



Office of the Provost &
Vice-President (Academic)

4401 University Drive
Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada
T1K 3M4

Phone (403) 329 2202
Fax (403) 329 2097

TO: Digvir Jayas **DATE:** July 5, 2023
President and Vice Chancellor

FROM: Alan Siaroff
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 approved the review of the Department of Art at its June 22, 2023, meeting. The Self Study Committee for this review comprised of: Annie Martin (Program Review Coordinator), David Miller, and Devon Smither.

The review produced 4 (four) documents:

1. Self Study Report. Written by the Self Study Committee. Received February 8, 2023.
2. External Review Report. Written by Lorraine Gilbert (University of Ottawa) and Dr. Marilyn McKay (NSCAD University) based on a site visit March 20 to 21, 2023. Received April 14, 2023.
3. Program Response. Written by the Self Study Committee. Received May 24, 2023.
4. Dean's Response. Written by Shelley Scott, Interim Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts. Received June 8, 2023.

As per our current Academic Quality Assurance process, the Departmental committee chose to respond to the Dean's Response to the Art Department review.

Self Study Report

The Self Study Report asked for External Reviewer feedback on several areas:

- From your external perspective, are there areas within our programs and curriculum that suggest potential for growth? What are areas of excellence in our program?
- Are there particular areas in Studio Art, Art History/Museum Studies, and the Indigenous Art programs that would benefit from funding, personnel or space/facility changes to grow them?
- What are our major challenges? How can we best deal with these?

The body of the report noted several strengths of the Department of Art:

- The Department of Art continues to offer strong programs and curriculum at or above a national standard.
- The department has developed and implemented new curriculum as we integrate new technologies and practices into established material and critical traditions. Curriculum changes in Art Studio have revitalized course offerings despite attrition in teaching faculty. An internal review of our Art Studio curriculum led to the development of a leaner program while fueling invention and growth. For instance, by eliminating a portfolio requirement, reducing prerequisites, and merging our signature (though resource-intensive) Foundation Studio courses with existing disciplinary streams in Art Studio (Indigenous Art, Painting, Drawing, Print, Photography, Media Arts, Spatial Practice, Social Practice) we are able to increase student access to the program through a menu of course options previously unavailable to non-majors.
- Graduates continue to find success in careers and admission to nationally competitive graduate programs. Graduates from both Art Studio and AHMS programs have good success rates in securing employment in cultural organizations regionally, provincially, and nationally. They have found curatorial positions, become involved in public programs and arts administration, collections management, arts entrepreneurship, and related fields. The work integrated learning in AHMS has been an effective bridge for students looking for work in the arts and culture sector and the department has regularly offered a workshop in the spring semester about searching for work, applying for jobs, and applying to graduate school.
- Teaching faculty in Art Studio and AHMS maintain active research, exhibition, and publication records on a national and international scale despite challenges posed by a regional location.
- Exhibition space on campus continues to be well-utilized for student exhibitions. We have recently partnered with Casa Lethbridge (the city's community arts centre) to offer additional exhibition opportunities that benefit students in their professional development.

The following weaknesses and challenges were mentioned in the body of the report:

- Challenges lie in balancing demand for enrolment expansion with stable, grounded policies for growth, including adequate funding. Class size must remain small in studio, seminar, and upper-level AHMS courses so that students may have a high-quality learning experience.
- Faculty numbers have been reduced due to retirements. Provincial cutbacks over the last few years have resulted in a significant decrease in sessional and term employees. Existing permanent faculty face an increased teaching load due to graduate student supervision, committee membership, teaching, and an increased administrative load. Study leaves no longer

allow replacement of teaching staff by the university, resulting in course cancellations and suspension of supervisory duties.

- Changes to administrative structures, involvement in the graduate program (MFA), and new curricular areas have continued to place strain on a diminished number of faculty.
- The secondment of one AHMS faculty in administrative work coupled with study leaves and additional administrative work by others means that the AHMS program also faces difficulties in offering its base program as it looks to try to expand and grow.

