

Final Assessment Report of Bachelor of Arts (Studio Art, Art History and Visual Culture, Film Studies and Visual Culture), Master of Fine Arts (Studio Art)

December 2015

Introduction

In accordance with uWaterloo's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this final assessment report provides a summary and synthesis of (i) the external review of the three BA programs in Studio Art, Art History and Visual Culture, and Film Studies and Visual Culture and the MFA program in Studio Art, (ii) the program (department) response to the external review, and (iii) an implementation plan for improvements that lists specific actions, timelines, required resources and responsibility.

The Fine Arts Department was last reviewed in 2007. Although self-studies were prepared separately for the graduate (2006) and undergraduate (2007) programs, the two programs were reviewed by external reviewers at the same time in the fall of 2007. Recommendations from the last program review have resulted in improvements in curriculum, courses, admissions processes, library resources, space for students, involvement of faculty beyond the department and Faculty of Arts, and strategic faculty and staff appointments.

Self-Study Process and Site Visit

The Chair of the Department of Fine Arts assumed primary responsibility for guiding the self-study process. Each faculty member, except those on sabbatical, was assigned one or more major sections of the self-study to complete. Staff were also involved in contributing to the self-study. Institutional Analysis and Planning provided the usual wide array of data required to support the self-study. The Centre for Teaching Excellence conducted three workshops with Fine Arts faculty members to create the UDLEs (in 2009) and GDLEs (in 2013-4) mapping charts. Student opinion was solicited through surveys. For current students, survey questions were appended to the Fall 2013 course evaluation forms for four key Fine Arts courses in Fall 2013. For undergraduate and graduate alumni, the department worked with the Office of Advancement. Current undergraduate and graduate students were also interviewed by the external reviewers as part of the review process.

The Department of Fine Arts submitted their self-study to offices of the Associate Vice President, Academic and Associate Provost, Graduate Studies on August 25, 2014. In addition to

faculty CVs (volume II of the submission), a comprehensive set of appendices accompanied the report, including: degree requirements, course descriptions, a list of visiting artists and scholars, staff job descriptions, information on the University of Waterloo Art Gallery, the external reviewers' report from 2007, the co-op report, and information on experiential learning, library resources, the MFA program, student awards and internships, course questionnaires, survey instruments and results, and the five-year plan for the Department of Fine Arts.

The site visit was conducted November 20-21, 2014. The external members of the review team were Alex Poruchnyk, School of Arts, University of Manitoba and David Merritt, Department of Visual Arts, Western University. The internal member was Dr. Vivian Dayeh, Department of Biology. The review team met with program administrators and departmental faculty (including sessional faculty) and staff, graduate and undergraduate students, as well as the Faculty Dean and Associate Dean (Undergraduate Studies), the Associate Provost, Graduate Studies and Associate Vice-President, Academic. The reviewers also visited numerous studios, resource centres, lecture theatres, art galleries and faculty and administrative spaces.

The external reviewers' report was received on January 2, 2015 and the department's response and implementation strategy, with timelines, responsibilities and resource needs assessment was received on April 29, 2015 and approved by the Dean of Arts on May 15, 2015.

This final assessment report is based on information extracted, verbatim in many cases, from the self-study, the reviewers' report and the program response.

Fine Arts Programs Under Review

Bachelor program

In 2011 the Department activated entirely new undergraduate curriculums in studio, art history and visual culture, and film studies and visual culture to keep pace with the changing nature of art scholarship and practice and the study of art and the visual image. The current bachelor programs are (i) Studio Practice, (ii) Art History and Visual Culture, and (iii) Film Studies and Visual Culture which are available through a variety of different bachelor programs (see below). The department has plans to merge the latter two programs in the near future into a new program called Visual Culture, a move strongly endorsed by the External Reviewers who indicated that the "planned Visual Culture designation will serve to align studies in this program with a growing number of programs adopting similar methodological approaches and nomenclature in Canada and internationally. It will also clearly differentiate the focus of the degree from film studies programs currently available through other universities in the region." The currently available Bachelor programs are:

- Three-Year General Fine Arts
- Four-Year General Fine Arts
- Honours Fine Arts (note all Honours Fine Arts programs offer students a choice in year 4 of either the Studio stream or the Studio Practicum stream)

