

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

PROGRAM UNDER REVIEW

PROGRAM	SENATE APPROVAL DATE	PREPARED BY
Fine and Performing Arts	September 13, 2019	Provost and Vice-President

A. SUMMARY OF REVIEW PROCESS & LISTING OF PROGRAMS UNDER REVIEW

SELF-STUDY REVIEW TIMELINE

DATE

1. Self-Study Presented to AQAPC	Oct. 29, 2018
2. Site Visit Conducted	Jan. 10-11, 2019
3. Reviewer's Report Received	Feb. 12, 2019
4. Internal Reviewers Response Received	Apr. 12, 2019
5. Dean's Response Received	Apr. 24, 2019

The members of the review committee were:

- Dr. Wendy Peters (Internal)
- Dr. Cora Cluett, Waterloo University (External)
- Dr. Alison McQueen, McMaster University (External)

The academic programs offered by the Department which were examined as part of the review included:

- Bachelor of Fine Arts
- BA Major in Fine Arts
- Minor in Studio Arts
- Minor in Art History, Visual Studies
- Minor in Film

This review was conducted under the terms and conditions of the IQAP approved by Senate on May 17, 2013.

B. PROGRAM STRENGTHS

External Reviewers: *The reviewers observed a strong work ethic, commitment to excellence in pedagogy and research exemplified by the efforts of FAPA as well as the collective desire to achieve the goals set in Nipissing's mission statement, although FAPA is hindered from achieving these goals due to a lack of basic resources.*

C. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

External Reviewers Recommendation #1: Change name of department: to align better with its mission and to communicate effectively with prospective students, community partners, and other areas of campus.

Unit's Response: We recognize that the department name could be misleading to prospective students, and agree that it does not reflect the current nature of the department. The name "Fine and Performing Arts" comes from a time when music was offered at Nipissing University as a minor. We would be receptive to engaging in discussions about reviving music and performing arts, but recognize the financial challenges associated with this. We are open to changing the name of the department until/if the program offerings are expanded to include music/performing arts. In preliminary discussions, the names that we felt might best reflect the current mission of the department are "Studio Art and Visual Studies" and "Fine Arts, Visual Arts". We intend to continue this discussion, and collect comparative information from universities with similar program offerings.

Dean's Response: I agree that the name of the department might be misleading, given that the performing arts component is sorely lacking. However, discussion with the department has been initiated to discuss the potential adding of a performing arts lens through the development of performance arts courses and leveraging the current film courses with a clearer performing arts strategy for a future expansion in this area. In my view, given the department's aspirations and the student demand for performing arts programs, renaming the program at this point would be counter-productive.

Provost's Response: I would agree with waiting on the name decision until such time that a decision on the programming has been made.

External Reviewers Recommendation # 2: Implement a five-year plan to resolve the issue of space through either: a renovation of Monastery Hall funded in part by the sale of the Jane Street building or a renovation of the Jane Street building. Such a plan is imperative to for the health and safety of the students and faculty who learn and work in the spaces to which FAPA is assigned.

Unit's Response: We are eager to move forward with an expansion to Monastery Hall, funded in part by the sale of the Jane Street building, as proposed in the Statement of Case submitted to the VPAR in November 2018. We hope to make progress on a timeline at our upcoming meeting (to discuss the department vision as it related to space) with the head of fundraising, the Dean, and the VPAR on April 3, 2019. The Jane Street building was recently appraised at a value of between \$900,000 to \$1,000,000. The deed of gift agreement between the university and the donor states that the building was donated specifically to support the development of a Centre for Fine Arts. In addition, an earlier gift of 50,000 was made to support the Centre for Fine Arts. We feel strongly that these gifts could be used to realize the plans to build on the grounds of Monastery Hall.

Dean's Response: A plan to renovate the Monastery grounds with the proceeds from the sale of the Jane Street building is underway. Given the strategic positioning and appealing locale of the Monastery Hall that highlights its Near North charm and distinguishes it from other Fine and Performing Arts programs in Ontario, the sale of the Jane Street building is essential to bolstering the Monastery grounds and providing our students with a unique Near North studio experience.

