

Program Review  
Department of Art  
Central Washington University  
July 29, 2012

I was invited by the Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Studies, Dr. Tracy Pellett, to conduct an external program review of the Department of Art at Central Washington University; my campus visit was April 19-20, 2012. I met with administrators and faculty, including Dr. Marilyn Levine, Provost, Dr. Marji Morgan, Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities, Dr. Pellett, Professor Gregg Schlanger, Chair of the Department of Art, and Professors Michael Chinn, Shari Stoddard, Glen Bach, Keith Lewis, Stephen Robison, Maya Chachava, and Paula Airth. I also met Anne Layton, Executive Aide for the Department of Art, and talked with over 40 students.

I am currently a Professor of Sculpture and Chair of the Department of Art and Design at East Tennessee State University. In 2008-9, I was responsible for managing the Self Study of the Department of Art and Design, and the Programs in Digital Media and Interior Design, and for accompanying site visits and reports, for reaccreditation by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD). ETSU has been successfully reaccredited by NASAD through 2018.

I would like to express my appreciation to Professor Schlanger and to Anne Layton for the organization of my visit, and to all of the administration and faculty with whom I met, for making my visit to CWU interesting and enjoyable. I appreciate the efforts of all: not only is the self study time consuming to prepare, but the faculty also took time away from classes and their own research to meet with me. The following report represents a considered opinion, developed from reading the Self Study provided, from perusing the CWU website and catalogs, and from meetings I had during short visit to CWU in April 2012, and will hopefully be helpful to the department as they move forward.

Central Washington University is a state supported university, located in picturesque Ellensburg, Washington. CWU has a lovely and inviting campus, graced with both historic academic buildings and more contemporary structures. The campus has the warm ambience which reflects the supportive relationship between the university and the city of Ellensburg. The Department of Art, housed within the College of Arts and Humanities, has held a long standing place in creating and sustaining this positive interface through extending creative activities into the community, and also by inviting the community onto campus. The Sarah Spurgeon Gallery in Randall Hall is the obvious locus for nurturing and strengthening this relationship.

The department's last Program Review was during the 2005-06 academic year; that review was by turns both complimentary and concerned, raising questions primarily about staffing and curriculum (These issues fall under a category NASAD names *Size and Scope*). Since that time, the department has experienced significant personnel turnover, and welcomed a new chair in Fall 2011. At the time of my visit, late April 2012, the department had 8 tenure track faculty, 7 lecturers, 1 full time staff member, and 2 part time staff members.

The Self Study was submitted after Professor Schlanger had been chair for less than a year; it appears that preparation for the document had not been systematically addressed in the years prior to his hire, most likely due to the lack of a permanent chair for the previous several years. This lack of preparation is understandable, as it really is not the faculty's job to juggle this kind of paperwork. I have tried to glean assessment points from the document, although much real data seems to be incomplete.

For purposes of clarity, I am responding to each section of the self study in the same order it is organized. for purposes of comparison to benchmark standards, I have referred to the NASAD Handbook, 2009-10. I understand that CWU may not be interested in NASAD accreditation, but the handbook provides a good set of benchmarks for visual arts education.

**Department/Program(s):**

Department/unit mission statement

*The mission of the Department of Art is the practice and the teaching of art. The Department of Art's mission embraces the College of Arts and Humanities' emphasis on the enrichment of our students' educational experiences.*

*Through our programs we seek to identify the rich creative, emotional and intellectual potential of students as they awaken to the lifelong value placed on critical and analytical skills. It is the Department's belief that an education in the visual arts builds the expertise necessary for students seeking to assume their respective roles as practitioners, educators, and informed patrons of the visual arts.*

The mission statement is both inclusive and broad, referencing the College of Arts and Humanities, emphasizing the importance of art in a variety of facets of educational experience and professional life. The department has historically held a prominent role in the cultural life of both the university and the larger community. It is distinguished through the teaching and well respected creative and academic research of the faculty, and Department of Art alumni have successfully entered a variety of professional visual arts

fields, including teaching, studio art, graphic design, museum and curatorial work, and many other areas.