- Honours Fine Arts, Arts and Business Regular
- Honours Fine Arts, Arts and Business Co-op (note that the Fine Arts Department does not have a department co-op program. Fine Arts students participate in co-op through this plan.)
- Joint Honours Fine Arts (note all Joint Honours programs are taken with another discipline program at the University of Waterloo)

The program also offers two minors (Fine Arts Studio Minor and a Visual Culture in a Global Context Minor) as well as two specializations which can be taken in conjunction with a Fine Arts major plan (Fine Arts - Teaching Preparation Specialization, and the Professional Practice Specialization);

Master of Fine Art Program

The Master of Fine Art is the sole graduate offering, and is offered in four fields:

- Painting
- Sculpture
- Electronic imaging (digital)
- Drawing

However, hybridity across these fields and other fields (e.g. performance, sound art) also occurs, consistent with the nature of much contemporary art practice. Note: the MFA is still generally considered the terminal degree in Fine Art (although doctoral programs are increasingly on the rise).

Strengths and Challenges

General

Strengths

- Department's continued commitment to excellent pedagogy by offering a diverse, innovative and flexible curriculum that embraces a range of media and approaches to the study of studio practice and visual culture and by enhancing the student experience generally, as well as continuing to maintain a high level of research pursued by each member of faculty.
- Committed faculty and sessional instructors who are active practicing artists and scholars of significant repute and who bring their professional experience and critical acumen into the classroom environment.
- Strong faculty-student interaction
- Program-related support appears efficiently maximized in light of the relatively tight human and physical resources currently available to the program

Challenges

- Faculty have heavy teaching loads (5 courses/year) as well as significant service demands related to administering and delivering the intricacies of both undergraduate and studio graduate programs, as well as the extra contact hours associated with the teaching of studio courses, 2.5 hours per course twice a week (with only limited technical support).
- Staff complement (administrative assistants and technicians) remains small vis-à-vis the size of the student body and the complexity of the programs offered in Fine Arts, especially considering the MFA in the departmental offerings.
- Until more recently, the location of the Department in East Campus Hall on Phillip Street, on the periphery of the main campus, resulted in isolation from the rest of the Faculty of Arts and the university as a whole. However, this situation is changing rapidly with the construction of the new Engineering buildings, as well as new student housing east of campus.

Specific to the BA

Strengths

- Experiential learning opportunities: (i) undergraduate students in the final year of the honours studio program develop an independent body of work and participate in the honours graduation exhibition held in the University of Waterloo Art Gallery (UWAG), (ii) availability of visiting artists, curatorial opportunities, field trips, work in local galleries and art institutions, workshops, and course trips abroad.

Challenges

- The recent 40% increase in undergraduate student enrolment in Fine Art programs is stretching available resources. Space resources are sufficiently limited that the external reviewers recommended the “department consider restricting undergraduate enrolment until more campus space comes available.” Total undergraduate enrollments in 2007/08 were 1434; in 2013/14 they were 2015. Note that this data includes headcounts only, academic courses only, excludes Co-op, PD and work report courses and represents only the primary class components for each fiscal year. In 2007/08 14 sessional appointments were made. In 2013/14 18 sessional appointments were made.
- Sessional instructors carry a significant portion of the course delivery in the Department, representing up to 40% of the teaching in the program over the past seven years.

Specific to the MFA

Strengths

- Experiential learning opportunities: (i) Each MFA student has the opportunity to exhibit their solo thesis exhibition in UWAG or another appropriate professional space, (ii) Shantz internship for MFA students offers exceptional opportunity for study abroad.
- Research and scholarly record of core faculty members is strong, and there is a notable diversity in the secondary and tertiary fields among the core faculty research areas.

- MFA students have a Pedagogy elective available to them, where under faculty supervision, students have the opportunity to design and deliver their own course material in their second year in the program. This also allows MFA students to build a teaching dossier prior to looking for a placement in another university or college.

Challenges

- The MFA program at the University of Waterloo is amongst the smallest in the country, with only four students admitted each year for a total of eight students across the five-term program, due to various reasons: space, financial resources, technical and administrative support, already pressing demands on the faculty.