Provost's Response: In addition to the above we should consider the possibility of offering some elective/introductory courses on main campus as a mechanism to attract more students to this programme as well as making Fine Arts courses more accessible to non FA students.

External Reviewers Recommendation #3: Hire a tenure-track faculty member (or Canada Research Chair) in the area of Visual Culture with research expertise in Indigenous Art, Media Arts and Entrepreneurship.

Unit's Response: We agree that a tenure-track position in Art History and Visual Culture is required. We agree that these areas of expertise would be extremely beneficial to the department. Up to this point, our strategy when posting positions has been to keep the description as open as possible, not specifying the area of research expertise. Historically, we have found it challenging to attract a significant quantity of qualified applicants, as the approval for positions has been quite late (sometimes as late as July or August), and because candidates often seek to work at universities in larger urban centers in the field of Art History and Visual Culture. In past years, the Chair has personally emailed the Art History/Visual Culture Department Chair and sometimes the PhD candidates of all Ontario universities with a graduate program in AHVS with the aim of increasing the number of applications. We will continue work to attract qualified applicants, and will list the proposed research areas as "assets", but we think that specifying a narrow/unique combination of expertise may eliminate applications altogether.

Dean's Response: I agree that a tenure-track position in the areas of visual and media arts, including indigenous art and art history, would be ideal. As noted in the department's response, attracting scholars of such caliber, however, remains a challenge. While the position will not be viable in the next academic year, a new tenure-track position will be essential to the program moving forward, especially as the program loses one of its faculty members to retirement.

Provost's Response: Fine Arts could potentially be supported by either a TT in Fine Arts, or 2 cross-appointed TTs. Currently it would seem that cross-appointments with indigenous studies, and media studies have some appeal.

External Reviewers Recommendation #4: *Institute Portfolio Reviews for entrance into the BFA and the BA Major in Fine Arts: to position the department as on a par with the quality of education offered at other BFA granting institutions, and to support student's positive self-perception as they enter the program.*

Unit's Response: Our decision not to require an entrance portfolio has stemmed from the fact that many of our students come from under-resourced communities, and may have had limited training at the high school level. While we recognize that this could affect the perception of the program, we think that there would be a way to institute portfolio reviews while clearly communicating alternative admittance procedures for students who need them. We intend to look into the infrastructure required to institute a digital submission procedure through the university website, and have had preliminary discussions about what the specific nature of our entrance portfolio would be. We also plan to conduct a survey of our current students to determine how many applicants we might have lost had we required an entrance portfolio. Once a decision is made, 2020-21 would be the academic year in which a Portfolio Review could be implemented.

Dean's Response: Given the diverse group of students enrolling in the BFA and BA Major in Fine Arts programs, I am concerned that instituting a portfolio requirement might hinder rather than bolster the program's enrolments. Furthermore, the implementation would require further administrative resources. In my view, the resources spent on instituting a portfolio would be better spent elsewhere (for example, in the area of instructional supplies).

Provost's Response: I agree with the Unit's original position on this which also aligns with Nipissing's desire to be welcoming and accessible to non-traditional students. I do not agree with the external reviewers, and do not recommend much effort is spent on changing this.

External Reviewers Recommendation #5: *Increase the assured annual allocation of what is currently listed as "Instructional Supplies" for the department. If possible at the level of the Faculty of Arts and Science, modify the structure of the departmental Operating Budget to include three separate lines for: Instructional Supplies, New Equipment and Equipment Maintenance. Ensure regular investment in new equipment and maintenance of existing equipment for reasons of quality of education as well as to maintain health and safety standards.*

Unit's Response: We certainly see a need to increase the allocation of Instructional Supplies, in order to maintain and professionalize the studios. Currently, the bulk of our budget is spent on software to run our digital media courses, while we seek to find creative cost-efficient ways to maintain the tools and equipment in other studio areas. The reviewers are correct in stating that the funds in that cost centre cover the three areas of: Instructional Supplies, New Equipment, and Equipment Maintenance. However, we appreciate the flexibility that having the funds in one cost

centre affords. For example, one year, we may have an increased amount of equipment damage, or a one-time cost of purchasing an expensive piece of equipment. Having all three areas grouped in one cost centre allows us to respond to the particular equipment needs we face in any given year.

