



**TO:** Mike Mahon  
President and Vice Chancellor

**DATE:** November 2, 2015

**FROM:** Ian MacLachlan  
Chair, Academic Quality Assurance Committee

**RE:** Department of Art, Academic Quality Assurance Review

In accordance with the U of L *Academic Quality Assurance Policy and Process*, the Academic Quality Assurance Committee concluded the review of the Department of Art at its October 22, 2015 meeting.

The Program Review Committee for this review comprised Ken Allan (Program Review Coordinator), Don Gill, and Ron Chambers. The review produced four documents:<sup>1</sup>

1. *Department of Art, Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Lethbridge: Program Review Conducted 2014/2015 - Self Study Report* (received March 13, 2015; revised version received March 30, 2015) – Self Study Report, developed by the Department of Art Self Study Committee.
2. *Undergraduate Program Review: Department of Art, Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Lethbridge* (received June 8, 2015) – External Review Report by David Garneau (University of Regina) and Oliver Botar (University of Manitoba) based on their site visit of April 23-24, 2015.
3. *Department of Art, Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Lethbridge: Program Review 2014/2015 - Department Response to External Review* (received June 23, 2015) – response of the Self Study Committee to the external review.
4. *Faculty of Fine Arts Dean's Response to the Department of Art's 2014-15 External Review* (received October 13, 2015) – response to the review, written by Edward Jurkowski, Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts.

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<sup>1</sup> All documents are available upon request.

## ***Self Study Report***

Art department strengths as reported in the Self Study Report included:

- Curriculum has been redeveloped to make Art Studio classes more accessible to students within and external to the Faculty of Fine Arts.
- The MFA program attracts strong applicants.
- Over the past five years enrolment in Art courses has been steady.
- Demand for the Art Studio program and the combined BFA/B.Ed. (Art) program is high and continues to grow.
- Demand for the Art History/Museum Studies (AHMS) program has risen steadily.
- AHMS graduates have been successful in finding related employment.
- Data from graduate outcome surveys reveal that over 90% of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of teaching, the quality of the program, and the quality of the overall educational experience.
- Programs benefit from close ties with the U of L Art Gallery and its extensive collection. The U of L is one of only two universities in Canada where the Director or Curator of the Art Gallery is a tenured professor, and the only one where that person teaches undergraduate courses.
- The ART NOW and Architecture and Design NOW presentation series bring invited speakers to campus for the benefit of the university and wider communities.
- Studio workspaces and equipment are in good repair. Sculpture facilities are well equipped, and have excellent technical support staff.
- Faculty are fully engaged in contemporary art production and exhibition.

Challenges mentioned in the Self Study included:

- The demand for enrolment expansion must be balanced with policies for managed growth.
- Class sizes in studio, seminar, and AHMS courses must remain small to maintain a high quality learning experience and because of physical size limitations of studios.
- The breadth of course offerings must be increased.
- Administrative, technical, and teaching support must be increased.
- More student exhibition space is needed, so students can gain professional experience.
- Effective recruitment and retention strategies are needed in the face of increased competition from degree-granting institutions.
- With the U of L considering a reduction in the General Liberal Education Requirement, Art Studio courses must be made more relevant to the general student population.
- The number of department faculty has declined. This has led to increased teaching and administrative loads, the cancellation of some courses, and the suspension of supervisory duties.

- The full-time visiting speakers coordinator position was moved from the department and reduced to a nine-month position. This has increased the workload for the instructor of Art Now and Architecture and Design Now.
- There is a lack of secure, ongoing digital technical support.
- The department has lost space from the fabrication shop, the sculpture area, and the Advanced and Senior Studio area in order to accommodate graduate students.
- There is a lack of support for art programming, public relations, installation assistance, and gallery monitoring.
- The Art Gallery is no longer housed under the Faculty of Fine Arts, which has led to a lack of exhibition support. Also, the lack of study access to the Art Gallery is an issue.
- A reduction in the number of teaching faculty has meant that some AHMS topics courses have not been offered for several semesters.
- There is a lack of adequate funding for the MFA program, plus a need for more graduate studio space.
- Only 65% of Art graduates find work that is related or strongly related to their program of study.
- The short life expectancy of equipment for digital photography puts pressure on budgets.
- The ART NOW and Architecture and Design NOW series face reductions in staffing and funding that may damage their viability.

