

Annual Assessment Report 2013

Department of Design

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.

In May 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

Admission into upper division study in three of the four majors within the Department of Design are impacted and subject to supplemental criteria in the form of a juried portfolio review by the full time faculty. The impacted majors are Photography, Graphic Design and Interior Design with a concentration in Interior Architecture.

RECENT PHOTOGRAPHY CHANGES

Last year the Bachelor of Arts in Photography degree program went through a major revision. We spent the last year revamping our program, examining our curriculum, rewriting classes, adding four new upper division classes and going through the impaction process. We addressed areas of weakness in our curriculum and crafted a stronger, more focused and rigorous program for our students. Impaction will begin in Fall 2013 and figuring out how to get our current students into cohorts and through the new program efficiently while dealing with incoming students is going to be paramount. The next two years will be dedicated to making this transition as smooth as possible. We need to anticipate possible road bumps that will affect students, the facilities and faculty as we blend together pre and post impaction students. The pay off for the upheaval is that once the new program is completely in place we will have an elegant set of courses for students to follow. Once they are admitted, they will flow through the program in cohorts, taking an orderly and prescribed set of classes, and will complete all of their upper division requirements in two years.

1. What goals or learning objectives/outcomes were assessed in AYs 2012-2013?

The Photography Program focuses attention on four areas:

Students ability to identify specific historical periods and artists who have influenced the trajectory of photography's effect on society and culture.

Students grasp of the history of photography and ability to apply that knowledge to a more informed and complex discourse around their own work.

The ability to produce a cohesive body of work addressing both aesthetic and technical concerns while also clearly articulating ideas and conceptual underpinnings.

The ability to verbally assess their own images and other's through their understanding of the correlation between aesthetic and technical choices.

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.

Our upper division studio class curriculums have 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 of advanced skills is accessed through exams and class critiques. Exams are an effective tool that let students know their own strengths and weaknesses and serve as an incentive for them to master 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 that contributes to the course grade.

As in previous semesters, the program collects representative samples of student work for the

Photography Program portfolio. These images are collected from the upper division portfolio classes. In addition to collecting senior work, the program also collects student work from Photo 141 & PH 111 (darkroom & digital intermediate courses). 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 180 (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 student's ability to explain their concepts and theories and how they apply critical techniques and concepts from art/photo history to their own work. These techniques and concepts are an essential part of the Department of Design's stated learning objectives.

At the end of the semester each student in the senior portfolio classes participates in a filmed interview process where they are asked to talk about the project they worked on for the semester, discuss what they learned over the semester, what they found challenging and to also give advice for the group of students coming up behind them. The filmed interviews serve three purposes:

The activity gives students the opportunity to present their work and talk about their ideas in a formal setting.

Each student receives a copy of the interview so they leave with a concrete documentation of not only their final projects but with a visual and aural sample of how they present themselves and their work.

We are accumulating quite an archive of these interviews. The archive serves two purposes: 1. We have a clear way of tracking the progress of our program. 2. We use the videos in other classes to share senior work and demonstrate the importance of being able to verbalize ideas.

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

In last year's assessment, the faculty felt that students were not getting enough experience with classroom critiques and that final projects needed more attention to technical and aesthetic details. With the restructured curriculum and addition of four new upper division photography studio classes students will benefit from having significantly more studio, lab and critique time. There will be a smoother transition from intermediate to advanced classes, which will help to build their skills and their confidence.

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

In our upper division classes we have increased the amount of reading and discussion around contemporary concerns in photographic practice. We have also made an effort to shown more work done by contemporary artists. Emphasizing the importance of being able to not only identify important work done in the field but to also be able to discuss it and apply it one's own work has become a cornerstone of the program. Because of this emphasis faculty have noted a higher level of discourse occurring during class discussion and critiques.

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

The area we are working on has to do with digital output in our studio classes. Though digital output is not a new technology it is still an area that has many technical challenges. Our program is moving from being one where many students outsourced their digital printing to a program that requires students to do their printing at school in our labs. The faculty is spending a significant amount of time and energy to not only get our labs up to a higher standard but to also create new working space and protocols for students so they can master this important skill in a cost effective way.

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

a. If so, what are those changes?

As stated above the photography program just went through significant changes, examining our curriculum, rewriting classes, adding four new upper division classes and going through the impact process. At this point we are concentrating on the new program and making sure that the transition is smooth.

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.

4. Did your department engage in any other assessment activities such as the development of rubrics or course alignment?

The Photography Program has been reviewing and refining the course structure and alignment of the curriculum in response to the continued evolution of photographic practice. 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?

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. This collection of student work provides concrete examples for performance assessment.

We will continue with the filmed senior interviews and are preparing to begin a similar interview process in one of our junior classes. In the coming years we will have a visual and aural mapping of students as they move through the upper division classes toward graduation.

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

Graphic Design Assessment Report 2013

1. What goals or learning objectives/outcomes were assessed in AYs 2012–2013?

The Graphic Design Program's evaluation in AYs 2012–2013 continued to focus on four main areas:

- a. 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.
- b. The ability to produce creative, professional-quality work within project guidelines.
- c. The ability to communicate aspects of both the designer's process and final work verbally, graphically and in writing.
- d. 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.

- 1) 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.

- 2) 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.

- 3) 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.

- 4) 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 roll 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.