

Annual Assessment Report
June 2010
Department of Design

Department of Design (DOD) Assessment Committee members: Professors Carolyn Gibbs, Richard Pratt, and Sharmon Goff compiled this report. The Department of Design, within the College of Arts and Letters, offers a Bachelor of Arts in Photography and Interior Design, and a Bachelor of Science in Graphic Design. Faculty from each of the three major areas developed this Annual Assessment Report.

External Review

Among the tools used for Department of Design assessment are external reviews by two accrediting organizations. The Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA) which accredits the Interior Design Program and The National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) which accredit all three of the programs in the department.

In May each program takes part in the Department of Design's Spring Show where projects from all upper division classes are displayed, accompanied by portfolios of graduating seniors. Faculty, local professionals from design fields and alumni review pieces for general continuity, quality of program curriculum, craft and presentation.

Admission to Degree Programs

Graphic Design

Students entering the Graphic Design program are initially classified as Pre-Graphic Design majors. Admission to the upper division program requires students to successfully complete lower division core courses with a C or better and to submit a portfolio of two and/or three-dimensional work from those courses. The entire full-time faculty, in the Graphics program, screen the portfolios. This provides an excellent method of measuring the learning outcomes of the lower division classes, as well as offering a base from which to measure the final portfolios of the graduating students.

Interior Design

Students entering the program are initially classified as Pre-Interior Design majors. After completing the required lower division prerequisites, students may apply for admission to the upper division program by declaring their concentration in either Interior Architecture or Interior Design Marketing. Admission to the Interior Architecture concentration is limited and controlled by an annual portfolio review. Students interested in this concentration must submit a supplementary application including a portfolio of work. Interior Architecture applicants are ranked based on cumulative GPA and the results of the juried portfolio review held each spring.

Photography

Students admitted to the university may select photography as their major; there are no separate admission requirements for a Photo major. As with many of the programs on campus, the majority of photography students have transferred from a community college. They arrive with differing levels of skills and knowledge. During orientation or advising sessions, full-time faculty interview students to determine: which courses may be transferred from previous institutions, areas where students may need review or further class work, and their readiness for upper division courses.

Department of Design
Annual Assessment Report : Graphic Design

1. What goals or learning objectives/outcomes were assessed in AYs 2009–2010?

The Graphic Design Program's evaluation in AYs 2009–2010 continued to focus on four main areas:

- a. The ability to demonstrate an understanding of the major trends, and recognize important historic work, from the graphic's field. Students are expected to apply critical techniques from art and design history to their and their contemporary's work.
- b. The ability to produce creative, professional-quality work within project guidelines.
- c. The ability to communicate aspects of both the designer's process and final work verbally, graphically and in writing.
- d. The ability to control visual media, enabling the communication of information.

2. How did you assess these learning outcomes?

a. Describe the measures you used and the information gathered.

1) There is a formal review of pre-major's portfolios after the completion of their foundation courses. These portfolios are made up of work from Art, Photography and Graphic Design classes and are evaluated by each full-time faculty member of the Graphic Design Program. Each faculty member gives a student a score based on their ability to demonstrate principles covered during foundations courses. These scores are compared and discussed in order to reach a ranking of all of the student applicants. These rankings are then compared to rankings from previous years.

2) As seniors, all Graphic Design majors are required to take a portfolio class in which they review and reassess assignments from previous classes with their professor. Professors make note of any inconsistencies and issues in curriculum. Students are also encouraged to get feedback from faculty members beyond their class professor.

3) Every year the Graphic Design Program takes part in the Department of Design's Spring Show in which projects from all upper division classes are displayed, accompanied by portfolios of graduating seniors. Faculty and community judges review pieces for awards and general continuity and quality of curriculum. Judges are pulled from the Northern California professional community and include alumni, members of national professional organizations and faculty from other institutions. Alumni and the greater business community also participate by communicating the current needs of employers within the industry, providing feedback on how curriculum and skill sets match anticipated openings.

4) Full-time graphic design faculty meet for a day at the end of each academic year to review class work and course objectives. Last year's focus involved a review of lower-division foundation courses which resulted in a new set of guidelines for how subject matter was to be covered and presented for portfolio review. These guidelines form the core of the document shared with other universities interested in preparing students for degrees in graphic design at Sacramento

State. This year the focus will include an examination of how lower division professors can provide greater feedback on attendance and working habits of students to faculty as part of the portfolio review. There will also be a further refinement of how assignments will be presented during reviews and of the criteria used for ranking student's portfolios.