Randall Hall, home to the Department of Art, is a large and architecturally significant facility for the instruction, learning, and exhibition of art. The department is fortunate to have adequate art studio space; this issue is a problem nationwide, and it was gratifying to experience a large, well appointed art building, one that was actually constructed for the purpose of teaching studio art. The Sarah Spurgeon Gallery serves not only the educational mission of the department; it also provides outreach to and interaction with the larger community, additionally fulfilling the mission of the College and University.

### **Departmental governance**

My impression of departmental governance, from the chart provided in the Self Study and from witnessing the interaction between the chair, faculty, and staff, in several settings, is that functional departmental governance is in place. The chair and faculty appear to be motivated to operate in a fair, respectful, and transparent manner. Communication at the meetings I attended was collegial and forthcoming; the department as a whole seems committed to working towards common goals for the health of the program and for the good of the students.

Committee obligations (service expected of faculty members) as listed in the chart are appropriate; it speaks well of the functionality of a program when faculty are actively involved in decisions affecting *personnel, scholarship, curriculum, assessment, faculty searches, budgets, retention and recruitment, and gallery related events*. Each of the faculty members I spoke with seemed interested in working with one another to develop the best program possible.

Several faculty members (and students) mentioned to me that the arrival of Gregg Schlanger as chair has made a big difference in the dynamic of the program. A collective sense of relief was expressed by everyone I spoke with, including students. Professor Schlanger is encouraging dialogue and engagement, and is setting the tone for collegiality.

One concern raised by the organizational chart for governance is that it illustrates a number of faculty vacancies. The vacancy in Art History was apparently filled (I believe the candidate accepted the position on a deferred basis), but the vacancies listed in studio art (Photography, Sculpture, and Drawing) are of concern. Each of these areas is key to a well rounded art program; it is difficult to understand how art students can be getting the studio experience they need without stable, full time faculty in these areas. This concern extends not only to BFA Studio and Graphic Design majors, but also to students pursuing the BA Studio or the BA in Visual Art Teaching, as well as to students in the MA and MFA programs. Students who go on to teach art in the public schools need professional guidance themselves in such basic studio areas as Drawing, Photography, and Sculpture in order to

be effective art teachers. Graduate students must have consistent mentoring by professionals in the areas in which they are concentrating their research.

I checked the Fall 2012 class schedule and see that some new instructors are teaching Computer Art, Graphic Design, and Photography. It appears that Graphic Design has lost a faculty member since my visit. At any rate, the department appears to be understaffed by tenure track professors in crucial areas of studio art, perhaps by as many as 4 positions.

### **Department/Program(s)**

The goals and criteria of achievement of the Department of Art listed in the Self Study have not been assessed (according to page 8 of the Self Study), apparently due to the fact that these were developed just one year prior to the Self Study. Although I have no actual data to address, from the materials I have looked at (University and Departmental website, BFA and BA check sheets, etc.) the Departments appear to fulfill most college and University strategic goals.

From encouraging interdisciplinary learning to stressing the development of both intellectual and practical skills, to building partnerships with the public sector, to maintaining a comprehensive visual arts curriculum, to supporting *“sufficient study of the diverse viewpoints and traditions of creating and interpreting visual art”*, to hiring qualified instructors, the department appears to be on track to attempting to fulfill most College and University strategic goals.

Student access to **technology**, namely, to computer labs, printers, and up to date software appears to need attention in order for the department to fulfill College and University strategic goal #3: *To facilitate liberal learning and academic excellence through instruction that is sensitive to the needs of a diverse student body and is attentive to the technological and economic realities of an increasingly visual culture.*

Without consistent access to appropriate and current technology, students majoring in any of the areas of visual art will not be competitive with their peers at other schools. One of the biggest complaints I heard from students was that there was marginal (and unpredictable) access to the one lab in the art building, and that students who are not enrolled in Graphic Design or Photography classes have almost no access. Open hours had been cut at the lab, and often the only lab assistant available was apparently a student worker who was floating between multiple labs and was difficult to find. Digital technology is increasingly being utilized as an essential “tool” in the tool box of artists in all realms of the visual arts, including such “traditional” areas as sculpture, ceramics, painting, and metals. The issue of technology access for all art students is one that must be quickly addressed for CWU art students to remain competitive professionally.

