

GRADUATE PROGRAM REVIEW
School of Art
College of Visual and Performing Arts
Texas Tech University

Review Committee:

- Zenaida Aguirre, College of Education, Assistant Director for the Center for Leadership in Education
- Coy Callison, College of Mass Communications, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, Review Committee Chair
- David Driskill, College of Architecture, Director of the Urban Design Research Studio

The Graduate Program Review for the School of Art was based on information contained in the Program Review Document prepared by the School of Art under the direction of Tina Fuentes, Interim Director of the School of Art, dated January 2010, and received by the committee on February 3, 2010. Interviews were held with College of Art graduate students (February 24, 2010), faculty (February 25, 2010), and administrators (February 25, 2010).

Program Overview and Vision

Mission

The School of Art list the following as its mission statement: *The School of Art provides a supportive, stimulating and challenging environment in which students, develop creative and scholarly potential, faculty members pursue excellence in teaching and research, the needs of public and professional constituencies are addressed and promotes intercultural understandings through art.*

The three graduate programs within the School of Art also each have their own mission statements that detail their goals as well as indicate how they contribute to the overall mission of the school.

The Master of Art Education program “...supports practicing teachers and other professionals from diverse disciplines with contemporary social theories and strategies that strengthen their classroom, studio practice and research in relation to art and visual culture.

The Master of Fine Arts in Studio Art’s “...primary purpose is for students to be prepared for a career in sustained professional creative production of original studio art.”

The Doctor of Philosophy in Fine Arts “...in Art, Critical Studies and Artistic Practice, examines diverse discourses in the visual arts, exploring their trans-disciplinary margins as well as their

disciplinary strengths. It considers the political, economic, and aesthetic matrices in which the arts are embedded. It provides knowledge, intellectual strategies, and critical skills that facilitate scholarly achievement at the highest level, innovative contributions to knowledge, and a variety of professional activities in the arts.”

Organization

Tina Fuentes serves as the Interim Director of the School of Art, which is one of the programs in the College of Visual and Performing Arts. The coordinators in the school are: Rick Dingus (Interim MFA coordinator), Dennis Fehr (Ph.D. coordinator), and Future Akins (MAE coordinator).

Faculty are generally hired to fill lines within the school’s departments. At the graduate level, these are: Art Education, Fine Arts, and Art History.

School’s Status in Comparison to Faculty Components of Strategic Plan

Overall Faculty Numbers. The current strategic plan lists no goals for faculty numbers. Currently, the school’s tenure- track faculty is composed of seven professors (average salary of \$78,890), 13 associate professors (average salary of \$68,844) and 11 assistant professors (average salary of \$54,252). The starting pay of the most recently hired assistant professor was \$47,000 in 2008.

Diversity. The school outlines its emphasis and the importance it sees in diversity in its strategic plan. A quick review suggests that roughly half of all faculty are female. It also appears that approximately 25% of all faculty are non-white/Caucasian.

Faculty Productivity

- Faculty Profile: Over the last 6 years, 40 faculty members have been on the graduate faculty. As of the publication of the current school review, 32 current faculty members are appointed to the School of Art Graduate Faculty. Of these 32, it would appear that 15 are female and 7 are in ethnic categories classified as minority. The faculty is also fairly balanced across rank, which should provide for a good mentoring system.
 - The SOA should be commended for its faculty diversity.
- Faculty Scholarship: The School of Art recognizes both refereed publications and creative activities in its evaluation of faculty productivity. The following metrics divide faculty-wide output by number of full-time faculty in the department on an annual basis.
 - Refereed Articles/Abstract
 - .63 output per faculty member in 2004