Recommendations from the body of the report:

- A future hire in Social Practice would complement our existing course offerings. Breadth in course offerings must be increased in Art History/Museum Studies, which would require an additional tenure-track hire to expand the Museum Studies course offerings, and in the Art History area to offer more courses in global art history. Administrative, technical, teaching, and grading support must be adequate and stable for faculty members to continue to achieve broad relevance in their research and scholarly activities, which directly enrich teaching and learning in the program.
- The Dr. James Foster Penny Building in downtown Lethbridge remains underutilized as an exhibition and event space by the department due to various constraints. Funding and support to renovate the space to make it a more professional art exhibition space could extend the reach of the department, faculty, and university into the broader Lethbridge community given its location in the downtown core. The current 10-hour/week casual position is insufficient. The University of Lethbridge Art Gallery no longer programs a BFA Exhibition or a Faculty Exhibition, leaving a lack of essential exhibition support.
- Recruitment and promotion strategies are needed to better serve the BFA Indigenous Art—Studio and AHMS programs. High schools on and off reserves could be visited to better inform students and teachers.
- The curriculum could be reviewed to consider course offerings for cross listing. Cross listing would make access more fluid between the Department of Art and the Department of Indigenous Studies. Combined workshops or events with faculty, staff, and elders could assist in some cultural bridging.

External Review Report

The External Review Report contained eight (8) recommendations for improving the Department of Art:

Recommendations from the body of the report:

- Hire at least one, preferably two, faculty to teach ARHI/MSTU courses. The first should be in Museum Studies. Adding another would make these programs more attractive as the university works on recruitment.
- Hire at least one new faculty member (preferably BIPOC) to replace the retired positions, in the Studio Art Program. These new hires, in art history, museum studies and studio, might also allow for the expansion of the MFA program which now admits only two students per year.
- Hire a 3rd technician, and modify all positions to become full-time. Keep the reporting structure of the technicians within the Studio Art Program, where one head technician can report to the

Chair. This will ensure that all workshops are maintained and utilized to their full potential to serve the students and the programs. With a more appropriate reporting structure, there will be less conflict and overwork in general, which will be highly beneficial to everyone- students, techs, professors, etc.

- Make the .5 position Art Now Instructor position full-time.
- Work with the Faculty of Fine Arts to design and install permanent audiovisual hardware and software in the theatre space where the 'Art Now' and 'Architecture and Design Now' lecture series courses are held. (Note that recommendations 4 and 5 are both in support of one of the most important courses in the Department).
- Begin to consider a way to expand the space needed for the University art gallery collection. Consult with the gallery director and curator, Josephine Mills, a brilliant member of your department, for both the nature of the expansion needed, and for fund-raising initiatives to help make this happen. This will greatly benefit the museum studies area of the art history program.
- Make arrangements for better use of the Penny Building for student and other exhibitions and events. This may be easier to manage with 3 full-time technicians.
- Provide a lounge for the Department's students.

Challenges discussed in the report:

- Art Studio/Indigenous Art Studio Faculty: Two full-time professors who have recently retired have not been replaced. In addition to this, two full-time studio faculty members were on leave, which increases the University service workload considerably for the remaining professors.
- Art History/Museum Studies Faculty: Because faculty must also serve on the normal departmental committees required by every university department, and because they regularly agree to supervise independent studies and MFA theses, and to serve as Chair, their workload is onerous. This workload seems to be largely the result of recent retirements which have not been replaced with new hires. It has also been attributed to severe problems in the number and the structure of the technical staff, which will be discussed below. It was noted that all professors in the Department of Art are or feel overworked, in trying to maintain the high standards of teaching that they uphold. Other contributing factors are no recruitment officer, a finance officer who is stretched over two large Faculties (Fine Arts and Arts and Science), reduced administration staff, workload of five courses per year rather than four, no policy (credit) for grad supervision, no compensation for Graduate Coordination and more and more protocols around other necessities such as health and safety.
- In almost every meeting the reviewers had (with professors, instructors, staff, and students) problems were revealed with the structures of technical staffing in the department (and in relation to the Faculty of Fine Arts): not enough technicians on the ground, a single technician responsible for too much work over several disciplines and courses.
- The reviewers also had a chance to see the gallery space at the "Penny building" which is in an important location in the Lethbridge community but is an under-utilized space. It appears to be under-utilized for three main reasons: the renovations were less than ideal to be used as a professional gallery space, (wall lighting is obstructed, electrical outlet boxes and wiring visible along the bottom of the walls, and a large garishly-designed bar in the middle of the space), there is no technical help to install exhibitions and so this work ends up being volunteered by professors, which is not a good incentive to activate the space, there is difficulty in getting into

the space, since it is locked, and one must call a person in the building to come and unlock the door.

