Department: Design (BA)

Assessment Coordinator: Dr. Elsi Vassdal Ellis

Departmental Mission: In support of the mission of Western Washington University and the College of Fine and Performing Arts, the Design Program utilizes a curriculum that emphasizes the process of problem solving to direct students to make connections between culture and design and their role as responsible visual communicators. Students learn to combine personal expression and critical thinking as they create solutions that connect industry, individuals, and institutions to specific audiences and themselves to the world. Students develop adaptive learning strategies to sustain successful communication careers in a constantly changing world.

Student Learning Outcomes. Upon graduation, Design, BA, majors will be able to:

1. Demonstrate functional competence with principles of visual organization, visual language and theory as applied to visual communication problems.
2. Understand and apply creative and abstract thinking skills to visual communication problems.
3. Produce creative, professional-quality work within project guidelines.
4. Understand, embrace and use current tools, software and technology as a vehicle of effective communication (conceive, design, produce, and create visual forms to successfully communicate ideas, opinions, concepts).
5. Demonstrate facility in visual communication practice, including written and verbal communication skills
### Student Learning Outcomes Assessed This Year:

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| Junior Portfolio Review (last one for 79 credit BA) | 1, 2, 3, 4 | During the Junior Portfolio Review of 2012, the methodology criterion was discussed in terms of its weight in the calculation of the final grade for Design 371. It was determined that the weight assigned to methodology was too high, resulting in a less accurate assessment of design talent and ability. The rubric for the course will be adjusted for Design 340 (the revised course) in 2012-2013 and applied consistently across equivalent production and new media courses.  

54 students applied for a senior sequence with 27 identifying graphic design as their first choice; 17 identified design production as first choice; 10 identified new media as first choice. Overall, 74% were advanced into their first choice; 11% into their second; 4% into their third choice. All students were ranked in quality of work, work ethic (attendance, meeting deadlines, class participation), methodology, consistency, and teamwork. Six students were not advanced into any senior sequence for 2012-2013. These students will graduate under the requirements of the new BA in Design. Seven eligible juniors did not participate in the 2012 review for the following reasons: one discovered she was more of a coder rather than designer; one was double majoring in art and design and realized she was more of an artist than designer and will complete her art degree; one student elected to participate in an international exchange program and will spend 2012-2013 in Sweden, returning Fall 2013 to complete her design degree; one student had a unique offer to work in the fashion industry in New York; one student had significant financial challenges and could not afford another full year of school; two students chose to deal with personal challenges before returning to Western. |
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<td>Professional interviews of seniors</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
<td>The professional interviewers noted the print portfolios were of high quality, including individual presentation formats. The formats were flexible in most cases, allowing the students to make changes in the presentation order of work based upon interview focus. Students were confident during the interviews and discussed their design process well. Some seniors included information graphic design examples and the interviewers suggested more work of this type be included in the portfolios. There is a growing demand for this design work and not all design programs include this complex design process as a course assignment. They suggested students include more process for the web/app/user interface design in their portfolios beyond sketches. Also suggested students use Cargo as a primary website for their online portfolios. Student presentation skills demonstrated improvement in 2011-2012 over the feedback provided last year by the interviewers. Although students engage in documentation of their process for web/app/user interface design, most did not include much in their portfolios. The lead instructor for new media will modify course expectations for the presentation of new media process in 2012-2013.</td>
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<td>External review of student work</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4</td>
<td>Two students recognized for design achievements: one had work selected for publication in Graphis New Talent 2012 (international design publication); second student received the J. Charles Walker &amp; John Brett Buchanan 2012 Educational Scholarship through the University &amp; College Designers Association (includes attendance of national conference in Montreal, Quebec with exhibition of work during conference)</td>
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### Assessment Measures | SLO's Assessed | Use of the Information
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Admission Portfolio Review | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 | Due to the loss of data in the office, only a partial analysis of admission to major and graduation ratings was possible in 2011-2012 and are included here. New procedures have been implemented to prevent loss of data for future assessment purposes.

