THE DEPARTMENT OF DESIGN
Department of Design (DOD) Assessment Committee members: Professors Carolyn Gibbs, Richard Pratt, and Sharmon Goff compiled this report. The Department of Design, within the College of Arts and Letters, offers a Bachelor of Arts in Photography and Interior Design, and a Bachelor of Science in Graphic Design. Faculty from each of the three major areas developed this Annual Assessment Report.

EXTERNAL REVIEW
Among the tools used for Department of Design assessment are external reviews by two accrediting organizations. The Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA) which accredits the Interior Design Program and The National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) which accredit all three of the programs in the department.

At the conclusion of each academic year generally during finals week of the spring semester each program takes part in the Department of Design’s Spring Show where projects from all upper division classes are displayed, accompanied by portfolios of graduating seniors. Faculty, local professionals from design fields and alumni review pieces for general continuity, quality of program curriculum, craft and presentation.

ADMISSION TO DEGREE PROGRAMS
Graphic Design — Students entering the Graphic Design program are initially classified as Pre-Graphic Design majors. Admission to the upper division program requires students to successfully complete lower division core courses with a grade of “C” or better and to submit a portfolio of work from designated studio courses. Every full-time faculty member in the Graphic Design program reviews every portfolio submitted. This provides an excellent method of measuring the learning outcomes of the lower division classes, as well as offering a base from which to measure the final portfolios of the graduating students.

Interior Design — Students entering the program are initially classified as Pre-Interior Design majors. After completing the required lower division prerequisites, students may apply for admission to the upper division program by declaring their concentration in either Interior Architecture or Interior Design Marketing. Admission to the Interior Architecture concentration is limited and controlled by an annual portfolio review. Students interested in this concentration must submit a supplementary application including a portfolio of work. Interior Architecture applicants are ranked based on cumulative GPA and the results of the juried portfolio review held each spring.

Photography — Students admitted to the university may select photography as their major; there are no separate admission requirements for a Photography major. As with many of the programs on campus, the majority of photography students have transferred from a community college. They arrive with differing levels of skills and knowledge. During orientation or advising sessions, full-time faculty interview students to determine: which courses may be transferred from previous institutions, areas where students may need review or further class work, and their readiness for upper division courses.
1. **What goals or learning objectives/outcomes were assessed in AYs 2010–2011?**

   The Graphic Design Program’s evaluation in AYs 2010–2011 continued to focus on four main areas:
   - The ability to demonstrate an understanding of the major trends, and recognize important historic work, from the graphic’s field. Students are expected to apply critical techniques from art and design history to their and their contemporary’s work.
   - The ability to produce creative, professional-quality work within project guidelines.
   - The ability to communicate aspects of both the designer’s process and final work verbally, graphically and in writing.
   - The ability to control visual media, enabling the communication of a specific message.

2. **How did you assess these learning outcomes?**

   a. Describe the measures you used and the information gathered.
   - There is a formal review of pre-major’s portfolios after the completion of their foundation courses. These portfolios are made up of work from Art, Photography and Graphic Design classes and are evaluated by each full-time faculty member of the Graphic Design Program. Each faculty member gives a student’s a score based on their ability to demonstrate principles covered during foundations courses. These scores are compared and discussed in order to reach a ranking of all the student applicants and are then compared to rankings from previous years. The quality of these portfolios also form the starting point for evaluations in the coming semesters.
   - As seniors, all Graphic Design majors are required to take a portfolio class in which they review and reassess assignments from previous classes with their professor. Professors make note of any inconsistencies and issues in curriculum. Students are also encouraged to get feedback from faculty members beyond their class professor.
   - Every year the Graphic Design Program takes part in the Department of Design’s Spring Show in which projects from all upper division classes are displayed, accompanied by portfolios of graduating seniors. Faculty and community judges review pieces for awards and general continuity and quality of curriculum. Judges are pulled from the northern California professional community and include alumni, members of national professional organizations and faculty from other institutions. Alumni and the greater business community also participate by communicating the current needs of employers within the industry, providing feedback on how curriculum and skill sets match anticipated openings.
   - Full-time graphic design faculty meet at the end of each academic year to review class work and course objectives. Projects and curriculum are reviewed and faculty members discuss issues specific to the current student body and how it is interacting with the program. Any concerns about the evolution of the curriculum are addressed, and any issues evident to individual members of the faculty are brought to the attention of the whole program.
b. As a result of these assessments what did you learn about the program’s success in helping its students achieve these learning outcomes?
The core curriculum remains strong and meets the program’s goals and learning objectives. Concerns have arisen about the changing role of current technology in certain sectors of the job market and it is evident that program will need to be refined in order to continue to fully prepare graduates for a variety of different roles within the business community.