Opportunities discussed in the report:

- The reviewers believe that this is something which sets the University of Lethbridge at the forefront of most other applied visual arts programs in the country. Since the unearthing of graves at former residential schools, as well as the tenets of the latest Truth and Reconciliation Policies, Universities across Canada should be entering a new era of reconciliation, diversity, inclusion, and scholarship in indigenous studies. The program provides students with the opportunity to pursue in-depth exploration of indigeneity, land use, and postcolonial theory in contemporary art. The founding of ORE Lab by Dr. Jackson Leween Two Bears has provided ongoing opportunities for students of all origins and levels to be involved with large scale immersive media installations, and advanced digital media projects. The Mootookakio'ssin project (<https://mootookakiossin.ca/>) is a partnership between Blackfoot leaders and elders, students, and faculty at the University of Lethbridge in various departments, as well as students and faculty in several UK-based universities. The project gives Blackfoot communities virtual access to cultural objects held by institutions and museums in the UK through the creation of digital 3D scans of the objects. This is such a fantastic initiative and at the forefront of post-colonial studies in art.
- Commendations have been stated throughout this document, but perhaps the one that should be reiterated is about how qualified and how hard-working the faculty are in delivering the department's high-quality programs. Of course, it is not all of the professors and instructors who go above and beyond their stated duties, but in the Department of Art, it is every person we, as assessors, spoke with. There has been steady, modest growth in enrolment in the Indigenous Art degree programs. New dual admission and plans to revitalize transfer agreements with colleges in Alberta and elsewhere in Canada should strengthen streams of enrolment in all Art programs.

Program Response

In their Program Response, the Self Study Committee addressed the recommendations from the External Review Report:

1. <i>Hire at least one, preferably two, faculty to teach ARHI/MSTU courses. The first should be in Museum Studies. Adding another would make these programs more attractive as the university works on recruitment.</i>	The Art Department has requested two term positions to cover courses in ARHI/MSTU. In addition to these, a new fulltime position is urgently needed to provide more course offerings in ARHI/MSTU.
2. <i>Hire at least one new faculty member (preferably BIPOC) to replace the retired positions, in the Studio Art Program. These new hires, in art history, museum studies and studio, might also allow for the expansion of the MFA program which now admits only two students per year.</i>	A new tenure-track position in Art Studio has been requested in our staffing plan and <i>is urgently required</i> . Until recently Art Studio was taught by nine (9) academic staff. Due to successive retirements of

	<p>two (2) tenured members and one (1) instructor, as well as one (1) LTD (tenured member who will not be returning), we are effectively losing half our teaching staff in the span of three years. Despite our small numbers, the dynamism of the Department of Art is evidenced by the securing of both a Tier I BoGRC and a CRC (five-year appointments, renewable). The resulting course reductions awarded per year totals the equivalent of another (1) position loss for essentially the next ten years.</p>
<p>3. <i>Hire a third technician, and modify all positions to become full-time. Keep the reporting structure of the technicians within the Studio Art Program, where one head technician can report to the Chair. This will ensure that all workshops are maintained and utilized to their full potential to serve the students and the programs. With a more appropriate reporting structure, there will be less conflict and overwork in general, which will be highly beneficial to everyone- students, techs, professors, etc.</i></p>	<p>A third technician position in Art is urgently required, as is increased technical staff in summer months to conduct important maintenance routines.</p> <p>Conflicts arising from problems with technical staff reporting structures in the Faculty of Fine Arts are endemic and damaging and must be addressed by the incoming Dean and Associate Dean of Fine Arts in robust consultation with teaching faculty and technical staff.</p>
<p>4. <i>Make the .5 position Art Now Instructor position full-time.</i></p>	<p>Agreed. We have requested that the .5 position teaching Art Now and Architecture and Design Now be made full-time a number of times in the past and will continue to lobby to rectify this.</p>
<p>5. <i>Work with the Faculty of Fine Arts to design and instal permanent audiovisual hardware and software in the theatre space where the 'Art Now' and 'Architecture and Design Now' lecture series courses are held. (Note that recommendations 4 and 5 are both in support of one of the most important courses in the Department).</i></p>	<p>Agreed. This must be addressed as part of the Space Audit underway in the Faculty of Fine Arts.</p>
<p>6. <i>Begin to consider a way to expand the space needed for the University art gallery collection. Consult with the gallery director and curator, Josephine Mills, a brilliant member of your department, for both the nature of the expansion needed, and for fund-raising initiatives to help make this happen. This will</i></p>	<p>While it is true, as noted in the external report, that the University Art Gallery and collection are extremely important resources for teaching in ARHI/MSTU and Art Studio, the Art Gallery is not an Art Department asset per se. That said, expanded exhibition and collection study space to support</p>