Dean's Response: The current "Instructional and Other Instructional Supplies" budget lines allow for new equipment and equipment maintenance, as well as for leveraging costs related to instructional supplies. In terms of health and safety, Nipissing complies with health and safety standards. The health and safety inspection of FAPA studio spaces at the Monastery and Jane Street properties undertaken on March 14, 2019, by Dr. Dave Vadnais, Laboratory Safety Coordinator, and Leah Symington, Coordinator (Fine and Performing Arts Department), confirmed that the spaces were compliant with health and safety guidelines. According to the report, "none of the studio areas have volatile chemicals being used that would pose a health hazard." M024 has a ventilation hood that directs fumes outside. All in all, both the Monastery and the Jane Street buildings are health and safety compliant.

Provost's Response: Agree with the Dean's response, and would ask that the Unit prepare a reasonable budget for consideration.

External Reviewers Recommendation #6: *Develop the learning outcomes expected for students who complete the BFA degree and ensure that those are different from the learning outcomes expected of students who complete the BA Major in Fine Arts.*

Unit's Response: While the bulk of the learning outcomes for the BFA and the BA Major in Fine Arts are the same, the reviewers may have overlooked that there are *additional* learning outcomes for the BFA degree program. We do not have enrollment to support different courses at each year-level for the two different degree programs, however the capstone 4th-year course is restricted to BFA students.

When the common degree structure was implemented, we were encouraged to develop similar yet different learning outcomes so students could for example, easily switch from a BA Specialization to a BFA without needing to backtrack and take additional courses. We agree with this approach, but will nonetheless review the learning outcomes to ensure they are distinct enough.

Dean's Response: The common degree structure leverages courses to allow for better student mobility and flexibility between the BA and BFA. However, I agree that a clearer distinction between the two is necessary.

Provost's Response: Agree with the above.

Additional Recommendations:

Program Evaluation Criteria (Section C. Curriculum and Program Delivery):

- Curriculum reflects the current state of the discipline or area of study.

External Reviewers Recommendation: *The reviewers noted that the Fine and Performing Arts Department does not currently offer any academic plans, courses or degree options in the Performing Arts and therefore, the department should consider renaming their department.*

- Appropriateness of the program's structure, curriculum and length to its learning outcomes and degree level expectations.

External Reviewers Recommendation#7: *The reviewers noted that the 1st year fundamentals coursework would benefit from a review toward a unified curriculum that will allow for more consistency in the pedagogy. It is currently being taught by a combination of tenured and sessional faculty with a varied approach. The reviewers feel strongly that this can impact recruitment and recommend that tenured faculty teach the first-year courses*

as it will encourage retention since tenured faculty are best positioned to recruit students into the program. The structure of the B.F.A. in first year includes sufficient writing in one of the art history courses and the reviewers suggest that the writing exercises in the studio fundamentals courses be removed in place of a greater focus on making and learning basic foundation level skills in art making through material processes and visual acumen. Some of the current projects, including the emphasis of Form and Content as the basis for developing an understanding of this pivotal relationship for art making would be best discussed in the more advanced third and fourth-year studio courses. Creating a unified fundamentals curriculum with a focus on making, developing haptic skills, collaborative projects, etc. will provide incoming students with an experience that is entirely different from the other required lecture based courses they are taking. In the opinion of the reviewers, this will very likely encourage greater retention from first year.

