

IBHE Program Review Report

1. Reporting Institution: Eastern Illinois University, Art + Design

2. Program Reviewed: BFA in Art

3. Date: 1/21/2019

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5. Overview

The Department of Art + Design's primary mission is to meet the instructional needs of our students by developing each individual's visual acuity, analytical skills, awareness of historical context, and commitment to craft. Our carefully-structured degree programs provide an opportunity for personal development and professional growth. The Department has 11 tenured/tenure-track faculty and 6 additional annually-contracted faculty. The BFA degree is divided into three options: Graphic Design, Art Education with Teacher Licensure, and Studio Art (with either 2D or 3D emphasis). We feature a strong commitment to relationship-driven education and integrative learning.

The current BFA curriculum design, academic requirements, and external opportunities are successful in maximizing the talents of our majors. Since its establishment in 2009, the BFA has proven to be a rewarding addition to the department, enabling our students to pursue more complex, substantive work. While our overall enrollment for AY18 has dropped in proportion to the university's student population as a whole, the department has succeeded in recruiting new students largely through highlighting the BFA program.

Since our last IBHE review in 2015, the department has changed its name: this shift—to Art + Design—was not superficial but rather signaled an effort by the faculty to recognize the collaborative relationships within our department. The change also acknowledged the addition of the Fashion and Merchandising Design program, which was formerly housed in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences. In 2018, a generous gift enabled a renovation of our student exhibition space into the new Gallery 1910. This space, located on the first floor of our remarkable Doudna Fine Arts Center, provides our students with a new professional exhibition space. Not only will this gallery increase the quality of BFA exhibitions, but students will be actively involved in the curating and installation of shows throughout the year.

6. Major Findings and Recommendations

a. Description and assessment of any major changes in the program/disciplinary context, e.g., (1) changes in the overall discipline or field; (2) student demand; (3)

societal needs; (4) institutional context for offering the degree; (5) other elements appropriate to the discipline in question; and (6) other.

(1) Changes in the discipline: The professional creative industries have grown increasingly collaborative over the past decade. The Department of Art + Design believes that our students are best prepared to lead in those fields by having cooperative experiences form the backbone of their undergraduate education. From faculty-led workshops to large-scale, collaborative installations, over the past four years, the Department of Art + Design has prioritized learning experiences that challenge students to work across disciplines, while working as members of a team.

(2) Student demand: Overall enrollment at EIU has steadily declined since 2009, with a drop totaling 58% over the past decade. Art + Design has seen a parallel decline. For example, since the last IBHE review there has been a drop from 72 students in Graphic Design to 48 students. Enrollment in the Studio BFA degree area has shown a similar reduction, while enrollment in the Art Education BFA has fluctuated from a high of 25 in 2015 to 19 students in the Fall of 2018. While the demand for K-12 art teachers has dramatically decreased over the years, numbers are lately trending back close to 2015 levels and, as schools across the country face a shortage of teachers, we expect the growth trend to continue. Thanks in part to sustained recruiting initiatives spearheaded by our faculty, the department has enjoyed renewed interest in our programs in the past year. The introduction of the Fashion Merchandising Degree has opened up the opportunity for us to consider the development of a Design BFA degree that could pull from the various areas within our department.

(3) Societal needs: Graphic design and digital media are fields that continue to thrive. In total, the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that there will be 300,000 positions added to this economic sector by 2024. Many digital industries are growing, and as a result, our Graphic Design students are finding numerous professional opportunities. To prepare them for employment, our courses require students to operate outside traditional, assignment-based class parameters and integrate “real-world” practices into their creative output. Because these learning experiences involve teamwork, they foster leadership skills and demand accountability. Society needs artists; our studio students are encouraged to think professionally and participate in the many art sales occurring in the EIU community throughout the year. Students learn important entrepreneurial skills and strategies not only in the marketing and sale of their creative work, but also in terms of making work specifically for the marketplace.

(4) Institutional context for offering the degree: The Department of Art + Design makes important contributions to the overall EIU community. We have enjoyed a successful relationship with the university’s General Education program, serving over 400 non-major students per year. It is worth noting that the department has further embraced the idea of collaboration in light of the recent creation of the School of the Arts within the new College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The School of

the Arts has now brought Art + Design, Music and Theatre Arts closer than ever before. This association has opened up the opportunity for the development of an Arts Administration program and other interdisciplinary options down the road. We are also fostering collaborative relationships with other departments on campus as diverse as Mathematics and Music. In its efforts to foster cross-departmental collaboration within the School of the Arts, we have foregrounded the establishment of Gallery 1910 as a space for transdisciplinary practice. Currently, faculty in both the Music and Art + Design departments are cooperating on a multidisciplinary event that involves students from both departments responding to musical and visual prompts. Students and faculty are also actively engaged in working with the Mathematics department on a large-scale installation of visual art and design.