<i>greatly benefit the museum studies area of the art history program.</i>	greater student and researcher access to the art gallery collection is urgently required.
7. <i>Make arrangements for better use of the Penny Building for student and other exhibitions and events. This may be easier to manage with 3 full-time technicians.</i>	We have emphasized that this is an ongoing issue that requires response. Issues in the Penny exhibition space should be addressed in consultation with members of the Art Department.
8. <i>Provide a lounge for the Department's students.</i>	This is a priority issue in the Art Department as well as in the Faculty of Fine Arts overall. Within the Art Department we will work with the Dean's office to identify a solution to this need for our students.

Dean's Response

The Interim Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts responded to the 8 (eight) recommendations from the External Review Report:

1. <i>Hire at least one, preferably two, faculty to teach ARHI/MSTU courses. The first should be in Museum Studies. Adding another would make these programs more attractive as the university works on recruitment.</i>	A three-year term position (in AHMS) and two one-year term positions (one each in AHMS and Photography) are currently being hired. The three-year term was made possible through a request to Strategic Priorities funding, while the one-year terms are being paid for with the Faculty's sessional instructor budget. In 2022 there were two continuing hires who share a continuing instructor position in Art Studio and a tenure-track position in Indigenous Art Studio. The Chair of Art is encouraged to continue to build a rationale for additional hiring and submit that in their annual staffing plan request to the Dean; including enrollment numbers will strengthen that request, as will alignment with institutional strategic priorities and recruitment opportunities.
2. <i>Hire at least one new faculty member (preferably BIPOC) to replace the retired positions, in the Studio Art Program. These new hires, in art history, museum studies and studio, might also allow for the expansion of the MFA program which now admits only two students per year.</i>	Refer to the response to Question 1.
3. <i>Hire a third technician, and modify all positions to become full-time. Keep the reporting</i>	There are currently three technicians. They report to the Facilities Manager, who is an APO, and that reporting structure is included in his position description. Removing supervision of AUPE staff

