Department of Art and Art History Response to SPRC Concerns
January 5, 2012

The Senate Planning Review Committee met on November 21, 2011 to discuss the proposal from the Department of Art and Art History for a Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Design. The committee identified a number of concerns with proposal a presented.

1. The Committee expressed grave concern over the lack of a tenure line faculty presence with this degree program. As presented, the program is being operated entirely with one Adjunct Assistant Professor and a handful of Special Lecturers. There is a request for two additional "full-time" faculty members as the program is implemented but no specific mention of converting any of these faculty members to the tenure track. Indeed, the request for additional faculty members merely identifies these individuals as "full-time" and not as "tenure track." Thus, we can clearly imagine an entire BA program run entirely by non-tenure track faculty. This is clearly unworkable for the following reasons: 1. Adjunct Faculty positions do not provide the stability and permanence of a tenure line appointments and this instability will be transferred to the program. 2. Without the presence of tenure line faculty, the program will have a diminished voice in university governance thus increasing its vulnerability. 3. Operating a degree program without the presence of tenure line faculty sets a dangerous precedent that the committee does not wish to see replicated within the institution.

The committee's observations and concerns relative to the lack of tenure track positions is justified, but the omission of "tenure track" in the request for "full-time" faculty members was not deliberate – we agree that this program needs tenure track faculty, and definitely intend for any new full-time faculty hired for this program to be tenure track. Therefore the issues the committee has with the lack of tenure track faculty for the program should not be a problem. Additional tenure track positions will be added to meet growth demands, as happened with the studio art program.

While we did not request a tenure track faculty member specifically for this program in the first year, because we are assuming that it will be far too late to hire one at the point this program is approved, Lynn Galbreath Fausone, who is an Adjunct Assistant Professor, has been approved for another three-year contract (starting in fall 2012), and has been teaching at OU since 2000, so we feel that she is a very stable presence. Professor Fausone, who is the primary author and chair of the graphic design major proposal committee, has owned her own design firm (client list including Brogan & Partners, Care Choices, Citizens Insurance Company of America, Detroit Medical Center, Children's Hospital of Michigan, Michigan Rehabilitation Center, Dyna Trends International, Inc., Fausone, Taylor & Bohn, LLP, Gale Research, Hasco Spring Industries, Inc., Centage Publishing, Inc.,Hasco Spring Industries, Inc., ISI Norgren, Inc., Judy Bobro Marketing &Communications, K & D Industrial Services, Inc., Lauren Manufacturing, Michigan Resonance Imaging, Morton Automotive Coatings, North Brothers Ford Dealership, Oakland University, POH Medical Center, The Smith Group, Inc., Simons Michelson Zieve, Inc., Solomon Friedman Advertising, Inc., South Wayne Center Associates, Walton Kleene & Jensen, Women's Survival Center), with over twenty years of professional work in the design field. Please see her cv in the proposal, pages 21-30, which shows the depth and breadth of her professional work, the substantive quality and high level of expertise she brings to the program, and the clear strong connection to the department through extensive teaching and service. Also, the department has already put in a request to the CAS Dean for the conversion of Lynn Galbreath's position to Special Instructor.

Also, as this program would be part of a department with ten tenured and tenure-track faculty, the voice for this program within university governance should still be strong in the one year before the first tenure-track faculty person is hired. In particular, two of the tenured faculty in the department, Associate Professor Andrea Eis and Associate Professor Susan Evans, who were both on the proposal committee, have substantive graphic design experience and can be the tenured presence necessary in the early years of the program. Professor Evans was Director of Marketing at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Denver and has twelve years of design experience (including work for Coors Brewing Company, The United States Olympic Committee, Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, Denver Museum of Art and the Cherry Creek Shopping Center. Professor Eis has over twenty years of freelance graphic design work experience (including work for Palimpsest Press, Belle Isle Aquarium/The Detroit Zoo, Amway Environmental Foundation and the Midwest Society for Photographic Education, as well as for OU and OUAG.

2. The committee expressed misgivings as well concerning the claims made to interdisciplinarity. Members of the committee note that several departments on campus offer courses that cover similar topics as the proposed BA-GD. We would like to see the professed goal of interdisciplinarity realized through exploring linkages that exist across campus. For example, the School of Business Administration has interests and expertise in Graphic Design, the School of Engineering and Computer Science offers coursework in Web Design and the Journalism program offers Design courses as well. While realizing the formidable obstacles that stand in the way of bringing these disparate areas together, we believe that if interdisciplinary programs are a real, as opposed to rhetorical, goal then it is precisely such connections that ought to be explored and that the BA-GD program is well positioned to exploit.

