

Executive Summary: Department of Visual Art

a. Mission

The Department of Visual Art is committed to fostering an environment that encourages critical and aesthetic engagement through the teaching of conceptual and technical skills. Our professional degree granting programs embrace the synergy between pedagogy and faculty creative research.

Our mission is to provide exceptional and diverse faculty, facilities, equipment, and technologies that encompass both traditional and alternative media within a comprehensive curriculum. We encourage innovation and interdisciplinary activities to support our students' development into professional artists and arts educators who are makers, critical thinkers, creative problem solvers, and life-long learners.

It is essential for our students to utilize the University's vast academic resources to inform and deepen their creative vision. In addition, the department strives to provide creative opportunities to others within the University environment. We strongly believe in the centrality of the arts, and its potential for creative discourse and action in the 21st century.

b. Faculty

The Visual Art Department within the School of the Arts at the University of Kansas is a comprehensive visual art program with nine primary instructional areas: drawing and painting; printmaking; sculpture; ceramics; metals/jewelry; textiles/fibers; expanded media; and visual art education. The standard allocation of effort for full-time faculty is 40% teaching, 40% research, and 20% service. With 25 tenured/tenure-track faculty, 11 part-time lecturers, and 17 graduate teaching assistants, the department teaches approximately 135 courses each year to undergraduate majors, non-majors, and graduate students. Faculty teach 4 regular courses per year. In addition, faculty engage in independent study hours with advanced undergraduate students and graduate students in visual art. All faculty engage in teaching related service that includes participation in a graduate seminar, graduate reviews, scholarship competition jurying, student exhibition installation etc. The department offers courses to non-majors in all studio areas as well as courses for students pursuing licensure in elementary education (visual art education methods courses). Through these courses, the department generates approximately 6,500 credit hours per year. The class size ranges from 10 to 20 with an overall department average of 15 students per course (not including graduate tutorial credit hours equaling approximately 600 credit hours).

Faculty Research

All Faculty in the Department of Visual Art engage in a studio research in their teaching areas. Studio faculty are active in exhibition of their work and faculty records show that faculty show work all over the US and internationally in Australia, Japan, Korea, Germany, Finland, France, etc. The Visual art Education faculty publish their scholarly work in journals and books and give refereed presentations at national and international conferences.

c. Degrees offered by the Department of Visual Art

Master of Fine Art degree in Visual Art (MFA), 60 credit hours for degree. Currently 34 graduate students enrolled full time. Students come from all over the US with some international students. Time to Degree in the MFA program is exceptional with almost 100% of the students graduating on time in 3 years.

Master of Art in Visual Art Education (MA), there are currently about 17 students enrolled in the MA VAE program. Many students continue from the undergraduate program with a BAE degree to for teaching Licensure and the MA degree.

Bachelor of Fine Art (BFA) is the professional degree in Visual Art that trains students to be professional artists. Students with this degree go on in arts careers and further study in graduate school.

History of Art (BFA), this degree combines a strong academic and studio background

Bachelor of Art in Visual Art (BA), This degree requires more academic hours and fewer studio hours. This degree is a good option for students who want a double major.

Bachelor of Art Education (BAE), Most students in this degree program continue on for an extra year to receive Licensure to teach in the state of Kansas. Some continue further to obtain the MA degree listed above.

d. External Review (National Associate of Schools of Art & Design; NASAD)

The Department of Visual Art has been continually accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art & Design (NASAD) since the late 1950's. The departments of Visual Art, The Department of Art History in the College and the Department of Design in the School of Architecture, Design, and Planning are in the process of re-accreditation at the writing of this document (April 2012). The written self study was submitted to NASAD in March, and the evaluation team visited campus April 8-11, 2012. The team presented a very positive exit meeting report. Provost Vitter, Dean Anderson, Associate Dean Kowalchuk, Dean Heilke, and Visual Art Department Cahir Jordan, were all in attendance at the External review exit meeting. The final recommendation will be available in December 2012. It is expected that re-accreditation will be recommended. Some suggestion were made to evaluate the BFA degree in History of Art. The NASAD team recommended that the degree include additional studio hours. The NASAD team also recommended some upgrades in studio ventilation for some studios like ceramics and sculpture.

Several programs have been ranked by US news and World Report over the past several years including the overall graduate program in Visual Art (MFA program), The Metalsmithing program, the Printmaking program and the Textile program.

Overall evaluation

The department of Visual Art has strong teachers engaged in rigorous research. The studio facilities are excellent and give students many opportunities to learn a wide variety of techniques and processes while working with a variety of full time faculty. There are many opportunities for engaged learning and undergraduate research that is supported by faculty. There is good scholarship support for students at all levels. Upon graduate students are well prepared to embark on careers as professional artists or in arts related industries. Undergraduates BA and BFA student are ready to continue on to graduate school at any reputable and rigorous program in the US and abroad. MFA degree students are prepared for individual art careers or university and college level teaching careers. BAE students are very successful in gaining positions as K-12 art teachers.