**Admission to major & 2012 graduation cohort:** Discovered two students were admitted to the major due to an error in the office; both students posed challenges to respective faculty but with extra feedback both made adequate progress and were able to complete course requirements and present a portfolio to interviewers and as part of the senior show. Portfolios met minimum standards; both students continued to demonstrate weak typography skills; both had high work ethic scores, the factor that originally provided adequate points for their advancement into a senior sequence.

One faculty member worked with three of the students not advanced to the any 2012 senior specializations to develop graduation portfolios through independent study. The faculty reported it was clear that these students would not have met the graduation portfolio requirements. One of the three students made sufficient design process improvement through the independent study. She reported that this experience provided a framework for her to process the intense junior year curriculum together create a working portfolio.

Overall, there appeared to be a positive correlation between admittance ratings of 5, 4.5 and 4 to success in the senor sequence. Those admitted with scores of 3.5 had less predictable performances except in the cases where lengthy discussions were noted on the rating sheet.

**Conclusion:** It is clear that the admission to the major should take place in a portfolio review that draws upon the work produced in the Design Foundation series of Design 220, 240, 250 and 260. The review should take place in June following completion of all four courses. In the current admission to major portfolio review, there is no hard data about work ethic, methodology, and consistency of the applicants, critical criteria for design success.

**Admission to major & 2012 junior portfolio review cohort:** There was a positive correlation between admission portfolio ratings and senior advancement portfolio ratings for students for whom both scores were available participating in this year's review (N= 21/54).
**Assessment Measures** | **SLO’s Assessed** | **Use of the Information**
--- | --- | ---
GPA Analysis | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 | Only three juniors had cumulative GPAs below 2.5; all three were admitted to the major prior to the 2.5 GPA requirement; 2 of the three were not advanced to a senior sequence following the Junior review.

**Program Changes Based on Assessment Data**

**Fall 2010:**
1. Design 456 [Design for the Internet] was renumbered and dropped down to the junior level based upon a review of peer programs, faculty curriculum discussions and advisory board recommendations. Students advanced to senior sequences in graphic design and new media will take Design 454 focusing on interactive design concepts; students in design production will take Design 472 focusing on sustainable issues in design production.

2. Following a comparison of the junior portfolio review results from 2007 to 2010 to the cumulative GPA of students it was determined that if a minimum overall GPA requirement of 2.5 was implemented, it would significantly reduce the number of students who failed the junior portfolio review.

Students admitted to the Design program beginning in Fall 2011 will require maintaining a 2.5 cumulative GPA until graduation. If students fall below the required GPA, they have two quarters to bring the GPA up or will be dropped from the major.

**Fall 2011**
1. Based upon review of the integration of software skills with design assignments, the Design Foundation was revised. Software (Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, InDesign, FinalCut Pro) will be integrated into the new Foundation courses (Design 220, 240, 250, 260) where applicable. Students are currently entering the program with a higher software skill set. While all are not functioning at the same level, students who need more software instruction will be able to sign up for Lynda.com and/or make use of ATUS services.

2. Based upon junior portfolio review assessments from 2007 to 2011, and recommendations from our Advisory Board and design professionals, and in conformance with NASAD guidelines, major curricular revisions to the BA and BFA degrees were made. The BA was reduced from 79 credits to 62 with the requirement of a minor.
The primary objectives of these changes are to:

1. Sustain the level of quality and reputation of the BA degree while reducing credits in the major (WWU Strategic Goal #1);
2. Assume responsibility for Foundation courses through the complete revision of 200 level courses in design;
3. Eliminate the second portfolio review for the BA degree;
4. Expand student access to design concepts through the offering of Design 111: Design and Society (WWU Strategic Goal #2);
5. Require a minor to more strongly align the BA educational experience with the liberal arts.
**Department: Design (BFA)**

**Assessment Coordinator:** Dr. Elsi Vassdal Ellis

**Departmental Mission:** In support of the mission of Western Washington University and the College of Fine and Performing Arts, the Design Program utilizes a curriculum that emphasizes the process of problem solving to direct students to make connections between culture and design and their role as responsible visual communicators. Students learn to combine personal expression and critical thinking as they create solutions that connect industry, individuals, and institutions to specific audiences and themselves to the world. Students develop adaptive learning strategies to sustain successful communication careers in a constantly changing world.

