



Date: February 21, 2020

To: John Stalvey, Interim Provost

From: John Petraitis, Interim Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

Cc: Garry Mealor, Associate Professor; Chair, Department of Art
Herminia Din, Professor
Steve Godfrey, Professor

Re: AY20 Expedited Program Review Findings

Program/s in this review: Art BFA

Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable): National Associate of Schools of Art & Design (NASAD)

Campuses where the program is delivered: Anchorage

Members of the program review committee:

Garry Mealor, Associate Professor and Department Chair
Herminia Din, Professor
Steve Godfrey, Professor

Centrality of Program Mission and Supporting Role

UAA's mission is to discover and disseminate knowledge through teaching, research, engagement and creative expression. UAA is committed to serving the higher education needs of the state, its communities and its diverse peoples. It is also committed to instruction at multiple academic levels, success of all students regardless of their higher education goals, and service to the diverse peoples and communities of the state. UAA's core themes are (1) Teaching and Learning, (2) Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity, (3) Student Success, (4) UAA Community, and (5) Public Square. UAA values international and intercultural education, diversity of experiences and perspectives, and the diversity of our unique location in Southcentral Alaska that comes from the Alaska Native peoples of this area.

The College of Arts and Sciences contributes to UAA's mission with a suite of programs that provide, among other things,

1. general education courses for undergraduates in CAS and other Colleges,

2. opportunities for undergraduates to pursue majors in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and the arts, and
3. opportunities for faculty and students to pursue research and creative activities in CAS's academic disciplines,
4. graduate programs for advanced studies.

Given decreased enrollments across UAA and significant budget cuts to CAS, the challenge is to serve UAA's and CAS's missions with only 75% of the funds it had in 2018-2019. CAS's shrinking budget is especially challenging for programs that rely on state financial appropriations through CAS because the programs have a gap between (a) the total costs of everything the program does and needs, and (b) the tuition CAS receives to cover those costs. This describes most programs in CAS: most rely on state appropriations and CAS has 30% less than it had two years ago.

CAS's Department of Art BFA contributes to CAS's and UAA's mission by providing general education instruction with courses in art appreciation and art history, allowing Art majors to select specializations in two of seven studio-based concentrations (including Ceramics, Drawing, Illustration, Painting, Photography, Printmaking and Sculpture), requiring students to produce a thesis, and giving program faculty the opportunity to pursue their own research and creativities as professional artists. When compared to the BA in Art, the BFA program has stringent admissions requirements, and is more intensive and selective, and requires – among other things -- more studio-based instruction. Both the BFA and BA are accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD), an optional accreditation that is not required for training or employment in art.

Program Demand (including service to other programs), Efficiency, and Productivity

ART courses are in high demand, producing 50% more student credit hours than the average in CAS, with 55% of the student credits hours coming from non-Art majors (a number just below the CAS average). During the years under review, 22-23 incoming students on average declare Art as their major, putting it behind only Biology and Psychology as the majors most in demand by high-school students. A select few of those students end up in the BFA. Although demand for ART courses is strong, program efficiency is a challenge. Certainly, the Department's general education courses can accommodate 40-75 students per section, but its studio-based classes must be small because of limits on the studio size and safety considerations. As a result, for every year under review, the instructional costs to deliver all ART courses (including general education courses, and courses for Art majors) exceeded the revenue that CAS received to cover the courses. This is more challenging for the BFA than the BA in Art because the BFA requires more studio courses. Furthermore, when the costs of everything faculty and department-specific staff do (including, teaching, research, service, and safety-related tasks), the Department as a whole ran a steep deficit in 2019, exceeded by only 4 of CAS's other 18 undergraduate programs. Finally, the BFA program also has challenges in its productivity. Because the BFA program is highly selective, requiring students to first establish their capabilities as Pre-BFA students, not all incoming Art majors become Art BFA majors, and fewer graduate with the BFA. Since 2013, on average only 5 students per year graduated with the BFA, while the BA produced 20 graduates per year.

Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success

The program's quality is strong and students benefit from two-years of small studio-based classes with professionally accomplished faculty. Although studio-based classes cannot be offered through distance, the Department faculty do offer their general education classes online.

Program Duplication / Distinctiveness

Like UAA, UAF offers a BA and BFA in Art. Given that studio-based art instruction must be delivered face-to-face, concern about direct competition is minimal. If one of the BFA programs were deleted,

students from either Anchorage or Fairbanks would have to relocate and the studio facilities might not be big enough for the combined group of students.

Commendations and Recommendations

The faculty in the program are commended for the intense work and long hours in the studios that routinely stack/combine 300-level courses with 400-level courses to improve efficiency. The faculty should also be commended for the hard work they put into their expedited program review submission.

Decision

Revision.

Budget cuts are forcing CAS to evolve quickly, doing less of some things it did in the past, especially in programs and departments where the various revenues do not cover the program's or department's costs for all the faculty and program-specific staff. Unfortunately, with its modest state appropriations, CAS likely cannot sustain the BFA in its current form. To be sustainable in the long-run with less state appropriations, the faculty in the Art Department must revise this program. UAA's program review process gives the following examples of areas for revision:

- *faculty or staff workloads and assignments,*
- *curriculum,*
- *program delivery,*
- *student success initiatives,*
- *outreach and/or partnerships with the community or industry, program promotion and*
- *marketing, and facilities.*

All of these options could be on the table, however, four are most pressing. First, in terms of curriculum, the number of concentration areas should be reduced. With seven concentrations (Ceramics, Drawing, Illustration, Painting, Photography, Printmaking and Sculpture), there might be more concentrations than sustainable for the number of students we serve. Second, the number of studio sections offered each semester should be reduced where possible. Given that studio-based courses must be limited in size, the tuition from the small number of students rarely covers the instructional costs, meaning that most studio courses lose money. The only place this might work is with Ceramics where we offer multiple sections of some classes each semester and each year, and where instructional costs are higher than some other concentrations. Third, given UAA's budget problems, the Art Department must assume that CAS will have no funds to operate the Kimura Gallery. As such, the Department must develop a plan for that gallery that does not involve state appropriations through CAS. Finally, given UAA's budget problems, the program must conduct an objective cost-benefit analysis of having accreditation with the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD). Although NASAD accreditation is a point of pride, it is not required. As such, faculty should fairly address the following questions:

1. What are the various costs and obligations that come from NASAD accreditation?
 - a. How does that accreditation impact what the Art Department must do in terms of courses, faculty hiring, facilities, equipment, etc.?
 - b. How does it impact the duties faculty and staff must do to apply and retain accreditation?
2. What are the various benefits of having NASAD accreditation?
 - a. Among UAA's peer institutions with NASAD accreditation, what benefits do those institutions and its graduates gain?
 - b. In what ways are non-accredited institutions no different than NASAD-accredited ones?

The program should report on its progress by Spring 2021.