

## **EXTERNAL REVIEW**

### **SONOMA STATE ART DEPARTMENT – ART STUDIO PROGRAM**

**By Libby Black, Assistant Professor, San Francisco State University**

Program Observation Dates: April 21 & 22, 2021

Report Submitted: May 13, 2021

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

It is both an honor and privilege to be invited to conduct this external review of the Sonoma State University Art Department's Art Studio Program. As a former lecturer at Sonoma State, I taught a variety of classes within the Art Department's Art Studio Program from 2012 to 2017. This direct experience with the Art Studio Program affords me with valuable insight and context to deepen the feedback and recommendations contained in this review. I subsequently joined the faculty at San Francisco State University's School of Art as an Assistant Professor in 2017. As such, I also bring to this review the perspective from a fellow arts program within the CSU system. I loved my time teaching at Sonoma State University and offer this review with an intention to bolster the program so that it may flourish into the future.

This external review is focused on the Art Studio program, while another external review of the Art History program is being completed concurrently. In preparation for the review, I read the "2021 Program Review Self Study" by Assistant Professor Sena Clara Creston, which contained in full the "2006 External Program Review" conducted by Professor Sylvia S. Walters of San Francisco State University. I also conducted observations of classes and other related program activities during two days in April 2021. Due to the pandemic, the classes were held online. I also had phone conversations with a range of people associated with Sonoma State's Art Department. See Appendix A for the complete schedule of observations and interviews, including the names of those with whom I spoke or observed. I had some additional follow-up calls with people on this list that occurred in the week following the scheduled "on site" observations.

I would like to thank Dean of the School of Arts & Humanities Dr. Hollis Robbins, Department Chair Dr. Christine Renaudin, and Dr. Stacey Bosick, Interim Associate VP for Academic Programs, for meeting with me and having open and honest conversations about the strengths, as well as concerns, related to the Art Department at Sonoma State University. I would also like to thank the Art Studio faculty, Nathan Haenlein, Clea Felien, Sena Clara Creston, Sahar Khoury, Takming Chuang, and Chris Grunder, for welcoming me into their online classes and for sharing their successes and describing what needs attention in the department. All the faculty with whom I spoke care tremendously about the welfare of the students and their continued success beyond school.

I would especially like to acknowledge Sena Clara Creston for putting together the 600-page Self Study Program Review in her first year of teaching at Sonoma State University. This alone is a huge task, in addition to her teaching workload. Her efforts should be commended.

I would also like to thank the Studio Technicians, Aimee Graham and Shannon Edwards, whose knowledge of the facilities and care for the equipment is key to the successful functioning of the studios. I thank both of them for their attention to the needs of the students and faculty.

Thank you, Douangta Sorensen, for setting up the Zoom meeting with the BA and BFA students.

Lastly, I am very grateful to all the BA and BFA students, along with alumni, for taking time out of their day to meet with me and talk about their time spent in school and with the Art Department. The students are the heart of the matter and their thoughtful participation is very much appreciated.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Sonoma State's Art & Art History Department serves state and regional needs by providing a quality arts program within the CSU system. The department has been part of the university since 1960 and has been operating in its current facilities since 1978. At Sonoma State, the fine arts are valued as an important humanistic discipline, essential to a liberal arts education. The Art Department offers both the Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) and the Bachelor of Arts (BA) degrees in Studio Art, as well as the Studio Art Minor. The Studio Art curriculum is grounded in traditional fine arts and focused on the development of individual artistic expression. The program generally conforms to national standards as established by the accreditation commission, the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) and offers a fine arts curriculum consistent with other similar institutions. The Studio Art faculty consist of three permanent, tenured or tenure-track faculty; one full-time visiting professor; and four part-time lecturers. There are currently 127 students majoring in Studio Art and the program is supported by two well-qualified studio technicians. The program is currently chaired and supported administratively by staff from outside the Art & Art History Department. The Studio Art area is contained within the Art & Art History Department facility, which is located in an idyllic setting alongside a pond and surrounded by trees and greenspace. The facility is a complex of classrooms, studios, workshops, offices, and gallery space, surrounding a central courtyard. Augmenting these facility resources is the campus library, which houses a maker space with fabrication equipment. The students are generally dedicated and many have progressed to study art at the graduate level or gone on to other art-related careers such as curatorial work, graphic design, or teaching art at the K-12 level.