c. In what areas are students doing well and achieving expectations?
Students are meeting or exceeding program expectations in the development of visual skills, the ability to communicate a strong engaging message and the means to justify the techniques they use. Skills in one class are successfully brought to bare in other classes demonstrating a strong understanding of the underlying communication and problem solving techniques.

d. What areas are seen as needing improvement within your program?
The need for stronger technical skills within certain areas of the job market requires the program to adjust some classes in order to emphasis and reenforce some existing technical skill sets. These changes should allow students to continue to have a wide array of professional options to them upon graduation.

3. As a result of faculty reflection on these results, are there any program changes anticipated? Yes.

a. If so, what are those changes?
Assignments will be modified in order to emphasize different technologies. Basic visual and compositional goals will remain the same, but the way projects are produced will be changed in order to reenforce different technological skills learned in previous classes. This should have minimal changes on the visual skill sets taught, but allow student to become more experienced with various media.

b. How will you know if these changes achieved the desired results?
Senior portfolios presented in class, and portfolios and assignments presented during the Spring Show should demonstrate a stronger focus on the required techniques. Feedback from the professional community based off of portfolios reviews will also provide an ongoing means of evaluation.

4. Did your department engage in any other assessment activities such as the development of rubrics or course alignment?
The Graphic Design Program has been reviewing and refining the course structure and alignment of the curriculum in response to the continued evolution of the graphic design profession. We plan to continue to review the interaction of courses and look for opportunities to align curriculum from both an accumulative viewpoint and a single semester.

5. What assessment activities are planned for the upcoming academic year?
The continuing use of pre-major portfolio reviews, senior portfolio reviews, public shows and yearly faculty reviews.
1. **What goals or learning objectives/outcomes were assessed in AY 2010-2011?**

   The Interior Design program continued to focus on the two main areas assessed in its 2010 evaluation. Under Program Goal #1, the program evaluated student expectation 'd'.

   d) The ability to apply critical techniques from art and design history to his/her own work and to work of his/her contemporaries.

   Under Program Goal #2, the program evaluated student expectation 'c'.

   c) The ability to draw inspiration from the history of their discipline, and understand their own work in relationship to that history.

2. **How did you assess these learning outcomes?**

   a. Describe the measures you used and the information gathered.

   The Interior Architecture program has a curriculum that is organized into four parallel sequences: design studios, design graphics studios, professional classes and design history classes. In each sequence, students move from an introductory level to an advanced degree of professional competency.

   This year was used to determine whether the small changes made as a result of the 2010 formative assessment strategy (to determine students’ progression of the above outcomes within the design studios) were meaningful.

   A random sampling of ten project binders were selected from the first junior-level design studio sequence (INTD 153) and a random sampling of ten research binders were selected from the senior thesis studios.

   The project/research binders were used because they not only organize the various types of research used in the profession, they also communicate, to varying levels of complexity, a student’s design thoughts and design process. In the INTD153 studios, students create project binders that include a project summary, program research, peer-reviewed articles on research related to their program, precedent research, and image/atmosphere research that includes color, furnishings, and materials.