Initiatives and recommendations discussed in the report included:

- The Faculty of Fine Arts recruitment and retention initiative has targets for numbers of new students in Art program areas.
- In 2015 the department will introduce a new student mentoring initiative and Art Futures workshops with art professionals.
- The department will investigate and develop further minors and concentrations.
- The department is in the process of changing the AHMS program from a BFA to a BA (AHMS). Also, the Museum Studies courses will be separated from the Art History courses to attract students from diverse backgrounds.
- The Native American Art program needs improved recruitment and promotion strategies. The FNMI Alumni chapter can be consulted in this. The department should establish and strengthen community ties related to this program. Also, the curriculum of this program should be reviewed and course offerings for cross-listing should be considered.
- The department will continue to develop opportunities for internship and work study.

## **External Review Report**

Strengths of the Department of Art mentioned in the body of the report included:

- There are excellent facilities for instruction in studio, art history, and museum studies.
- The studios are generous in size, well maintained, and are staffed by knowledgeable and enthusiastic technicians.
- The following features of the undergraduate programs are outstanding: studio facilities; studio technicians; Library; Art Gallery collections; internship opportunities for Museum Studies majors; and faculty and staff.
- The Art Gallery holdings are exceptionally rich and offer enhanced learning opportunities.
- There is strong collaboration with the Native American Studies program.
- The relationships with the local Siksika, Kainai, and Northern Peigan nations are unique, a draw for students and scholarship, and important for community building.
- The department addresses the goals in the U of L planning documents.
- The department's community outreach is commendable.
- The department is student centred.
- The Museum Studies major is strong and relatively unique.
- The ART NOW series is significant and unique.
- The curriculum for AHMS is very well organized.
- High quality faculty ensure high standards in Art History instruction.
- The range and depth of the faculty in the department are impressive.
- The department has a strong collegial environment.
- Students are generally very satisfied with Art department programs.
- Graduate students are fully funded.
- About half of Art History graduates go on to graduate studies and those that don't are successful in finding employment.
- Most Museum Studies graduates find employment in their field.
- The shops are well-equipped and maintained.

The body of the report discussed several challenges facing the Art department:

- There are not enough professors or technicians and staffing levels are decreasing.
- Student numbers are declining.
- The academic quality of students coming into the undergraduate program is uneven.
- The sculpture area lacks a full-time instructor.
- There is a lack of training in professional issues, such as grant writing and artist contracts.
- There is a lack of internships that include commercial galleries and entrepreneurship.
- Some faculty members have difficulty gaining access to Art Gallery collections.

- The Museum Studies program is insufficiently staffed.
- There is a lack of teaching in non-Western art.
- Many courses are taught as overloads.
- The Art Studio program has a high attrition rate.
- There is no program and career counselling specifically for the Art department.
- Student recruitment for the Art Studio and AHMS programs is a challenge.
- Tri-council funding of research has been almost nonexistent.
- The department does not have enough staff to maintain a program in Museum Studies.
- Art History majors are getting an insufficient background in the history of Western art before modernity and in the history of world art.

There were several recommendations contained in the body of the report:

- Maintain and deepen: the teaching of Indigenous art history; Indigenous approaches to studio work; and relations with local Siksika, Kainai, and Northern Peigan nations of the Blackfoot Confederacy.
- Break the Open Studio course into smaller units with different topics, including professional issues, to make it accessible to non-majors and community members.
- Consider developing a certificate program for professional artists who want to upgrade their studio, critical, and professional skills.
- The department should encourage and support faculty in applying for research funding. Provide training related to tri-council funding.
- Implement program and career counselling for the Department of Art, to augment general Fine Arts counselling.
- Boost recruitment efforts in catchment area high schools.
- Make investments in new studio technology, like a laser cutter and 3D printer.

The report concluded with 13 main recommendations to the department:

1. Maintain and increase staffing levels.
2. Continue existing initiatives to encourage faculty to apply for internal, provincial, tri-council, and Canada Council research funding.
3. Maintain and enhance the ART NOW program. Consider revising the program to allow for longer-term residencies for visiting artists, art historians, and curators.
4. In consultation with Native American Studies, determine if a new Indigenous hire should be in traditional or contemporary Indigenous art. Also, ensure that the new hire has expertise in art history and studio.
5. Establish a program to train student technicians.
6. In the summer, rent studios to students and community members.
7. Give a faculty member responsibility for student advising.

8. Develop a departmental attendance and participation policy.
9. Install art works across campus.
10. Maintain current faculty complement in Art History, ensuring one faculty position is within the field of Canadian art history or preferably Canadian and Indigenous art history.
11. Add another faculty member in Art History, preferably someone who can teach courses in both art history and museum studies.
12. Reintroduce two three-credit courses that survey world art history to the mid-18th century.
13. Encourage art history instruction using the Art Gallery collections.