The Studio Art program has a long and successful legacy built upon a solid foundation, however it is currently at a critical juncture. It has some morale issues and has been under resourced and operating beyond capacity for a number of years. I believe that the university needs to address many of the recommendations contained in this external review to bolster the program so that it may successfully meet its mandate, retain accreditation, and be properly sustained into the future.

## **ART STUDIO CURRICULUM**

The Sonoma State Art Department offers four options for the study of Studio Art: 1. Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in Studio Art; 2. Bachelor in Art (BA) in Studio Art; 3. Minor in Studio Art; and 4. General Education courses in Studio Art. As stated in the 2021 Self Study Program Review:

*The goal of the program is to educate students to create original art, and to elucidate the meaning of art in relation to contemporary, historical, global, personal, and professional practice. While grounded in traditional fine arts curricula, our approach encourages openness and exploration in interdisciplinary, pluralistic, postmodern, sociopolitical, and personal fields of inquiry. Upper-division studio majors are encouraged to explore individual expression to resolve advanced technical, aesthetic, and conceptual issues (2021 Self Study, Page 1).*

The Studio Art curriculum is delivered across a variety of fine arts disciplines organized into three areas of emphasis: 2D practice (painting, drawing, and printmaking), 3D practice (sculpture and ceramics), and media arts (photography and new media). The stated mission of the "art studio curriculum is designed to develop the ability to create, analyze, interpret, and evaluate art." The coursework offered centers on an examination of "personal values and interests" as a basis for technical, aesthetic and conceptual

exploration of artistic media in order to develop “individual vision and style” and the ability to critique and interpret visual arts generally. The curricular focus on “personal values and interests” encourages the student’s own personal direction and allows for meaningful engagement by students at all levels of the program, from the BFA and BA, to Studio Art minors and those taking general education Studio Art courses.

Observations:

- Curricular goals align with the University’s mission.
- Curriculum is generally appropriate for an undergraduate education in studio art.
- Curriculum design conforms to national standards and aligns with practices of similar fine arts programs.
- CANVAS Learning Management Platform is being properly and effectively utilized by faculty with the required course information clearly laid out, including clearly outlined project assignments.
- There is demonstrated student engagement even within the challenging context of online distance learning. All three of the critiques I observed had full attendance, all students had their cameras on, and there was lively discussion between faculty and students. Student work demonstrated a clear understanding of the assignments.

Recommendations:

- There are opportunities to differentiate and properly scale the curriculum for the BA versus the BFA. (See BA section below)
- Studio Arts could be further integrated within the University in alignment with University’s mission by increasing Studio Art general education offerings. (See General Education section below)
- While the program has a solid curricular basis, there are opportunities to further improve curricular coherency and currency, as well as the relevance and clarity of learning outcomes and their integration within the curriculum. (See Syllabi section below)
- Address resource challenges to support delivery of curriculum. (See sections on Faculty, Staff, Facility, and Finances later in report)
- Reduce or discontinue the use of “stacking” multiple levels of a course within one class to allow for differentiation between course levels and provide a diversity of courses offered within the program. (See Stacked Classes section below)
- Diversify course offerings. (See Diversity of Course Offerings section below)

### **BFA Curriculum**

One of the Art Department’s strengths lies with its BFA program which successfully provides majors with the professional training needed to either pursue a career in the arts or in a related field where art and design apply. The progression of classes required for a BFA from Sonoma State is coherent – sequentially building technical art making skills and developing the student’s ability to form and communicate value judgments about art. The program’s focus on professional practice culminates with the presentation of a developed body of work in a capstone exhibition. In these ways, Sonoma State’s BFA program aligns with national standards of expected competencies developed through a professional undergraduate degree in fine arts<sup>1</sup>. A BFA from Sonoma State successfully prepares their majors for graduate school or

