

Department of Art and Art History

Strategic Plan

April 14, 2009

Section 1 Department Description

1.1.1 Mission, vision, goals

Overview

The Department of Art and Art History offers three majors (Art Studio, Art Education and Art History) and two minors (Art Studio and Art History). The department is staffed by 6 full time tenured and tenure track faculty members, 1 shared appointment, 1 or more adjunct faculty members and 1 administrative assistant. Tenured and tenure track faculty members consist of Priscilla Briggs, Kris Lowe, Bruce McClain, Lois Peterson, Stan Shetka, and Linnea Wren. A shared appointment is held by Don Myers who teaches two courses in art history and who is Director of Hillstrom Museum. Nicole Hoiland teaches adjunct courses on a regular basis. Our department assistant, Colleen Hanson, like Don Myers, has a shared position with the Hillstrom Museum.¹ Courses taught by adjunct instructors are offered in fall, spring and January Term semesters in art history.²

The department graduates approximately 20 majors every year and has 75 declared majors. 100 level art history courses enroll 30 students per section; 200 level art history courses enroll 15-20 students per course; 300 level art history courses enroll 10 students. 100 level art studio courses enroll 18 students; 200 level art studio courses enroll 10-15 students; 300 level art studio courses enroll 5-12 students. The total enrollment in spring semester 2008 department courses was 311 students.³

The Department of Art and Art History strongly supports the general education program of the college. We contribute 40 courses contributes that fulfill the ARTS requirement of Curriculum 1 and one course in the Arts area of Curriculum 2. We contribute 1 course to the First Term Seminar program, 7 courses to the Writing program and 3 courses in International Education. We also contribute at least one course to fulfill the Non-Western curriculum requirement, one course each to the Gender and Women's Studies program, the Latin American, Latino and Caribbean Studies program, and the Education Department. The Department of Art and Art History contributes to the pre-architecture program in the areas of art history, drawing and studio foundations. We provide many courses that are important to pre-architecture students.

¹ Colleen Hanson oversees the budget, a function that involves a minimum of 75 vendors and 100 substantial financial transactions per month. Colleen also coordinates the faculty and studio schedules, the student exhibition schedules and openings, and innumerable other activities. Colleen is an excellent liason between the Department of Art and Art History and the Hillstrom Museum, where she is also a half-time staff member.

² While Linnea Wren serves as chair, adjunct instructors offer courses in Gender and Art, Maya and Mexican Art, and other areas as needed. As many as four additional adjunct courses are offered in January Term. Although not counting towards the major, these courses cover areas that are not covered by the full time faculty and therefore expand the opportunities available to students in areas including graphic design, web design and shubori.

The Department of Art and Art History faculty has studied the GAC college mission, vision and goals and the college strategic plan and core values. The Department of Art and Art History faculty strongly endorses the above and strives to incorporate the mission, vision, goals and values into its on-going teaching and activities.

Mission

The Department of Art and Art History values the universal human need for artistic expression and celebrates the contributions of artists in all cultures throughout history. We are committed to high quality teaching that develops the creative spirit, intellectual potential, and aesthetic sensibilities of every student. Through our teaching and advising, we also prepare majors for professions in the visual arts. Our faculty, staff, and students collaborate to offer programs, activities and service projects that enrich the college campus and community at large. It is our belief that every person can contribute to the vitality of the arts in contemporary society and to the betterment of our shared communities.

Vision

The Department of Art and Art History recognizes the fundamental importance of the visual arts and visual communication in contemporary society. We see ourselves as increasing the scope of our teaching in areas involving diversity, social justice, and interfaith understanding. We see ourselves as extending our mentoring of students in ways that increase opportunities for experiential and international education. We see ourselves as increasing collaborative relationships among students, faculty, staff, and alumni within our college and among artists, art historians, art educators, arts organizations, and service institutions of diverse places. We see ourselves as introducing innovative interdisciplinary programs so that our students can meet the challenges of a changing world. We see ourselves as adopting and teaching new, emerging and innovative technologies so that our students can reach beyond their classrooms to wide public audiences. We see ourselves as engaging alumni and community members in ongoing programs of visual arts awareness, connection, and exhibition. We see ourselves as infusing the visual arts throughout all facets of the liberal arts curriculum, throughout the extracurricular life of the college, and into the spheres of engaged alumni and community members.