We believe that we are working from a different definition of interdisciplinarity than the committee. We consider our department to be inherently interdisciplinary, as we already combine two different disciplines (art history and studio art) and the graphic design program would require students to take courses in three disciplines (art history, studio art and graphic design). Despite the fact that these all reside in one department, they are clearly different disciplines (as with Communications and Journalism, Sociology and Anthropology, etc.). We currently offer several courses that address digital graphics from an arts perspective, in the specializations of New Media, Photography, in the Foundations course requirements of studio art courses, and in all of the course requirements for a minor in Graphic Design.

Regarding working with the School of Business Administration, the School of Engineering and Computer Science, and the Journalism program, we would definitely be happy to work towards these kinds of collaborations in the future. However, as the committee notes, there are "formidable obstacles" standing in the way. We feel that, in the near term, such linkages are neither practical nor necessary: (1) related courses in these areas have prerequisites often unrelated to design, which would take too many graphic-design-specific credits out of the major (for example, the Journalism design courses have two course prerequisites, in newswriting and media editing) and (2) many of the existing courses often take a very different perspective (for example the SECS courses are programming courses, not design courses). We do hope that, in the future, the BA-GD program will be able to work with all of these different areas, as our interest in interdisciplinarity is not just "professed" but real, not just "a rhetorical goal" but an actual goal. Inserting this specifically into the program at this point did not seem to be useful, but we certainly are committed to exploring this as the major becomes established. In the meantime, we believe we are already proposing a program that is interdisciplinary, based on our understanding of the term.

3. The committee is also concerned that the computing needs of this program are seriously underrepresented in this document. Even assuming the lab space required for the increase in majors as the program builds to capacity, the maintenance and updating of these machines and associated software present an enormous expense that needs to be accounted for if students are to receive the kind of instruction necessary for entrance to the careers identified.

> The budget for the program does include line items software and computer costs, such as in year two, $75,000 for equipping a new lab, and $30,000 in software costs. These are based on the expenditures we had to equip a new lab for studio art with computers and software. We have also included software upgrade costs each year ($10,000 a year for upgrades, plus an additional $30,000 in year 4 for significant new software needs. The equipment costs are spread over the 5 years, with lower costs in year 1 as we would use already existing equipment that would need only some additions, but with $20,000 for years three and four, and $50,000 in year 5. We felt that, for the enrollment numbers we had estimated, this was an appropriate budget. We feel that we have a great deal of practical experience with budgeting numbers for computer labs because of the studio art labs, that we maintain, update and keep supplied with state-of-the-art software. We also have a lab tech included, starting in the second year of the program, who would help upgrade and maintain the labs, as our Photo/Media Lab Coordinator does for the studio art labs.

> At the request of UCUI, we have done another budget to show what we would need if the program grew at a much faster rate (for example, if we did not control enrollment through a portfolio review). We have attached that budget, which shows substantially higher lines for equipment and software, to establish more labs.

4. On a related note, we would like to see evidence for the list of careers identified in section II.F. For example, it strikes some members of the committee that "e-commerce site designer" would require considerable training outside of that offered in the BA-GD. We would simply request some support for the BA-GD as a credential leading to careers in the positions identified.

> Our list of possible careers was, perhaps, a bit overreaching (although not out of line with what other graphic design programs list as options for possible careers for their graduates). As with any field, it is possible that extra training might be required to specifically fit into a job profile. However, we would agree that the following careers options should be pulled from our list as they do not represent strong focus areas of our proposed program: E-Commerce Site Developer, Flash Media Designer, Prepress Specialist, Webmaster.

> While no one can guarantee graduates that they will get jobs in their fields, we believe that the strength of our program will prepare our students well. We already have several of our students who only have minors in graphic design already employed in design, for example, as graphic designers at Grid4 Communications, Team Detroit, The Detroit News, and at George P Johnson Experience Marketing Agency. An email to Professor Fausone from the student hired by George P Johnson wrote that she "got a job as a Graphic Designer at George P Johnson Company. So I'll start after Thanksgiving, which is really exciting. The interview went well, and they loved my portfolio, so thank you for encouraging me to do my best. They said they have never hired anyone from Oakland, much less a minor student, so that's really encouraging and I think it says a lot about the Design program at Oakland."