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<sup>1</sup> **NASAD Competencies Summary**

*Degree: The BFA in General Fine Arts, a professional undergraduate degree*

<https://nasad.arts-accredit.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2015/11/BFA-GeneralFineArts.pdf>

to pursue a career in an arts-related field. During my time teaching at Sonoma State, I experienced the BFA critiques as rigorous. Through a review of the survey results of past BFA degree students conducted by the Art Department and included in the 2021 Program Review Self Study, there is evidence to support the effectiveness of Sonoma State's BFA curriculum, with many students from Sonoma State University going on to attend renowned graduate programs all over the world. Other former students reported having successful careers in the arts, in such fields as curatorial, illustration and design, as well as some becoming art teachers within a K-12 context.

The Art Department's BFA curriculum is in alignment with (and slightly exceeds) NASAD standards stipulating that approximately 65% of a 120 semester hour program is in art/design studies to ensure that time is available to develop the requisite competencies. Sonoma State's BFA requires a minimum of 90 units, which is 68% of a 132-unit degree. Currently the Sonoma State BFA degree is designed to take five years to complete. I understand that the Art Department is considering having the BFA be a four-year program in order to make it more affordable for students. However, I also heard legitimate concerns from faculty that, if the BFA became a four-year degree program, students may not have time to develop the required body of work for their capstone exhibition. My recommendation would be to either keep the BFA as a five-year degree program, or if changed to a four-year degree program, the Art Department should add one or more summer intensives to the curriculum. The summer intensive could be anything from a month-long studio intensive to a week-long travel class to New York or Los Angeles to visit museums and galleries, meet with artist in their studios, and talk with curators. Adding the summer intensives may negate any cost savings for students, but it would help them keep their creative momentum and provide them with dedicated time for the development of a body of work and allow them to finish in four years, which may be appealing in and of itself. Adding the summer intensive component to the curriculum could make the four-year BFA degree program feasible and would be a unique and valuable addition to the BFA program, increasing the program's curricular currency.

### **BA Curriculum**

NASAD states that the major in Studio Art for a liberal arts undergraduate degree "should aim primarily toward breadth of experience and understanding rather than professional specialization. The primary objective of such training is not necessarily preparation for a career in art or design."<sup>2</sup> The competencies associated with a liberal arts BA degree are [emphasis mine]:

- a. *A developed visual sensitivity.*
- b. *The technical skills, perceptual development, and understanding of principles of visual organization **sufficient to achieve basic visual communication and expression** in one or more media.*
- c. *Ability to make **workable connections between concept and media.***
- d. ***Some familiarity** with the works and intentions of major artists/designers and movements of the past and the present, both in the Western and non-Western worlds.*

It is worth noting the difference between these expected competencies and those associated with the BFA degree, which include the following [emphasis mine] to illustrate the point: "Students must demonstrate **achievement of professional, entry-level competence** in the major **area of specialization**,

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<sup>2</sup> **NASAD Competencies Summary**

Degree: BA or BS in Art or Design Studies, a liberal arts undergraduate degree

[https://nasad.arts-accredit.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2015/11/BAorBS-Art\\_or\\_Design.pdf](https://nasad.arts-accredit.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2015/11/BAorBS-Art_or_Design.pdf)

including *significant technical mastery*, capability to produce work and *solve professional problems independently*, and a *coherent set of artistic/intellectual goals that are evident* in their work.”

NASAD standards stipulate that for the liberal arts studio art major at least 20% of the total credits be in studio courses, and at least 5% in art/design history, with a total required in visual art coursework equal to 30–45% of a 120 semester hour program. Sonoma State’s studio BA program entails 51–53 units in art-related courses, which stands at 42.5%–44% of the total curricular units, which is at the high end of the range of units required for graduation with a BA in Studio Art.

