

Assessment Cycle

Academic Year 2017 – 2018

Program – Master of Arts in Art

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.

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.

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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.

Master of Arts in Art Program Mission Statement: The Master of Arts in Art degree program offers the student an opportunity to study graduate level art courses either on campus or online. The curriculum allows the student to propose their vision for their studies that coincides with the vision for their personal art practice. Seminar and research-based courses will assist the student in personal research to expand their understanding of their own artistic context and methodology. These courses will culminate in the capstone experiences writing and presenting a creative research document and exhibition. The outcomes of these will propel the student into terminal degree studies or artistic and professional practice.

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 and graduate coordinator;
- (2) They will analyze the data to determine whether students have met measurable outcomes;
- (3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the program graduate faculty;
- (4) Individual meetings will be held with faculty if required (show cause);
- (5) The Program Chair and Graduate Coordinator will propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, curricula and program changes.

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Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1. Evaluate own artistic experience and formulate an advanced direction, voice, and momentum in the creation of personal artwork.

Measure: Observable through projects, seminars, and by semester faculty and peer evaluations. Data will be collected through semester reviews. Benchmark reviews will be after the first semester and with the proposal of their creative research project. Advisor will collect data for the first benchmark. Graduate Coordinator will collect data for the proposals. Student and faculty (outcome and curriculum) will work together with the appropriate balance of direction and freedom in order for the student to build upon their artistic voice and style. Acceptable data would reflect 75% of the students actively evaluating their own artistic experience and formulating an advanced direction, voice, and momentum in the creation of personal artwork. Target data would show 95%.

Findings: Target data not met. From advisor reports, we found that approximately 33 percent of our students have struggles with writing and researching effectively. These issues have arisen in written class proposals, research papers, and in the creative research document drafts. Approximately 65 percent are actively evaluating their own artistic experience and formulating an advanced direction, voice, and momentum in the creation of personal artwork.

Analysis: Some of these students lacked proper writing and research opportunities in their bachelorette experiences, or it has been many years since they have been in school. This also affects their ability to assess and formulate their direction in their own art making.

Decision: We discussed putting together a quiz for entering graduate students as part of their Letter of Intent, to help us understand their writing and researching abilities and background. We will employ a closer scrutiny of new applicant information, portfolios, transcripts, and letters of intent under the direction of the Graduate Coordinator.

SLO 2. Synthesize the curricular experience to meet their professional and creative goals.

Measure: Observable and testable through the curricular opportunity to take independent courses in specific areas. Students will submit a proposal for each class of what they will accomplish for the course. The students will present a cohesive body of artwork and a creative research paper at the end of their degree program. An alumni survey will be administered at one-year, three-year and five-year intervals. Data will be collected through individual courses, reviews of exhibition and paper, and through the administered surveys. The faculty will assess whether the students have accomplished the proposals for each class. Advisors and committees will assess the success or failure of the papers and exhibits. Faculty will administer the surveys and collect the data. Data

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will allow faculty to assess current and future curricular needs. Students will respond to curriculum and own creative drive to build a research and object-based output for review that will propel them to the next level of our artistic and academic goals. Acceptable data would reflect 75% of the students synthesizing the curricular experience to meet their professional and creative goals. Target data would show 95%.

Findings: Target data not met. As mentioned above, we found that approximately 33 percent of our students have struggles with writing and researching effectively. These issues have arisen in written class proposals, research papers, and in the creative research document drafts. The capstone exhibition quality has risen this year. Three of our graduate students postponed their papers and exhibitions to the summer in order to ensure quality output. Our Alumni Survey response grew from 1 respondent to 3. The respondents' attendance ranged from 1989 to 2017. 66 percent felt they were sufficiently guided by the NSU Art Faculty. 66 percent are still finishing up their degree. 33 percent are working as an artist. 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.

Analysis: Some of these students lacked proper writing and research opportunities in their bachelorette experiences, or it has been many years since they have been in school. This also affects their ability to synthesize the curricular experience to meet their professional and creative goals. The committee work is effective in helping monitor and maintain quality student output.

Decision: We discussed putting together a quiz for entering graduate students as part of their Letter of Intent, to help us understand their writing and researching abilities and background. We will employ a closer scrutiny of new applicant information, portfolios, transcripts, and letters of intent under the direction of the Graduate Coordinator. Have more frequent student driven critiques and discussion, at least three times a semester.

SLO 3. 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 in national, international juried exhibitions, and in the graduate student exhibition opportunities. Also observable through teaching assistant opportunities. Data will be collected by generating lists of the percentage of graduate students attending the various class and departmental trips. Also in reviews, faculty will report independent trips the students have initiated, and their participation in student and other exhibitions. Data will also be received through reports of the Graduate Assistants' level of participation and professional candor in various assignments. Faculty will collect the data for student exhibition participation. Faculty will collect the date for student trip attendance. Advisors and committee members will collect the data

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for individual assignments in the Assistantships. Data will allow faculty to assess frequency and effectiveness of exhibitions and trips. Students will independently seek after life-long learning not based solely upon curricular experience. Acceptable data would reflect 75% of the students actively participating in experiences that encourage familiarity with a broad variety of work in various specializations and media. Target data would show 95%.

Findings: Target data not met. Approximately 45 percent of our students entered regional, national, or international art competitions. Five graduate students, about 30 percent, participated in a departmental field trip. One student initiated and oversaw a weekly after-hours life drawing class throughout the semester. Students participating in Graduate Assistantships effectively taught or assisted in courses, maintained facilities and lab hours, ran kilns, recycled clay, and many other things throughout the department. The Graduate Student Exhibition was a success with our on-campus and online students participating.

Analysis: Graduate students need more direct contact with one another for dialogue and encouragement. They need curricular encouragement to enter regional, national, and international juried exhibitions. Online students need earlier invitations to participate in critiques and exhibitions. Current mode of working with Graduate Assistantships seem appropriate and effective.

Decision: Graduate Coordinator has been appointed, and briefed on duties. These duties consist of monitoring new applicants, orientating them, helping graduate students organize two student shows a year, and at least three graduate student critiques a semester. Discussion will begin about requiring graduate students to enter juried exhibitions, and encouragement to create collaborative field trips among themselves.

Conclusion: As our target data were not met, we have discussed certain changes in the application process that may help cull the students without the ability to succeed in this degree program. The addition of an Art Department Graduate Coordinator will allow a more developed process for retaining, advising, and graduating these students.