

Review of the B.A., B.S. in Art

Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Code: 50.0701
Art/Art Studies, General

The B.A., B.S. in Art program is housed in the School of Art within the College of Fine Arts. The school also offers a minor in art with an art history emphasis, a Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.) in Art (studio arts), a M.A., M.S. in Art (art education or visual culture), and a M.F.A. in Art (studio arts). The B.A., B.S. in Art program is a liberal arts program. Sequences of study offered by the program include art history, graphic design, studio arts, and art teacher education. The latter sequence leads to licensure and endorsement in Illinois as an art teacher on the primary and secondary education levels. Students interested in working in the studio arts and seeking a more rigorous studio arts experience may apply to the companion B.F.A. in Art program.

As has been experienced by fine arts programs across the country, enrollment in the B.A., B.S. in Art program has declined since the last program review. Fall census day enrollment has steadily dropped from 350 first majors in 2010 to 281 in 2014. To address this decline, faculty and staff of the School of Art have instituted aggressive recruitment strategies. Those efforts have already helped stabilize and slightly increase enrollment in undergraduate art programs of the school.

The B.A., B.S. in Art program at Illinois State is one of nine such programs at public universities in Illinois. The program continues to be the largest of the nine in terms of enrollment, accounting for approximately 30 percent of the combined enrollment of the nine programs.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY PROGRAM REVIEW SELF-STUDY REPORT

Self-study process. In the summer of 2015, School of Art faculty and staff participated in a program review retreat. Individually and within small groups they discussed and reviewed the school mission statement and strategic plan. Participants then divided into smaller groups to examine specific goals for related program review topics, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of programs, and develop recommendations for building on strengths and improving areas of weakness. The issues identified and addressed in this retreat deepened the understanding among faculty and staff of the academic programs in the school and became the foundation for the self-study. Many individuals made significant contributions to this program review. Key faculty and staff members helped the interim director of the school write the self-study report. In addition to full participation by faculty in the program review retreat, faculty members participated in all facets of this review.

Program curriculum. As set forth in accreditation guidelines of the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD), the B.A., B.S. in Art program is designed for the liberal arts student. Consequently, studio requirements of the program are less extensive than studio requirements of the companion B.F.A. in Art program. Students in the B.A., B.S. in Art program are required to complete requirements of one of four sequences: art history, graphic design, studio arts, or art teacher education. Students in all sequences share a common art history foundation, while studio arts and art teacher education students take the same visual foundation courses. All course offerings are consistent with NASAD standards. The number of credit hours required for graduation from the art history, graphic design, and studio arts sequences falls within the 124 credit-hour limit established by the University. The University has granted an exception for the art teacher education sequence, which requires 131 credit hours due to state teacher licensure and endorsement requirements. The need for that exception was reviewed and reaffirmed through the program review process. To graduate from the art history, graphic design, or studio arts sequence, students must earn at least a 2.0 grade point average across all courses and at least a 2.5 grade point average across courses in the major. Students in the art teacher education sequence must earn at least a 2.8 grade point average across all courses and across courses in the major.

Program or academic unit faculty. All tenure track faculty members in the School of Art hold the terminal degree in their respective fields (the M.F.A., Ed.D., or Ph.D.) and are active scholars and artists who present their work at regional, national, or international venues. The School of Art is unusual in the diversity of its degree programs and,

therefore, in the diversity of qualifications for faculty teaching in them. The terminal degree for studio faculty is the M.F.A., the terminal degree for art history and visual culture faculty is the Ph.D., and the terminal degree for art teacher education faculty is either the Ed.D. or the Ph.D. Collectively, School of Art faculty is an accomplished and highly regarded group of artists and scholars. Art history faculty members publish in scholarly journals and contribute essays and chapters to edited books. Art teacher education faculty members exhibit original works of art, publish articles and present at conferences, and conduct methods workshops at elementary, middle, and high schools throughout the region. Studio arts faculty members exhibit in some of the most prestigious art galleries and museums in the country.