The Self Study was submitted after a period of significant turnover in the department; various data requested in the Self Study template apparently had not been gathered in the years since the last review. Assessment of the data toward meeting University, College, and Departmental goals and associated criteria of achievement (standard of mastery), and activities that enabled goal attainment should be achieved prior to the next review. The Department should provide results in specific quantitative/qualitative terms, compare to these to standards (such as NASAD standards), and interpret the results. Changes as related to the assessment process should be described, and documentation of these programs should be provided, and reference state and regional assessment standards.

### **Department/Program(s) Goals and Criteria for Assessment Tables (page 9- 21)**

These charts are standard, with traditional expectations. The standard for the Criterion of Achievement for all degrees is listed as “100% pass the course, otherwise cannot move forward”. This criterion is confusing (and unrealistic) and does not seem to provide the numerical results that would enable the department to make comparisons from year to year. It is unclear what “cannot move forward” means, although this is listed in all of the assessment tables as a criterion for success.

### **Degree programs and curricula/ Currency of the programs**

The degree descriptions are appropriate for each degree (BA Art or Visual Arts Teaching; BFA Art or Graphic Design).

#### Bachelor of Arts – Art- 75 credit hours of Art-

Appears to meet the standard for art credit hours required by NASAD (73).

#### Bachelor of Arts – Visual Art Teaching- 64 credit hours of Art-

Appears to meet the standard for art credit hours required by NASAD (61).

#### Bachelor of Fine Arts – Graphic Design Specialization- 107 credit hours of Art-

Does not appear to meet the standard for art credit hours required by NASAD (117).  
The degree appears to be 10 hours short, according to NASAD.

#### Bachelor of Fine Arts – Studio Art Specialization- 105 credit hours of Art-

Does not appear to meet the standard for art credit hours required by NASAD (117).  
The degree appears to be 12 hours short, according to NASAD.

#### Master of Arts in Art – 45 credit hours of Art-

Appears to meet the standard for art credit hours required by NASAD.

#### Master of Fine Arts in Art -90 credit hours of Art-

Appears to meet the standard for art credit hours required by NASAD.

### Minor in Art Studio

The minor in Art Studio is a 24 credit minor including 20 credits in studio art and 4 credits in art history. This minor augments or enhances the students major as well as addresses the larger liberal arts university goals. May be short 3 credit hours; NASAD suggests 15% of total credit hours in the minor.

### Minor in Art History

The minor in Art History is a 24 credit minor with all 24 credits in art history courses. This minor augments or enhances the students major as well as addresses the larger liberal arts university goals. May be short 3 credit hours; NASAD suggests 15% of total credit hours in the minor.

### **Credit hours**

According to the NASAD handbook (2009-10, p. 63), studio classes led by an instructor should meet for a minimum of 1.5 hours per week for each credit granted or, more typically, for 2 hours per credit hour per week. It is unclear that students in studio art courses at CWU are meeting in class for the recommended amount of time for the number of credits awarded. Studio classes currently receive 5 credits each. In looking at the class schedule, studio classes meet for 5 hours each week, meeting 1 hour per each credit granted. Several course descriptions in the online catalog say the classes meet 6 hours per week, while the schedule says 5. It is unclear how art students at CWU are receiving the appropriate amount of instructional time for the credits they are receiving.

According to the departmental check sheet for the BFA Studio, students are to take only 25 credit hours in specific media areas. It is unclear how students can declare a concentration or area of emphasis with only 5 classes in an area, particularly in a quarter system. This suggests that students may fulfill the requirements of a concentration by taking just one class each of 5 quarters. The development of mastery in a studio area occurs over an extended period of time; it is doubtful that students are able to do this with a relatively small amount of instruction in the area.