Summary of the External Reviewers' Findings

The Reviewers were unanimous and unequivocal in their support of the Fine Arts Department and its undergraduate and graduate (MFA) programs. The three-person review committee was “genuinely impressed with the energy and dedication of the faculty, staff and students” and acknowledged the breadth and depth of pedagogy and research within the Department. In particular, the committee was impressed with the creative and intellectual development that is central to the programs, delivered through a core academic structure buttressed by a diverse range of professional practice and experiential learning requirements and opportunities. The Committee emphasized the high national and international profile, strength and relevance of the faculty and sessional instructors, as well as their dedicated commitment to pedagogy. Furthermore, the reviewers “found the culture of the Department open, collegial, and respectful, with a remarkably consistent spirit of community and sense of common cause among the faculty, staff and students [that] enriches student experience and clearly sustains the program’s healthy retention numbers, as well as its attractiveness to recruiting students and faculty”.

The External Reviewers did note, however, that the Department of Fine Arts faces substantial challenges. While the Department is no longer “technology starved” as it was described in the 2007 Program Review, lack of sufficient administrative and technical support, pressure on existing space, and faculty workload are hampering the Department’s ability to sustain the same level of vitality as it moves into the future.

The external reviewers reported on their findings using the evaluation criteria set out in Waterloo’s IQAP. They found the University of Waterloo undergraduate and graduate Fine Arts program consistent with the Faculty of Arts mission and academic plans. The external reviewers found the Fine Arts undergraduate degree level expectations to be appropriately developed throughout the curriculum from introduction, reinforcement and mastery.

Admissions requirements for the undergraduate and graduate programs seem to be appropriate. Admission to the MFA program is an Honours degree in Visual Arts or its equivalent from a recognized university or art college, and a minimum of an 80% average and these requirements are consistent with comparable MFA programs in Canada.

In light of the 2011 changes to the curriculum in the undergraduate Fine Arts program, the external reviewers noted the “value of comprehensive mechanisms introduced for guiding students through their degree milestones and program requirements...”. The external reviewers did make a number of recommendations concerning curriculum improvements to reduce redundancies and gaps, however, and these are noted specifically below as part of the program response documentation. Following from the 2007 review, the department has made significant advancements in adding and integrating new technologies in the studio curriculum, and according to the external reviewers, this is progressing very well. With only minor exception the external reviewers found the variable modes of program delivery to be effective and consistent with the programs’ learning outcomes.

For the undergraduate program, assessment methods are consistent with the learning objectives for its students as set out in the self-study document and with similar programs across North America. Undergraduate studio work in the program is generally assessed on a project assignment basis and typically includes evaluation of communication skills in seminars, critiques, reports and other written assignments. Art History/Film Studies/Visual Culture courses generally assess achievement through essays, reports, exams and quizzes.

The Graduate program has set out clear learning outcomes measured against a well-stepped five-term framework of professional study as students progress in their program. Assessment of students’ written, oral and visual performance takes place at measured intervals in each semester over this period and culminates in the oral defense of a professional body of work presented in a thesis exhibition. Students’ professional achievement is also assessed in the context of a pedagogy seminar and subsequent in-class teaching situations. These methods are appropriate and consistent with Fine Art MFA programs in North America.

The external reviewers expressed significant concerns around the workload issues for faculty and staff and questioned the sustainability of the current situation. Based on information in the self-study, the “current technical and administrative support positions for the Fine Arts program in the University place it at the lowest tier among comparable Fine Art Department programs in Canada” – a concern that could eventually “impact the quality, level of ambition and safe conduct of students’ work in the program.” The program is well-supported by the university library, however, and the departmental Visual Resource Centre and the University of Waterloo Art Gallery. With respect to the latter, the reviewers noted “the fragility of its operations given an operating budget and staff resources that appear minimal in relation to most similarly mandated galleries across the country.”

Student feedback from the survey and meeting during the site visit generally reflected well on the program, and students provided critical insights into program improvements which informed the reviewers’ report. Course evaluation scores, averaged for classes of all sizes, support students’ overall satisfaction with Fine Art courses over the past three years.

Student quality is high for both undergraduate and graduate students based on retention rates and degree completion times. In fact, for the MFA program, the reviewers commented that “all students who entered the MFA program have successfully graduated with their degree since 1998 with the exception of one withdrawal.” Given the preceding, the reviewers were “surprised by the relatively small number of applicants seeking admission to the program over the past two years.”