I recommend that the Art Department revise the design of their BA curriculum to reduce the number of units required for the degree to better align its objectives with national standards which call for a “breadth of experience and understanding rather than professional specialization.” This change would not only help differentiate the BA from the BFA, but may help alleviate over-enrollment and overcrowding in Studio Art classes, where the reliance on stacked courses has become the go-to strategy to ensure that students have access to the courses they need in order to graduate.

### **Stacked Classes**

The problem of stacked classes was called out in the 2006 External Review conducted by Professor Sylvia Walters where she stated: “Faculty need two heads and four hands to satisfy different course objectives simultaneously and to attend to widely varying student needs” (2021 Self Study, Page 52). In spite of stacked classes being identified as a problem for the Department in the prior external review, the 2021 Self-Study proposes to continue to rely on “creative scheduling, such as strategically teaching intermediate and advanced sections together or alternating courses, [to] utilize limited faculty while providing a greater variety of courses offered” (2021 Self Study, Page 43). Reducing the required number of Studio Art credits for the BA could be part of the solution to these problems as the Art Department works to regain faculty.

### **General Education**

Studio Arts could be further integrated within the University in alignment with University’s mission by increasing Studio Art general education offerings. Embedded in the mission of Sonoma State University is a commitment to the development of creativity and self-expression. NASAD encourages member institutions “to offer programs for non-majors toward the development of the future public for art and design.” The Art Department currently offers one GE course, the Visiting Artist Lecture Series, which provides a fantastic opportunity for students from all over campus to learn about and hear from contemporary art practitioners. Beyond merely enhancing a life-long interest in the arts, a case should be made for the way that art fosters the type of creative thinking that bolsters academic success in all other areas of study across the university. Concepts like “design thinking”<sup>3</sup> may be useful to describe the important role of creativity within innovation and problem solving – a concept that can be applied broadly within a liberal arts context. This underscores NASAD’s recommendation that:

*Institutions are encouraged to experiment with various types of course offerings, and to be innovative in designing them, in order to meet the interests and needs of non-major students.*<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> IDEO *Design Thinking Defined*: <https://designthinking.ideo.com/>

<sup>4</sup> *NASAD Handbook 2020-21* (Page 84) <https://nasad.arts-accredit.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/11/AD-2020-21-Handbook-11-16-2020.pdf>

A challenge to adding Studio Art GE courses is the current diminished number of Art Studio faculty. However, by strategically establishing additional GE courses, the Art Department has the opportunity to more visibly demonstrate its value and thereby raise its profile within the university as a whole. The 2021 Self-Study notes that there are opportunities to leverage the new Media Arts faculty for the development of GE courses in digital media that could serve Communications majors in addition to Studio Art majors and a general student body. A case could be made to University administration that restoring Art Department faculty numbers would help the University better fulfill its mission by offering courses such as these. This may also help the Department make a case for investment by the University in related facility needs and technology resources to support this curricular development.

### **Consistency Across Program Syllabi**

In my review of the Department's collection of course syllabi included in the 2021 Self-Study, I noticed a lack of consistency in format and content. I recommend enforcing the use of a standard syllabus template for all Art Studio courses. I recommend that the syllabus template include Program Learning Outcomes and Learning Outcomes for the course, in addition to consistent grading rubric, attendance policies, and important student resources such as Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). Integration of Program Learning Outcomes and Learning Outcomes for each course is part of a systematic approach to support on-going and comprehensive assessment of the Department, its faculty, the Studio Art curriculum, and student performance.

### **Diversity of Course Offerings**

I want to underscore another issue that was highlighted in the last external review that is still unresolved: Lack of Diversity of Course Offerings. Because the department chooses to offer all of its core courses every semester, its flexibility to offer a variety of courses is limited. This limitation impacts the relevance and currency of program offerings. As noted in the 2021 Self Study: "The Department's ability to offer diverse core and advanced studio courses appropriate to its size and scope would be greatly improved by increased faculty allocation for both tenure-track and part-time lecturer positions" (Page 20).