### **Core Classes (Foundations)**

When compared to the number of Foundations classes required by most accredited art programs, it appears that the current undergraduate curriculum is lacking at least one class in the Art Core. Many programs require at least 4 Foundations studio classes in the freshman year (not counting Art History), and these classes generally meet 6 hours per week each. The department might consider adding a basic "Art and Technology" class in the core. If the Core class credits were reduced to 3 credits each, at least 6 credits would be freed up for a class that taught all art students the basics of current art technologies (e.g. Photoshop, etc.). This kind of class is ubiquitous in art programs across the country, and the students I spoke with expressed interest (unsolicited) in a class like this. The other 3

credits could count towards an additional Art History course. Art majors at CWU take only one year and one quarter's worth of AH; art majors at most accredited schools must take at least 2 years of Art History, at least one of these being Writing Intensive.

The number of Art History credits required for the BA and BFA degrees appear to be less than suggested as optimal by NASAD. Most accredited programs require that Art/ Design History courses fulfill 10% of the total credits, which would be 18 credits at CWU. It seems that requiring just one upper level Art History course for a professional degree like the BFA is not holding the students to the same expectations as most BFA programs.

Many students I met with expressed a desire for a "professional practices" class, prior to the 1 credit capstone class required for all majors, ART 495, Studio Project. Students discussed needing a class earlier in the program that would address issues like portfolio preparation, writing artists' statements, grant writing, and how to apply for graduate school. They were also concerned that ART 495 is offered only in the spring quarter, which sometimes meant students were paying tuition for an extra semester.

### **Graduate program**

The Graduate degrees appear to be appropriately structured with regard to curriculum.

It appears, however, that there may not be the faculty in place to actually advise and mentor students in the concentration of Photography. One issue regarding staffing is that of the full time faculty needing to drop undergraduate courses due to teaching graduate students. In looking at the class schedules for the last 4 quarters, I am struck by the low number of upper level undergraduate studio courses offered. Although it is commendable that the university is supporting graduate only sections, if these sections are extremely small and require that a professor not teach an undergraduate section, this starts to raise questions about resources. Can the program afford to do this? This is an important question for the department to consider.

### **Eight distinct sub-disciplines**

I met with the Professors of Ceramics, Graphic Design, Jewelry and Metalsmithing, Painting and Drawing, Visual Art Teaching, and Wood Design. Although the chair is a sculptor, it will be a challenge for a professor to act both as full time chair, and as head of a complex studio area.

The Self Study includes comprehensive descriptions of each of the areas, including Visual Art Teaching; each description includes information about the program, the facilities, and student outcomes. It is unclear to me how students can reasonably focus in Photography, Sculpture, and Wood Design (the area head has an administrative appointment), without full time faculty teaching in these areas.

## **Effectiveness of instruction**

The information provided on pages 31-32 of the Self Study regarding the SEOI data from 2006-11 is difficult to assess out of context. Of more relevance to determining instructional effectiveness are the tools for assessment listed on page 34. The information provided by Peer Teaching Reviews, Peer Tenure Reviews, success of student juried exhibitions and student success post graduation, would give more direction and support for curricular changes. The list is comprehensive and should provide substantial information for assessment. There was little information provided, beyond the list.

The *effectiveness of instructional methods using both innovative and traditional methods* list provides a broad variety of teaching methods, which will engage students in many ways, including lectures, student attendance at conferences, interdisciplinary and collaborative experiences, traditional critiques, study abroad, working with children's art classes, and Graphic Design internships, among others. This is an inspiring range of learning opportunities for students.

Some students I spoke with expressed frustration that some faculty members did not seem to be on campus outside of designated class times (which already seem to be shorter than most studio classes at other schools), others felt that there should be more guidance and less lecturing in some studio classes. These issues should be discussed by the faculty: creating an environment of mentoring in the classroom may be helpful for retention in the program.

