DEPARTMENT OF ART AND ART HISTORY

PROPOSED RESTRUCTURING OF STUDIO PROGRAM

BACKGROUND

Two years ago, the Department of Art and Art History welcomed a program consultant as

a first step in the pursuit of accreditation by the National Association of Schools of Art

and Design. In response to his recommendations, and in consideration of the guidelines

and procedures for accreditation, the Department Curriculum Committee has convened

since Fall 2011 to consider revisions to course curricula—including increased instructor-

student contact hours—and other programmatic changes. Three goals have guided the

committee’s deliberations:

To restructure the studio curricula to reflect current practice in the worlds of

contemporary art and art-related business opportunities;

To consider current and future studio programming in the context of student

enrollments and faculty support;

To assure that proposed changes to curricula and programming advance the goal

of NASAD accreditation.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

Beginning in Fall 2012, instructor-student contact hours in studio courses—with the

exception of 400-level and writing-intensive courses—were increased from 4 hours to 5

hours and 20 minutes. Sophomore-level majors were assigned 2 hours of required,

additional open-studio time connected to their 200-level courses. Instructor-student

contact hours were increased to comply with NASAD requirements/recommendations

and Sophomore placement in Open Studio represents the phasing-in of additional

(beyond 5 hours and 20 minutes) contact hours (to consist of open studio hours or Art

Forum Lecture/Discussion hours) for *all*studio majors.

PROPOSED CURRICULUM RESTRUCTURE FOR STUDIO MAJORS

For studio majors, the Department of Art and Art History currently offers the BFA degree

in Fine Arts, Digital Arts, and Graphic Design. The proposed restructure of the degree

programs is as follows:

The Department of Art and Art History would offer the BFA in *Visual Arts*with

*concentrations*in Fine Art; Lens-Based Art: Photography and Video; and Graphic

Design.

All students pursuing the BFA in Visual Arts would be enrolled in the same

foundations courses in their Freshman year: Drawing I, 2D, 3D, 4D, Photo I, and

Visual Thinking. These courses will serve as a common core from which students

can branch into studio concentrations beginning in their Sophomore year.

Within each concentration, students enroll in another set of core studio courses

that build on the foundations core and introduce a variety of mediums and/or

technical skills. These courses serve as opportunities for students to discover their

interests and talents, to continue to develop their skills, and to begin to consider

how they will focus their coursework during Junior year.

Following these concentration core courses, within the Graphic Design and Lens-

Based Art: Photography and Video concentrations, students will choose *one*of

two branches of specific, required, advanced studio options. Labeled “Focus

Requirements,” each branch will allow intense focus on a particular set of

processes and/or technical skills.

All students pursuing the BFA degree in Visual Arts will enroll in a

concentration-specific, three-semester capstone sequence including: theory,

professional practices, and a culminating thesis (a portfolio presentation for

Graphic Design students and an art exhibition for students in Fine Arts and Lens-

based Art: Photography and Video).

ANTICIPATED ACHIEVEMENT OF GOALS THROUGH CURRICULAR RESTRUCTURING

The restructure of the studio curricula will reflect current practice in the worlds of

contemporary art and art-related business opportunities in that it will create

flexibility and permeability between or among disciplines and mediums,

preparing students for multiple career opportunities and/or studio practices. At the

same time, a progressive approach to curricula creates, first, a strong foundation

and then allows students to narrow and intensify their focus as they acquire more

and diverse skills and mature as professional artists.

The new concentration in Lens-based Art: Photography and Video accomplishes

two objectives. First, it builds upon the popular, high-demand minor in

photography that has been offered for a number of years by the Department of Art

and Art History. Second, it folds the Digital Arts major into the new

concentration. This measure is intended to counteract the downturn in digital arts

major enrollments and to address the serious lack of dedicated digital arts faculty

brought about by the loss of one tenured faculty member (and the failure to rehire

for his position) and the long-term illness of another.

It is the conviction of the faculty of the Department of Art and Art History that the

proposed restructuring of the studio program is pedagogically sound, dynamic,

and consonant with current professional trends and practices. The faculty is

confident that together with the increased faculty-student contact hours (in class

hours/open-studio hours/weekly and bi-weekly art forums\*), this restructuring

(including adjustments to existing courses and the addition of a small number of

new courses) will meet or exceed the NASAD guidelines for accreditation.

\*All studio courses that are not writing intensive meet for 5 ½ hours with the instructor of

record. Students in 100- and 200- level courses enroll, in addition, in open studios that

meet once a week (as mentioned above, open studio time was implemented beginning

Fall 2012 for 200-level studio courses); the open studios are staffed by adjunct faculty

and by the department’s full-time sculpture technician. Students in 300- and 400-level

courses (all concentrations) will meet once a week for Art Forum—a vibrant program of

lectures/discussions on art theory and criticism presented by faculty, visiting artists, and

guest speakers.