   Senior research binders, at a minimum, include:
   - Project summary statements and project concept statements
   - Program research including peer-reviewed articles related to their program
   - Precedent research
   - Code and design regulations research and analysis
   - Site research
The rubric used in the 2009-2010 evaluation was used to again compare the project binders from the two studio series. The rubric used the following criteria to determine if students are progressing toward demonstrating the expectations outlined in Item #1. The rubric included the following traits:

- Evidence of the full range of research is demonstrated (i.e. program/building use research, historic and contemporary precedent research, code/regulatory research, site/environmental research, and image/material/furnishing research).
- Relevance of the research to the program or student’s design goals is demonstrated.
- Quality and credibility of the body of research is apparent.
- Progression in synthesizing the range of research for the design problem is demonstrated.

During the 2010–2011 academic year, instructors reemphasized the importance of research for design. While specific class content and student project requirements differed from instructor to instructor, in general, additional time and project evaluation emphasis was increased.

b. As a result of these assessments what did you learn about the program’s success in helping its students achieve these learning outcomes?

Similar to the 2009-2010 results, the students’ work demonstrated sufficient ability to identify the specific components within the full range of research resources. Junior-level binders again showed that most of our interior students understand the various types of research that is needed for a project.

While the senior studio 2010–2011 results clearly indicated improvement from the 2009-2010 results (approximately 60% vs. 40% of the senior-level research binders demonstrated evidence of collecting and utilizing the full range of research for their thesis project), they also revealed the same strengths and weaknesses as the 2009-2010 results.

In general, students’ work demonstrated sufficient ability to identify and collect the relevant and credible research resources. The results indicate that our students understand how to research their program and the associated image/material research that is appropriate to the project.

The 2010–2011 results again indicate that students, in general, demonstrate weaknesses in communicating how this research is incorporated (directly or indirectly) into their design solution. While the majority of students (approximately 80%) excelled at appropriately incorporating material/furnishing and code research into their projects, approximately half of these same students demonstrated understanding of how to use the remaining research elements in the development of their design solutions.
3. **As a result of faculty reflection on these results, are there any program changes anticipated?**
   a. If so, what are those changes?
   No major program changes will be implemented this year because we are in the final stage of assessing the overall program change made in response to the last accreditation visit by CIDA (Council for Interior Design Accreditation). CIDA is making its next visit in fall 2011 (an extension to the fall 2010 was approved by CIDA) where we will show the results of a well tested curriculum.

   Continued minor changes will be implemented in the design studios to address some of the weaknesses cited above.

   b. How will you know if these changes achieved the desired results?
   A holistic assessment of the program’s goals will be initiated in the spring of 2012.

4. **Did your department engage in any other assessment activities such as the development of rubrics or course alignment?**
   As a result of working toward meeting both CIDA’s and the University’s assessment requirements, Interior Design faculty developed a course content matrix which matches specific CIDA standards and guidelines to the DOD’s learning objectives and outcomes. These course content matrixes have not been changed or updated this year.

5. **What assessment activities are planned for the upcoming academic year?**
   The Interior Design program has been fully accredited since 1991 by the Council on Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA) and is scheduled for a re-accreditation review in one year. The first phase of the re-accreditation process is the submission of a self-study report (to be written in the spring 2011); the second phase of the re-accreditation process is a site visit the following semester. An important element of CIDA accreditation is program assessment. All interior design faculty will be involved in preparing assessment materials and the self study in preparation for the CIDA site visit.
RECENT PHOTOGRAPHY CHANGES

The Bachelor of Arts in Photography degree program is a joint program sponsored by the Art and Design departments. In spring 2011, the Arts and Letters Budget and Curriculum Committee approved the conversion of four Art Department photo classes to cross-listed courses. Classes previously listed with the ART Hegis code will be cross listed with the PHOT Hegis code and will be offered in Design, as well as Art. Since the Department of Design administers the Photography Program, this move will facilitate Design’s assessment of both individual courses and the overall Photography Program.

