ART DEPARTMENT

FIVE-YEAR
PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT
APRIL 1, 2005

Introduction

This report represents the Art Department’s first, formal report on its program review process. Our original program review proposal was submitted to the Program Review Committee (PRC) during the fall of 2003, and was based on our curriculum revisions and on our Irvine Self-Study from the Summer 2000. We received feedback from the PRC on our initial proposal in February of 2004.

Because of the PRC’s distribution of reports on a rolling five-year schedule, the art department has been asked to submit this report only one year after designing and implementing our review plan. With that in mind, this report reflects more of our on-going process than documented outcomes, and it incorporates our own learning process as we discover the most effective ways to document progress toward our stated goals.

We have attempted to follow the spirit of the rubric for submitting a report, distributed to departments on October 25 by Russell Smelley and Bill Wright, but have also felt free to adapt this format to our needs as a department at the very beginning of this process. Therefore, you will find the three rubrics “Review of Program Goals” “Data” and “Interpretation of Results” discussed for each specific review strategy, rather than discussed in single sections.

I. Review of Program Goals from our Fall 2003 Proposal

Goal #1 Students will develop educated standards of judgment and be open to a greater understanding of the multifaceted components and diverse perspectives of aesthetic judgment. Students will develop an informed critical attitude in order to make more informed decisions and judgments.

Goal #2 Students will learn to use the proper language of the visual arts as appropriate for critical analysis, and also use proper terminology of media and technique when critiquing and analyzing works of art. They will also learn to use proper research and documentation skills when writing about art.

Goal #3 Students will be helped to develop the concept of a personal, Christian art that reflects an inner Christian attitude rather than a specific content or style. Students will be assisted in moving beyond the recognized popular evangelical or ‘religious’ understandings of art as they engage in both the making of and appreciation of art.
Goal #4 Through a variety of situations and specific problem-solving opportunities, students will stretch themselves beyond what is comfortable in order to seek innovative and creative self-understanding and open-ended discovery.

II. Strategies for Current Review Cycle, from our Fall 2003 Proposal: Data, Interpretation and Use

A. Strategy #1: Develop formal guidelines in individual courses that will help students articulate evidence of improved oral and written communication skills. (Goal #2; Written and Oral Communication Standard)

1. We’ve begun collecting and compiling the vocabulary lists we use in each of our classes, and looking for ways to document students’ increasing mastery of these terms. Vocabulary quizzes and tests in class are one measure of growing proficiency in this area. We have yet to work out a way to collect a record of our results in this area. Once we do, we hope to have a clearer sense of which strategies are encouraging mastery, and which are not as effective.

2. We have begun requiring students to follow the MLA Style Guide for departmental writing assignments—particularly in art history classes and in Senior Seminar. The degree to which students correctly follow these guidelines should be easily documented. We still need to invent a way to track this.

3. To assess and encourage the state of writing in the department, we collected exemplary work from a number of classes. Our intent was to put these in a department writing portfolio we could use as a repository of excellent work for students to see and faculty to reference. Our first venture in this area merely demonstrated that we all had had the same excellent writer in our classes. Over time, however, we hope that this portfolio will become more varied and useful.

4. Our best test of effectiveness in this area has been the artist’s statements that students write for their sophomore and senior art projects. These provide a basis from which to judge students’ increasing proficiency in using the appropriate terminology. All faculty read these statements and we collect and save the statements from each show. In fact, the need to address terminology and communication became evident to us after reading last year’s batch of sophomore and senior statements. At our year-end “ale-and-assessment” bash, we use these statements to assess progress toward this goal. Though this is not class specific, it will given us a clear sense of how well students are learning to communicate correctly.

B. Strategy #2 Develop new internships and expand our internship offerings in the realm of education, design and computer graphics. (Goal #4; Active Societal and Intellectual Engagement Standard)
Thanks to the work of Jennifer Taylor we’ve been able to add to the number of businesses, studios, museums and non-profits interested in hosting an art intern. We now have many more local opportunities for studio, graphics, and art history students (more than 25) listed on the Internship webpage, plus others that are arranged through the department.

A good number of art majors also participate in the Urban Program, and have very good internship experiences in San Francisco. For our new Santa Barbara internships as well as our existing Urban, and local internships, we will need to document how these experiences are helping students actively work out the implications of their callings in society (Goal #4), and how to use these findings to further hone our program.

**Strategy #3 Develop a student gallery on the art department website.** (Due to lack of exhibition space for the ongoing exhibition of student work, and due to the frequent requests by prospective students to view current student work, we must take the time to invest in this form of communication. At the time of our Irvine Self-Study, we were looking forward to occupying a new building and taking advantage of the designated student gallery space. We now realize the additional need for a web-based gallery that will be useful for both recruitment and student feedback. (Goals #1 and #3; Critical Thinking and Technology Standard)

We’ve created a student gallery using the images from the Spring 2004 Sophomore show. Thus the works on the site are the work of current students, not graduates. A student in the computer graphics department helps maintain this site—making it truly a product of our students.