### **ASSESSMENT**

As is standard in fine arts programs nationally, student achievement at Sonoma State's Art Studio program is assessed by faculty relative to the learning outcomes through a number of direct means including one-on-one work with individual students and through group critiques that engage all students in the class. Professors gauge how effectively students are meeting the learning outcomes through observation of individual student work habits, their development of technical skills, and execution of their projects in real time. Professors also monitor how effectively the students are meeting the learning outcomes through group critiques and by the quality of completed assignments. Sonoma State's Art Studio program includes discipline-based critiques which occur throughout the semester in every Art Studio class. BFA students also participate in interdisciplinary critiques twice each semester offering insight into the effectiveness of the learning outcomes across disciplines. Exhibitions of student work also provide the Art Studio program with valuable information about the program's effectiveness. I agree with the 2021 Self Study that the Art Studio's methods of assessment demonstrate a "commitment to process, product, communication, and improvement, [which] supports students to give their best efforts to create their best work, given realistic circumstances" (2021 Self Study, Page 20).

I applaud the Art Department's effort to use surveys as an assessment tool for program improvement. The 2021 Self Study stated that the program intends to continue developing its use of surveys as an assessment strategy and plans to send out quantifiable surveys to students, faculty, and alumni every

other year. While this may be challenging given the Art Department's staffing constraints, I agree that implementing these surveys regularly would support meaningful program improvements.

## **FACULTY**

The Art Studio faculty at Sonoma State are well qualified, highly trained and educated with the appropriate terminal degrees. They are dedicated and demonstrate a deep commitment to education. They are also professionally engaged with their own creative practices, and the majority have an extremely impressive record of exhibitions, publications, presentations, and other professional accomplishments. That being said, it must be noted that the faculty is almost entirely new to the program with 50% of the total faculty (including permanent, visiting, and part time faculty) having been hired in just the last two years. There is only one fully tenured professor in Art Studio. Additionally, there are key curricular areas that do not have even one fully-dedicated permanent faculty person (ceramics, sculpture, drawing, and photography). The Studio Art area has seen a drastic reduction in full-time permanent positions overall, which leaves the existing permanent full-time faculty extremely overtaxed and the department's ability to meet student needs in jeopardy. By my count, the department has lost and not replaced five tenured faculty positions. In order to adequately deliver the Department's core Studio Art curriculum to meet student need, sustain the program's accreditation, and retain current permanent faculty, it is imperative that these faculty positions be filled with permanent faculty.

### **Observations/Recommendations:**

- Workload of permanent faculty. (Advising Workload section below)
- Collegiality is strained among faculty. (See Lack of Collegiality section below)
- There are negative long-term consequences to recent hiring strategies. (See Hiring Strategy section below)
- New faculty hire in Media Arts is not adequately resourced relative to facilities and equipment. (See Strategic Needs section below)
- Lack of anchor faculty for sculpture and ceramics. (See Anchor Faculty Needed section below)
- Recommendation for training workshops for faculty as a team relative to racial equity and cultural competency.
- As already implied, but to state clearly, faculty is a central resource that affects the quality of the learning experience. This resource needs investment in order to meet stated goals and objectives in all areas covered by this review.

### **Advising Workload**

Advising can only be done by permanent tenure/tenure track faculty and those faculty are expected to spend three hours a week for office hours, which appears to be insufficient given the advising workload. Three permanent faculty must advise 127 Art Studio majors, which means that each of these faculty is advising approximately 42 majors, in addition to participating in two BFA Interdisciplinary Critiques per semester, plus career advising, student support, and other service to the program and department. This is a very heavy workload.

### **Lack of Collegiality**

Collegiality has been strained among faculty for at least a decade. Interpersonal tensions existed when I taught at Sonoma State. As part of this external review, I heard that these dynamics still exist and have led to morale problems amongst faculty and staff. Former and current students have also been impacted by the lack of collegiality.