### **Program Response**

In their Program Response, the Self Study Committee responded to key comments from the External Review Report:

<b>External Review Comments:</b>	<b>Self Study Committee Response:</b>
Inadequate staffing for Studio and Art History/Museum Studies is a critical issue.	Agreed. In particular the AHMS area needs a replacement for the position that was not replaced.
Consider revising the ART NOW program to allow for longer-term residencies for visiting artists, art historians, and curators	This has been discussed in the department. Implementing this recommendation would require more resources for ART NOW. The loss of the ART NOW coordinator position has created difficulties for the program.
Break the Open Studio course into smaller units with different topics, including professional issues.	Some issues related to grant writing, artist contracts, and other professional issues are addressed in senior studio courses. However, these topics could be better addressed.
Consider developing a certificate program for professional artists who want to upgrade their studio, critical, and professional skills.	This is an interesting proposal.
Reintroduce two three-credit courses that survey world art history to the mid-18th century.	The department does not currently have the resources to add more AHMS courses.
Implement program and career counselling for the Department of Art, to augment general Fine Arts counselling.	The department will involve faculty members in department-specific mentoring Fall 2015.
Pay more attention to research and scholarship by faculty in Studio.	These faculty already have active records of creative production through exhibitions in peer-reviewed, nationally-recognized exhibition venues.
The department should encourage and support faculty in applying for research funding. Provide training related to tri-council funding.	Departmental involvement in tri-council funding could be improved. However, this funding focuses on developing projects that conform to the funding model and discourages creative, independent, critical research. Studio faculty have been successful in securing funding from the Canada Council and the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.

External Review Comments:	Self Study Committee Response:
Departmental success is based on the goodwill of department members. There is no system to recognize the teaching of the Studio MFA program, the data visualization class, and AHMS independent studies.	Department faculty are experiencing burn out and stress from an aging professorship, increased teaching responsibilities, increasing service demands, and little support for research.
There are excellent facilities for instruction in studio, art history, and museum studies.	Credit is due to the Facilities Manager of the Art Studio.
Make the Digital Technician position full-time.	Agreed.
Establish a program to train student technicians.	This is a useful suggestion.
Maintain and increase staffing levels.	Agreed.
In the summer, rent studios to students and community members.	This is an interesting idea that will require discussion.
Develop a departmental attendance and participation policy.	This is best left to the individual instructors.
Install art works across campus.	Security issues make this problematic. In addition, the Art Gallery now reports to the VP Academic office.
Upcoming departmental hires.	<p>The tenure-track replacement position in Studio has a concentration in indigenous studio art practice. The AHMS term position involves Canadian, Western survey, and indigenous art history.</p> <p>The department supports continuing the sessional position in Native American Studies that addresses Aboriginal art historical material.</p> <p>An additional hire is needed in AHMS.</p>
Encourage art history instruction using the Art Gallery collections.	The collections are mainly Canadian, so could be used more extensively in the two Canadian courses.

## Dean's Response

In his response, the Dean addressed the key comments from the External Review Report and the Self Study Committee's response:

External Review Comments:	Self Study Committee Response:	Dean's Response:
Inadequate staffing for Studio and Art History/Museum Studies is a critical issue.	Agreed. In particular the AHMS area needs a replacement for the position that was not replaced.	There are some inaccuracies in the Self Study Committee's understanding of staffing. The Department of Art is presently searching for a tenure-track hire in AHMS. A tenure-track appointment has been made in the Art department, a joint position between this department and the Department of Native American Studies.
Consider revising the ART NOW program to allow for longer-term residencies for visiting artists, art historians, and curators	This has been discussed in the department. Implementing this recommendation would require more resources for ART NOW. The loss of the ART NOW coordinator position has created difficulties for the program.	The Visiting Speaker Coordinator position has replaced the ART NOW coordinator. This new person services all visiting speakers in Fine Arts. In addition to the Visiting Speaker Coordinator, for ART NOW there is: a marker assigned to the ART NOW courses; a faculty advisory committee; a technician to record the lectures; and support from the Fine Arts Financial Officer. There should be a complete review of the ART NOW program, including a financial review. The department should then decide future directions for the program, considering some the pedagogical recommendations put forward by the External Reviewers.
Break the Open Studio course into smaller units with different topics, including professional issues.	Some issues related to grant writing, artist contracts, and other professional issues are addressed in senior studio courses. However, these topics could be better addressed.	The Dean will develop a framework for professional issues workshops for all Fine Arts students, and will bring this to Fine Arts Council in the Spring 2016 semester.
Consider developing a certificate program for professional artists who want to upgrade their studio, critical, and professional skills.	This is an interesting proposal.	A certificate program is not currently a strategic recruitment priority for the U of L.