The alumni survey responses from students who completed undergraduate degrees indicated a wide breadth of careers, both related and in some cases, unrelated, to professional occupations associated with graduation from a Fine Arts program. Graduates of the MFA program since 2007 have had a high degree of success, reflecting very well on the professional preparation their program provides. The reviewers noted that most all of its graduates are continuing to work as artists over this period, with many acquiring full-time or sessional employment teaching at the post-secondary level.

Program Response to External Reviewer Recommendations

Responses to 22 specific recommendations from the external reviewers follow. These responses include timelines for implementation of changes, responsibility for follow-through and indication of what resources are needed and how they will be provided. Responses are provided under 3 major categories: resources, curriculum, and teaching and assessment.

Resources:

- **Recommendation 1:** “the Appraisal Committee felt there was much to celebrate and champion in the Fine Arts program and strongly recommend the Department continue to find ways to promote its distinct strengths and uniqueness on campus, as well as within the region and larger cultural community”.

Response: The Department instituted a faculty administrative position in public relations about three years ago and has strengthened its communication efforts through its websites, Facebook, Akimbo, etc. UWAG employed a part-time Audience Coordinator for two years which significantly increased UWAG’s profile (and, by extension, the Department’s) regionally and nationally. Unfortunately, this position was not ongoing. Plans for moving forward:

1. The Department plans to create a ‘splash-page’ that runs parallel and is linked to the official UW site. The intent is to appeal to the art-focused audience that is the Department’s primary audience. Responsibility: Digital Media faculty members.
Timeline: December 2016.
2. The Department will continue to enhance its profile by posting visiting artists’ talks, student exhibitions, MFA thesis exhibitions, etc. on its website and Facebook page. Responsibility: Visual Resources Curator and Digital Media faculty member. Timeline: in place and ongoing.
3. Re-establishment of the Audience Coordinator on a permanent, part-time basis, for both

UWAG and Fine Arts. Responsibility: Dean of Arts and/or Vice-President Administration and Finance. Timeline: December 2018.

4. Assured ongoing funding for the Department to advertise its programs, 4th-year and MFA exhibitions in *Canadian Art's School Guide*, *Border Crossings* and Akimbo (a national listserv for the national art community) to hit target audiences. Responsibility: Dean of Arts.

- **Recommendation 2:** “the University, Department and University of Waterloo Art Gallery work together to determine the most effective means possible to place appropriate public signage identifying the location of the Gallery to the campus and larger community.”

Response: Lack of signage for UWAG and Fine Arts has been an ongoing issue, pre-dating the last Program Review, with no evident progress made since then. This circumstance is an obvious detriment to public outreach, with UWAG so conveniently located off busy Philip St. Responsibility: Dean of Arts; Plant Operations and Vice-President Administration and Finance.

- **Recommendation 3:** “the reviewers strongly recommend that the University work with the Department to find the means to increase technical support for the Fine Arts program. We would consider the addition of at least one 0.5 technical position critical to current program delivery. We also recommend the Department explore the feasibility of hiring appropriately skilled and trained graduate students or senior undergraduate students to aid with wood and metal shop supervisions”. For the print studio, the Reviewers wrote: “The reviewers were surprised to find the technically intensive printmaking shop relying on volunteer technical support. This arrangement suggests the Department has had to turn to provisional measures to support delivery of their program and raises in our eyes significant questions regarding the sustainability and appropriateness of such arrangements”.

Response: Hiring of graduate and/or senior undergraduate students in these roles is not feasible according to the University’s safety policies. The Department has identified areas in critical need of technical support: ceramics, metal, and print. Two 0.5 positions would address the deficiency.

- 0.5 technician in Ceramics and Metal: Currently the Ceramics Professor provides all technical support. For metal, the Department currently hires a technician on an hourly basis to ensure appropriate support for technical instruction and safety for courses that involve metal, as well as for senior undergrads and MFA students working with metal.
- 0.5 technician in Print: Currently the Department relies on a volunteer to provide technical support in the Print Studio, as well as on the Print Professor. This arrangement is logistically and pedagogically untenable with the significant increase since 2011 in enrollments in print courses and students working in print at the senior undergrad and MFA level (in conjunction with our new hire in Print and the consequent revitalization of

Print in the Department).
Responsibility: Dean of Arts.