Distance education: The department has offered 6 undergraduate courses online; it is typical of art departments that online instruction is more likely to be in Art History and digital Photography.

## **Assessment of programs and student learning**

Undergraduate students take **exit surveys** specific to the three disciplines: Studio, Graphic Design and Visual Art Teaching. These surveys provide an important tool for the program to utilize in developing future curriculum, staffing, and facilities decisions. The results of the 2010-11 surveys provide a range of attitudes about the educational experiences students had in the program. It is clear that many students feel their educational experience was very good, and offer high praise for the program, although there are some complaints, many of which seem valid. Comments that I agree with are: The need for better technology access; the need for a mid- program portfolio review (at least for the BFA); the need for a basic computer skills for the artist class (not necessarily a Graphic Design class); and the need for a final exhibition for the BFA. The responses from BFA Graphic Design students are comprehensive and reveal that these students have experienced a systematic program that has clear outcomes.



All Bachelor of Fine Arts or Bachelor of Arts majors must take **ART 495**, the department's capstone course.

- *Students will produce a packet that includes a resume, artist statement and professional documentation of their work (for studio art BFA and BA students)*
- *Students will demonstrate knowledge of applying for a job (for BA Visual Art Teaching students)*
- *Students will be able to assemble a professional portfolio to show prospective employers (for BFA Graphic Design students)*

ART 495 is a primary tool for assessment of student success; this capstone course gives the department a means of comparing the knowledge and skill base of all students. All students in ART 495 are graded either satisfactory/unsatisfactory. A grade of satisfactory indicates the student has successfully completed the course objectives. This is an effective and revealing tool for assessing the strengths (and weaknesses) of the program.

The Art Department may consider the establishment of 2 additional means of assessing not only student success, but also instructional effectiveness:

- The establishment of a **portfolio review** at the completion of the Art Core for prospective BFA students, to insure that students who are aspiring to this professional degree have the skills and knowledge that should be expected (or required) for students in this track. A portfolio review requirement will ensure that BFA students have completed the Art Core prior to taking upper level courses, and will give the faculty clear evidence about curricular strengths or weaknesses at the Foundations level, which will help the department with curriculum development and staffing decisions. Another benefit of the review is that it serves to help define a "cohort" of students: students who are progressing through the program at the same time, with the same courses. The creation of cohorts may help with student retention; we have found this to be the case in the Department of Art and Design at ETSU.
- The establishment of an **exhibition requirement** for BFA students. From the NASAD handbook, page 84: *Students must demonstrate their competence by developing a body of work for evaluation in the major area of study. A senior project or final presentation in the major area is required.* The BFA (and perhaps BA) exhibition would provide the department with the most obvious tool for assessment: each year, the department would have the ability to gauge student outcomes in the most visible and objective way. This does not have to mean onerous work for the faculty; the exhibition could be tied to ART 495 and evaluation

of the exhibition could be shared between the professor teaching 495 and the student's advisor.

Several students I spoke with were disappointed that they were not going to be able to show off the culmination of their efforts in a formal exhibition at the school. Senior exhibitions are important not only for the opportunity to develop professional skills, but they also serve as terrific public relations vehicles. What better way to show off the art program to parents, relatives, and potential students, than to have high quality exhibitions of graduating students? The shows could be either solo shows or group shows, depending on the work. The BFA exhibition also gives students a good opportunity for documentation of their work, which will be of great help when they apply to graduate school. Finally, the exhibition provides students with an important line on their resume's, which will be helpful when they try to promote their work, apply for grants, enter competitions, etc.

### **Faculty**

Faculty members are professionally active, both on and off campus. The art faculty, as verified in the c.v.s provided, has a solid record of successful exhibitions, grants, workshops, service, membership and leadership in professional associations, service as consultants and as judges of creative events and the reviewing of professional publications and textbooks..

Faculty c.v.s reveal involvement in numerous national and regional arts organizations and a commitment to professional development.

