenured faculty, untenured faculty are not really in a position to decline the invitation to serve in these roles or to implement and enforce the graduate policies that are necessary to effectively run the program. It should also be noted that two faculty members had not had their required annual reviews for progress toward tenure.

With respect to service in the community and profession, faculty appear to be involved in a wide range of activities. Faculty expressed concern that they are continually asked to do more with less and that their work loads are steadily increasing. Finally, we would note that faculty morale across the School seemed rather low (as did a sense of community across the School); there was clear in-fighting between several MFA faculty and Art History faculty. Some faculty expressed that they did not feel valued institutionally.

**IV. Students and Graduates**

Please evaluate the following student- and graduate-related factors by clicking and selecting the appropriate rating descriptor:

*Time to degree:*

  - Masters degree: Good
  - Doctoral degree: Very Good

*Retention:*

  - Masters degree: Excellent
  - Doctoral degree: Excellent

*Graduate Rates:*

  - Masters degree: Very Good
  - Doctoral degree: Very Good
Enrollment:

Masters degree: Good
Doctoral degree: Excellent

Demographics:

Masters degree: Needs Improvement
Doctoral degree: Needs Improvement

Number of Degrees Conferred Annually:

Masters degree: Good
Doctoral degree: Good

Support Services:

Masters degree: Good
Doctoral degree: Good

Job Placement:

Masters degree: Good
Doctoral degree: Good

Student/Faculty Ratio:

Masters degree: Good
Doctoral degree: Good

Please comment on the positive components and suggested areas of improvement.

The metrics in each of the above categories vary widely based upon the degree program under consideration. The PhD and MFA programs are both well enrolled, for instance, while the MA ARTH has historically had low enrollment (though a variety of complex factors have contributed to this). Enrollment in the MAE is down slightly, but this is almost certainly due to the program's recent relocation. Adding to the difficulty of accurately rating the degree programs in each of these areas is grossly conflicting data provided by institutional research and graduate coordinators (which seemed to be confirmed by students). Indeed, the graduate coordinators were shocked to hear some of the data reported by institutional research with respect to enrollment and time to degree. On the topic of diversity, we would note that none of the graduate programs is especially diverse, a issue that was both evident and a cause for concern among students.

Graduate students are receiving travel funding, which they very much appreciated. There has also recently been an increase in graduate student stipends. We applaud these efforts.
V. Facilities and Resources
Please evaluate the following facilities and resources factors by clicking and selecting the appropriate rating descriptor:

Facilities: Very Good

Facility Support Resources: Very Good

Financial Resources: Good

Staff Resources: Good

Please comment on the positive components and suggested areas of improvement.

The School of Art has diverse, high-end facilities. The 3D annex is an especially impressive facility. That having been said, because it was constructed on an existing building footprint, it lacks adequate studio space (especially for the PhD students) and affords no room for growth. We heard a number of concerns about the inadequate staffing of lab spaces, though student access was generally considered good. One of the real positives related to facilities was strong safety procedures and protocols.

VI. Overall Ranking
Please provide an overall rating of the masters and doctoral degree programs by clicking and selecting the appropriate rating descriptor:

Overall Rating:

Masters degree: Good

Doctoral degree: Very Good

Please provide summative conclusions based on the overall review.

Our overall assessment of the four graduate degree programs in the School of Art is highly mixed. While a number of the programs appear to be quite healthy and doing well (the MFA and PhD degrees), the MA ARTH is struggling in terms of enrollment and the MAE is struggling in terms of adequate facilities.

We consistently got the impression that there were some deep conflicts among various faculty members and that communication across degree programs was not especially open and productive. It is our impression that the departure of the PhD coordinator Dr. Kristy Humphreys is, at least, partially related to these problems.

Students very much appreciated the diverse opportunities for exhibiting their work and we recommend that this continue.

Please proved summative recommendations based on the overall review.

Students desired greater training, orientation, and advising (especially upon entry into the program), and we concur with this need. Students would also benefit from the reintroduction of a Research Methods class and a Pedagogy class.
We recommend that the College and School reevaluate the need for the MA in Art History and consider refocusing its efforts in a more concentrated way on its strengths (the MFA and PhD programs).

We also recommend that the School consider offering stipends to Graduate Coordinators in addition to the one course release. Additionally, we recommend that the College work to improve its mentoring of junior faculty, making certain that they receive their annual progress toward tenure reviews.

Finally, we recommend that the School actively seek out opportunities to foster community and effective communication across its various degree programs and emphases. There exists, we believe, a remarkable opportunity for synergy among these diverse areas if faculty are willing to put aside personality conflicts and territorial disputes.