

# Assessment Cycle Plan

## Academic Year 2017 – 2018

**Program – Bachelors of Fine Arts**

**College: Arts and Sciences**

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**Northwestern Mission.** Northwestern State University is a responsive, Student-oriented institution that is committed to the creation, dissemination, and acquisition of knowledge through teaching, research, and service. The University maintains as its highest priority excellence in teaching in graduate and undergraduate programs. Northwestern State University prepares its Students to become productive members of society and promotes economic development and improvements in the quality of life of the citizens in its region.

**College of Arts and Sciences' Mission.** College of Arts and Sciences' Mission. The College of Arts & Sciences, the largest college at Northwestern State University, is a diverse community of scholars, teachers, and students, working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. The College strives to produce graduates who are productive members of society equipped with the capability to promote economic and social development and improve the overall quality of life in the region. The College provides an unequaled undergraduate education in the social and behavioral sciences, English, communication, journalism, media arts, biological and physical sciences, and the creative and performing arts, and at the graduate level in the creative and performing arts, English, TESOL, and Homeland Security. Uniquely, the College houses the Louisiana Scholars' College (the State's designated Honors College), the Louisiana Folklife Center, and the Creole Center, demonstrating its commitment to community service, research, and preservation of Louisiana's precious resources.

**Department of Fine and Graphic Arts.** The mission of the Art Unit within the School of Creative and Performing Arts operates under the mission of the university as a whole. This mission involves three primary goals: first, to provide quality instruction in a variety of disciplines; second, to encourage creative activity and scholarship, and third, to serve the college and surrounding community via the educational, cultural and economic opportunities provided by the university.

A broad range of educational offerings in fine and applied art and art history, in conjunction with the university's core curriculum, provides in-depth study for the professional major, as well as a body of knowledge associated with a liberal arts degree.

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In addition to facilities, expertise and instruction regarding traditional media, the Art Unit has a strong commitment to technologically enhanced instruction and relevant technology curriculum. The availability of new technology and instruction is considered imperative by the faculty and administration.

The Art Unit is committed to an academic and professional environment, which encourages creative activities, scholarship, and research. Faculty development in the areas of personal research and creative growth, technological competencies and teaching is nourished by the department and the university as a whole. This emphasis on active professional competence promotes excellence in the learning environment while engaging the public in university activities.

The university serves a diverse cultural and economic audience encompassing not only the local area, but also the state, region and beyond. Students come from small communities as well as metropolitan areas. Through academic offerings, art exhibitions, and the contributions of students to the community and contributions of graduates to the work force, the Art Unit is deeply tied to the surrounding community. The unit is committed to an environment of mutual respect, in which academic and cultural opportunities are made available; helping to meet the educational, cultural, and professional needs of the community at large.

**Bachelors of Fine Arts Program Mission Statement:** Students in the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree program will experience a thorough educational experience in the visual arts. They will learn a variety of foundational principles and mediums in art that will lead to upper level specificity and personal development. Each concentration will help the students reach their personal career and artistic goals by giving them opportunities through projects and class assignments to develop habits, style, and artistic voice. These class experiences will culminate with professional studies, business practices, and the capstone Senior Exhibition in order to provide the students with experience in planning, processing, and carrying out professional artistic and design practice. The students should graduate with the portfolio and experience to begin professional practice or graduate studies.

**Methodology:** The assessment process for the MA/MS program is as follows:

- (1) Data from assessment tools (both direct – indirect, quantitative and qualitative) are collected and returned to the program chair;
- (2) The program chair will analyze the data to determine whether students have met measurable outcomes;
- (3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the program faculty;
- (4) Individual meetings will be held with faculty if required (show cause);

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(5) The Program Chair will propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, curricula and program changes.

### Student Learning Outcomes:

#### **SLO 1. Through directed studies in art and design, students secure an in-depth understanding and application of visual art techniques.**

**Measure:** Testable through projects, annual student reviews with faculty advising committees and class critiques. Data will be collected through curricular benchmarks, annual student review rubric forms, and course reports. Faculty advising committees will collect data at annual student reviews. Data collected will allow faculty to assess current and future curricular needs. Acceptable data would show overall 50% of students secure an in-depth understanding and application of visual art techniques, or a 3.5 or better on the review rubric. The target data would show 80%. Faculty and students (curriculum and outcomes) reach a competitive level of professional proficiency early in the students' studies.

**Findings:** Target data not met. From annual student reviews data, we are currently at 29.6% of students that reach 3.5 or better.

**Analysis:** Combined factors of limited student experience or access to the visual arts in lower educational levels, poor performance based on new student inattentiveness and neglect, and curricular demands seem to play a role in the low numbers of student proficiency.

**Decision:** As the first two factors, we have little control over, we will focus on our curricular offerings. Starting in Fall of 2017, our curriculum has been revised, combining some of our foundations courses and adding others to rethink our methodology. We will assess our new freshman during that semester, and again in the spring of 18 to evaluate our changes, and their actions in relation to them.

#### **SLO 2. Students acquire valuable production experience that is reflected in their own independent achievements.**

**Measure:** Observable through projects and academic patterns by regular faculty evaluations and review of sketchbook work. Data will be collected through annual student review rubric forms and curricular benchmarks. Faculty advising committees will collect data at annual student reviews. Data will allow faculty to assess current and future curricular needs, as well as frequency and quality of evaluation processes.