Members of the Art Faculty are accomplished and actively engaged in creative and academic research. They have had art work in regional, national, and international exhibitions over the last 6 years (since the last self study), and have also served as curators, jurors, presenters at national and international conferences. It was clear to me in just the short amount of time I was in Ellensburg that the faculty cherishes the community, and is cherished in return. Their level of commitment to their own research, as well as to the program, is commendable.

### **Students**

The following accomplishments speak well of the Department of Art at CWU:

Several Graphic Design students have won prestigious ADDY awards, commissions for advertising jobs, etc. each year for the last several years. It was helpful to see complete information for these accomplishments, including the dates awarded.

Recent undergraduates were accepted for graduate school at prestigious programs like Carnegie Mellon University and American University.

Many CWU graduates have gone on to teaching careers at a wide range of respected institutions including Western Washington University, Montana State University, the University of Puget Sound, Portland State University, just to name a few.

In future reviews it would be helpful to see actual dates for the student accomplishments to get a sense of how the department is progressing.

## **Advising**

It is commendable that all TT faculty members in the Department of Art serve as academic advisors to majors and minors, and that all curriculum forms are available on the site. Of concern to me is the frequency with which I heard the word “float” in reference to incoming freshmen, as in “*the university wants students to float the first year, and not declare a major*”. This is most likely coincidental, but I did hear this from 3 different people, 2 of whom were administrators. Even if this is not in fact true, some folks seem to have that perception. It may be helpful for university advising staff to meet with departmental faculty to clarify advising issues.

Art students should be advised from their very first semester in school by Art Department faculty. It is possible that one reason art students are somewhat confused about the progression of Art Core classes is that they may not be advised to take these classes at the appropriate time. As everyone in academia knows, now more than ever, retention of students is paramount. And we all know that effective and supportive advisement ***in the program*** is one of the most effective things we can do for retention. The art curricula at all schools is incredibly time intensive, and if students do not get into the appropriate classes early, they may end up having to spend another year in school. Frustration at the amount of time needed for matriculation may be one thing that is impacting retention.

If the faculty does not already do this, they may want to set up special departmental advisement days each quarter. Each student, each quarter, should go through the program of study with an advisor who is familiar with the student’s academic record and goals. If advisement is not **required** each quarter, it should be, as required advisement has been shown to improve retention as well.

There appears to be no consistent or progressive “track” that all Art majors follow with regard to first completing Foundations level courses prior to entering into the Introductory, Intermediate, and upper level studio courses. The exception is the BFA, Graphic Design, which has a clearly articulated track (with prerequisites) for all majors to follow. From what I could gather, from talking with faculty and students, and from looking at course descriptions in the most recent catalog, many art courses do not have prerequisites, and students often take courses out of order, sometimes needing to complete freshmen level courses in the senior year. With consistent advisement, this should not be

happening. My sense is that turnover in the faculty has contributed to much of the uncertainty about advisement that students expressed to me.

If only for purposes of planning, and for developing clear figures about the need for staffing of various courses from semester to semester, the department might find it helpful to create a clear track for progression through the programs. As stated in the NASAD Handbook, p. 84: *"Studio work normally begins at the freshman level and extends with progressively greater intensity throughout the degree program."* A redesign of the BA and BFA Studio check sheets may be in order, perhaps mapping out the freshman and sophomore years, so that all incoming art students take the Foundations classes within the first year or so. The Graphic Design check sheet already provides a clear progression of courses.

### **Student clubs and extracurricular opportunities**

There are five clubs within the Department of Art; these offer students a chance to develop professional and social skills, and to provide service and volunteer work to the department, the university, and the community. The clubs appear to be generally active, and offer students important professional opportunities like conference attendance, managing the student honors show in Spurgeon Gallery, and interaction with local entrepreneurs and businesses. Some discussion I heard suggested that some faculty and students were looking into ways to develop an off campus gallery in downtown Ellensburg; this could be an exciting and proactive venture, and would increase visibility of the program, as well as providing students with essential hands on experience.