### **Hiring Strategy (Temporary versus Permanent Faculty in Core Areas)**

There are negative consequences to the strategy of hiring one-year positions for core areas in Art Studio. Because the recruitment of a One-Year Visiting Artist position is implemented as a full search, it takes a tremendous investment of time and energy on the part of all involved (faculty and administrators). After having spent many months on a temporary recruitment, it is taxing to have to then repeat the process all over again just a number of months later. This strategy also communicates ambivalence to potential applicants which may cause them to not bother applying. The department could draw from a wider pool of qualified applicants if it were posted as a permanent tenure track position. For a department struggling with faculty stability, a temporary hire is a poor strategy that leads to faculty burnout.

### **Strategic Needs: Providing Adequate Facilities and Equipment for New Hires**

The addition of a new tenure track faculty in Media Arts is a notable success, however this position needs to be supported by the University with an investment in the required Media Arts equipment, which is necessary to deliver the Media Arts curriculum. The Department needs a designated classroom with at least 25 work stations with up-to-date computers, software, accessories and related equipment. Currently, the designated Media Arts classroom has only six outdated computers. This points to the need for a more comprehensive strategic plan for the growth and development of the Art Department, and this should be tied to the Studio Art mission. Ideally, the resources for a new curricular area would be identified prior to, or at least simultaneous with, the hiring of new faculty to teach in a new area. It is laudable that the new Media Arts faculty is seeking grant funds to supply the equipment needed for her area, however fundraising is yet another thing to add to an already full workload.

### **Anchor Faculty Needed**

Art Studio has no permanent faculty for the 3D area. This is a core area and represents one third of the three areas of curricular emphasis. This may be an issue relative to accreditation.

### **STAFF**

The administration of the program is currently done by a Chair from outside the Art & Art History Department and two part-time administrative staff from other departments. These administrative staff have full time duties in their home departments and were not provided with training due to the transfer and subsequent retirement of the prior Art & Art History Department's administrative staff. The Art & Art History Department needs a dedicated administrative staff person.

While the outside chair is doing a great job, the Department needs to resolved whatever issues necessary so that it may have an internal chair. Internal leadership is crucial to support and sustain Studio Art-specific resources and curriculum.

Staff positions include two Instructional Support Technicians who cover sculpture, painting and ceramics. These technicians had their hours reduced to 50% due to the pandemic. I understand that these positions will be restored to full time in the fall. There is also a need for another technician for photo, printmaking and media arts, which requires specialized skills associated with those media.

### **FACILITIES**

Sonoma State's Art Department facilities were designed to support the curriculum with a number of instructional spaces including discipline-specific studios, shops, and classrooms, and an open courtyard between the sculpture and ceramic areas which serves as a flexible space that can be used during



instruction or for students working on projects. There is additional flexible space around the studios with informal walls where students may hang their work. The Art Department also has a foundry, which is rare and is an attraction for students who want to work in metal and bronze. There are also gallery spaces for student use – the University Art Gallery (for juried exhibitions and the BFA shows), as well as Rage Gallery, a small but energized space for installations of student work.

NASAD Standards for Facilities, Equipment, Technology, Health, and Safety<sup>5</sup> are as follows:

1. *Facilities, equipment, and technology must be adequate to support faculty needs, all curricular offerings, and all students enrolled in them, and be appropriately specialized for advanced work.*
2. *Budget provisions shall be made for adequate maintenance of the physical plant and equipment as related to the size, scope, and purposes of course and curriculum offerings, and to conditions related to health and safety.*
3. *Each art/design unit should maintain a plan for the regular maintenance of its facilities and upkeep and replacement of equipment. The plan should be developed consistent with goals and objectives, the size and scope of the art/design unit, and prospective changes.*

While the facilities at Sonoma State’s Art Department were probably amazing when they were first built, most now have issues of deferred maintenance, which has caused bigger problems that have become costlier as they’ve been neglected. The 2021 Self Study detailed a more complete list of the maintenance and repair needs of the facilities, but here are the projects that I believe should be prioritized:

### **University Art Gallery Floor**

The University Art Gallery is an amazing cultural and educational space, which presents museum-quality exhibitions. It also provides the students with valuable professional practice experience. The gallery building has been neglected and has a sagging floor, which currently poses a danger and is a liability for the University because the lighting for the exhibitions must be changed out with a scissor lift, which can become unstable when driven over the sagging floor. I recommend fixing the floor, or pulling up the wooden floors and finishing off the concrete slab underneath, as a top priority related to safety.