Program goals and quality indices. Goals of the School of Art are to maintain an educational program in the visual arts that provides a professional education in the studio arts, art education, graphic design, and art history; to provide arts-based instruction for the General Education program of the University and, therefore, for the general student population, and selected course work in art production for non-art majors interested in the studio disciplines; to recruit or retain a faculty and staff with strong academic and professional credentials who are committed to teaching, to their own creative/scholarly work, and to participating in academic shared governance; to provide and maintain physical facilities and resources adequate to the educational mission and goals of the school; and to recruit and retain students who are committed to acquiring a professional-level art education within the liberal arts environment of the University. Among the quality indices used by faculty to compare the program with aspirational programs at other institutions are the reputation of faculty/scholars teaching in the program; the uniqueness of media taught in the program; the quality of graduate schools in which graduates of the program enroll; the quality of faculty and student work; and involvement of tenure-line faculty (instead of adjuncts) in supervising student teachers and maintaining strong connections with elementary and high school art classrooms.

Student learning outcomes assessment plan and process. School of Art faculty has adopted 11 student learning objectives for the B.A., B.S. in Art program consistent with expectations of the University and the National Association of Schools of Art and Design: students will demonstrate knowledge and/or skill in content associated with their chosen sequence; students will possess critical thinking, problem solving, and analytical skills; students will demonstrate original thought in the creation of artifacts; students will synthesize learning across disciplines; students will observe, analyze, and interpret visual/verbal information; students will practice receiving and accepting constructive criticism; students will become culturally literate and global citizens of the arts; students will effectively collaborate and exchange ideas; students will understand the value of the arts and become arts advocates; students will demonstrate knowledge of the major monuments and periods in the history of art from pre-historic times to the end of the medieval period, circa 1400 to the end of the Modern period, circa 1970; and students will demonstrate the ability to complete a research project in a specific subject in art history. Students are deemed to have achieved the learning objectives if they successfully master the material and content in foundation courses; successfully apply to one of four sequences (art history, graphic design, studio arts, or art teacher education); achieve a grade of C or better in every art course and maintain at least a 2.5 grade point average in the major; and, for art teacher education students, successfully complete pre-student teaching clinical experiences.

Specialized accreditation. The School of Art and its programs, including the B.A., B.S. in Art, continue to meet expectations of the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD). The school and its programs of study were reaccredited by NASAD in 2014. The next accreditation review is tentatively scheduled for 2023-2024. The art teacher education sequence of the B.A., B.S. in Art program is approved annually by the Illinois State Board of Education and is part of the teacher education unit at Illinois State accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). The next accreditation review of the teacher education unit is tentatively scheduled for 2019 and will be conducted by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) as successor to NCATE.

Responses to recommendations resulting from the previous program review. Two recommendations by the Academic Planning Committee resulted from the previous program review in 2008-2009. The committee recommended that the program work with the director of the University Honors program to ensure that students participating in the honors program sponsored by the School of Art are also participating in the University Honors program. School of Art faculty and staff, together with University Honors program staff, have since developed programming for art majors enrolled in the University Honors program, including impromptu gatherings, formal field trips, and an end-of-the-semester check-in for the entire group. The committee also recommended that the program continue its efforts to diversify the student body and the faculty. Since then the student population has

become more diverse. The percentage of students in the program self-identifying with racial/ethnic groups traditionally underrepresented at Illinois State has increased from 8 percent in fall 2008 to nearly 21 percent in fall 2015. With 13 women and 15 men on the faculty who are either tenured or hold a tenure track position, the ratio of female to male faculty members is approaching a satisfactory level. However, the faculty is not as diverse racially or ethnically, as only two faculty members self-identify with traditionally underrepresented racial/ethnic groups.

Changes in the academic discipline, field, societal need, and program demand. While enrollments in most undergraduate art programs across the country are shrinking, faculty and staff of the School of Art are working diligently to reverse the enrollment decline in those programs at Illinois State. Faculty and staff now recognize that enrollment in fine arts programs is no longer a given. Instead, they will have to work hard to attract talented students. Assisted by the Office of Admissions and the Office of Enrollment Management and Academic Services, the School of Art has developed a robust recruiting plan whose implementation has already helped stabilize program enrollment. The school intends to continually tweak the plan in order to connect with prospective students.