### **Facilities**

Randall Hall is a large and, for the most part, quite functional art building. As mentioned in the Self Study, the request for capital funding to replace the HVAC system is crucial. This was discussed in the program review 6 years ago as a priority; the safety of students and staff may be at risk during the very hot summer months.

The wireless network should be fixed so that students and faculty can do their work effectively; this is an issue faced by institutions everywhere, but one that must be addressed for art programs to remain competitive. This will be additionally important should the university support a mobile Mac Book Learning Lab.

Seating and worn out furniture from throughout the building should be replaced.

Sarah Spurgeon Gallery needs some help. The lighting was assessed in 2004 as being outdated. This should be addressed. Climate control is essential for the exhibition of art work, which often has fragile surfaces or structures which may be reactive to humidity or to fluctuations in temperature. Updates to the walls for the purposes of safe installation of

art work need to be addressed. Signage needs to be consistent and visible. The gallery is the “public face” of not only the Department of Art, it is a public space, welcoming the community at large to witness the creative endeavors of a broad range of artists, as well as hosting a variety of college and university events. Supporting this facility as not just an aspect of the Department of Art, but as a point of welcome to the cultural life of the university, is essential.

## **Equipment**

Most areas of the department appear to be well appointed with equipment, which is commendable. One area which was negatively affected by the ventilation renovation in 2004 is the sculpture foundry. It is surprising that such a wonderful facility, previously functional, has not been revamped and made functional again. As the Self Study mentions, this region of the country is world renowned for art foundry work. It is a shame that students cannot pursue this line of creative research when the potential for gainful employment is nearby in Walla Walla.

The university should also make it a priority to replace outdated studio equipment with safer alternatives if these exist. Equipment that would fall in this category would be a new pug mill for ceramics. New technologies like electroforming in Jewelry/Metalsmithing and Sculpture would expand the creative possibilities for faculty and students.

## **Technology**

Of all of the issues facing the Department of Art, that of technology (funding, access, creative applications, and curricular implications) may be the most pressing.

This is not unusual, as it is an issue faced by programs across the country, however it appears that the department is unusually hampered by numerous factors. At this point in time, the department should have several “smart classrooms” in the studio areas: media carts and digital projectors in the studios (and lecture and seminar rooms) so that faculty can effectively teach. As mentioned earlier, predictable access to Wi-Fi is essential. The university’s technology office should address these shortcomings.

Art faculty must have access to current software and operating systems; digital technology is ubiquitous in the visual arts, and not only do instructors need this for their own academic and creative work, they need to know how to use technology **so they can teach their students**. Students entering the workforce today MUST be proficient with the newest software and programs. The acquisition of CAD software, Rhino, and a laser cutter would enable students and faculty to expand their work into new areas of expression.

As mentioned earlier in my report, the funding of another computer lab must be a priority, not only for current students’ access, but for the development of a relevant curriculum.

## **Library**

I did not visit the library, and I will just quote the Self Study here: *The Library and Learning Resources available at CWU far exceed the guidelines set by NASAD, (National Association of Schools of Art and Design, the national accreditation agency). (Library resources, see Appendix H for specific data on holdings and digital resources for Art in the Brooks Library at CWU.)*

It is commendable that the university provides ARTStor to the Department of Art. This is a wonderful (and vast) resource. *The Brooks Library also offers faculty access to CAMIO, Catalog of Art Museum Images Online. CAMIO is an online resource with access to images of artworks contributed by leading museums from around the world.*

## **Funding**

Funding as an area of comment, including annual budgets, materials' fees, etc., was not included in the Self Study. It is impossible to ascertain whether the program is being funded at an appropriate level without this information. It is difficult for me, as an external reviewer, to offer suggestions (or opinions) about how well (or poorly) the program is funded. It is unclear to me how materials' fees are managed, and how much funding the program receives each year from the institution for departmental support, gallery support, staffing support, faculty travel, equipment, etc. It is also unclear if faculty members have the opportunity to receive additional institutional funding for instructional development, or for research, although there is a line on the chart for faculty evaluation that mentions internal grants.