With the help of Anne Siskold and Dorothy Palmquist, we’ve also created some display space in the library. We’ve been using this space to feature the work coming out of specific studio classes. Drawing, Sculpture and Ceramics have been featured so far.

Again, we have fulfilled this goal as it is stated, but have yet to detail how, exactly, the student web gallery and the library displays are helping students develop standards of judgment (Goal #1) and develop a personal vision for their art (Goal #3). We also need to discover how our findings in this area can be used to continue improving our program.

**III. Summary and Assessment of our First Year Plan**

Overall, this first year of our program review finds us full of strategies for improving our program, but still struggling with the evaluation and documentation of the success of our strategies. We anticipate that as we move forward in this process, we will develop in this area.

**IV. Other Review Related Activity**

**A. Department Ethos**
In other ways, however, we feel we have made strong progress that we may be able to document fairly clearly. The feedback we received from the PRC encouraged us to consider the ways in which our four stated goals and our three strategies for achieving those goals were connected to the larger issue of increasing student engagement and “passion” for their learning—issues we highlighted in the section VI of the report titled “Current Discussion Points.”

Over the last two years, to address the “passion and commitment” question, we have introduced a fall retreat, the sophomore show, experimented with monthly “salons” at a faculty home, and instituted some sort of celebrative spring event—all with the goal of creating a stronger sense of our department as a learning community. To continue building momentum in this area, we are also going to build in a “Senior Critique” for the Sr. Art Show, to take place sometime after the opening of the show. We feel this is the logical completion of the trajectory begun by the Sophomore Show and Critique, and will further reinforce the standards to which we hold our students accountable.

The results of these changes have been clear to us and to our students.

A. This year’s senior class, the first to have gone through the sophomore show, is manifesting a much greater sense of class solidarity than we’ve seen before. Because they experienced their own sophomore critique as fairly traumatic, they met before the sophomore critique to consider how they wanted to both encourage and challenge the students coming up in the department. Their comments at the critique demonstrated a respect for the efforts of their younger peers, but also a willingness to call out weaknesses and challenge stereotypes.

B. Out of a concern to bring their art into the wider campus community, this year’s seniors, of their own volition, are staging a variety of events/interventions/happenings on campus in conjunction with the opening of their Senior Show. This is exactly the kind of initiative we felt was lacking among our students. It’s heartening to see it emerging in this class, who in turn, are setting an example for following classes.

C. We have anecdotal evidence that students now experience our department as having “more identity and community” than other departments. We’ve heard that other students are envious of their friends in the art department. (Not that we want to cultivate envy—but it is an indication of a perception of community that was not there two years ago.) Our students tell us that they know the people in the department, even if they are a year or two ahead/behind them in their studies.

B. Diversity Standard

Since we turned in our initial proposal in the fall of 2003, there have been other initiatives in the department that are relevant to program review, but were not included in that document. Specifically, we applied for, and received an $18,000 Irvine diversity grant to bring in artists of color who could speak to the intersection of “faith, calling and culture.” We are halfway through this grant, having invited Makoto Fujimura, Elmer Yazzie and Lara Scott to campus as Irvine Guest Artists. Next January, the Reynolds Gallery will feature a show of their work, and a portion of our grant money has been reserved for acquiring their work for display on
campus. We are now in the process of evaluating our students’ engagement with our guest artists, and digesting what we have learned from this experience. Once our final Irvine report is written (May 2006), we will incorporate our findings into our program review process.

V. Next Steps

As we look forward to our next five-year review cycle, our goals are to develop more fully the potential of the plan we initially developed, and continue working on a healthy and committed department community.

This will involve:

- Continuing to work out a way to collect a record of our efforts to improve students’ control of vocabulary and terminology.
- Continuing to hone the development and use of a department writing portfolio
- Developing ways to document the ways in which internships help our students connect their classroom learning to their own artistic development, and to problem-solving in the social world around them.
- Using the student web gallery more intentionally to help students develop standards of judgment and develop a personal vision for their art, and finding ways to document how the web-gallery achieves this.
- And finding ways to document the growth and productivity of “department ethos.”
- Continuing to document and make use of the findings from our Irvine Diversity Grant.

Finally, all of these efforts to document the success of our strategies will be useless if we do not also reflect on what we are learning from this data. Though this happens fairly regularly and informally in our department meetings (the format for which has been changed so we can more easily track these conversations), we will continue to meet annually, as a department, at the end of the school year for our “ale and assessment bash” to brainstorm about what we’ve learned, and where this information is pointing us next. The minutes from these conversations will be appended to this report, for consolidation in our next five-year report. Our Spring 2005 bash has been scheduled for Monday, May 16 at Peabody’s.