### **Walls in 2D Studios**

The studio walls in printmaking, painting, and drawing have been used by students to hang their work (a necessary part of instruction) week-after-week for decades and are now full of pin holes. The walls have been patched and painted many times throughout the years and it shows. It is important to have clean smooth walls for students where they hang their work. I recommend installing a type of board that is designed for this use, like Homasote.

### **Classroom Lighting**

The lighting in the classrooms, upper courtyard, and office hallway needs replacement. The University took out half of the lighting twenty years ago for a PG&E rebate, and this left the spaces so dim it is hard to see artwork in them. As a visual arts program, seeing the work is crucial. I recommend installing LEDs to light those spaces.

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<sup>5</sup> *NASAD Handbook 2020-2021* (Page 64): <https://nasad.arts-accredit.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/11/AD-2020-21-Handbook-11-16-2020.pdf>

### **Leaking Roof**

The Art Department roof has been leaking for years and facilities staff keeps patching it, but not fully fixing it. This has caused water damage in multiple areas and in faculty offices. This problem was noted in the 2006 External Review by Sylvia Walters and needs to be addressed.

### **Modernize Classrooms with Current AV Set Ups**

All classrooms and studios should be updated to include a computer, mounted projector, and speakers. This is standard in university settings.

### **Replace Aging Equipment in Woodshop and Ceramics Studio**

The woodshop and ceramics studio have equipment that is so old, it is hard to find replacement parts when anything breaks. There is not a budget to replace these parts, and the technicians have to access office supply budgets to buy parts.

### **Invest in Equipment that Supports Environmental Sustainability**

The University should purchase a pugmill machine for the ceramics studio which is used to recycle clay. Not only would this be good for the environment, it would also help students save money by being able to recycle used clay.

## **FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

Beyond the financial resources needed for faculty, staff, Media Arts equipment, and facilities repairs that have already been described in earlier sections of this report, there is a need for annual budgets. The quality of the learning experience is negatively impacted by the insufficiency of resources provided to the Art Department. Per NASAD standards: "Budget allocations for personnel, space, equipment, and materials must be appropriate and sufficient to sustain the programs offered by the art/design unit from year to year" (NASAD Handbook 2020-2021, Page 59). The University needs to provide an annual instructional equipment budget to maintain and replace equipment as needed. There should also be an operating expense budget adequate to meet the instructional needs of the program. The 2021 Self Study described how the operating expense budget is a function of the number of FTEs, which means that not only is the program understaffed, it is also under-resourced relative to operating budget. The prior external review noted the need for an equipment budget, as well as additional operating budget. This needs to be addressed.

## **STUDENTS**

During my two days of observation, I sat in on three critiques, met with a handful of BFA and BA students, watched two classroom lectures and a lighting demonstration, listened to a visiting artist lecture, and spoke with alumni. Overall I was very impressed with student engagement, especially because online learning can discourage participation. Most of the students had their videos on and were talking during the critiques. The students were great about providing supportive and constructive criticism to their peers in the class.

Observations from my conversations with students include:

- BA students benefit from being in classes with BFA students. It increases the rigor of the program overall.
- BFA students voiced concerns about the BFA critiques:
  - There are too many faculty on the critique panel relative to the time allotted, so not all faculty have time to speak.
  - The critiques can become heated and competitive between faculty.

- The style of critique utilized can be harsh, hierarchical and dominating, which is a dated manner of conducting a critique.
- This dynamic makes it hard for students to find their own voice.
- On the other hand, I heard from one alumni that they appreciated the competitive environment.