- **Recommendation 4:** “the university considers the means of increasing Fine Arts studio space to meet the demands of recent enrolment and teaching area expansions. During the Appraisal Committee visit there was mention of possible future annexation of spaces in ECH currently occupied by other programs. In the reviewers’ view, this would be an ideal solution. In the interim, we feel the department consider limiting undergraduate enrolment growth until more campus space comes available.”

Response: Since the last review, the undergraduate program in Fine Arts has grown by 40-45% (see Table 23A in the self-study).

- 2014-15 marked the largest senior Honours cohort (43) in the Department’s history, and as a consequence, Fine Arts improvised; rather than working in open shared studio spaces, ten 4th-year honours students were tucked into borrowed space around ECH. The appropriate means of pedagogy has become untenable. The Department and Dean’s Office continue to make concerted attempts to secure more space.
- Faculty-wide Plan Standardization and the lowering of the honours average to 70% is likely to have a significant impact, increasing pressure on the current space.
- The current (shared) MAC lab is now beyond capacity and the conversion of a drawing studio for the creation of the lab has meant the remaining drawing studio is also at capacity. A ‘clean drawing room’, furnished with computers, multi-media equipment (see Reviewers’ suggestion, pp. 9-10) and drawing tables would address this need. The new undergraduate initiative between Fine Arts and Computer Science and the continued growth of the Stratford programs will further increase pressure on this type of studio space.
- The MFA program has also been inhibited by lack of space; we are now in a situation of needing to grow the MFA program by two students a year, to use properly the endowment provided by Keith and Win Shantz. However, there is no space to accommodate any more graduate students and the Reviewers have noted that the existing MFA space is mediocre at best compared to other institutions.

The Reviewers’ recommendation to limit undergraduate growth until space can be found runs counter to the mission of the Department, Faculty and University.
Responsibility: Dean of Arts; Associate Provost, Resources. Timeline: Ongoing.

- **Recommendation 5:** “the Department considers revising the Experiential Learning course requirements to allow intern students the possibility of repeat assignments with employers and sufficient time to follow through on initiated projects.”

Response: Currently, students can repeat internships at the same institution. Fine Arts is considering enhancing the length of the internships so students can work on more involved, meaningful projects. Longer term, the Department is committed to expanding

the internship opportunities for undergraduate students and has identified national and international internship opportunities as a focus for fundraising and advancement. Additional administrative support is required before any expansion can take place; currently a faculty member handles all of the administration. Responsibility: Chair; Dean of Arts. Timeline: December 2016 for minor adjustments to local internships; December 2018 for longer term opportunities.

- **Recommendation 6:** “The Faculty of Arts and Fine Arts Department work together to find a way to offset the current workload of the Department Administrative Assistant, particularly during peak program enrolment periods.”

Response: The job description for the Fine Arts administrative assistant is 9 pages long; the position embraces undergraduate and graduate matters, building issues, enrollments, course trips, chair, exhibition, visitor and exhibition assistance, and much more. A comparative study revealed that Fine Arts at UW is underserved in terms of administrative support positions vis-à-vis comparable Fine Arts departments in Canada (see table 1.1, p. 13 in self-study). The level of administrative assistance has not kept pace with the increased student population in Fine Arts. Expansion of any aspect of either the undergraduate or graduate program is also predicated on the need for additional administrative support. (This is particularly urgent in the case of the MFA given the terms of the Shantz internship funding.) Responsibility: The Dean of Arts. While the addition of a 0.5 or 1.0 permanent position would be ideal, other options are being considered in light of budgetary constraints. Timeline: In place.

- **Recommendation 7:** “The Department considers extending the weekly visits of a main campus librarian to the Visual Resource Centre to advise students in their broader research needs to promote the acquisition of information skills through in-class bibliographic instruction at both the undergraduate and graduate level.

Response: This initiative seems entirely plausible. Responsibility: Chair of Fine Arts, Dana Porter liaison librarian and the Fine Arts Visual Resources Curator. Timeline: In place.

- **Recommendation 8:** “The Visual Resource Centre work with the University to enable Fine Art students to gain access to its holdings from remote locations.”

Response: This is potentially feasible. Responsibility: Chair of Fine Arts, Dana Porter liaison librarian and the Fine Arts Visual Resources Curator. Timeline: December 2016.

