Expected Outcome 1: Appreciation of Historical and Contemporary Artworks

Students will acquire knowledge of historical artworks, and in ARTS 4980 Senior Project will demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of contemporary art practices as a context for their artwork.

Assessment Method 1: Committee review of writing and artwork; scoring against a rubric.

Assessment Method Description

A faculty committee evaluates the student’s written proposal, the artwork created at several intervals through the semester, the finished work presented in a senior project exhibition, and a written self-evaluation at the end of the term. In written materials students are expected to address historical and contemporary precedents for their work. Oral presentations at mid-semester and the end of term also include treatment of these aspects. The studio work itself is assessed for its engagement with and understanding of historical and contemporary influences. Each of these components of student accomplishment is evaluated by a faculty committee against a rubric. Each student in ARTS 4980 spring term 2014, a total of 7 students, was assessed.
Findings
This cohort of BFA students exhibited appropriate engagement with historical and contemporary precedents and influences in their studio work, though for about half not at the level of sophistication we hope for. All demonstrated use of at least some beneficial use of sources, in writing about and speaking of observations and understandings of precedents to create content in their own artwork.

We examined these aspects of the expected outcome:
- Student awareness and understanding of historical precedents as context for his or her own artwork (as evidenced in written and oral presentation): 42% were considered accomplished, and 57% met our benchmark.
- Utilization of this knowledge to enrich their artwork: 57% of students rated accomplished, with 42% of students at benchmark.

How did you use findings for improvement?
We are examining the senior project course structure, and have devised a plan to incorporate some senior project content into the students' penultimate semester, giving students more time to develop ideas and plans for the work. This will permit more research and writing directed at building an awareness of important historical and contemporary artists’ work that inform the student's concepts. We have also noted a need to provide opportunity for guided writing exercises across our curricula, and have added a variety of “low stakes” and more formal writing assignments to studio courses at all levels. A central aspect of these writing exercises is the development of awareness of precedents for the student’s own artwork. We have proposed a new foundations-level Orientation to Art course that will include significant discipline-specific writing toward inculcating an
understanding the importance of such writing and research.

Additional Comments

Expected Outcome 2: Problem solving for effective visual statements

Students will solve problem-based art assignments demonstrating an ability to comprehend problems and identify multiple solutions to create effective visual statements.

Assessment Method 1: Sophomore Portfolio Review

Assessment Method Description

Our assessment of this outcome is focused on students’ ability to comprehend and solve problems they are given in beginning and intermediate studio courses, and is thus designed to permit more “vertical” assessment in the department. We have developed new practices and a detailed rubric to assess for this outcome. This is used in our new sophomore portfolio review, which we began to implement spring term 2013. BFA students with at least 24 hours of art courses and sophomore standing are expected to prepare a portfolio and a statement of goals for review by a faculty committee. Faculty assessed work against the rubric, and offered students feedback and guidance at this early stage of their curriculum. In this second year of the portfolio review, 9 students participated in the review, and we gathered significant baseline data.
## Findings

- In assessing students’ ability to comprehend and address the goals and intentions of the assigned problem, 45% were deemed highly accomplished, and 35% accomplished.

- In the student’s ability to determine and resolve the technical approaches and design tasks expected of the assignments, 45% were seen as highly accomplished, and 55% as accomplished.

- In the student’s proficiency at developing conceptual content appropriate to
expectations articulated in the assignments, 33% were rated highly accomplished, 45% accomplished, and 22% at our benchmark for appropriate attainment.

How did you use findings for improvement?
We saw quite encouraging levels of accomplishment among this cohort of sophomore students. We have discussed the findings and methods of the portfolio review, and expect to make some minor revisions in the execution of the review (timing, and assignment of reviewing faculty who are in the student's intended area of concentration.) We also expect that our new freshman-level Orientation to Art course, now in the curriculum approval process, will encourage students to maximize value of this early consultative opportunity by helping these students prepare more polished portfolio presentations.

Additional Comments

Expected Outcome 3: student demonstrates problem solving ability
Through the creation of a body of artwork in ARTS 4980 Senior Project, the student demonstrates the ability to define problems, identify strategies and propose and implement solutions to create accomplished work.