Goals

1. To promote active learning through the direct experience of art.
2. To promote aesthetic originality, critical inquiry, analytic thinking, problem-solving, interdisciplinary perspectives and persuasive writing.
3. To promote a broad and inclusive understanding of art and its global, interfaith, ecumenical, and ethical dimensions.
4. To utilize new, emergent and innovative technologies in order to expand the role of art practices and discourse in public spheres.
5. To build community through multiple means including exhibition, presentation, service learning and collaboration.

6. To promote the understanding the art and artifacts of earlier times and other cultures, to promote sensitivity to cultural patrimony and to the ethics of collecting, studying and displaying art across cultures.
7. To increase effective pedagogies of the faculty, to expand the professional expertise of the faculty and to extend the departmental participation in curricular initiatives and interdisciplinary programs.
8. To introduce art and art history majors to the professional standards of their disciplines in preparation for future careers.

1.2 Programs

The Department of Art and Art History offers three majors:

1. **Art Education Major**
This major is jointly offered with the Education Department. It graduates 2-3 majors per year. Lois Peterson, a member of the Department of Art and Art History, teaches Art Education Methods and advises the Art Education majors. Students prepare for positions in K-12 education, as well as for position in arts institutions that are geared at public education. One undergraduate degree in Art Education was awarded in 2007-08.
2. **Art History Major**
This major is offered through the Department of Art and Art History. It is strengthened by offerings in the Departments of Classics, Philosophy, English, Communication Studies, and Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures. It is also strengthened by the exhibitions and programming of the Hillstrom Museum. It relies upon a single full-time position in art history, held by Linnea Wren. An additional adjunct course in art history and a second adjunct course in Museum Studies are offered by Don Myers, the Director of the Hillstrom Museum. Four undergraduate degrees in Art History were awarded in 2007-08. Fourteen students had declared majors in Art History in 2007-08.
3. **Art Studio Major**
This major is offered through the Department of Art and Art History. Its faculty consist of 5 full-time, tenure track or tenured faculty members: Priscilla Briggs, Kristen Lowe, Bruce McClain, Lois Peterson, and Stan Shetka. Eleven undergraduate degrees in Art Studio were awarded in 2007-8. Forty-two students had declared majors in Art Studio in 2007-08.

The Department of Art and Art History offers two minors:

1. Art History Minor
2. Art Studio Minor

The Department of Art and Art History supports the development of an Arts Management minor that will be interdisciplinary. The planning process is currently underway. The department also supports the future development of a Visual Studies program.

Support Relationships

The Department of Art and Art History teaches in widely varying classroom situations, trains students in both studio and academic fields, prepares students for spectrum of careers, and encourages cross-disciplinary studies in students. The department therefore draws on support from many academic departments and administrative offices. Academic departments with whom we have working relationships include the departments of Communications Studies, Education, Theatre and Dance, English, Classics, Philosophy, Communication Studies and Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures, Math/Computer Sciences and the Natural Science. Administrative divisions that provide essential support include International Education and Bernadotte Library. Administrative offices that are critical to us include the Fine Arts Office; the Center for Vocational Reflection, the Diversity Center, the Alumni Office, the Office of Marketing and Communication, Gustavus Technology Services, the Interpretive Center, the Chapel, the Community Service Center, Academic Advising, Admissions, Financial Aid, Print Shop, Counseling, and the Career Center. Physical Plant works closely to maintain studio areas, an especially labor intensive job in our building, while the Office of Safety and Security, and particularly the Manager of Environmental Health and Safety, has been of great assistance in addressing safety issues in terms of both chemicals and equipment. The Book Mark pays special attention to the particular supply requests needed for studio courses. Hillstrom Museum provides a setting, expertise and publicity to the Senior Art Studio Majors exhibition, faculty exhibitions, and curricular-related exhibitions while also providing an educational program of guest artists and speakers.

Section 2 Strategic Review

2.1 Strategic issues

Strengths (internal) of the department and programs

The Department of Art and Art History offers a strong curriculum in both studio arts and art history. The faculty members are committed to excellence in teaching and in professional achievements. Members of the department have been awarded the Edgar M. Carlson Award for Distinguished Teaching and the Faculty Scholarship Accomplishment Award. Faculty members have held the Ethel and Edgar Johnson Distinguished Professorship of Fine Arts and the Dorothy Peterson, Mildred Peterson Hanson and Arthur Jennings Hanson Professorship in Liberal Studies. Faculty members have attained prestigious national fellowships including the National Endowment of Humanities year-long fellowship, the Bunting Institute (of Radcliffe College) fellowship; and regional fellowships including the Minnesota State Arts Board Grant, the Blandin Foundation grant, and the McNight Fellowship. Faculty members have curated exhibitions at institutions including the Peabody Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology at Harvard University, the Science Museum of Minnesota. Faculty members have been active in exhibiting artwork in international, national and regional museums and galleries. Faculty members have published books and scholarly articles, and have presented at numerous

professional conferences. Faculty members have published art critiques and have been highlighted in numerous newspaper and journal articles and media interviews. Faculty members have exhibited original art in many regional and national venues.