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Faculty and students (curriculum and outcomes) increase in the level of expectation and professional output. Students are expected and deliver a qualitative and quantitative level of involvement and production. Acceptable data would show overall 50% of students exhibiting high levels of production in their individual artistic achievements, or a 3.5 or better on the review rubric.

**Findings:** Target data not quite met. From annual student reviews data, currently we are at 42% of students that reach 3.5 or better.

**Analysis:** Students may be spending too much time learning the foundations, and not enough curricular time using foundational tools to find their own artistic direction.

**Decision:** Starting in Fall of 2017, our curriculum has been revised, combining some of our foundations courses and adding others to rethink our methodology. We will assess our upper level students in the spring of 18 to evaluate our changes, and their actions in relation to them. This process will allow us to evaluate future curricular changes.

### **SLO 3. Students synthesize the curricular experience to meet their professional and creative goals.**

**Measure:** Observable and testable through the curricular opportunity to take upper-level courses in specific areas and the presentation of a cohesive body of artwork at the end of their degree program. Testable through an alumni survey that will be administered at one-year, three-year and five-year intervals. Data will be collected through annual student review rubric forms, curricular benchmarks, reviews of exhibition, and through the administered surveys. Students will submit a proposal for their senior exhibition. Advisors and committees will assess the success or failure of the exhibits. Faculty will administer the surveys and collect the data. Data will allow faculty to assess current and future curricular needs. Faculty and students (curriculum and outcomes) work together to develop and foster their individual voice and style of the student in preparation for professional work. Acceptable data would show overall 50% of students synthesizing the curricular experience to meet their professional and creative goals, or a 3.5 or better on the review rubric. The target data would show 80%.

**Findings:** Target data not met. From student reviews data, currently we are at 20% of students that reach 3.5 or better. The participation in surveys jumped from 1 response to 9. The respondents' attendance in the program ranged from 1998-2016. Data from the surveys was overwhelmingly positive, showing that 67% were employed in a field relating to their major, 100% felt their time in the NSU art program contributed positively to their present employment, and our annual student reviews were useful to 100% of them.

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**Analysis:** Students today seem less willing to work hard on their own, with or without curricular or grading motivation. Impatience with research, lack of creative ideas and solutions, and resistance to stretching experiences and projects is a daily occurrence in the classroom. At times it feels as if we give in to that mentality and lower the bar to accommodate them. A few of our students continually pass their classes without doing to work in order to keep them in school and encouraged. Utilizing surveymonkey.com for our surveys was a more effective way to administer them, but more effective ways to reach out to a greater number of alumni would be beneficial.

**Decision:** We, as a faculty, will counsel together to decide how to best handle these subpar students. We have certain faculty with very exacting standards of performance, that should model to the rest of us a persistent pattern of holding to standard. This will be on the agenda for our September 2017 faculty meeting. We will assess our upper level students in the spring of 18 to evaluate our changes, and their actions in relation to them. This process will allow us to evaluate future curricular changes. We will continue our student review process as it is.

#### **SLO 4. Students participate in experiences that encourage familiarity with a broad variety of work in various specializations and media.**

**Measure:** Observable through participation in departmental or class field trips to museums, galleries and design centers, and participation in student exhibitions and organizations. Keep track of percentage of majors attending major semester field trips, entering annual the student exhibition. Data will be collected by generating lists of the percentage of students attending the various class and departmental trips. Also in annual student reviews, faculty will report independent trips the students have initiated, and their participation in student and other exhibitions. Faculty will collect the data for student exhibition participation, and the data for student trip attendance. Data will allow faculty to assess frequency and effectiveness of exhibitions and trips. Faculty and students (curriculum and outcome) will foster an atmosphere of learning through participation in gallery and extra-curricular experiences. Acceptable data would show overall 50% of students Participating in enrichment experiences, or a 3.5 or better on the review rubric. We are currently at 33.3%. The target data would show 80%.

**Findings:** Target data not met. From student reviews data, currently we are at 20% of students that reach 3.5 or better. 91 students participated in field trips this year. There are many overlaps, in that some students attended several of the trips. This number is up from last year. Over 4,000 people signed our guest books in the galleries. This number is up from last year.

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**Analysis:** Though our field trip numbers are up, there is a core of students that are consistent participators. We have tried to encourage this by offering quality, inexpensive trips. The students respond, and then attend more. We had a few freshman this year ask for more trips. The gallery has offered particularly interesting and high quality exhibits this year. Our Art Historian has made it a requirement for all her students to attend the receptions, sign in, and get a selfie with the artist (or a faculty member if the artist isn't available). This has increased our attendance for the students.

**Decision:** Unfortunately, these trips may become a bit more expensive because of policy changes at Enterprise Rent-A-Car where we rent our vans for trips. We will seek for new ways to travel, but keep up the opportunities for our students. Next year's gallery schedule is a continuation of the quality and interest of this year.

**Conclusion:** As none of our target data were met, we are correct in revising our curriculum and assessing our effectiveness as instructors in raising the bar for the students. These changes will be the main topic of discussion as they are experienced this coming academic year. As it is ineffective to set goals based solely upon the actions of others, we can focus on what we are doing as individuals and as a department. The students will then be given the opportunity to act and react.