- .11 output per faculty member in 2005
 - .32 output per faculty member in 2006
 - .26 output per faculty member in 2007
 - .34 output per faculty member in 2008
- Presentations/Posters
 - 1.22 output per faculty member in 2004
 - 1.00 output per faculty member in 2005
 - 1.04 output per faculty member in 2006
 - 1.68 output per faculty member in 2007
 - 1.06 output per faculty member in 2008
 - Professional Exhibitions
 - 3.93 output per faculty member in 2004
 - 4.00 output per faculty member in 2005
 - 2.93 output per faculty member in 2006
 - 4.23 output per faculty member in 2007
 - 4.34 output per faculty member in 2008
- While the number of professional exhibitions seems adequate for a School of Art, the number of refereed articles/abstracts seems low for a School administering a Ph.D. program.
- In a meeting with the review committee, faculty members mentioned that research agendas and success may be held back by lack of travel funding. It was reported to the committee that faculty members were allocated \$300 per year in travel for conferences.
- Faculty also reported lack of grant funding opportunities and a lack of college grant finder/writer limited research productivity.
- Faculty Teaching Load: Faculty in the School of Art teach 5 courses per year.
 - In a meeting with the review committee, faculty members relayed that they felt that their research/creative works efforts suffered because of the 3/2 course load. Several faculty members said that a reduced teaching load would allow for more focus on grantsmanship.
- Total Faculty Workload: From 2003 through 2007, the average faculty workload (calculated for fall semesters) for the university was 15.16; for the College of Visual and Performing Arts 15.16; and for the School of Art 14.39.

- In a meeting with the review committee, the School of Art faculty seemed surprised that their workload was reported as slightly less than university and college averages. Faculty suggested that there may be some error in the way the school reports faculty workload.
- Faculty Service: The report submitted by the School of Art details responsibilities/leadership in professional societies and service on graduate committees. The school had from 3 to 5 faculty members serve as journal editors or editorial board members from 2003 to 2008. Likewise, the number of officers in national organizations ranged from 1 to 3 over the same time period, and participation of professional society committees ranged from 1 to 2 annually. Three faculty members were editorial review members annually.
 - Going only from the service listed in the report, it would seem that the school faculty members have a light service load.
- Of the 33 faculty members listed on the report's chart indicating involvement with graduate thesis/dissertation committees, 16 different faculty members have chaired at least one thesis, 8 have chaired or co-chaired a dissertation, 21 have served on thesis committees, 11 have served on dissertation committees, 7 have served on thesis committees outside of the department, and 6 have served on dissertation committees outside of the department. Distribution of involvement is centralized though with two faculty members chairing 47% of all theses. Likewise, two faculty members chaired 65% of dissertation committees. In particular, Akins-Tillet, Check, and Fehr seemed particularly involved in committee work.
 - The graduate committee workload is centralized with a few faculty members, a situation that is not uncommon. The school should work to more evenly distribute the load to not only relieve key faculty members to pursue their own research and grant opportunities but also to stimulate involvement by other faculty.
 - In a meeting with the review committee, faculty members suggested that the Ph.D. program in particular didn't have a shared vision across the faculty. Faculty members reported Ph.D. students may, at times, be slowed in their progress by factions represented on committees. This may be reflected in the uneven distribution of committee workload. Perhaps more universal involvement would result in a shared vision.

Quality and Quantity of Graduate Students and Graduates

- The number of total applicants has grown between 2003 and 2008. Examining individual programs, it appears that the Art Education program has grown the most in both the number of applicants and the number of admitted students.

- The average percentage of applicants admitted for the MFA and Ph.D programs during this time span was less than 50% indicating that either the quality of the applicant pool was poor or problems in the recruitment of students persist.
 - For the doctoral program, in 2005, 88% (7/8) of the applicants were admitted and 62% of the MFA applicants were admitted in 2007. Department leadership should consider examining what might have been done differently that resulted in the admission of a larger percentage of applicants during this time. If specific strategies or policies can be identified, consideration should be given to how these strategies can be carried out more consistently and/or expanded.
- In the MFA and Art Education programs, the applicant pool is greatest from Texas, except in 2006 when about half of the applicants were received from outside of Texas.
 - Again, if this increase in out-of-state applications can be tied to specific recruitment strategies, consideration should be given to continue these efforts.
- The Doctoral program should be commended for its international applicant pool. During this time period at least half of the applicants came from outside the US.
- Diversity in both the applicant pool and admitted students is also cause for concern.
- The number of graduates in the doctoral program between 2004 and 2008 was very low (4) and is cause for concern. Program leadership should consider how best to support students to increase graduation rates. This need is supported by the time to degree data; those who have completed the doctoral degree have done so in about 4 years (3.5) on average.
- There are apparent discrepancies in employment opportunities (RA, TA or GPTI) across the programs, the average percentage of MFA students employed in the program is about 91%, whereas for doctoral students it is about 70% and about 12% for Art Education. While the very low percentage of Art Education appointments is likely due to the employment as in-service teachers and are thus enrolled part-time in the master's program, the consideration should be given to how a larger percentage of doctoral students can be employed. This might help to solve the graduation rate of doctoral students.
 - While there was concern among the students and faculty alike regarding the compensation of students for employment positions, a recent investigation by one of the faculty members revealed that the compensation is comparable to other