The departmental faculty members are also strong in terms of their international experience. Faculty members have created and exhibited art work in China and France and have led student travel courses to Italy, Thailand, Egypt, Spain, France and elsewhere. One has taught at Kansai Gaidai University in Hirikata, Japan; another has served as a guest artist at Rorke's Drift Arts and Crafts Center in Rorke's Drift, South Africa.

Faculty members are deeply involved in their teaching mission both to beginning non-majors for whom this may be their first substantial experience in the arts and to majors who are concerned with developing potential careers in the arts. In departmental courses, independent studies and individual mentoring, students learn critical and creative reading, thinking and research skills; artistic skills and craftsmanship; formal and visual literacy skills; the relationships between past and contemporary visual styles, issues, and concepts; and a lifelong appreciation of the arts. We are concerned that students see the relevance of the arts in the broadest sense. We therefore develop students' awareness of social justice, diversity and global perspectives; and we are actively involved in offering international courses. We are committed to encouraging students to develop life-long goals and abilities that will bring them deep satisfaction in their professional and personal lives.

Our alumni develop careers in many fields. Recent graduates have entered graduate programs in the studio arts, art history, education, architecture and interior design. Other graduates find employment in museums, historical societies, and performing arts centers.

Weaknesses (internal) of the department and programs

The art history program relies upon a single full-time art historian. Continuity is threatened when Linnea Wren takes a sabbatical, assumes part time administrative functions, addresses family emergencies and/or is ill.

The department as a whole lacks sufficient professional staff to expand the visibility of the arts on campus; to devote to fostering individual student creativity and research outside the classroom; to develop faculty creativity and research, publications and exhibitions; to expand exhibition venues throughout campus and into community; to expand service projects; and to expand experiential and apprentice opportunities for students. The department is fortunate to have an extraordinarily skilled departmental assistant, but she is stretched thin with her present responsibilities regarding budget, scheduling and supply inventory. The studio arts faculty spends time on studio maintenance that would be better provided by a studio assistant to maintain and supervise labs. The art historian spends time on scanning, organizing, and maintaining digital imagery. This time would be better spent by a departmental assistant who could assume these roles if working on a full-time basis. Lack of a designated GTS person for Fine Arts

means that we struggle to learn programs and updates and that we don't have a consistent resource person to whom our students can turn in courses.

The department lacks sufficient faculty positions in art history and the studio arts to accomplish its goal of offering academic courses that combine research with presentation formats utilizing new, emerging and innovative technologies.

Opportunities (external) facing the department and programs

Recently hired faculty members in Communication Studies, Theatre/Dance and English Departments open opportunities for interdisciplinary programs such as the Arts Management minor, a Visual Literacy program and/or Media Studies major. Faculty from other departments are interested in collaborative courses and teaching methodologies. Artists from off-campus communities are eager to be in college settings and to have contact with studio faculty and students. Community art centers, galleries, co-operatives offer internship and apprentice positions to students who evince suitable skills and dedication. Alumni are connected to college and welcome involvement with students.

New, emerging and innovative technology, such as Pod casts, websites, FaceBook, MySpace, blogging, and gaming, is of high interest to students. Students can easily see career paths in the arts that involve these technologies. Internships and paid assistantships are increasingly open to students with well-developed skills in desirable areas of technology.

Challenges (external) facing the department and programs

We work in a society that regards contemporary art as irrelevant and the artist as an outsider with little of importance to say. In many high schools, arts education has faced severe cutbacks, in both studio and art history areas. Entering students often have negative stereotypes about contemporary art and often feel unprepared for departmental courses as well as disconnected from the arts.