This spring, 2011, a course/program change proposal was created making Photo 141, Intermediate Photography a “gateway” course. Beginning in the fall 2012 semester, all photography majors must complete this course and earn a minimum of a B- in order to enroll in four senior-level photography courses: Senior Portfolio, Advanced Photography, Photo in the Field and Artificial Light Photography. In addition to introducing new concepts and technical skills, faculty will reinforce conceptual and technical skills developed in earlier courses. Assessment tools such as course rubrics, group critiques of student work and exams will continue to be used in Intermediate Photography.

1. What goals or learning objectives/outcomes were assessed in AYs 2010–2011?

The Photography Program focused attention on one of the Department of Design’s Assessment Plan learning objectives:

Students are expected to create professional-quality work, which shows a clearly articulated concept, creative energy, technical mastery of tools and techniques, and imaginative concepts.

2. How did you assess these learning outcomes?

a. Describe the measures you used and the information gathered.

The program uses both formative and summative means of performance assessment to measure learning outcomes.

- Photography Program assessment takes place in specific courses through group and individual critiques of student portfolios, exams, papers, artist’s statements, exhibitions and participation in classroom discussions. Course rubrics describe the quality of an individual photograph or an entire portfolio. They reflect attributes associated with image quality such as the photograph’s: emotional impact or imaginative quality, technical quality, organization of light, space, forms and overall presentation.

- Intermediate Photography is the new “gateway” course (all photography majors must complete this course and earn a minimum of a B- in order to enroll in four senior-level photography courses). The curriculum for the class has a technical emphasis, as well as a focus on the development of visual concepts and imagery. The importance of assessing the student’s success in acquiring technical understanding and intermediate skills, in this course, required adding a second exam to the course. Exams are an effective tool that let students know their own strengths and weaknesses and serve as an incentive for them to
work at mastering the necessary information. They give a clear and immediate message to an instructor about the effectiveness of lectures, demonstrations and the group’s understanding of material being presented. The tests also provide an objective element for the course grade, which determines a student’s ability to enroll in senior-level courses and complete their degree.

- As in previous semesters, the program collected representative samples of student work for the Photography Program portfolio. These images were collected from two senior-level courses, Senior Portfolio and Studio Lighting. In addition to collecting senior work, the program began a collection of student work from Photo 141, Intermediate Photography. This intermediate work is used for comparative purposes. Faculty evaluate work in this portfolio looking for inconsistencies or indications that there is a need to alter the overall curriculum, as well as problems with individual course content or student learning objectives.

- In Photo 150 (the senior portfolio class) students are required to write an artist’s statement, as part of the Program’s assessment process. This requirement helps assess the artist’s ability to explain their concepts and theories as well applying critical techniques from art/photo history to their own work. These techniques are an essential part of the Department of Design’s stated learning objectives.

- The senior portfolio classes created a collaborative book of representative images from the entire class. These high-quality, self-published, books will be added to the Program’s assessment portfolio. Creating this book not only addressed layout and design principles, it creates a collaborative environment where students can view and assess their own work in relation to that of their peers.

- Photography internships, with state agencies, publications, commercial and portrait studios, are an elective option for majors. Internships give students experience working directly with a professional in the discipline and provide the Program with an outside perspective on student learning outcomes. Employers provide a written assessment evaluating: the student’s scope of photographic knowledge, their materials and equipment familiarity and their learning proficiency.

b. As a result of these assessments what did you learn about the program’s success in helping its students achieve these learning outcomes?

c. In what areas are students doing well and achieving expectations?

- In last year’s assessment, the faculty noted that the impact and success of student’s images was diminished by inattention to overall presentation quality. There has been significant improvement in the quality of portfolio and individual image presentation this year. Greater emphasis and very specific guidelines were given in classes, related to matting and mounting techniques as well as archival issues. Understanding the importance of presentation was discussed as related to gaining admission to Master of Fine Arts programs and entering a professional field.
As a result of faculty assessment of student portfolios, emphasis on advanced digital techniques, particularly in the area of print output has been increased in Intermediate Digital Photography, Senior Portfolio and Advanced Photography. Student work shows improvement in this area, though this continues to be a source of concern.

d. What areas are seen as needing improvement within your program?