External Reviewers Recommendation #7 (cont'd): While the current iteration of the third-year studio courses provides additional specific technical skills development, it is typically the time in other programs where a studio student can begin to announce themselves as artists. The required media specificity of the program although encouraging a broader level of material study, does not allow for the independent and in-depth focus that is necessary for not only skills but conceptual G:\IQAP\Policy & Procedures\NU IQAP 28jun13.docx 5 development. It was noted, by several students, that this structure prevents them from focusing in their discipline of choice sooner in their degree. A restructuring of third year would allow students more flexibility in terms of following their own research interests as they move into fourth year. Additionally, the emphasis of Form and Content would be an appropriate pedagogical time to bring this level of discourse in studio coursework. Considering this shift in curriculum could also mean that FAPA can offer fewer courses in third year, bring all disciplines together into a cohort sooner and encourage the interdisciplinary and collaborative approach that faculty expressed as a desire for their program.

External Reviewers Recommendation #7 (cont'd): The fourth-year course coordinator should be a tenure-track/tenured member of faculty who could embed the current professional practice coursework into the studio course. Having a tenure-track/tenured faculty coordinate both the collective first-year experience with the fourth-year experience nicely bookends the degree for students and will give faculty a clear perspective on how to adjust and evolve the coursework, as needed. Additionally, this capstone course could then become a 6-unit course, per semester – F/W, giving students more time in their studios focusing on their individual project development.

External Reviewers Recommendation #7 (cont'd): Consider offering a fourth-year course for those students enrolled in the current B.A. studio stream. This could increase the numbers in the fourth-year cohort and provide an option for those students who do not wish to be practicing artists but who have a desire to continue in the arts in some capacity. The unit weighting of this course would distinguish it from the B.F.A. students.

- Evidence of innovation or creativity in the content and/or delivery of the program relative to other such programs.

External Reviewers Recommendation #8: The reviewers are aware that the university's website infrastructure is a work-in-progress. The reviewers are also aware that they do not know who updates the departmental website, and that the department may not have sufficient administrative support to update media communications on a regular basis. Nonetheless, the reviewers recommend regular G:\IQAP\Policy & Procedures\NU IQAP 28jun13.docx 6 postings of images of faculty and student work and events for the purposes of recruitment.

Unit's Response: The reviewers recommend a more unified approach to the 1st year courses, and noted some discrepancies between sections taught by full time tenured faculty and part time faculty. They recommend that all of the 1st year courses and 4th year courses should be taught by tenured faculty. We agree that this is ideal, although we find it difficult in practice when we have members on leave or on reduced teaching loads for Chair or other duties. We have changed the schedule for 2019/20 to ensure that a tenured member will teach the capstone FAVA 4125 course. We have also committed to aligning the delivery of multi-section courses more closely. We recognize that we need to do more to support our part time members, while still allowing for autonomy in their teaching.

The reviewers also recommend developing a second 4th-year studio course for non-BFA students, to serve the students enrolled in the current BA studio stream. We are considering doing this, but think it needs to be put on hold unless we see sufficient growth in the BA studio stream. The current enrollments do not justify an additional course at the 4th year level.

Another recommendation from the curricular section of the review was that FAPA should develop a new course called “Experiential Learning with Placement” to formalize the experiences many of our students are already getting with our community partners. The reviewers were likely unaware of the UNIV 3006 course, which provides students with similar opportunities. We recently banked FAVA 2516: Community-based Practice, but this recommendation has sparked a discussion in the department to look more closely at ways to run this course without diluting enrolment in other 2nd year courses. We agree that professional placement experiences are very desirable for students.

Dean’s Response: I agree with the reviewers that first-year and fourth-year courses should be taught (ideally) by tenure-track and tenured faculty. While this would be an ideal scenario, the current faculty complement does not allow for staffing the first- and fourth-year courses by tenure-track and tenured faculty only. When assigning courses, the Dean’s Office in collaboration with the department does its best to leverage course offerings and faculty alignments.

The reviewers suggest that the writing component in the studio fundamentals courses be replaced with a more in-depth focus on developing students’ basic foundation level skills in art making. While I agree with the reviewers that eliminating the writing component might be appealing to students, writing is not only an important component of university education, but it also enhances students’ creative potential. Hence, I support keeping the writing component while complementing the writing skills with basic foundation level skills.

The reviewers’ suggestion to consider restructuring the third year so that students have more flexibility to pursue their research interests should be considered as it would allow the department to cultivate interdisciplinary initiatives with other programs.

