Program Reviewed: Art

Onsite Review Dates: April 20-22

Name of Reviewers:

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

   **External**: (Please include Name, Title, Department, and Institution)
   
   William F. Condee, Professor, Interdisciplinary Arts, Ohio 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.

The goals are consistent with the university goals, but could be improved by making them more clear, specific and particular to the School of Art. The current vision, mission, goals and strategic plan for the School are not clear from the report submitted. In addition, there could be greater faculty involvement in the development and implementation of these goals. It is also not clear what the strategies are for achieving these goals and what the benchmarks are for measuring success.

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: Very Good
   
   Doctoral degree: Very Good

   *Curriculum development coordination and delivery*:
   
   Masters degree: Very Good
   
   Doctoral degree: Very Good
Program learning outcomes assessment:

Masters degree: Very Good
Doctoral degree: Very Good

Program curriculum compared to peer programs:

Masters degree: Very Good
Doctoral degree: Very Good

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

General comments:

The faculty's close work with their students is a great strength of this program. Students generally have a positive view of their programs. They appreciate the facilities, faculty, funding, flexibility, faculty mentoring. In addition, the mentoring and professional preparation of students is strong. The visiting artists program is also a strength, especially for promoting diversity. The size of the faculty has remained overall stable, which is beneficial for student learning and long-term planning.

The school has excellent community partnerships, which create opportunities for student and faculty exhibitions and the opportunity to develop donors.

Overall the School is doing a good job of preparing students for teaching, but the problem of declining undergraduate enrollment has created issues regarding the Foundations courses. The faculty should consider how to create a process that provides an opportunity for all students to teach both general and specialized art courses.

This reviewer does not understand the need for the "leveling" policy. It seems to provide for remedial education and to prolong the student's time to graduation. In this view, if a student is admitted to and deemed qualified for graduate education, he or she should progress through that education. A given student's program might be tailored to his or her strengths or weaknesses, but not at the cost of additional requirements.

There could be better coordination and communication among the programs.

It was difficult to provide accurate evaluation for many of these areas because of problems with the report that was submitted. For example, some data in the report was contradicted by other data elsewhere in the report and by oral reports by the faculty during the site visit. Many of the syllabi were old, which makes it difficult to determine if the programs are remaining current. In addition, explanations of some seemingly contradictory data and of apparent significant changes from year to year would have helped the reviewer understand the School better.

Specific programs:

MFA: Regarding the "rating descriptors" above, I rate the MFA studio programs as "excellent." The studio faculty is strongly committed to student learning, and the students
clearly appreciate that. The quality of instruction is excellent. The addition of transmedia is a good example of how the studio programs are staying current with contemporary trends in art. In addition, the MFA Student Coordinator position is an excellent way to foster communication and to improve the overall quality of the program. While the 2-D and 3-D facilities are excellent, the distance between them is not conducive to a sense of community. The faculty should consider ways to bring everyone, students and faculty, together.

PhD: The recent changes in the curriculum, such as creating core courses that students take as a cohort, are excellent improvements to foster a greater sense of interdisciplinarity and cohesion among the students. Oral reporting during the site visit also indicates that the program has been re-energized and revitalized. Students report that they feel well prepared for their careers. Coordination among the faculty seems somewhat improved. In addition, the program is now more open to interdisciplinarity across and outside the arts, with the opportunity for students to study such areas as psychology, sociology and film. The problem, however, is that students run up against institutional barriers that prevent them from actually enrolling in these courses. This problem forces faculty and students to create such workarounds as independent studies, which reduces the opportunities for peer learning in classes and is not an efficient use of faculty time.

There are important and specific curricular changes and areas for improvement that the faculty should consider:

- There is no language requirement, and this is usually considered standard for a doctoral program.
- While pedagogy is currently an option, the faculty should consider making this a required course, given the likely career path for most graduates.
- The “leveling policy” referred to above seems to be a particular impediment to a timely completion of the degree for some doctoral students.
- It is currently difficult for doctoral students to enroll in studio classes and to work in studio spaces. The faculty should consider limiting the number of doctoral students interested in the practice of studio arts until progress is made in this regard.
- There is a need to get more art faculty involved in the doctoral program and to encourage discipline-based faculty to better model collaboration and interdisciplinarity for their students.

The fact that the current PhD Coordinator is leaving TTU raises concerns about how these improvements will be sustained. In order to sustain the progress that was reported orally during the site visit, and to avoid the problems referred to in 2009 report, it is essential to fill the PhD Coordinator position, preferably with a tenured professor.

MA in Art History: The “Book as Art” concept seems to be a good use of existing resources. The faculty should consider the opportunity for greater coordination with the Museum Studies and Arts Administration programs. In addition, the quality of the program would be improved if the art history faculty would consider how they can promote greater involvement with and better integration with the other programs in the School of Art. Please see below for concerns about the MA Art History program. This program is rated as "needs improvement."