Assessment Method 1: evaluation of writing and artwork; scoring rubric

Assessment Method Description
Our Senior Project course, required of all BFA students in their final semester, provides the ideal opportunity to assess students’ overall accomplishment in this major. A faculty committee evaluates the student’s written proposal for a body of artwork, the artwork as it evolves at several intervals through the semester, the finished work presented in a senior project exhibition, and a written self-evaluation at the end of the term. Each of these aspects of student ability and accomplishment is evaluated against a rubric (attached). Each member of the faculty committee assesses each student on each outcome; the committee chair tabulates. In 2013-14, 7 students enrolled in the course and all were evaluated.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Highly accomplished</th>
<th>Accomplished</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Below Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In a written proposal, student defines proposed body of work</td>
<td>Proposed artwork is comprehensively and insightfully defined or described with focus on content, meaning and purpose.</td>
<td>Proposed artwork is clearly defined or described, with focus on content, meaning and purpose.</td>
<td>Proposed artwork is superficially defined or described, with focus on content, meaning and purpose.</td>
<td>Proposed artwork is ill-defined/described with unclear focus on content, meaning and purpose.</td>
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<tr>
<td>In a written proposal and meetings with faculty committee, student provides evidence of research related to proposed body of work</td>
<td>Thoroughly researches related artworks and/or artistic movements and is capable of fluidly and elegantly contextualizing proposed artwork within historical and contemporary art practices.</td>
<td>Researches related artworks and/or artistic movements and is capable of fully contextualizing proposed artwork within historical and contemporary art practices.</td>
<td>Conducts little research of related artworks and/or artistic movements and is capable of contextualizing proposed artwork within some historical and contemporary art practices.</td>
<td>Does not conduct research of related artworks and/or artistic movements and is very limited in ability to contextualize proposed artwork within historical and contemporary art practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a written proposal and in the creation of artwork student identifies creative process.</td>
<td>Proposes and uses an art-making approach that indicates a deep comprehension of possible outcomes.</td>
<td>Proposes and uses an art-making approach that demonstrates good comprehension of possible outcomes.</td>
<td>Proposes and uses an art-making approach that demonstrates comprehension of possible outcomes.</td>
<td>Proposes and uses an art-making approach that demonstrates limited comprehension of possible outcomes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student creates artwork</td>
<td>Imaginatively explores and integrates techniques, formal elements and content to create highly resolved and sophisticated works of art. Thoughtfully identifies strengths of approach as well as potential weaknesses and demonstrates a refined ability to adjust approach(es) as needed to achieve desired outcome.</td>
<td>Thoughtfully explores and integrates artistic approaches with focus on techniques, formal elements and content to create highly resolved works of art. Identifies strengths of approach as well as potential weaknesses and demonstrates ability to adjust approach as needed to achieve desired outcome.</td>
<td>Explores and integrates artistic approaches with focus on techniques, formal elements and content to create resolved works of art. Partially identifies strengths of approach as well as potential weaknesses and demonstrates some ability to adjust approach as needed to achieve desired outcome.</td>
<td>Inconsistently explores and integrates artistic approaches with focus on techniques, formal elements and content to create works of art. Has difficulty identifying strengths of approach as well as potential weaknesses and demonstrates inadequate ability to adjust approach as needed to achieve desired outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In written project evaluation, student assesses outcome</td>
<td>Reviews results relative to defined goals and identifies with deep comprehension strengths and weaknesses of outcome.</td>
<td>Reviews results relative to defined goals and identifies strengths and weaknesses of outcome.</td>
<td>Reviews results relative to defined goals and partially identifies strengths and weaknesses of outcome.</td>
<td>Reviews results relative to defined goals but is unable to identify strengths and weaknesses of outcome.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Findings**

As our BFA students enter the intensive, exhibition-focused final semester of their degree program, most are well prepared to independently devise and solve the creative problems that define this body of work. All of this year's
graduating BFA students met or exceeded our benchmark expectations for developing an appropriate and original project on which to work, articulating the goals and means of the work, and carrying it through to successful completion. We examined these aspects of the expected outcome:

- In creation of a well-written and well-conceived proposal, 14% were evaluated as highly accomplished, 57% accomplished, and 28% at our benchmark.
- In our evaluation of preparatory research related to the proposed body of work, 28% of students were rated as highly accomplished, 57% accomplished, and 14% at our benchmark.
- In development of a successful approach to the problem the student devised, 28% of students were rated as highly accomplished, 42% as accomplished, and 28% at our benchmark for acceptable attainment.
- In the execution of the proposed artwork, and achieving technical, formal, and conceptual resolution, 42% of students were judged to be highly accomplished, 42% accomplished, and 14% at benchmark.
- In the written self-assessment of outcomes, 71% were evaluated as accomplished and 28% at our benchmark.

Faculty judged the large majority of these BFA graduates to be well prepared for the challenges of the culminating senior project semester, and to have produced skillfully executed, original, and well-grounded work and to have demonstrated themselves to be well prepared to pursue graduate studies or professional opportunities in the field. There were fewer students excelling at the highest levels than in the previous year.

**How did you use findings for improvement?**

We saw demonstration of broad and detailed preparation for the rigors of the Senior Project. We do see opportunities to provide earlier guidance and direction for the Senior Project studio work. To this end, we are working toward incorporation of some Senior Project content into the penultimate semester of the student’s degree program, allowing more preparatory and gestational time for the proposed work.

**Additional Comments**