5) In addition to meeting at the end of the academic year, faculty met between the fall and spring semester to review assignments and student outcomes. Faculty brought examples of each assignment and reviewed them as a group, focusing on the continuity of skill sets from one semester to the next.

b. As a result of these assessments what did you learn about the program's success in helping its students achieve these learning outcomes?

The core curriculum remains strong and is meeting goals and learning objectives. Technology classes continue to provide instruction and skills sets in areas most in demand by employers. As professors take on new rolls within the curriculum, class assignments are being modified to keep skill sets integrated and reinforce strengths of individual faculty members.

c. In what areas are students doing well and achieving expectations?

Generally, students are meeting or exceeding program expectations. In particular, graduating seniors show a strong ability to apply skills learned in one context to assignments in other media. This demonstrates a strong understanding of the underlying communication and problem solving techniques.

d. What areas are seen as needing improvement within your program?

As budgetary concerns necessitate the assignment of faculty to new classes, the program is concerned that the existing continuity and quality of education is not lost. Assignments need to be modified in order to take advantage of faculty research, teaching and professional strengths while reinforcing the existing curriculum.

3. As a result of faculty reflection on these results, are there any program changes anticipated? Yes, minor changes.

a. If so, what are those changes?

Faculty plan to modify assignments in order to further integrate the teaching outcomes from one class to the next.

b. How will you know if these changes achieved the desired results?

Senior portfolios presented in class, and portfolios and assignments presented during the Spring Show should continue to show skill sets that allow students to work in a variety of media while communicating the appropriate message. The same professional knowledge and secondary skill sets should be evident across all classes and students.

4. Did your department engage in any other assessment activities such as the development of rubrics or course alignment?

The Graphic Design Program has been reviewing and refining the course structure and alignment of the curriculum in response to the continued evolution of the graphic design profession. We plan to continue to review the interaction of courses and look for opportunities to align curriculum from both an accumulative viewpoint and a single semester.

5. What assessment activities are planned for the upcoming academic year?

The continuing use of pre-major portfolio reviews, senior portfolio reviews, public shows and yearly faculty reviews.

Department of Design
Annual Assessment Report : Interior Design

1. What goals or learning objectives/outcomes were assessed in AY 2009-2010?

Under the Program Goals of the Department of Design's Assessment Plan the Interior Design program focused on two main areas for its 2010 evaluation:

- a. The ability to apply critical techniques from art and design history to his/her own work and to work of his/her contemporaries.

- b. The ability to draw inspiration from the history of their discipline, and understand their own work in relationship to that history.

2. How did you assess these learning outcomes?

a. Describe the measures you used and the information gathered.

The Interior Architecture program has a curriculum that is organized into four parallel sequences: design studios, design graphics studios, professional classes and design history classes. In each sequence, students move from an introductory level to an advanced degree of professional competency.

This year, the program decided to focus on a formative assessment strategy to determine students' progression of the above outcomes within the design studios. A random sampling of ten project binders were selected from the junior-level design studio sequence (INTD 153, INTD 163) and a random sampling of ten research binders were selected from the senior thesis studios.

The project/research binders were used because they not only organize the various types of research used in the profession, they also communicate, to varying levels of complexity, a student's design thoughts and design process. In the INTD153 studios, students create project binders that include a project summary, program research, peer-reviewed articles on research related to their program, precedent research, and image/atmosphere research that includes color, furnishings, and materials. In the INTD163 studios, students create project binders that include program research, anthropomorphic and workstation research, as well as image/atmosphere research that includes color, furnishings, and materials.

Senior research binders, at a minimum, include:

- Project summary statements and project concept statements
- Program research including peer-reviewed articles related to their program
- Precedent research
- Code and design regulations research and analysis
- Site research

A rubric was used to compare the project binders from the junior-level design studio sequence with the research binders from the senior thesis studios. The rubric used the following criteria to determine if students are progressing toward demonstrating the expectations outlined in Item #1.

The rubric included the following traits:

- Evidence of the full range of research is demonstrated (i.e. program/building use research, historic and contemporary precedent research, code/regulatory research, site/environmental research, and image/material/furnishing research).
- Relevance of the research to the program or student's design goals is demonstrated.
- Quality and credibility of the body of research is apparent.
- Progression in synthesizing the range of research for the design problem is demonstrated.

b. As a result of these assessments what did you learn about the program's success in helping its students achieve these learning outcomes?

In general, students' work demonstrated sufficient ability to identify the specific components within the full range of research resources. Junior-level binders showed that approximately 90% of our interior students understand the various types of research that is needed for a project. Senior-level research binders, however, exposed evidence that this understanding may be only superficial. Approximately 40% of the senior-level research binders demonstrated evidence of collecting and utilizing the full range of research for their thesis project. This apparent reversal may indicate a weakness in reinforcing the importance of the role of research in design in all of the design studios.