Master of Arts in Education: Overall, this program could be rated as “Very Good,” but there are concerns about the new facilities in on the Fredericksburg campus, as well as leadership
and coordination among faculty. In order to sustain the excellence of this program, TTU needs to invest significant funds for an art facility at this site. The benefits, however, could be considerable in terms of outreach and recruitment. Specifically, this program is a good opportunity for recruiting students to other art programs, since the MAE students are art teachers and know about Texas Tech. A strength of this program is its ability to serve a broad population in Texas. In addition, the use of hybrid and online learning is good. The online courses, however, should take advantage of on-campus resources for online course design. In addition, TTU should consider use of Quality Matters for accreditation of online classes, if it is not already doing so. An area of concern is that, because most students are non-residents during most of the time in the program, they may feel disconnected from the program and each other. The faculty should consider ways to create more of an online community. The School as a whole should also consider how to get more faculty involved in the program, especially online art history classes, since increased enrollment in this program could benefit the entire school. Addressing these issues will take strong leadership.

III. Faculty Productivity

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

- **Qualifications:** Excellent
- **Publications/Creative Works:** Very Good
- **Teaching Load:** Good
- **External Grants:** Good
- **Teaching Evaluations:**
- **Professional Service:** Very Good
- **Community Service:** Excellent

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

This is an especially difficult section in which to provide meaningful assessments because of problems in the report that was submitted. For example, there are no teaching evaluations and faculty CVs are unclear. In addition, external faculty awards were unclear from the written report, which includes figures for up to $790,300 for 2014. Similarly, the 2013 figure for “Departmental Research Expenditures” is $25,285,690. These numbers would be extremely impressive for an art department, but they do raise questions about what the figures represent.

From the site visit, it is clear that faculty are very concerned with issues of staff and workload. There is a problem of getting faculty to serve as area heads, in that they feel undercompensated with only one course release. The School and the College should consider other forms of compensation. In addition, it is very problematic to have untenured, assistant professors serving as area heads. The faculty also stressed a great need for more staff to relieve the burden that has increasingly fallen on the faculty. Some programs are very tech intensive (complex equipment) and time intensive (ordering supplies). The faculty convey a sense of trying to do too much, making such comments as “Something has to give," "We’re
bursting at the seams," and "We need to do less." The faculty, in separate programs and as whole, should consider how they can bring their commitments under greater control.

Mentoring and promotion and tenure evaluation should be re-evaluated, in that these processes do not seem to be supporting some of the untenured professors. In addition, the report indicates potential problems with faculty retention, which may be related to the problems referred to above.

The written report does raise concerns about the distribution and workload for thesis and dissertation chairs. For example, one faculty member chaired 48 masters theses and 10 doctoral dissertations.

On positive notes, there has been an increase in funding for faculty travel and increased funding from university for research. The practice of providing a course release for new faculty is also to be commended.

Finally, the School should consider ways to recruit and retain more diverse faculty.

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: Good

Retention:
- Masters degree: Good
- Doctoral degree: Good

Graduate Rates:
- Masters degree: Good
- Doctoral degree: Good

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

Demographics:
- Masters degree: Needs Improvement
- Doctoral degree: Needs Improvement


**Number of Degrees Conferred Annually:**
- Masters degree: Good
- Doctoral degree: Needs Improvement

**Support Services:**
- Masters degree: Excellent
- Doctoral degree: Good

**Job Placement:**
- Masters degree: Excellent
- Doctoral degree: Needs Improvement

**Student/Faculty Ratio:**
- Masters degree: Excellent
- Doctoral degree: Excellent

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

General comments: This section is also hard to evaluate because of divergent and contradictory data within the report and different information provided during the site visit. For example, the time to degree is unclear. The MFA is listed as 6-7 years, the MAE as 8-10 years (though a longer time to degree may be appropriate for a part-time, non-residential degree), the MA as 4 years, and the PhD as 10-12 years (though another place in the report lists 5.74). During the site visit, however, faculty reported that these figures are inaccurate.

Generally there seems to be a need for the school to determine the right size for each program. Overall graduate credit-hour production and enrollment have declined, but may be at a new and healthy equilibrium. Not all programs should increase enrollment, but there may be opportunities in some areas. A related problem is that the dip in undergraduate enrollment has affected graduate teaching opportunities. The School needs to determine a process for planning for enrollment, class sections, etc.

The planned increase in student stipends is excellent, and the leadership of the College is to be commended. As noted during the site visit, however in order to avoid this problem again in the future, it is vital to build in a process for continued growth. The School should also consider an increase in funding for student travel and research.