> We believe that we have designed our BA program so that students will graduate with strong portfolios and the substantive background in design coursework that will enable them to

compete successfully for graphic design jobs. We have high standards built into the program, as well as a range and depth of coursework that insures they will have a solid design background and skills (with 36 credits in design-specific studio courses), as well as the critical thinking, imagination, creativity and verbal abilities to be able to have careers in their field.

5. Further, the rationale (section II.A) for the program states that the program will fulfill the goal of providing a "Student-Centered Learning Experience." However, since the course descriptions offered in this proposal do not include syllabi there is little basis for us to assess the degree to which this goal is being realized. Again, providing some evidence as to how courses offered in this program will be structured so as to facilitate Student-Centered Learning would alleviate some of these concerns.

While we have not supplied full syllabi, we believe that studio courses, in which students put into practice their learning, are inherently student-centered learning experiences. These classes are not lecture based, though some lectures and demonstrations are certainly presented. Instead, studio courses involve "active learning," a key tenet of student-centered approaches. Active learning comes from students being directly involved in project-based problem solving. "Learning by doing" ensures that design knowledge is based in progressive experiential processes. Regular critiques, which are an established part of studio courses, enable students to develop their own critical faculties by discussing the work of other students, and suggesting improvements or noting successful solutions.

The encouragement we will give our students to develop professional experiences through internships, as well as the ways in which our courses are structured to give students opportunities to create in specific projects that are the equivalent of commercial assignments, are other ways in which we will create student-centered learning. Preparation for the professional world will be significant in the success of our students, and we will be focused on that need. The opportunity for a professional public presentation of their work in Senior Thesis is another way in which we center our program around the learning experiences of our students.

With class sizes no larger than 20 students (as recommended by NASAD), we will be giving our students a great deal of personal attention and guidance, another key of the student-centered experience. Also, because all of the faculty teaching in graphic design have worked in the field, whether in a design firm or freelance, they will be able to be mentors who have real-world experience, able to give students the real picture of the career roles and responsibilities they will move into.

6. The committee also notes that for this program to be launched, eleven new courses will need to be developed. What plans are in place to develop these courses by the projected start date? And perhaps more importantly, given the program's reliance on non-tenure line faculty, who will develop these courses? We find that eleven new courses is a substantial burden that we are loath to place on the backs of faculty members whose contractual obligations should not include work of this kind.

In the first year of the program we only need to initiate **four** new courses (DES130, 350, 360 and the AH design history), with two required courses to be developed in the second year (DES 480 and 491 – see page 16 in the proposal) plus one elective. A majority of the development of these courses is already complete, as required by our COI. The elective courses (DES 325, 355, 390 and 399, also on page 16 in the proposal) can be developed as

needed. One of these courses, DES399 Internships in Design, can be based largely on our already existing internship courses in the department. By the second year we expect to have hired a tenure-track full time faculty member who can work on future course development.

7. The committee would also like to know what plans exist to obtain accreditation for this program. The proposal indicates that there is some vision of transforming the program into a BFA and obtaining accreditation but no such plan for the BA.

We would obtain accreditation for the BA at the same time as a BFA. Our studio art BA program is not accredited, and we are planning the same development in that program: develop to the point that we can create a BFA, which would work in concert with a BA (students in the BA could apply for BFA status in the third year) and put both up for accreditation at the same time.

A note: NASAD requires programs to be functioning for five years before applying for accreditation.

8. Finally, we are concerned that the proposal makes no firm statement as to how transfer students from local community colleges with Associate degrees in Graphic Design will be treated by the program. We can easily imagine that this will be a large population with specific needs that should be addressed in advance.

We are unsure what other information you require beyond the information on transfer credits and specific transfer courses found on page 16 in the proposal. This information remains the same whether a student has an Associates degree or just course work.

Because the majority of required courses in the major are at the 300-level, we would not accept many community college courses that would have been taken in Associates degrees as equivalent to major courses. We also will not be accepting courses that are purely technical training. While those with Associates degrees might consider that they have specific needs due to the courses they already took, we feel that the quality of the program requires us to make certain specific transfer policies. However, when courses taken at the community colleges are equivalent, we will definitely accept up to 16 credits towards the major, as noted in the proposal.

Transfer students would be able to request portfolio reviews (as they can in studio art) if they felt that their work might entitle them to have certain courses waived, though the number of credits required in the major would remain the same, to be filled in through electives.