In general, students' work demonstrated sufficient ability to identify and collect the relevant and credible research resources. Junior-level binders showed that approximately 75% of our interior students understand how to research their program and the associated image/material research that is appropriate to the project. The junior-level binders, however, showed a significant weakness in the collection and analysis of historic and contemporary precedent research and, as a result, revealed weakness in their ability to "draw inspiration from the history of their discipline, and understand their own work in relationship to that history".

While, senior research binders demonstrated sufficient progression in the collection and analysis of historic and contemporary precedent research (over 50%), summary and concept statements again revealed their deficiency at analyzing and synthesizing their precedent research into their projects.

While students, in general, demonstrate sufficient understanding of how to research the various elements of the design project, they show weakness in communicating how this research was incorporated (directly or indirectly) into their design solution. There is also significant evidence that shows that students do not understand how these research elements can be used in the development of their design solutions.

3. As a result of faculty reflection on these results, are there any program changes anticipated? a. If so, what are those changes?

No major program changes will be implemented this year because we are in the final stage of assessing the overall program change made in response to the last accreditation visit by CIDA (Council for Interior Design Accreditation). CIDA is making its next visit in fall 2011 (an extension to the fall 2010 was approved by CIDA) where we will show the results of a well tested curriculum.

Continued minor changes will be implemented in the design studios to address some of the weaknesses cited above. Two examples of these changes include revision to the specific requirements of the project/research binders and the inclusion of additional analysis diagrams, drawings, and writings.

b. How will you know if these changes achieved the desired results?

The faculty will assess this part of the program's goals again in the Spring of 2011.

4. Did your department engage in any other assessment activities such as the development of rubrics or course alignment?

As a result of working toward meeting both CIDA's and the University's assessment requirements, Interior Design faculty developed a course content matrix which matches specific CIDA standards and guidelines to the DOD's learning objectives and outcomes. These course content matrixes have not been changed or updated this year.

5. What assessment activities are planned for the upcoming academic year?

The Interior Design program has been fully accredited since 1991 by the Council on Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA) and is scheduled for a re-accreditation review in one year. The first phase of the re-accreditation process is the submission of a self-study report (to be written in the spring 2011); the second phase of the re-accreditation process is a site visit the following semester. An important element of CIDA accreditation is program assessment. All interior design faculty will be involved in preparing assessment materials and the self study in preparation for the CIDA site visit.

Department of Design
Annual Assessment Report : Photography

What goals or learning objectives/outcomes were assessed in AYs 2009-2010?

The Photography Program focused attention on three of the Department of Design's Assessment Plan learning objectives:

1. Students are expected to create professional-quality work, which shows a clearly articulated concept, creative energy, technical mastery of tools and techniques, and imaginative concepts.
2. Students are expected to explain their work graphically and verbally.
3. Students are expected to apply critical techniques from art/photo history to their own work.

How did you assess these learning outcomes? Describe the measures you used and the information gathered.

The program used both formative and summative means of performance assessment to measure learning outcomes.

1. As in previous semesters, the program collected representative samples of student work for a digital Photography Program portfolio. These images were collected from two senior-level courses, Senior Portfolio and Studio Lighting. In addition to collecting senior work, the program began a collection of student work from Photo 141, Intermediate Photography. This intermediate work is used for comparative purposes. Faculty evaluate work in this portfolio looking for inconsistencies or indications that there is a need to alter the overall curriculum, as well as problems with individual course content or student learning objectives.

2. In order to measure the student's ability to explain their work graphically and verbally, Senior Portfolio faculty interviewed selected students. In these video-taped interviews, students were asked to show and discuss their images.

3. Photography Program assessment takes place in specific courses through group and individual critiques of student portfolios, exams, papers, exhibitions and participation in classroom discussions. Exams are an effective assessment tool which let students know their own strength and weakness and serve as an incentive for them to work at mastering the necessary information. They give a clear and immediate message to an instructor about the effectiveness of lectures and demonstrations and the group's understanding of material being presented. Course rubrics describe the quality of an individual photograph or an entire portfolio. They reflect attributes associated with image quality such as the photograph's: emotional impact or imaginative quality, technical quality, organization of light, space and forms and overall presentation.

4. In the spring 2010 semester, the Photography Program completed its second Senior Exit Survey. The intent of the survey is to measure the success of the program's learning objectives, from the student's perspective. The respondents remained anonymous; the questions were ordinal, both open-ended and closed-ended. Students were given ample time to complete the survey and adequate space to provide narrative responses.