The School should also consider how they can encourage more applicants and recruit a more diverse student body, especially African American, out-of-state and international.

MFA: The MFA studio programs would be separately rated as Excellent in all areas, though the general areas of concern listed above do apply also for the MFA. Enrollment for MFA programs seems excellent and at capacity given need for studio space, but it is unclear whether that is across the board. Placement of graduates seems appropriate for the degree.

PhD: It is difficult to determine a clear picture of the PhD enrollment. The report lists no students since 2011-12 (and only two students in 2011-12), and no applicants or admitted students from 2012 onward. But the oral report during the site visit presents quite a different
situation now, with 5-7 new students each year since 2013 and 21 total in the Art track of the Fine Arts PhD. Similarly, placement of graduates listed in the report is problematic, with only one graduate teaching full-time at the university level. The oral report during the site visit, as well as student comments, indicate significant potential improvement in this regard. The PhD Coordinator reported that students are now being mentored, making connections in academia, attending conferences, etc. Two students currently writing dissertations have been placed into teaching positions for next year. In addition, students commented that they feel that they feel well prepared for job market.

These improvements are significant, but, as noted above, whether they can be sustained may be dependent on a new PhD Coordinator. While enrollment has increased substantially in recent years, the School should consider capping enrollment until the program can demonstrate sustained success in job placement. Given the scarcity of jobs for people with doctorates in the humanities, this issue is especially important. Also, as noted above, the School should consider limiting the admission of students interested in practicing studio art until problems of studio space and courses are resolved.

MA: This program has a problem of enrollment, in that only 1-3 graduates are listed in the Program Review and there are no incoming students. The pool is too small for a meaningful analysis of the placement of graduates, though is is notable that only one has been placed outside of TTU. The School should consider putting this program on hold until the Art History faculty can devise clear goals, an attractive curriculum, and viable recruitment strategy.

MAE: This program would be rated separately as Very Good, and may have a potential for growth, but admissions for studio students should be limited until space on the Fredericksburg is available. The placement for graduates seems appropriate for degree.

V. Facilities and Resources

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

Facilities: Excellent
Facility Support Resources: Very Good
Financial Resources: Good
Staff Resources: Needs Improvement

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

The facilities are excellent overall, especially for 3D art. In addition, facilities for transmedia and photography are notable. The faculty, school, college and university are to be commended for upgrading equipment and keeping facilities up to current standards. The faculty and staff also clearly place a high priority on safety, and they follow through on this commitment, which is commendable. The faculty is also to be commended for facilitating student access to equipment from the Architecture department.
The downside of the excellent facilities is that the 2D and 3D areas are separate and far apart, which makes it harder to create a sense of community, both for students and faculty. In addition, despite the increase in size, studio space remains at a premium. The School should consider whether it can continue to provide students with a separate studio space for a secondary area. The other significant issue regarding facilities is the need for a significant investment in the Fredericksburg campus.

The budget data is unclear in the report provided. There seems to be a roller coaster in budget allocation from year to year, with massive cuts and which are then partially restored. If the budget is fluctuating (and this may, admittedly, be a misreading of unclear data), that issue needs to be addressed at the College level in order to provide for meaningful long-term planning.

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: Very Good
- Doctoral degree: Good

Please provide summative conclusions based on the overall review.

MFA: The studio art programs are the strength of this department. The faculty is to be commended on their accomplishments and those of the students and graduates.

MAE: This program has had great successes and has great potential, but needs clearer leadership and investment in the Fredericksburg campus.

MA: The faculty and leadership should re-evaluate how this program can be viable for the future.

PhD: This program has made considerable strides in recent years, but the leadership should make steps to ensure those improvements are sustained into the future.

Please proved summative recommendations based on the overall review.

Collaboration and communication:
- The faculty should work together to establish strategies for achieving mutually agreed-upon goals.
- The leadership should consider ways to foster greater communication and collaboration among the faculty and between programs.

Requirements:
- The faculty should reconsider the “leveling” policy.
- The doctoral program should consider a language requirement.
Programs:
- The leadership should plan for how to consolidate gains in the doctoral program and to encourage greater involvement from across the faculty.
- The MA program should be reconsidered until the mission and outcomes are more clearly defined.
- The University, College and School should consider greater investment in faculty, leadership and facilities in the MAE program, in that it may have the greatest potential for growth.

Faculty:
- The School and College should consider ways to compensate area heads and to relieve the faculty of service burdens.
- The faculty should consider ways they can bring their workload under control by reconsidering such areas as requirements, course offerings and programs.
- Greater emphasis should be placed on faculty recruitment and retention, especially in mentoring and evaluating untenured professors and enhancing diversity.

Students:
- The leadership should consider how to encourage more applicants, especially from diverse populations.