

February 5, 2012

To: Thomas Discenna, Chair
Senate Planning Review Committee

From: Andrea Eis, Chair
Department of Art and Art History

Re: SPRC Concerns on the BA in Graphic Design

Cc: Virinder Moudgil, Provost
Michelle Piskulich, Associate Provost
Members of the Steering Committee of the Senate

The tenured, tenure-track and full-time faculty of the Department of Art and Art History met on February 4, 2012, to discuss the concerns that led to the SPRC vote to not support the Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Design, as noted in the memorandum of January 16, 2012. In response, the Department has several comments and has made some adjustments.

SPRC noted in its Concerns being “primarily concerned with the staffing plans submitted in the proposal...[which] identifies only a projection to hire two ‘full-time’ faculty members. The committee believes that it is unwise and inappropriate to staff a degree program without the stability proffered by tenure...we believe that operating a degree program without tenure is an invitation to instability that will have serious repercussions for the success of the program and the reputation of the university.” SPRC also noted that “the sole issue that led to their negative assessment was the lack of tenure-track leadership and that should this issue be rectified we would unanimously recommend this proposal.”

1. As stated in the Department’s January 5, 2012 response to a previous memo of SPRC concerns, the two “full-time” faculty line hires included in the Graphic Design major proposal were always intended to be “full-time tenure-track” positions. As we explained, “tenure-track” was omitted in error, not deliberately. It was not our intention that that these hires be full-time but not tenure-track. The Department will revise the wording in the proposal to clarify that all lines requested for this major will be both full-time and tenure-track. The Department has no intent to have a degree program without tenure-track and tenured faculty, and never did.
2. The first tenure-track hire in the Graphic Design major proposal is in the second year. In order to resolve any possible issues with a lack of a tenure-track faculty in the first year of the program, the Department has agreed to a shift in teaching assignments, so that a tenured faculty member, Associate Professor Andrea Eis, will teach in the major immediately. If the major is approved to start in fall 2012, Professor Eis will teach DES360 Motion Graphics, an upper-level course that is required for all graphic design majors. Sections of DES360 have been scheduled for fall 2012 and winter 2013, pending approval of the DES major and new courses. Students currently enrolled at OU who have taken the prerequisite (an existing course, DES335 Typography) will be able to take this course, as will transfer students with an appropriate equivalent transfer course. As also noted in our January 5, 2012 response, Professor Eis has over twenty years of freelance graphic design work experience, as well as experience teaching aspects of motion graphics in video art and digital film production classes at Oakland. Therefore, a tenured faculty member with appropriate expertise will be teaching in the program from its first year.
3. Regarding lack of “tenure-track leadership,” which appears to be a slightly different issue than staffing (which we assume refers to teaching), the Department disagrees that there is a

lack of “tenure-track leadership.” All programs within the Department of Art and Art History (currently Art History and Studio Art) are under the leadership of the tenured Chair of the Department. All department chairs in the College of Arts and Sciences bear the ultimate responsibility for majors within their department, and provide, along with the tenured and tenure-track members of their departments, appropriate leadership and governance.

The Department would also like to note that, because tenured department chairs bear the ultimate responsibility and provide over-arching leadership for programs in the College of Arts and Sciences, it is not unusual, problematic, or unprecedented for program directors to be non-tenure-track. The Studio Art major operated successfully for many years with directors who were neither tenured nor tenure-track. The Journalism program also has a successful history, with a long-time Director who is not tenure-track. As a result, the Department of Art and Art History feels that having an Adjunct Assistant Professor as the director of the Graphic Design program is both reasonable and acceptable.