## **Analysis of the Review Period**

The departmental accomplishments of the past five years, achieved with internal resources, reveal much activity and many changes. It appears that the department has made some very strong hires, and has emerged from a time of disharmony. The challenges (unfilled positions, potential retirements leading to more unfilled positions, and the decline in majors) point to the need for creative thinking about where the department wants to go. The faculty vacancies might be filled to reflect new curricular directions.

During the course of this self study, the department has had to look at the opportunities for reform that were missed over the previous several years. Some data that would have been instructive for me peruse in order to gauge the relative state of the program had not been gathered for several years. Due to high turnover among the faculty, it is easy to see how advisement and curriculum issues had not been addressed.

Having said this, however, it was gratifying to visit a program which seems to be in a renaissance of sorts: it was obvious to me that the faculty members were respectful of one

another and in fact genuinely liked each other. Students definitely pick up on the dynamics in a program, and they appreciate not having to tiptoe through mine fields of faculty unpleasantness. Students were quite vocal with me about how happy they were about the changes. They seemed optimistic and eager to see how the program might change. The faculty seemed engaged and eager to work on improving their program. It is good to know that the department is addressing weaknesses in advising; the students will appreciate this.

As stated in the Self Study, the department has had numerous challenges since the last review. An area in which the College and University might assist is in the development of new scholarships and/or tuition waivers as a means of attracting quality students and addressing retention. Quality graduate students are being courted with generous assistantships and stipends by many schools. My own department is struggling with this issue: institutions that want to maintain healthy graduate programs must provide competitive support! Without students there is no program.

### **Future directions**

The list of future goals provided in the Self Study makes perfect sense. Each of these goals is important and relevant to the future growth and improvement of the department. Clearly, there must be a partnership between the Department, the College, and the University, in order for these goals to be accomplished.

The Department will need to address curriculum issues like prerequisites, the structure of the Foundations, offering enough upper level studio courses, which studio areas to offer, and which, potentially, to let go of. For the sake of student retention, effective and consistent advising needs to be addressed, and check sheets need to be clarified.

The Department may need to take a hard look at limiting offerings in some studio areas with low enrollment, while increasing offerings in others. The Department may also need to reconsider the MA and MFA program, which appears to have very low enrollment. Although these are historically the only terminal degrees offered at CWU, the practice of pulling full time faculty from teaching essential courses for matriculation in undergraduate areas raises questions about the overall departmental strategy for staffing, student retention, and the use of facilities.

The College and University will need to make a commitment to resolving technology issues, and to funding tenure track positions so that students have reliable and qualified instruction, advising, and mentoring.

I will reiterate by simply copying the list of departmental goals included in the Self Study:

- *To fill vacant faculty position and have TT faculty in all studio areas.*

- *To develop an effective undergraduate and graduate recruitment and retention plan.*
- *To significantly enhance the department's teaching capabilities in new and digital technologies.*
- *To gain scholarships and tuition waivers to recruit and retain productive, successful students.*
- *To develop exhibitions in the Sarah Spurgeon Gallery so that they are more relevant to the teachings of the department.*
- *To establish a student gallery.*
- *To explore the relevance and potential of a student senior exhibition as an assessment tool.*
- *To explore the expansion of the capstone experience within the ART 495 course in combination with a senior exhibition. (Art 495 syllabi, see appendix I)*
- *To develop better alumni relationships and utilize alumni resources more effectively To have more interaction with the community at large with better promotion and outreach of our programs in Ellensburg.*
- *To explore and potentially implement curricular changes to align the department more closely to NASAD standards.*

Thank you for the opportunity to visit Central Washington University. It was a pleasure meeting with all of you and learning about the Department of Art. I see tremendous potential in the program, and hope that the collegiality that I witnessed among the faculty will continue to lead to proactive solutions to the kinds of staffing, funding, facilities, and curricular problems that every program must address.

Please let me know if you have any questions or comments about this report.

With best wishes,

Catherine Murray, Chair

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