

School of Art Assessment Inventory

Mission and Goals Statement –

The mission of the School of Art parallels that of the College of Fine Arts and is stated in the University Academic Plan for 2002-2007.

The mission of the College of Fine Arts is to educate students as artists, as teachers in the arts (elementary, secondary, and higher education), as arts researchers, and as life-long audience members who are able to respond to and appreciate the arts. The departments of the College create and produce studio and performing arts works as well as research in order to support this mission. (Academic Plan, p. 8.)

As stated in the Academic Plan, the University recognizes that this mission is "central to the overriding mission of Illinois State University" (p. 8).

The goals of the School of Art are:

1. To maintain an educational program in the visual arts that provides a professional education in the studio arts, art education, graphic design, and art history.
2. To provide art-based instruction for the University's General Education program and, therefore, for the general student population, and selected course work in art production for non-art majors interested in the studio disciplines.
3. To recruit and/or retain a faculty and staff with strong academic and professional credentials, who are committed to teaching, to their own creative/scholarly work, and to participation in academic shared governance.
4. To provide and maintain physical facilities and resources adequate to the educational mission and goals of the School.
5. To recruit and retain students who are committed to acquiring a professional-level art education within the liberal arts environment of the University.

Goals 1 and 2 are directly related to fulfilling the overall mission of the School of Art, the College of Fine Arts, and the University. Goals 3 and 4 address the human and material resources necessary to accomplishing goals 1 and 2. The accomplishment of goal 5 is largely dependent on the accomplishment of goals 1, 2 and 3.

In addition, the School of Art has an overriding goal of being and being recognized as one of the leading art programs in the state and the region.

M.F.A. in Art

Objectives

1. To develop the student's proficiency as a studio artist in the individual's selected discipline;
2. To fully prepare students for active and successful lives as career artists;
3. To prepare students for careers as art teachers, especially in higher education;
4. To acquaint students with current issues in art, art criticism, and art history;
5. To direct students in acquiring unique artistic expressions or styles;
6. To assist students in acquiring the skills to communicate in writing and speaking about their artwork and its intellectual implications;
7. To provide the terminal degree, qualifying the graduates for pursuit of careers in higher education;
8. To utilize fully a performance-training center at ISU to train professionals and to provide a significant cultural experience for the people of central Illinois.

Learning Objectives for the M.F.A. Degree

1. Students will demonstrate a professional level of competence in at least one discipline of the visual arts.
2. Students will demonstrate a significant understanding of the major issues in contemporary art and of these issues' relationship to their own artwork.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to complete a research project in a specific subject in art history.
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to explain their artwork in both written and oral form, including doing an analysis of the artwork, a summary of research related to the work and a discussion of new directions in the work.

General Assessment of the M.F.A.

The School of Art has a coherent MFA curriculum, in which new courses (e.g. Life Drawing II, Social Documentary Photography, Video I and II, Integrated Media I and II, a number of special topics courses) and modifications have been implemented during recent years. These changes reflect programmatic needs identified by the graduate faculty; other developments are considered and discussed continually. Current course requirements are up-to-date, and they ensure appropriate general and specialized learning.

The course requirements are established primarily by discipline (painting, printmaking, photography, glass, on so on), so that a student is committed to learning about and expanding on the technical, aesthetic, and conceptual models established historically and in contemporary society. The student is expected to use the knowledge gained from and experiences related to course work to mature artistically and intellectually as a unique

and creative form of expression is developed. Diversity within the course requirements is assured by the innovation of the faculty and by the variety of backgrounds, aesthetic positions, and areas of expertise represented within the faculty ranks.

A typical program for the Master of Fine Arts degree will include at least 60 semester hours of graduate work beyond the bachelor's degree. These 60 hours may be programmed as follows:

1. at least 36 semester hours must be taken in the School of Art; of these at least 24 must be at the 400 level;
2. at least 24 semester hours must be in the student's major studio area; of these at least 18 must be at the 400 level;
3. at least 12 semester hours must be taken in art history, or nine hours may be taken in art history with three hours in related areas such as aesthetics, philosophy, or anthropology, or M.F.A. Seminar;
4. at least three hours of M.F.A. Seminar (taking the M.F.A. Seminar under heading "3" does not substitute for this requirement);
5. and six hours of 496 M.F.A. Exhibition and Supportive Statement. (This will involve a comprehensive exhibition of studio work, an exhibition-related written project, and a comprehensive oral examination. Candidacy review must take place before a student can enroll in Art 496 or schedule the M.F.A. exhibition and must include approval of proposal for the supportive statement.)

It should be understood clearly that the accumulation of 60 semester credit hours is not the primary criterion in evaluating final achievement. Instead, it is the exhibition and demonstration of the student's competency and intellectual maturity in his/her area of the arts that must be deemed sufficient. In view of this understanding, a major requirement is a comprehensive showing of the student's visual work, along with a written project and an oral examination of the intellectual implications of his/her work.

Assessment Systems Used to Measure Learning Outcomes (by degree program and linked to learning objectives by parallel numbers)

(1) In addition to some required courses in a discipline that students take and the one-on-one supervision of them within the studio environment, students also participate in regular critique sessions, involving both faculty and other students, that require them to analyze and explain their work, both formally and conceptually. Students in this degree program also do a significant amount of independent study work in studio art. This highly individualized work with faculty members provides a very direct mentoring and assessment process in which verbal and written critique and analysis are used to measure learning outcomes and to provide the opportunity for students to demonstrate the relationship of their own work to issues in contemporary art.

(2) Students are required to relate their artwork to contemporary art practice. This is done through ongoing discussion with the instructor during one-on-one class mentoring and within the group during class critiques. All M.F.A. students are also required to take

a specific seminar class which has them relate their own artwork to modern and contemporary art and which assesses learning outcomes through testing and written assignments research and analysis.

(3) All M.F.A. students are required to take at least three advanced level art history courses. Normally, these courses are seminars, which require significant research and writing components. These projects are closely monitored and evaluated by art history faculty members well-trained in this kind of assignment.

(4) All M.F.A. students have a capstone experience comprising a final solo exhibition, a written artist statement, and a comprehensive oral examination.

In addition, as they move through the program toward this final assessment, they go through individual end of the semester critiques in which they are required to explain their artwork and assess their own progress and the direction their work will take in the following semester. All faculty and other graduate students are invited to take part in these end of the semester discussions.

How Results of Assessment Are Being Used to Lead to Program Improvement (Linked to Degree Programs and Sequences)

With the major changes in the B.A./B.S. program completed, the School is now directing attention to possible changes in the M.F.A. program. Although assessment indicates that this is overall a strong program, some faculty members have suggested that there is need for more group activity since most of the studio work toward degree is currently tutorial in nature. This could take the form of having first year students participate in some of the upper division undergraduate courses, such as Painting IV, Topics in Advanced Sculpture, Advanced Drawing, and Topics in Advanced Photography. Also, a critique class for M.F.A. students has just been approved that will enable them to gain additional experience in the explanation and discussion of their own work, but in the company of peers rather than with just faculty members. Assessment also indicates that these students need additional work in critical thinking and analysis, both in written and oral form. As with the B.F.A. students, the faculty has begun to require reading and writing assignments in the tutorial studio work.