(5) Other elements appropriate to the discipline: The Department of Art + Design developed the BFA in Art programs in accordance with current National Association of Schools of Art & Design (NASAD) standards. The Graphic Design BFA degree is built to prepare students for entry into a career as a graphic designer. In our BFA degree program, 38% of credits are in Graphic Design, 27% are in supportive Art and Design studies, 20% are in Art/Design history, and 15% are in Electives (Marketing, Business, Advertising, etc.); these percentages meet NASAD and American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) criteria for BFA degree programs in Graphic Design. In accordance with NASAD standards, students enrolled in the BFA in Art with option in Studio will develop the knowledge, skills, concepts, and sensitivities essential to the professional life of the artist. It also provides students with a thorough grounding in fundamental principles and techniques with opportunities for emphasis in one or more specific studio areas. For the Art Education option, the BFA is considered the professional undergraduate education degree in the visual arts; the BFA is a more prestigious degree and indicates a higher level of studio ability that will translate into more effective teachers.

b. Description of major findings and recommendations, including evidence of learning outcomes and identification of opportunities for program improvement:

In the Fall of 2017, the Art + Design faculty held a retreat where the strengths and weaknesses of the Department were discussed. The prevailing concern was the need for reform in the BFA experience. As a result, changes were implemented in 2018, and sophomore students now participate in a portfolio review led by a committee of three faculty members from various areas within the department. These reviews offer students directed feedback on their output with an eye towards establishing creative goals and a personal artistic vision. Currently, faculty members are actively engaged in discussing how a “capstone semester” for BFA seniors might be modeled upon the successes of our studio MA program. We are in the process of creating a BFA Exhibition Committee that will be comprised of members of the faculty to oversee the capstone experience; both the Graphic Design and Studio BFA majors are now required to enroll in ART 4749 - Capstone Experience so as to submit resumes and digital portfolios to the department before graduating. The BFA Studio and Graphic Design majors are also required to present their work in a BFA Senior Exhibition. The BFA in Art Education majors have equivalent opportunities from

student observation hours and coordinating the enrichment program at the Tarble Arts Center for visiting elementary and junior high school students.

C. Descriptions of actions taken since the last review, including instructional resources and practices, and curriculum changes:

1. Recent faculty hires: The hiring of a new tenure-track Graphic Design professor has had a major impact in the area. The faculty member comes with twelve years of professional graphic design experience and has made tremendous positive change in the past three semesters. We have also been able to hire a second Art Education Instructor on an annual contract, although we hope in the next few years that we can hire a tenure-track professor in that area.

2. Instructional resources: Due to support from the College of Arts and Humanities Dean's office, the department was able to purchase more computers for the Graphic Design labs in 2017. In addition, we replaced all hard drives on our existing computers. Graphic design has also replaced three heavy-use printers and purchased a large format color printer after being awarded a grant from within the University.

3. Curricular Changes: The Graphic Design area has revised their BFA degree to accept electives drawn from entrepreneurship, marketing, and advertising.

4. Practice changes: Since 2015, the 2D Studio area has worked to adopt non-toxic and non-carcinogenic materials as well as "green" studio practices. The printmaking area has received a complete overhaul in terms of its materials safety, while consultants to the painting studios have introduced students to newly formulated, non-toxic products for their use. Because of our new Graphic Design professor, the BFA seniors in Graphic Design IV were newly grouped into four design teams, each of which worked with a local business to reimagine their identity and branding materials. Students worked with CCAR industries (a non-profit organization serving area residents with developmental disabilities), Home Again Consignment, Plush Boutique and Bike & Hike of Charleston. They visited the facilities, met with stakeholders, evaluated needs, and proceeded to design numerous concepts that they then presented to the clients for feedback. They next provided each business with a final document that detailed the recommendations for the new identity designs. In addition to writing, designing, and producing a full-length magazine annually, the "Blue Room" student organization recently began to network with local institutions. In 2018, the Blue Room team designed a t-shirt for local non-profit Grand Prairie Friends and a logo for a local philanthropic effort titled "Drink Something. Do Something."

c. Description of actions to be taken as a result of this review, including instructional resources and practices, and curricular change:

The results from the addition of the BFA degrees have been better than expected. The degrees have aided student retention, and the level of student expectation and production has risen to meet or exceed NASAD's standards. As mentioned above,

changes are in progress to improve the capstone process throughout the BFA program. Because the BFA in Graphic Design was restructured last year and those changes only went into full effect in the Fall of 2018, we expect to make further adjustments as that program matures. The Department of Art + Design looks to continue its current path while reevaluating itself on an ongoing basis.

7. Responses to Institution-Assigned Issues

No institutional questions were assigned.

8. Outcome

8.1 Decision:

Program in Good Standing

Program flagged for Priority Review

Program Enrollment Suspended

8.2 Explanation

On behalf of the office of Academic Affairs, I appreciate the faculty and program's continued focus on student success and curricular innovation, particularly in light of recent enrollment challenges. Likewise, the department is to be commended for its cross-departmental collaboration. Finally, the report demonstrates a commitment to academic excellence and student success.

Dean's Comments

The Art + Design Department has vigorously and strategically responded to the enrollment decline of recent years. The effects of this response are just beginning to be seen, with increased interest and enrollment in the BFA program this academic year. Establishment of a professional-quality undergraduate student gallery space, the creation of avenues for collaboration within the new School of the Arts and beyond, the growing role and visibility of the design component of the Department, and an overall strengthening of the BFA curriculum to improve the student experience all have contributed to this positive development. The University prioritized resources to the Graphic Design area with both a tenure-track hire and equipment resources, and these decisions are proving to be critical for recruitment and long-term stability for the program.