The recession is likely to cause students and parents to see arts majors as impossible career paths. At the same time, the recession has further delayed the time when our departmental budgets will increase. The restrictive budgeting practices of the last decade has meant that we are shifting expensive course supply costs to individual students at a rate that might exclude discourage many students from enrolling in studio arts classes. Lack of funds is also limiting the possibilities of planning class visits to Twin Cities arts organizations. Without class visits, the distance of St. Peter from larger arts communities, museums, galleries in the Twin Cities is an obstacle for students to be familiar with original art work outside the immediate community. Equally seriously, technology is moving quickly—in terms of hardware, software, and faculty training. We become outmoded quickly if we don't dedicate resources to keep up.

2.2 Barriers

The department lacks sufficient faculty and staff to meet its goals, mission and vision. The most urgent need is for a faculty position to sustain the art history program. The second need is for studio faculty positions in areas of graphic design and web design.

Our physical plant is aging. It was built 40 years ago when the department had less than half the current faculty positions and the college had less than half the current enrollment. Comparable institutions including St. Olaf, Luther and Carleton have either completed or are completing state-of-the-art buildings. We will soon become non-competitive in the visual arts with comparable institutions. The problems of the current visual arts building (FAA) include chronically leaking roofs, safety issues, insufficient numbers of classrooms, classrooms that are too small, the absence of classrooms that are adequately equipped for participatory and interactive multimedia authoring teaching in art history, the absence of classrooms that are adaptive to contemporary arts courses in performance, installation, graphic and web design, and insufficient space for senior studios.

The department lacks a replacement and renewal fund for its equipment. The departmental budget does not increase in relationship to long periods of inflation.

Section 3 Strategic Initiatives and Recommendations

Our vision recognizes the fundamental importance of the visual arts and visual communication in contemporary society. We see ourselves as emphasizing diversity, social justice and interfaith understanding; as mentoring students, as expanding experiential and service learning; as engaging in collaborative relationships; as expanding departmental as introducing innovative interdisciplinary programs; as adopting new, emerging and innovative technologies; as infusing the visual arts throughout all facets of the liberal arts curriculum and the college as a whole.

Goals 1

To promote active learning through the direct experience of art.

1. Construction of new Visual Arts Center⁴ that includes classroom spaces for new teaching pedagogies and technology based courses, as well as meets current standards of safety.
2. Introduce a visual literacy component in general education.
3. Work with departments of Communications Studies and English to develop a multi- and interdisciplinary minor in Visual Studies.
4. Expand additional professional support staff including hiring a Shop Assistant and expanding the position of Departmental Assistant from half-time to full time.

4. We recommend that a contemporary Visual Arts Center include the following: a studio electronic classroom for graphic design, web design and animation; an art history electronic classroom equipped for dual displays on large screen, for interactive course presentations, for library research capacities (see appendix with art history technology vision); video projection classroom; seminar and presentation classroom—(seating for 30); faculty studios; student spaces for seniors art majors and student apprentices; visiting artist studio; student storage areas for art in progress work; critique space; photo documentation area; visual image station and preparation station for students and faculty.

5. Fund experiences that bring students to urban art centers through field trips, internships, workshops, and semester-learning programs.

Goal 2

To promote aesthetic originality, critical inquiry, analytic thinking, problem-solving, interdisciplinary perspectives and persuasive writing.

1. Host alumni exhibitions on-campus which will create networks on-campus with our students and to be an off-campus support network.
2. Host student and alumni exhibitions and art sales in urban, off-campus settings so that students and alumni gain exposure in urban arts areas. Proceeds might help fund student scholarships.
3. Provide digital workstations to individual student seats in classrooms so students can pursue independent aesthetic learning in classroom setting.
4. Develop an on-line gallery.

Goal 3

To promote a broad and inclusive understanding of art and its global, interfaith, ecumenical and ethical dimensions.

1. Develop partnerships with arts organizations to integrate students into arts communities as volunteers, interns, and arts practitioners.
2. Study the feasibility of short duration course-embedded domestic and international experiences.
3. Provide real-world connections for students in art and art history courses.
4. Be explicit about goals in course syllabi, teaching materials and classroom discussions, and in individual conversations with students.
5. Link some art studio and art history courses to co-curricular learning opportunities including service learning and community internships.
6. Invite collaborative teaching with faculty of other departments.
7. Increase recruitment, including through expanded scholarships, of arts students from diverse communities and backgrounds.

Goal 4

To utilize new, emergent and innovative technologies in order to expand the role of art practices and discourse in public spheres.

1. Better educate faculty in new technology and in arts and humanities based digital pedagogy.
2. Create electronic classroom in art history and in studio arts in which each student has electronic workstation.
3. Provide faculty with portability (including laptop computers) to provide them with arts based software both at office and home, to support teaching (both in classroom and in travel courses) and in professional contexts.
4. Provide workshops and other opportunities for faculty and students to be able to utilize new technology so that they can make virtual links to artists and scholars.

