

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Academic Program Review
College of Arts and Sciences

DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM

Art and Architecture Department:
Architecture and Community Design, Arts History/Arts Management, Design, and Fine Arts

EXTERNAL REVIEWERS

Associate Professor Lancelot Coar, Fordham University of Manitoba
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CAMPUS VISIT

November 2nd – 4th 2016

The review team read the self-study written by the faculty in USF's Art and Architecture Department, reviewed the curriculum, course syllabi and evaluations; interviewed faculty, students and staff; and met with the Dean, Associate Deans and other relevant members of the campus community. Prior to their visit, the reviewers were provided with USF's Vision, Mission, Values Statement, the program's self-study and other university materials.

1. How did the external review committee rate the quality of the program – excellent, very good, good, adequate, or poor? How does the program compare with benchmark top-tier programs nationally? Please provide a brief rationale for the external review committee's rating.

The committee stated that "Overall the quality of the department is impressive, diverse, and ambitious for the scale, scope, and resources allotted to it by the university." They noted that the Art and Architecture faculty members are "top tier" but are "hampered" by "limited facilities, restrictive scheduling, and a low full-time faculty to adjunct ratio." This **theme of major challenges in space and facilities pervades the reviewers' report and was a major factor in their ratings of the four programs** within the Department: the committee gave the Architecture program an overall rating of **adequate**; the Art History/ Arts Management program an overall rating of **very good**; the Design program an overall rating of **adequate**; and the Fine Art program an overall rating of **Poor**.

2. What are the most important general issues that emerged from the external review process?

The committee stated the Art and Architecture Department's "overwhelming problem" is the "inadequate" and lack of space. They noted that "inadequate" and lack "is the root of most (but not all) of the major problems the department faces.

The committee stated "a serious concern" with "basic building code and safety violations that appear to be occurring as a consequence to these inadequate and improper spaces."

The Architecture and Fine Arts programs “are most directly impacted by the constraints of the space they are working in. This constraint significantly stifles the research and teaching in these programs and needs to be addressed urgently.”

The committee also noted that the “website of the Department is problematic on a number of levels.” The presentation of the department and its program on the website was “not always complete or accurate,” “the presentation of the programs feel disconnected with what is actually happening in the school,” and that representation of the programs and facilities are both “inaccurate and misleading”.

“Curricular challenges are different for each program but across the board the severe spatial issues and very low number of full time faculty are shaping decisions and often having more effect on curricular planning than the needs of students and the community.”

More upper level courses need to be developed and offered across all programs but especially in the Fine Arts program. The Fine Arts program “operates on a “sampler” fashion in which a variety of courses are offered but no real way of honing skills is offered beyond the beginning level.”

3. What specific recommendations for improving the program’s quality has the external review committee made to the Dean?

The committee provided the following recommendations, emphasizing that the overarching need in the department is for adequate space and proper facilities (i.e., items outside of space and facilities are important but pale in comparison to the glaring problems with space and facilities):

Facilities

- The committee stated throughout their report that the largest issues the Art and Architecture faces is space. The committee recommended that proper space must be created in collaboration with faculty to serve the multiple needs:
 - a. The programs across the department all need 24-hour access to a fully equipped digital fabrication laboratory. This includes CNC milling, 3d printing, laser cutting/engraving, and tools and supplies for building basic electronics. This lab will also require expert staffing that can provide for safe operation and guidance on how students can use the tools to convey their ideas.
 - b. Dedicated studio spaces with proper ventilation and lighting with work storage for each level of the ARCD program
 - c. Additional Design Lab dedicated for open study use, so that other Design outfitted classrooms can be dedicated specifically to teaching
 - d. Dedicated wood and metal construction and assembly spaces
 - e. Spaces for longer term testing of materials and constructions
 - f. Dedicated spaces for ceramic production
 - g. Spaces for clean assembly and production
 - h. Spaces for storing student projects impractical to be taken home on a daily basis
 - i. Spaces for sharing and critiquing work from DSGN, ARCD, FNAR and

ARTM

- j. Spaces for engaging the community in conversation and collaboration
 - k. Proper distance between quiet and loud spaces
 - l. Install functioning blackout shades in classrooms where art history is taught and fix broken windows.
 - m. A seminar room should be allotted for upper level art history classes.
 - n. ARTM faculty should have offices nearby each other; currently they are spread out from the west end of campus to the extreme east end of campus (XARTS and Masonic).
- The committee highly encouraged the University Administration as well as members of the Board of Governors to “make a point to visit the Department facilities, in particular the X-Arts building, during peak teaching time to get a full grasp of the extent of the concerns over space.”

Accreditation

The FNAR and DSGN programs both might consider trying for NASAD (National Association of Schools of Art and Design) accreditation. This would not only garner recognition for the program and place it more strongly as a place to study arts and design, but it would also provide leverage with nationally accepted standards for spaces, resources, and faculty that are currently missing.