Major findings of this program review self-study. Within the last few years the School of Art has participated in both program review and the National Association of Schools of Art and Design accreditation review process. Each experience has built on the other. Both processes continue to inform strategic initiatives of the school. One issue addressed in both processes is the graphic design sequence of the B.A., B.S. in Art program. Faculty has long considered the graphic design program at Northern Illinois University (NIU) a comparator to graphic design study at Illinois State. However, the graphic design program at NIU is considered a professional degree program while graphic design study at Illinois State is part of a liberal arts program. Graphic design faculty members in the school have engaged in conversations regarding the potential of adding a graphic design sequence to the B.F.A. program. This addition would allow a more professionally-minded student to move into an advanced track of graphic design study. Over the next few years these conversations will likely continue.

Initiatives and plans for the next program review cycle. Continuing to develop and implement a rigorous recruiting plan for each of the sequences in the B.A., B.S. in Art program and its companion B.F.A. program is a major priority for the coming years. Faculty and staff of the school are already deep into conversations about how to best address this. This program review has verified what was previously known anecdotally, that numerous areas of study offered by the program have been operating below enrollment capacity. Assuming that overall program enrollment continues to increase, strategies for recruiting students into currently low-enrolled areas of study are needed, including strategies for attracting high school students and strategies for attracting transfer students.

PROGRAM REVIEW OUTCOME AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ACADEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Academic Planning Committee, as a result of this review process, finds the B.A., B.S. in Art to be in Good Standing.

The Academic Planning Committee thanks the program for its self-study report and for opportunities extended to all faculty and staff members to participate in the program review process (e.g., through participation in an all-school summer retreat). The committee recognizes the program for its contributions to planning and preparation for the new fine arts complex, including relocation of University Galleries from campus to Uptown Normal in 2014.

The committee commends faculty for offering a quality academic program enriched by individualized attention, co-curricular activities, and study abroad opportunities. Quality of the program is evidenced by its reaccreditation in 2015 by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) and by the many successes program graduates have had, including acceptance into prestigious graduate programs (e.g., the University of Chicago, Maryland Institute College of Art, and Herron School of Art and Design).

The committee recognizes the school and program for maintaining a student-to-faculty ratio conducive to one-on-one mentoring of students by tenure-line faculty members. The ratio of students to tenure-line faculty in fall 2014 was approximately 10:1 in the School of Art compared to approximately 26:1 university-wide. In mentoring their students, faculty members draw on the many scholarly contributions they make to their discipline, including research and regional, national, and international exhibits and installations. The committee commends the program

for its numerous and varied co-curricular activities, such as the Normal Editions Workshop for printmakers, the Student Annual Exhibition, and Saturday morning art classes for community youth taught by art education students, and for articulation of students learning outcomes for each co-curricular activity. The program also sponsors study abroad opportunities thoughtfully integrated with the curriculum, including an art history experience in Italy and an art teacher education experience in Australia. The committee recognizes the program for the unique collaboration it has fostered with Milner Library, through which art students gain experience curating art exhibitions and installations held in the library.

As has happened with post-secondary education programs in the arts and humanities nationwide, enrollment in the B.A., B.S. in Art program has declined in recent years, from 364 at the time of the last program review in fall 2008 to 281 in fall 2014. The committee recognizes the program for its aggressive efforts to reverse this trend, by hiring a part-time recruitment coordinator, participating in National Portfolio Day to gain exposure to prospective students, offering scholarships to incoming students, streamlining the program application process, and expanding recruitment efforts in Chicago. These efforts have contributed to stabilizing program enrollment and increasing the size of incoming classes (from 79 students in fall 2013 to 105 in fall 2015). Also commendable is the steady increase in the percentage of undergraduate art students self-identifying with racial/ethnic groups traditionally underrepresented at the University, from approximately 7 percent in fall 2009 to approximately 20 percent in fall 2014.

Both fall-to-fall retention rates and six-year graduation rates for the program are consistently higher than those rates across all undergraduate programs at the University. However, most first-time-in-college students graduating from the program take more than four years to do so (e.g., 57.9 percent in Fiscal 2014 compared to 35.7 percent university-wide). The Academic Planning Committee asks the program to analyze this phenomenon and to identify actions the program might take to enable students in all sequences to graduate within four years. The committee asks the School of Art to summarize the analysis in a report submitted to the Office of the Provost by December 1, 2016.