Through course evaluations and viewing student portfolios from Photography in the Field (Photo/Art 161) there is concern about the broad nature of the course’s learning objectives in meeting student’s career and academic requirements. This year’s Photography Program change places Photo in the Field (Art / Photo 161) beyond the gateway course, Intermediate Photography. With this change the course enrollment will be limited to advanced juniors and seniors. These students will already have essential foundation knowledge and so will require instruction in more advanced technical and visual techniques.

Exams and student portfolios show the need for further technical foundation instruction. Transfer students come to the Photography Program with differing levels of preparation. This is most evident at the intermediate level, demonstrated in course critiques, student portfolio’s and test scores.

3. As a result of faculty reflection on these results, are there any program changes anticipated?

a. If so, what are those changes?

The ability to write a cogent and effective artist’s statement is critical for photo majors. These statements, required in the senior capstone course, are held to a rigorous upper-division writing standard. Ideas must be well developed and clearly presented. Photo majors often wait very late in their academic careers to complete the writing intensive course, meaning it is difficult for them to meet the high standard expected. In major advising sessions, and at transfer orientation, the importance of early completion of the Writing Placement for Juniors (WPJ) exam and the University Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement will be emphasized.

With the increased emphasis on digital photography at community colleges, students transferring to Sacramento State have a limited knowledge of essential foundation material that applies to both shooting and darkroom skills. To ensure their success in the gateway course, Intermediate Photography, the Program plans to submit a course change proposal which will require that students successfully complete an exam, of the type administered to CSUS students in the Basic Techniques of Photography, before enrolling in Photo 141.

A course change proposal will be submitted during the 2011/12 academic year, for Photo in the Field (Art/Photo 161) altering the focus of the course’s stated learning objectives. This is necessary with this year’s program change, which effectively limits enrollment in the course to advanced juniors and seniors who have completed Intermediate Photography with a B- or better. The course’s curriculum will emphasize location-lighting techniques that can be applied to commercial and fine art situations. This change will also address the concerns of previous program assessments that identified the need for Photo majors to have additional artificial lighting course work.
b. How will you know if these changes achieved the desired results?
The success of curriculum changes in helping the program meet its student learning outcomes will be measured using established program assessment techniques such as: group and individual critiques of student work, exams, papers, exhibitions, the Program’s portfolio of student images, senior video interviews and through formal feedback from internship sponsors.

4. Did your department engage in any other assessment activities such as the development of rubrics or course alignment?
The proposed program changes mentioned throughout this report prompted a need to review rubrics and the learning objectives in vital single courses as well as connections throughout the larger curriculum.

5. What assessment activities are planned for the upcoming academic year?
• Faculty will continue building a portfolio of student work, collecting samples from Intermediate Photography to compare with the work of students from the Senior Portfolio class. The intermediate class was selected as a base for the faculty to assess the program’s curriculum since all photography majors must complete this class, regardless of courses taken at other institutions. This collection of student work provides concrete examples for performance assessment.

• Due to faculty sabbaticals, the program was not able to complete videotaped senior interviews for assessment in 2011. Video interviews will be resumed spring 2012. The success of the Department’s learning objectives were demonstrated with this assessment tool. The photographs presented illustrated the artist’s solution to functional and aesthetic problems and expressed the work’s organizing concept. The interviewed students were able to move comfortably back and forth between words and visual material in order to express their ideas. They discussed their work coherently and with confidence. The video interview project will be enlarged in scope, to include more seniors and their final portfolios. In addition to discussing their senior course work and giving oral artist’s statements, students will be asked to show and discuss their entry-level work from the Intermediate Photography class.

• The Photography faculty will continue to hold regular meetings to discuss both the curriculum and the degree program’s effectiveness