Faculty and Staff

Hire more full-time faculty, as well as professional staff for advising, in order to reduce the heavy advising load each full-time faculty member currently carries. Consider converting current full-time term faculty positions to tenure-track positions.

Curriculum, Instruction and Student Opportunities

- If more space was available, the Architecture program could consider adding more contemporary design and fabrication equipment/“basic” emerging hardware such as 3D printers, laser cutters, and CNC routers to help students advance current interest in full scale construction and scaled modeling.
- The Design program must continue to consider the shape of their curriculum in terms of the narrow or broad ideas of design they are trying to teach and what students believe they are studying design for (in the hub of the technology sector). It must also consider deeply the effects on the program if connecting with the Advertising major and/or the Computer Science UX/UI related majors; the capacity of the spaces and faculty are already full.
- The Art History / Arts Management program should consider modifying the CORE courses “so that some art appreciation courses could be replaced by Art History survey courses.”
- While some Art History / Arts Management “faculty members are undertaking study abroad teaching, their courses do not seem to be integrated into the course offerings or advertised to USF students. This is a missed opportunity for USF students as study abroad programs conducted by USF faculty in art history would

be an excellent way to create interest in the discipline and once they developed, they would relieve pressure on existing campus resources.”

- Besides the obvious challenges of space, the Fine Arts curriculum is almost too small for any fine arts student to develop and cultivate skills beyond the basic level. Students do not have the opportunity to take intermediate and advanced level courses in their desired subject as they would at other comparable institutions. The fine arts department operates in a “sampler” fashion in which a variety of courses are offered but no real way to hone skills is offered beyond the beginning level

Alumni Tracking

“The campus recruitment and admissions offices could work more closely with the department in order to accurately present the department’s offerings to prospective students and identify incoming students who may be interested in the major - for example, those students who have taken AP Art History in high school.”

“The development office could track alumni, particularly those who went on to graduate school in Art History or careers in Architecture, Fine Arts, Arts Management or Museum work and provide this information to the faculty. This would be a useful resource for faculty and could potentially aid the University’s efforts in fundraising for the visual arts. Clearly what USF needs is a building dedicated to the Arts.”

Website

“Faculty need to given access to the campus web page in order to accurately describe the program, post course descriptions, notices of group advising sessions, and events such as guest speakers, art exhibitions, and study abroad opportunities.”

4. In the opinion of the external review committee, is the program following the University’s strategic initiatives?

The committee found that, despite critical challenges with inadequate space and insufficient facilities and equipment, the Art and Architecture Department’s mission aligned with the University’s mission and strategic priorities clearly and in a direct and meaningful way that is evident in teaching, research and service to the larger community. “The university as a whole would be well served if the department was afforded more space in which to engage in this work and enable the faculty to better engage the rest of the university and the larger community. There is a consistent and robust awareness of the department’s mission and goals by the faculty and students. This was reflected in both conversations with faculty and students and in the pedagogical and research outcomes of the various programs, though it was more in evidence in some more than others. Students graduating from this program will be well equipped on a personal level to make meaningful contributions to their community and the faculty should be commended for their stewardship in this regard.”

5. In what way is the program contributing to the goal of making the University of San Francisco a premier Jesuit, Catholic urban university with a global perspective that educates leaders who will fashion a more humane and just world?

“Education through the visual arts has historically been central to the dissemination of the Jesuit mission.” The committee found that in all four programs of the Art and Architecture Department “there is a serious commitment on the part of faculty, despite being hampered and constrained by very significant space and facilities challenges, to embrace the values of this mission and to apply it to contemporary conditions. That aim is clearly communicated to students who, in turn, are responding enthusiastically to their leadership. The many and varied ways that the issue of social justice is addressed across the curriculum struck the review team as innovative and prescient.”

6. What is the timetable for the response to the external review committee’s recommendations for program improvement? What can the Office of the Provost do to appropriately respond to the review?

The next step is for the Dean and Associate Deans to meet with the Chair and full time faculty members of the Art and Architecture Department and discuss the action plan based on the self-study and reviewers’ report. Based on the reviewer’s suggestions, the Office of the Provost could assist the program by developing and implementing solutions to the critical space and facilities issues facing the Department so the programs offered can effectively utilize the talented faculty and maximize growth and success of students.

7. What general comments or issues, if any, are crucial to understanding the reviewers report?

“The 2009 review ended by saying “Without question, the most pressing issue for the department and its future development is space.” The current reviewers can only repeat this recommendation and note that since nothing has been done to implement this recommendation in over seven years, there does not seem to be any real commitment on the part of the university administration to genuinely address the needs of this Department. Without this commitment, it is unlikely that the root causes of many of these pressing problems will be addressed, further perpetuating the strain, fatigue and frustration felt by the faculty and students of this school. This is unsustainable.”