**Departmental Student Learning Outcomes:** Upon graduation, Design, BFA majors will be able to:

1. Demonstrate functional competence with principles of visual organization, visual language and theory as applied to visual communication problems.
2. Understand and apply creative and abstract thinking skills to visual communication problems.
3. Produce creative, professional-quality work within project guidelines.
4. Understand, embrace and use current tools, software and technology as a vehicle of effective communication (conceive, design, produce, and create visual forms to successfully communicate ideas, opinions, concepts).
5. Demonstrate facility in visual communication practice, including written and verbal communication skills
6. Identify, analyze, interpret, translate and manage complex communication problems into effective visual communication solutions.
7. Demonstrate integration of print, web, interactive media in complex visual communication solutions.
8. Work collaboratively and manage design projects to effective completion.
Student Learning Outcomes Assessed This Year:

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<td>BFA Portfolio Admission Review (last one for 2011-2012 catalog)</td>
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<td>Two students submitted thesis project proposals to the Design faculty for admission to the BFA degree option under the 2011-2012 catalog. The proposals were found to be clear, concise, well written; the BA senior portfolios included with the thesis proposals were of professional quality and correlated well with their goals for the 2012-2013 academic year. Both were admitted to the BFA. There is no formal curriculum for these BFA candidates and they will sign up for independent studies with respective faculty to complete their BFA thesis projects.</td>
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2011-1012 BFA Program Changes Based on Assessment Data

The BFA changes that begin Fall 2012 specifically address the recommendations of our Advisory Board and professional organizations to integrate the three emphases we have offered in the 2011-2012 BA into a revised and integrated senior experience. This could only be achieved through a complete revision the current BFA degree, to formalize the educational experience through the creation of specific courses, and offer it to a maximum of 18 students, admitted through a winter quarter junior portfolio review. This represents a significant shift in use of resources. Prior to these changes the BFA degree option was not promoted due to enrollment demands placed on resources for the BA degree. BFA students were taken on as overloads through independent studies. In the past no more than 2 students in any given year were admitted to the BFA degrees option.

The Design program will continue to graduate 48 to 54 students per year under this plan while offering a fully integrated professional senior level curriculum to the top students. The BFA students will have stronger conceptual and team project. The degree changes efficiently make use of our current resources.

The program changes conform to NASAD guidelines with the exception of the number of credits required for the degree. Although NASAD suggests that Design BFA degrees are 117 credits, we did not increase the credits for the revised degree at this time. Only if and when we elect to apply for NASAD accreditation would we modify the degree and increase the credits required by 2 credits.
The BFA requires an internship between junior-senior years. The internship will be established by Design with a faculty member assigned responsibility for supervision of students and sponsors. Internship sponsor reports will be included in the annual assessment of the curriculum.

Students will earn only one design degree, either a BA or a BFA. The previous BFA degree required completion of the BA degree prior to application for the BFA. NASAD considers the BFA to be a four-year degree and we will conform to this model.

**The primary objectives of these changes are to:**

1. Implement recommendations by Advisory Board and design professionals;
2. Improve the quality of the BFA through a formal curriculum (WWU Strategic Goal #1);
3. Create a curriculum that can implement changes without constant curricular changes;
4. Continue to graduate the same number of majors annually between BA/BFA degrees;
5. Graduate a higher quality student with an adaptive skill set for success in a competitive profession.