Furthermore, the reviewers suggest a fourth-year level course for non-BFA students as way to promote the program further across the faculties. I agree that such a course is worth considering and will consult with the department on the possible way forward.

Last but not least, the reviewers recommend that the program develops its own experiential learning/placement course. As noted in the department’s response, Arts and Science has developed a university-wide experiential learning course (UNIV 3006: Experiential Learning in Arts and Science) to promote students’ experiential learning opportunities in the community and beyond.

While the department has recently banked its community-based practice course, FAVA 2516: Community-Based Practice, the department is open to un-banking the course. I would like to support and encourage this opportunity as it will provide further connections with the community and career-training opportunities for students.

Provost’s Response: I agree with the above assuming the community based learning is explicitly connected and promoted as a way of getting credit for UNIV 3006. I find it unusual that a department would offer 4000-level electives to non-discipline students.

Program Evaluation Criteria (Section D. Assessment of Learning):

- **Appropriateness and effectiveness of the methods used for the evaluation of student achievement of the defined learning outcomes and degree level expectations.**

External Reviewers Recommendation #9: *FAPA would benefit from a student gallery exhibition space. A student gallery is a part of studio education as it provides a public face to a program and provides the necessary aspects of professional practice to a B.F.A. It also encourages cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary research between departments. It is also a way for faculty to monitor the success, theoretical and contextual development of their*

student body prior to degree completion in a formal setting and is something that is standard in all Fine Arts programs and departments.

One area that the reviewers also noted is that the learning outcomes of the B.A. degree and those of the B.F.A. program are identical and this should be addressed and modified. As previously stated, there is the opportunity, at this point, to offer 4th year studio courses to the B.A. student who is enrolled in a four-year degree but who is not accepted into the B.F.A. The department could potentially increase student numbers into fourth year by expanding their four year program to include these B.A. students.

Unit's Response: The reviewers recommend a student gallery exhibition space on campus. They state "A student gallery is a vital part of studio education as it provides a public face to a program and provides the necessary aspects of professional practice to a B.F.A.

A gallery space has been proposed in the most recent "statement of case" and building plans for the proposed expansion on Monastery Hall grounds. We would welcome a dedicated space for student exhibitions. Recent comments from administrators have suggested that the spaces on main campus are in use at 50% capacity. We would welcome a dedicated room to convert into a gallery space on main campus until the plans for an expansion of Monastery Hall can be realized.

Dean's Response: In line with the reviewers' recommendation to promote students' experiential learning opportunities is the recommendation to house a student gallery on campus. The student gallery is an essential part of the department's statement of case. Discussions about establishing a gallery on campus are underway. In the interim, the Office of the President, the Library, and the Office of the Arts and Science Dean have provided space for students to exhibit their art work. In collaboration with the AVP of Students, the Office of the Dean of Arts and Science sponsored a student competition to design murals for the Monastery building entrance.

Overall, I agree that Nipissing University needs a student gallery to promote students' creative accomplishments.

Provost: We need a discussion that involves Facilities on space possibilities on main campus.

Program Evaluation Criteria (Section E. Quality Indicators):

- **Assessment of program against national and/or regional comparators.**

External Reviewers Recommendation #10: The curriculum for the B.F.A. requires a faculty appointment in the area of Visual Culture. It is highly unusual for a B.F.A. or B.A. program in the Fine Arts to not have a tenured faculty member covering this integral aspect of the degree. The B.F.A. requires a set number of relevant courses in the history of Fine Art as well as core theoretical and contextual courses in Visual Culture. Since FAPA does not contain a faculty member in this area – the course offerings and vision are continually in flux. Additionally, it weakens the overall core structure of the program. There are scholars who have PhDs and work in cross-disciplinary fields that could accommodate visual culture as well as have the potential to introduce curatorial practice and Indigeneity as part of the B.F.A. program at Nipissing.