similar institutions. What is not clear from the documents is how many TA and GPTI positions are appointed. The concerns that were voiced in meetings with the review team may stem from discrepancies in appointments across degree programs and if all appointments are for a set 20 hours per week. This concern is supported by the difference in the average total amount of financial support between MFA and doctoral students (\$10, 346 and \$8, 246 respectively).

- Graduates from the programs appear to be placed in a variety of positions consistent with their training. The publication activity for the doctoral students could be stronger.
 - In the meeting with graduate students, students expressed a desire for a professional seminar for doctoral students to increase their publication and creative activities.

Curriculum and Programs of Study

- The Doctor of Philosophy in the fine arts is entitled “Critical Studies and Artistic Practice.” This is a unique degree. Existing students and alumni are strong advocates for the degree and its current director, Dennis Fehr. The degree program deserves the support of the University and the School of Art. Issues internal to the School of Art appear to have a negative impact on the ability for students to complete the degree. The Ph.D. increases the scholarly output for the School of Art, but is not a vehicle for funded research. International universities require faculty to hold a Ph.D. as a condition for teaching. International students are thus increasing the demand for the degree.
- The Ph.D. program does not meet the needs for the students of the Master of Fine Arts program and studio artists and only one graduate with a Master of Art Education has entered the Ph.D. program.
- The Master of Fine Arts is studio based and is the soul of the graduate program. Productivity is measured in creative activity with limited opportunities for outside funding. The program and MFA faculties bring national recognition to the University.
- The Master of Art Education fulfills a large need in the State of Texas for K-12 art educators to continue their education. The program runs extensively during the summer at the Junction campus. The program improves the quality of art education and gives Texas Tech University a presence across the state.
- Aside from the need for a professional seminar for doctoral students, mentioned above, the curriculum and programs of study in the School of Art seem well designed and presented. The high number of international applicants supports the strength of the

doctoral curriculum. Students generally perceive faculty to be dedicated and supportive of their progress

Facilities and Resources

- The School of Art is in a transition phase in regard to facilities. Ceramics and Jewelry are located in the new, Art Annex, located a few blocks north of the main art facility. These facilities are spacious and represent a quality desired for the other art programs. Sculpture is scheduled to be relocated to the Art Annex, which is timely, due to the fact that relocation from the main facility opens up needed space for other programs.
- The most pressing facility needs are space to accommodate graduate students. Ph.D. students have no space of any type allocated for their use. MFA students have a few quality spaces and a number of shared, sub-basement locations without natural light for personal studios. These spaces are dark, drab and depressing. Spaces available when sculpture is relocated to the annex do not answer the issue of space for graduate students. Existing graduate students stated that they came to Texas Tech in spite of poor facilities for themselves, to the credit of outstanding faculty.
- Library resources are deemed adequate by virtue that no one considered them an issue. The transition from slides to digital images is a difficult and expensive endeavor that programs across the nation are facing.
- The School of Art has initiated a program requiring all students to have laptop computers. This is a very positive move, and will assure that the School has the latest technology with each new class of students. Funds spent on upgrading the computer labs, can be used to purchase high end equipment and software otherwise unaffordable to faculty and students.
- The Art Annex splits resources into two locations. Arrangements with the College of Architecture to share resources seem appropriate. Art and Architecture share a building now, and they both need wood shop, metal shop, model shop, laser cutters, 3D routers, IT support, printing resources and access to images, journals, and print media available through the University Libraries and collections held by the College of Architecture and School of Art. Support staff is adequate for the resources as they exist, but not adequate allow for growth or change.

GRADE ASSESSMENT

Program Overview and Vision:	Good
Faculty Productivity:	Satisfactory
Quality and Quantity of Graduate Students and Graduates:	Good
Curriculum and Programs of Study:	Good
Facilities and Resources:	Poor