<p><i>structure of the technicians within the Studio Art Program, where one head technician can report to the Chair. This will ensure that all workshops are maintained and utilized to their full potential to serve the students and the programs. With a more appropriate reporting structure, there will be less conflict and overwork in general, which will be highly beneficial to everyone- students, techs, professors, etc.</i></p>	<p>could be interpreted as constructive dismissal and would likely result in a grievance. The Facilities Manager reports to the Associate Dean of Fine Arts; as a member of the Art department, the Associate Dean will have a good understanding of the department's needs. I agree that relations between the technical staff and academic faculty could be improved, and I encourage the incoming Art department chair to work with the Associate Dean to find better communication strategies. I agree that the Fine Arts Assistant position should be increased to ten months, and I will encourage the Facilities Manager and the Associate Dean to pursue that with Human Resources. The hiring of a fourth technician can be included in the Chair's staffing plan requests, and prioritized along with the requested faculty positions</p>
<p>4. <i>Make the .5 position Art Now Instructor position full-time.</i></p>	<p>Refer to the response to Question 5.</p>
<p>5. <i>Work with the Faculty of Fine Arts to design and instal permanent audiovisual hardware and software in the theatre space where the 'Art Now' and 'Architecture and Design Now' lecture series courses are held. (Note that recommendations 4 and 5 are both in support of one of the most important courses in the Department).</i></p>	<p>Art Now and Architecture and Design Now have long been regarded as central to the Art department and the external examiners concur wholeheartedly with their value. They are also courses that are very resource-heavy: about a third of the Fine Arts Assistant's staff time supports these courses; the Visiting Artist Coordinator has more than half their work devoted to these courses; there is also a departmental committee involved and external grants are applied for. An online version of Art Now is offered through the Calgary campus. During the pandemic, the Lethbridge campus version of the course was very successfully offered online, but since our return to in-person learning, the Art department has chosen to pursue a hybrid model which, if continued, will require additional technical equipment. I will note that the course is currently taught in the Recital Hall, which is primarily used by the department of Music and is in the process of two major renovation projects to replace the lighting and repair the flooring. As with the other suggestions regarding hiring, the teaching position currently held by the Instructor of Art Now and Architecture and Design Now can be prioritized in the Chair's staffing plan request to the Dean; I note that this position was not included on the 2021 or 2022 plans. I recommend that our incoming Dean strike a committee or task force to look at all aspects of the delivery model for Art Now and Architecture and Design Now.</p>
<p>6. <i>Begin to consider a way to expand the space needed for the University art gallery collection.</i></p>	<p>The Space Advisory committee is headed by the Associate Dean of Fine Arts, who is a member of the Self-Study committee that prepared the Art department report. They should be well placed</p>

Consult with the gallery director and curator, Josephine Mills, a brilliant member of your department, for both the nature of the expansion needed, and for fund-raising initiatives to help make this happen. This will greatly benefit the museum studies area of the art history program.

to work on the space needs identified by the report and to prioritize them as part of the Destination Phase Two planning.

7. *Make arrangements for better use of the Penny Building for student and other exhibitions and events. This may be easier to manage with 3 full-time technicians.*

Refer to the response to Question 6.

8. *Provide a lounge for the Department's students.*

Refer to the response to Question 6.

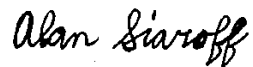
While the External Reviewers' Report contained 8 (eight) recommendations for improving and/or maintaining the Department of Art, the area, Interim Dean Scott, and the Academic Quality Assurance Committee each felt that the recommendations were too narrow in focus and were better presented as broad goals to be met before the next review. The committee modified and consolidated most of the 8 (eight) recommendations into the following 6 (six):

1. The Department of Art will consider the following when making their next hires:
 - a. Focus on faculty to teach ARHI/MSTU courses. The first should be in Museum Studies.
 - b. Making at least one new faculty member (preferably BIPOC) replace open positions in the Studio Art Program.
2. The Faculty of Fine Arts will consider hiring an additional technician to support the Department of Art and modifying all existing positions to become full-time, dependent on the budgetary situation of the Faculty of Fine Arts.
3. The Faculty of Fine Arts will work with the Department of Art to support the 'Art Now' and 'Architecture and Design Now' by:
 - a. Considering the delivery method including whether the courses should be offered entirely online or changed to purely in-person courses.
 - b. Considering the budget implications of the design and installation of permanent audiovisual hardware and software in the theatre space where the 'Art Now' and 'Architecture and Design Now' lecture series courses are held, in any decision to switch to purely in-person course offerings.
 - c. Considering upgrading the 0.5 position the 'Art Now' and 'Architecture and Design Now' and Instructor position to full-time, dependent on the budgetary situation of the Faculty of Fine Arts.
4. The Faculty of Fine Arts will consider a way to expand the space needed to display the University Art Gallery collection.

5. The Department of Art will plan for better use of the Penny Building for student and other exhibitions and events.
6. The Department of Art will consider providing a lounge for the Department's students.

The Academic Quality Assurance Committee is satisfied that the Department of Art 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 that reads "Alan Siaroff". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Dr. Alan Siaroff
Chair, Academic Quality Assurance Committee
Professor, Department of Political Science

cc Erasmus Okine, PhD., PAS, FICN
Provost & Vice-President (Academic)