### **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

As stated in the introduction, the Studio Art program has a long and successful legacy built upon a solid foundation, however it is currently at a critical juncture. I believe that the University needs to address the following recommendations to bolster the program so that it may successfully meet its mandate, retain accreditation, and be properly sustained into the future.

1. Differentiate and properly scale the curriculum for the BA versus the BFA.
2. Studio Arts could be further integrated within the University in alignment with University's mission by increasing Studio Art general education offerings.
3. Standardize syllabi across all courses.
4. Address resource challenges to support delivery of curriculum.
5. Reduce or discontinue the use of "stacking" multiple levels of a course within one class.
6. Diversify course offerings.
7. Continue developing use of surveys as an assessment strategy and send out quantifiable surveys to students, faculty, and alumni every other year.
8. Reduce advising workload of permanent faculty.
9. Address lack of collegiality among faculty.
10. Do recruitments for permanent tenure track faculty instead of one-year visiting artist hires.
11. Provide necessary technology equipment for Media Arts.
12. Hire permanent tenure track faculty for sculpture and ceramics.
13. Provide training workshops for faculty as a team relative to racial equity and cultural competency.
14. Hire a dedicated administrative staff person for the Art & Art History Department.
15. The Department needs to resolved whatever issues necessary so that it may have an internal chair.
16. Hire a technician for photo, printmaking and media arts.
17. Repair or replace the University Art Gallery floor.
18. Install appropriate wall boards in 2D classrooms/studios.
19. Install LED lighting in the classrooms, upper courtyard, and office hallway.
20. Replace the leaking roof.
21. Update all classrooms and studios to include a computer, mounted projector, and speakers.
22. Replace aging equipment in woodshop and ceramics studio.
23. Invest in equipment that supports environmental sustainability – like a pugmill for the ceramics studio.
24. Provide an annual instructional equipment budget to maintain and replace equipment as needed.
25. Provide an annual operating expense budget adequate to meet the instructional needs of the program.
26. Improve dynamics that occur in BFA critiques.

## APPENDIX A: OBSERVATION AND INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

### Wednesday, April 21, 2021

9 AM: Zoom meeting with **Dr. Hollis Robbins**, Dean of Arts & Humanities

10–10:50 AM: Observe ARTS 229, “Beginning Ceramics” taught by Lecturer Takming Chuang

11–11:50 AM: Observe ARTS 310, “Intermediate Digital Photo” taught by Lecturer Chris Grunder

Noon: Observe ARTS 491, “Visiting Artists Lecture Series with visiting artist Paula Gaetano Adi” taught by Assistant Professor Sena Clara Creston

1–1:50 PM: Zoom with Art & Art History **Faculty**, Staff and Technicians

2:30–3:20 PM: Observe ARTS 402, “Advanced Drawing” taught by Professor Nathan Haenlein

3:30–4:30 PM: Zoom meeting with **Dr. Christine Renaudin**, Chair, Art & Art History Department

4:30–5 PM: Zoom meeting with **Stacey Bosick**, Interim Associate VP for Academic Programs

### Thursday, April 22, 2021

9–10 AM: Observe ARTS 105, “Media Arts Fundamentals” taught by Assistant Professor Sena Clara Creston

10–11 AM: Zoom interviews with **Art Studio Program Alumni**

Noon–1 PM: Zoom interview of **current BFA students**

1–1:50 PM: Observe ARTS 336/436, “Intermediate and Advanced Sculpture” taught by Lecturer Sahar Khoury

2:15–2:45 PM: Talk to Assistant Professor Clea Felien about ARTS 220, “Beginning Painting”

3–3:50 PM: Zoom with **BFA and BA Students**

4–5:15 PM: Zoom with Studio Technicians Aimee Graham and Shannon Edwards

5:15–6 PM: Observe ARTS 420, “Advanced Painting” taught by Assistant Professor Clea Felien