As noted above, the submission of a portfolio of visual work for review is the usual milestone for acceptance into a B.F.A. program. This activity can be addressed in a several ways: through direct entry into the program whereby students submit a portfolio of work produced outside of the university program, through responding visually to a series of problems to solve (see NSCADU's entry list for portfolio submission) or as a milestone that occurs through the work produced within the existing Fine Arts fundamentals courses. A combination of these entrance requirement milestones could also be considered by the faculty as each has its advantages and can be used collectively to pull in enrollment. The reviewers feel quite strongly that this will strengthen not only the standing of the program in relation to other B.F.A. programs but will also provide practical measures for monitoring student learning outcomes in the foundation program so that adjustments can be made as the program evolves. It will also provide practical planning via student numbers for subsequent course offerings.

Dean's Response: The reviewers encourage interdisciplinary collaboration with other areas such as Native Studies, Business, Education, or any other Arts and Science programs to enhance students' overall experience. I agree that an interdisciplinary Minor in Fine Arts Professional Practice would help leverage the program's enrollments, as well as provide students with a career-oriented Minor.

Provost: Agree with Dean's Response.

- **Quality of the educational experience, teaching**

External Review Committee: The provost chair a committee, that includes the dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science and several FAPA faculty to develop and implement a five-year plan in place to resolve the building/space issues.

Research

- **Scope, quality and relevance of faculty research activities.**

External Reviewers Recommendation#11: FAPA is comprised of four tenured faculty in studio; however, they do not currently have a tenured position in Visual Culture or with research expertise in Media Arts and Imaging. The reviewers noted this as a significant concern for the B.F.A. program as both areas represent the necessary development of a clearly defined and integral academic aspect of the B.F.A. Additionally, this prevents the program from growing student numbers in that a tenure-track or tenured faculty member, with research investment in contemporary art practice (including media arts and imaging) and visual culture, can expand, implement and follow through within the current university departments. The reviewers felt that there are several options that could play to the strengths of FAPA and its location within the North Bay region through the broader initiative to increase Indigenity within university programs across the country. There are a number of programs at Nipissing that give tremendous potential for unique academic programs in Ontario and in Canada and could give FAPA a competitive edge in capturing those students.

An appointment in FAPA (Visual Culture), potentially cross-appointed with Indigenous studies, and with a connection to the Bachelor of Business Administration program would be a significant and unique program in the province and in Canada. An Indigenous Visual Culture scholar, a potential Canada Research Chair appointment with expertise in media arts could also resolve the need to expand the program into areas of technology, media arts and entrepreneurship.

Dean's Response Conclusion: Proposed Action Plan Based on the Above

- 1] The facilities development plan will be further discussed and finalized in collaboration with the Office of the Provost, the Office of Advancement, Facilities, the department, and other institutional stakeholders.
- 2] The Dean's Office will support the department in developing and promoting further interdisciplinary connections with other Arts and Science, Education, and Professional programs.
- 3] In collaboration with the Office of Registrar and the Office of Institutional Research & Planning, the Dean's Office will monitor attrition at the upper-year level and discuss opportunities for curriculum innovation.
- 4] A space development plan for the student gallery (with a realistic timeline) will be discussed further with the department and institutional stakeholders.

D. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Below are the recommendations that require specific action as a result of the Review, along with the identification of the position or unit responsible for the action in question. Notwithstanding the position or unit identified as the being

responsible for specific recommendations, the Dean of the Faculty has the overall responsibility for ensuring that the recommended actions are undertaken

RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE MEMBER/UNIT	PROJECTED COMPLETION
#1 - Re-assess naming of Dept.	Dean with Unit	2020-2021
#2, 9 - Space planning incl. Monastery, Jane St., and Main Campus, as well as gallery	Dean of A&S, FAPA, PVPAR, Facilities	2019-2020
#3, 11 - Faculty renewal plan	PVPAR	Annual consideration
#4, 6, 7, 10 - Curriculum development (FA students, non- FA students, international) disciplinary and non-disciplinary	FAPA	2021
#5 - Increase supplies	FAPA	Academic Plan 2020-2021
#8 - Web posting of FAPA products and assets	FAPA with External Relations	2019-2020