5. Photography internships, with state agencies, publications, commercial and portrait studios, are an elective option for majors. Internships give students experience working directly with a professional in the discipline and the Program an outside perspective on student learning outcomes. Employers provide a written assessment evaluating: the student's scope of photographic knowledge, their materials and equipment familiarity and their learning proficiency.

As a result of these assessments what did you learn about the program's success in helping its students achieve these learning outcomes? In what areas are students doing well and achieving expectations?

1. In last year's assessment, the faculty noted that the impact and success of student's images was diminished by inattention to overall presentation quality. There has been significant improvement in the quality of portfolio and individual image presentation this year. Greater emphasis and very specific guidelines were given in classes, related to matting and mounting techniques as well as archival issues. Understanding the importance of presentation was discussed as related to gaining admission to Master of Fine Arts programs and entering a professional field.

2. Students also show considerable progress in applying critical techniques from photo history to their own photographs, a Department of Design student learning objective. Photo 102, a non-studio class, discusses late 20th century and contemporary photography. This course is credited with contributing significantly to this progress. The change has occurred since most major's catalog rights now require the completion of this class. Students have expressed enthusiasm for examining the work of contemporary artists, both in course evaluations and in the senior exit survey. More importantly, their work shows the effect of this class in inspiring them to take visual risks and working to develop their own concepts into a cohesive photographic statement.

3. As a result of faculty assessment of last year's student portfolios, emphasis on advanced digital techniques, particularly in the area of print output has been increased in Intermediate Digital Photography, Senior Portfolio and Advanced Photography. Student work shows improvement in this area, though this continues to be a source of concern.

4. While this spring was the first cycle of using video-taped senior interviews for assessment, and was limited in scope, the process was gratifying. The success of the Department's learning objectives were demonstrated with this assessment tool. The photographs presented illustrated the artist's solution to functional and aesthetic problems and expressed the work's organizing concept. The seniors created professional-quality work, which showed a clearly articulated concept, creative energy, and technical mastery of tools and techniques. The interviewed students were able to move comfortably back and forth between words and visual material in order to express their ideas. They discussed their work coherently and with confidence.

What areas are seen as needing improvement within your program?

1. In the senior exit survey, students continue to express a need for additional course work in commercial studio and lighting techniques. The survey mirrors faculty concerns, portfolio submissions, and lighting class exam results. It is not possible to cover the necessary course material in the single course the Department is now offering.

2. Both exams and student portfolios show the need for further technical foundation instruction. Transfer students come to the Photography Program with differing levels of preparation. This is most evident at the intermediate level, demonstrated in course critiques, student portfolio's and test scores.

As a result of faculty reflection on these results, are there any program changes anticipated? If so, what are those changes?

1. This spring (2010) a course change proposal was submitted making Photo 141, Intermediate Photography into a “gateway” course. Beginning in the fall 2011 semester, all photography majors must complete this course, earning a minimum of a B- in order to enroll in two required senior courses, Senior Portfolio and Artificial Light. In addition to introducing new concepts and technical skills, faculty will reinforce conceptual, organization and technical skills developed in earlier courses. Assessment tools such as group critiques of student work and exams will continue to be used in Intermediate Photography.

2. Faculty recognize that a single lighting course is insufficient for those students entering the commercial field. While lighting is covered in some prerequisite courses, its application to advertising photography is limited to one class. It is clear in the current budget climate that no classes can be added to the curriculum. However, it may be possible to substitute a new class for an existing course, in order to respond to this need.

How will you know if these changes achieved the desired results?

The success of curriculum changes in helping the program meet its student learning outcomes will be measured using established program assessment techniques such as: group and individual critiques of student work, exams, papers, exhibitions, the Program’s portfolio of student images, the senior exit survey, senior video interviews, and through formal feedback from internship sponsors.

What assessment activities are planned for the upcoming academic year?

1. Faculty will continue building the portfolio of student work, collecting samples from Intermediate Photography to compare with the work of students from the Senior Portfolio class. The intermediate class was selected as a base for the faculty to assess the program’s curriculum since all students must complete this class, early in their academic career, regardless of courses taken at other institutions. This collection of student work provides concrete examples for performance assessment.

2. The Program will continue the senior exit survey process and would like to combine this with an annual graduating senior and faculty meeting where students can participate in a dialog about the Photography Program and what might assist future students in meeting their career and academic goals.

3. The video interview project will be enlarged in scope, to include more seniors and their final portfolios. In addition to discussing their senior course work and giving oral artist’s statements, students will be asked to show and discuss their entry-level work from Photo 141.

4. The Photography faculty will continue to hold regular meetings to discuss both the curriculum and the degree program’s effectiveness.