In its discussion of comparator and aspirational programs, faculty has identified aspects of the program at Illinois State that are distinctive rather than identifying aspects of other programs to which our program might aspire. While there might not be other programs in the state, region, or nation identical to the program at Illinois State, the committee asks faculty to identify elements of other undergraduate art programs that excel with respect to one or more quality measures considered by faculty to be most pertinent to our own program. The committee asks program faculty to then identify specific actions our program can take to achieve levels of quality that approach, meet, or exceed quality levels of those other programs with respect to each quality measure. The committee asks the School of Art to submit a summary of this analysis to the Office of the Provost by January 27, 2017.

It is evident from the self-study report that faculty has done considerable work since the last program review on the student learning outcomes assessment plan for the program, including adoption of student learning outcomes that align with the mission and goals of the School of Art. It is also evident that providing ongoing feedback to students regarding their work is deeply ingrained in the school culture. However, it is not clear whether that feedback is being systematically documented and compiled and then used for program-level review. The committee is cognizant of the challenges in assessing student learning on the program level in disciplines with strong emphasis on qualitative holistic evaluation of individual expression and creativity. Developing a strategy to do so provides the program a unique opportunity to provide leadership among its peers nationally. Accordingly, the committee asks program faculty to continue its work on a student learning outcomes assessment plan that reflects the culture of the discipline and school while providing a means of obtaining feedback on the program level to guide program development and modification over time. Resources that might aid this effort include scholarship of teaching and learning in the discipline, experiences of aspirational programs, and University Assessment Services staff. The committee asks the School of Art to submit a written update to the Office of the Provost regarding the status of assessment plan development by May 15, 2017, and to submit a revised assessment plan to the Office of the Provost by May 15, 2018.

Recommendations

The Academic Planning Committee makes the following recommendations to be addressed within the next regularly scheduled review cycle. In the next program review self-study, tentatively due October 1, 2023, the committee asks the program to describe actions taken and results achieved for each recommendation.

- The committee recommends that the program continue its aggressive efforts to recruit students to the program, including students from traditionally underrepresented racial/ethnic groups. The program might consider expanding recruitment efforts to secondary schools with diverse student populations in the St. Louis and Indianapolis metropolitan areas and in downstate Illinois metropolitan and micropolitan areas.
- As another strategy for attracting more students and enrolling a more diverse student population, the committee recommends that faculty examine the curriculum for ways to expand coverage of non-European and non-Western art. The committee also recommends that faculty investigate expanding graphic design instruction and, if such expansion is warranted, focusing faculty recruitment efforts in the graphic design area.
- The committee recommends that, in support of its student recruitment efforts, the program maintain a web presence that showcases the expertise of program faculty and the many exhibition and professional practice opportunities available to students.
- For the benefit of prospective and current students, the committee encourages the program to maintain an undergraduate catalog entry that accurately and clearly describes available plans of study and graduation requirements.
- The program is engaged in numerous initiatives for communicating with alumni, including events in New York and Los Angeles and an award-winning social media presence. The committee recommends that the program incorporate these and other initiatives in a formal plan for tracking alumni, documenting their successes, and periodically soliciting their feedback regarding the program.
- The percentage of students in the program participating in the University Honors program was consistently lower than the percentage across all undergraduate programs at the University between fall 2010 and fall 2014. Meanwhile, the percentage in the B.F.A. in Art program has been significantly higher. The committee recommends that the program investigate strategies deployed in the B.F.A. program to enroll students in the University Honors program for their potential use in encouraging qualified students in the B.A., B.S. in Art program to participate.
- In fall 2014, approximately 13 percent of School of Art faculty members self-identified with racial/ethnic groups traditionally underrepresented among faculty at the University. The committee recommends that school faculty continue efforts to expand applicant pools to include candidates from those groups when faculty positions are filled, particularly tenure-line faculty positions. As noted in the self-study report, the Recruitment Assistance Program sponsored by the Office of the Provost is one resource that could help with this effort.
- Beyond the work requested by the committee to revise the student learning outcomes assessment plan for the program, the committee urges the program to continue to utilize information collected through student learning outcomes assessments over the next eight years to make program improvements and to document how that has been done.