External Review Comments:	Self Study Committee Response:	Dean's Response:
<p>Reintroduce two three-credit courses that survey world art history to the mid-18th century.</p>	<p>The department does not currently have the resources to add more AHMS courses.</p>	<p>The Art department is in the process of hiring a tenure-track appointment to replace the retirement of the AHMS faculty member. This should give some flexibility in the curriculum once the new hire has settled into their appointment.</p>
<p>Implement program and career counselling for the Department of Art, to augment general Fine Arts counselling.</p>	<p>The department will involve faculty members in department-specific mentoring Fall 2015.</p>	<p>Involving faculty members in department mentoring depends on these individuals being aware of the curriculum and programming needs of each student and that they consistently follow-up with the students.</p> <p>Lack of adequate program counselling is not raised as an issue by students from the other Fine Arts departments. The Dean will follow up and check if there are structural issues in Fine Arts advising.</p> <p>Related to student engagement and student retention, the Fine Arts recruitment and retention committee will develop a strategic retention plan for the Faculty of Fine Arts.</p>
<p>Pay more attention to research and scholarship by faculty in Studio.</p>	<p>These faculty already have active record of creative production through exhibitions in peer-reviewed, nationally-recognized exhibition venues.</p>	<p>The Office of Research and Innovation Services (ORIS) has strived to find ways to support creative activities throughout Fine Arts.</p>

External Review Comments:	Self Study Committee Response:	Dean's Response:
<p>The department should encourage and support faculty in applying for research funding. Provide training related to tri-council funding.</p>	<p>Departmental involvement in tri-council funding could be improved. However, this funding focuses on developing projects that conform to the funding model and discourages creative, independent, critical research. Studio faculty have been successful in securing funding from the Canada Council and the Alberta Foundation for the Arts (AFA).</p>	<p>The number of Canada Council and AFA awards has declined in the Art department. The Social Studies and Humanities Research Council has introduced a "Research Creation" portfolio. In May 2015 there was a two-day workshop, organized by Fine Arts and ORIS, on strategies for applying for research funding. The Dean and Associate VP Research will develop further workshops for Fine Arts. There will be another two-day workshop in May 2016.</p> <p>All Fine Arts departments have seen an increase in internal and external research awards.</p>
<p>Departmental success is based on the good will of department members. There is no system to recognize the teaching of the Studio MFA program, the data visualization class, and AFMS independent studies.</p>	<p>Department faculty are experiencing burn out and stress from an aging professorship, increased teaching responsibilities, increasing service demands, and little support for research.</p>	<p>The annual Professional Activities Report recognizes MFA supervision and independent studies supervision.</p> <p>Some internal programs provide course release, such as the Canada Research Chair (Tier II), Board of Governors Research Chair, and University Scholars.</p> <p>For research money, there is funding for travel, and internal seed programs like through SSHRC and CREDO.</p>
<p>Make the Digital Technician position full-time.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>	<p>As of August 2015, there is a full-time digital technician.</p>
<p>Establish a program to train student technicians.</p>	<p>This is a useful suggestion.</p>	<p>The Art department should strike an ad hoc committee to determine the viability and possible design of a student technician training program.</p>
<p>In the summer, rent studios to students and community members.</p>	<p>This is an interesting idea that will require discussion.</p>	<p>Strike an ad hoc committee in the Art department to generate a financial model for studio rental.</p>
<p>Develop a departmental attendance and participation policy.</p>	<p>This is best left to the individual instructors.</p>	<p>The Art department should develop an attendance policy that reduces the variance between classes in the grade assigned for attendance.</p>

<b>External Review Comments:</b>	<b>Self Study Committee Response:</b>	<b>Dean's Response:</b>
Install art works across campus.	Security issues make this problematic. In addition, the Art Gallery now reports to the VP Academic office.	The Art department should develop a vision for aligning its pedagogical objectives for AHMS with those of the Art Gallery. The ultimate goal is to maximize the exhibition and pedagogical opportunities in University Hall

The Dean's Response made some additional comments related to enrolments and curriculum. The Department of Art has seen a fall in credit hours and in enrolments in the Studio programs over the past decade. For the past two years, the Dean of Fine Arts has made Art Studio a top priority for strategic recruitment in the Faculty in an attempt to reverse the enrolment decline. Regarding curriculum, the hiring of a new AHMS faculty member gives an opportunity for the department to consider the curricular suggestions from this quality assurance review.

The Academic Quality Assurance Committee is satisfied that the Department of Art program academic quality assurance review has followed the U of L's academic quality assurance process appropriately, and acknowledges the successful completion of the review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ian MacLachlan", written over a horizontal line.

Ian MacLachlan

Chair, Academic Quality Assurance Committee

Cc: Andrew Hakin, Provost and Vice President (Academic)