5. Secure tenure track positions in art history/digital technology, graphic design and web design.
6. Secure a GTS position that supports visual arts.

Goal 5

To build community through multiple means including exhibition, presentation, service learning and collaboration.

1. Endow a visiting arts professional program that will bring artists, faculty, students and community in close collaboration.
2. Support faculty research and creativity with summer stipend, with professional funds for travel and supplies, and with subvention funds for publishing and exhibitions.
3. Develop partnerships with off-campus service organizations.

Goal 6

To promote the understanding of the art and artifacts of earlier times and other cultures, to promote sensitivity to cultural patrimony and to the ethics of collecting, studying and displaying art across the cultures.

1. Work with GAC Lecture Series to obtain funding for national and international speakers
2. Continue explicit introduction of topics in classroom syllabi, teaching materials and discussions.
3. Support Hillstrom Museum in its programming.

Goal 7

To increase effective pedagogies of the faculty, to expand the professional expertise of the faculty and to extend the departmental participation in curricular initiatives and interdisciplinary programs.

1. Work with departments of Theatre/Dance, Communication Studies, Music, and Economics and Management to institute an Arts Management minor.
2. Institute a Media Studies program including (but not limited to) courses drawn from Communications Studies, Theatre and Dance, Modern Languages, Literatures and Culture and English.

Goal 8

To introduce studio art and art history majors to the professional standards of their disciplines in preparation for future careers.

1. Develop an on-line network with alumni.
2. Increase faculty time to work with students on arts projects and research topics; mentor students effectively through additional faculty lines; provide faculty positions in areas of new technology that equip students with professional, technology savvy abilities.

3. Identify and mentor students with interest in graduate schools earlier and more intentionally.

Section 4 Assessment

- Goal 1: *To promote active learning through the direct experience of art.*
Assessment: Student oral and written discussions of, writings about, research on art will be analyzed by faculty and peers. Student-created artwork will be critiqued by faculty and peers. Establishment of programs outlined in Section 3.3.a and Section 3.4.a,b,c. Survey of students and alumni involved in program and of visitors to on-site and on-line venues. Interviews with incoming and graduating students and with alumni.
- Goal 2: *To promote aesthetic originality, critical inquiry, analytic thinking, problem-solving, interdisciplinary perspectives and persuasive writing.*
Assessment: Art studio majors' work will be exhibited in the ongoing teaching of courses and in sophomore, junior and senior exhibitions. Art history majors' papers will be presented in college settings and will be submitted for on-line publications, for hard-copy publications, and for professional conferences.
- Goal 3: *To promote a broad and inclusive understanding of art and its global, interfaith, ecumenical, and ethical dimensions.*
Assessment: Feedback from students, alumni and employers will be collected about courses and their impact on students both during college and after graduation.
- Goal 4: *To utilize new, emergent and innovative technologies in order to expand the role of art practices and discourse in public spheres.*
Assessment: Implementation of faculty positions that focus on these courses, development of courses in these areas, development of web-sites, blogs and on-line exhibitions. Faculty will report on their acquisition of skills.
- Goal 5: *To build community through multiple means including exhibition, presentation, service learning and collaboration.*
Assessment: Increased knowledge, engagement and interest as measured in attendance and in survey responses. Increase in number of opportunities offered students and in involvement of students in collaborative and service projects in college and community settings. Faculty involvement in monitoring quality, as well as quantity, of outcomes through review of student work and through feedback from appropriate representatives of college and community.
- Goal 6: *To promote the understanding the art and artifacts of earlier times and other cultures, to promote sensitivity to cultural patrimony and to the ethics of collecting, studying and displaying art across cultures.*

Assessment: Evaluation of student response in classroom discussion, in written papers, in attendance in arts events, in responsiveness to coverage of contemporary news events.

Goal 7: *To increase effective pedagogies of the faculty, to expand the professional expertise of the faculty and to extend the departmental participation in curricular initiatives and interdisciplinary programs.*

Assessment: Successful implementation of additional courses in FTS, of implementation of Media Studies program, of possible Literacy component in general education curriculum.

Goal 8: *To introduce art and art history majors to the professional standards of their disciplines in preparation for future careers.*

Assessment: Placement in graduate programs, awards, exhibitions, publications, survey of satisfaction after graduation and achievement of professional goals.