- **Recommendation 9:** Concerning UWAG, “The University review its art collection holdings and consider hiring a third party consultant to undertake a systematic inventory and assessment, including appraisals and condition reports, in order to determine policies appropriate to the handling, storage, display, and insuring (or potential deaccessioning) of its contents.”

Response: At present, UWAG has no administrative assistance except at a very minimal level provided by OSAP work-study students. This, combined with UWAG's very small budget, precludes a proper assessment of the permanent collection. A third party consultant will result in highlighting the strengths of the collection – notably the strong focus on late 1960s/early 1970s Canadian Modernism. **Responsibility:** Dean of Arts; Vice-President, Administration and Finance.

- **Recommendation 10:** “The Department considers the feasibility of providing Fine Arts student interns with the opportunity of working with UWAG and the University permanent collection to develop appropriate interpretative signage for each piece from the permanent collection currently installed around campus.” (p. 20)

Response: This is feasible. The UWAG Director/Curator has already worked with one student intern in 2014 to do an initial assessment of the permanent collection.

Responsibility: Fine Arts Experiential Learning Liaison (Department member) and UWAG Director/Curator. **Timeline:** December 2016.

- **Recommendation 11:** “The Department work with the University to resolve issues associated with the implementation of the new UW Enrolment system in the Fine Arts program. The current system has placed inordinate pressures on the faculty and staff, frequently requiring manual enrolment of its students.”

Response: The Department is supported by the Arts Undergraduate Office in its ongoing dialogue with the Registrar's Office to overcome the hurdles that impede students' ability to enroll easily in their Fine Arts courses. While progress has been slow, some procedures have begun to be implemented. Similarly, the current scheduling system does not effectively serve the specific nature of Fine Arts studio pedagogy. While the Chair of Fine Arts has succeeded in maintaining ability to schedule courses, there is no guarantee this autonomy will continue into the future. **Responsibility:** Chair of Fine Arts, Associate Dean of Arts, Undergraduate, and Registrar's Office (Systems and Scheduling). **Timeline:** December 2016.

- **Recommendation 12:** “The Department limit further enrolment growth until such time that faculty workloads can be relieved through a reduction of required teaching loads or the creation of a further faculty position.”

Response: Faculty in Fine Arts teach 5 courses a year plus graduate supervision in a program that demands, by its very nature, high faculty-student interaction. This load is very high compared to other programs at UW and is at the highest end for Fine Arts programs in the country. Student demand on the existing courses is high and the Department is already reliant on sessional instructors to ensure enough courses are available. 2011 Fine Arts instituted an extensive overhaul of the curriculum,

allowing faculty to go from teaching 6 courses a year to 5. Limiting enrolment growth is inconsistent with the mission of the Department, Faculty of Arts, and University thus we continue to identify ways to offset the pressure on the current faculty.

Responsibility: Chair; Associate Chair Undergraduate Studies; Dean of Arts and Associate Vice-President, Academic. Timeline: December 2016.

- **Recommendation 13:** “The Committee recommends that the University examine its promotion criteria in view of encouraging progress through the ranks and better reviews in supporting of faculty promotions, particularly promotion to the rank of full professor.”

Response: At least one faculty member is planning to apply for full professorship in 2016. For some, the potential impact of high teaching loads and faculty service on research output have discouraged them from considering moving forward. Responsibility: Dean of Arts and Vice-President, Academic.

Curriculum

- **Recommendation 14:** “The committee strongly supports the Visual Culture program plan as it moves towards consolidation as an interdisciplinary degree with a home base in the Fine Arts Program. We recommend it going forward with developed and formally instituted protocols to guarantee the commitment of faculty, space, and resources necessary to sustain its viability over the long term. We further recommend the institution of a governing body constituted by core faculty to coordinate and guide its optimal and ongoing delivery as an integrated program.”

Response: Plans for implementing the revised Visual Culture program are well underway and will become effective, with the Plan Standardization initiative, in Fall 2016. Responsibility: Visual Culture Working Group: (Prof. Joan Coutu and Prof. Boyana Videkanic). Timeline: implementation, Fall 2016.

- **Recommendation 15:** “The appraisers recommend the Department examine the feasibility of implementing a Studio and Visual Culture Major Degree stream to respond to increased student demand for academic plan representative of a balance of courses drawn from the Studio and Visual Culture programs.”

Response: Currently a student cannot officially get a joint degree in Studio and Visual Culture because both programs are housed in the same department, although numerous students have completed the appropriate courses to get such a degree (the students’ diplomas and transcripts will say a major in either Studio or Visual Culture, but not both). Responsibility: The Chair and Associate Chair, Undergraduate, Fine Arts will initiate conversations with the Associate Dean, Undergraduate and the Registrar’s Office to determine a solution. Timeline: December 2016.

- **Recommendation 16:** “In revisiting their current studio course offerings, we recommend a Department Curriculum Committee review of the content of current course offerings with eye to further minimizing students’ experience of blind spots and redundancies of course content encountered by students’ in their progression through the program.”

Response: Redundancies are sometimes the perception of students, although the Department has kept an eye on potential overlap in FINE 100 and some of the 200-level courses. The Department Curriculum Committee is currently refining the curriculum implemented in 2011 to address ‘blind spots’, especially adding more technical courses in 3rd year and integrating the Arts and Business co-op students more effectively. **Responsibility:** Chair; Associate Chair, Undergraduate Studies. **Timeline:** implementation, Fall 2016.

- **Recommendation 17:** “the Department continues its enhancement of professional practice workshops for the MFA students in order to assure their access to a broader set of professional skill sets.”

Response: The Department has increased the number of workshop opportunities for both undergraduate and graduate students. Grant writing and academic writing workshops have also been provided solely for the graduate students. The Department would like to formalize and expand these opportunities yet such opportunities are particularly vulnerable to funding issues. **Responsibility:** Chair, and Associate Chair, Graduate Studies; Faculty of Arts, including Advancement. **Timeline:**—December 2016.

- **Recommendation 18:** “The Department restores offering the course Topics in Museums, Galleries and Curatorship (FINE 330) and considers making the course a requirement of the Professional Practice Specialization stream. We also recommend the Department consider renaming this Specialization stream to reflect its focus on gallery practices and to provide more explicit identification to potential employers after students graduate.”

Response: FINE 330 still exists and the plan is to run it on a fairly regular basis but this is conditioned upon sessional financing. The Professional Practice Specialization requires enhancement. **Responsibility:** Department Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. **Timeline:** implementation, Fall 2016 with other refinements to undergraduate curriculum.

- **Recommendation 19:** “the Department considers adding a media course to the core requirements of drawing and sculpture in the studio major program to balance students’ interdisciplinary skill sets of its students.” (p. 21)

Response: This has become part of the discussion of the current Curriculum Committee.
Responsibility: Department Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. **Timeline:** implementation, Fall 2016.

Teaching and Assessment:

- **Recommendation 20:** “The Department continues to develop the MFA Pedagogy course, particularly in the areas of pedagogical theory and through workshops in student engagement strategies and critiquing approaches and the development of teaching philosophies.”

Response: This process is well underway. **Responsibility:** Associate Chair, Graduate, Fine Arts. **Timeline:** December 2016.

- **Recommendation 21:** “The Department considers adding MFA professionalizing workshops (paralleling those offered in the undergraduate program).”

Response: See Recommendation above, under Curriculum. The Department would like to formalize and expand the existing experiential learning opportunities. **Responsibility:** Associate Chair, Graduate Fine Arts; Faculty of Arts, including Advancement. **Timeline:** December 2016.

- **Recommendation 22:** “As an alternative to the 20 still image documentation current required in support of MFA applications, we recommend the Department consider making explicit allowances for applicants to submit documentation of time-based media (i.e. media, video, sound, performance, installation etc.). This would fall in line with the broadened interdisciplinary orientation of the program and more effectively align with the goals of its evolving program”.

Response: This was an oversight in the Department’s website and has already been corrected.

Additional Recommendation:

Although not included in the concluding list of recommendations, the External Reviewers also suggested the Department consider parallel direct-entry admission into the undergraduate program. Such an initiative would attract “the most competitive and strongly identified applicants possible to the undergraduate program [and] would bring an enhanced profile and cultural benefits to the Department as a whole”.

Response: The Department has considered this possibility, for the reasons above and to augment further admissions to the Faculty of Arts generally. However, the pressure on existing resources makes such an initiative untenable, which the External Reviewers acknowledge.