ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT
OF THE
DESIGN AND INDUSTRY GRADUATE PROGRAM

COMMITTEE PROCESS

This Academic Program Review Committee (APRC) Report is based on the following source material:
2. External Reviewers Report and Summary of Recommendations to Design and Industry Department, June 7, 2010.
3. APRC Interview with Dean Kurt Daw, Chair Ricardo Gomes, Graduate Coordinator Steve Jones and faculty members Hsiao-Yun Chu, Joshua Singer, and Jane Veeder on October 13, 2010.
4. Guidelines for the Sixth Cycle of Academic Program Review.
5. The APRC customary evaluation procedures.
6. DAI response to APRC Report draft, April 19, 2011

These sources were employed to construct an integrated view of the Department of Design and Industry’s present strengths, aspirations, and possibilities for future development, focused upon the Department’s graduate program.

REPORT

Introduction

In the recent past, the Department of Design and Industry has moved from a focus on the more traditional industrial technology education to one on design, in keeping with the trends in their field. The Department’s undergraduate program is highly subscribed and the Department will enter impanction for the undergraduate major starting in 2011-2012.

University Standards

The Department is commended for meeting all University standards for graduate programs.

Program Specific Requirements

The Department meets all program specific requirements: they offer two courses per semester, report an adequate frequency of course offerings (annually or every three semesters), have a 100% proper distribution of
graduate and upper division courses on students' GAP/ATC, and have appropriate class sizes and numbers of graduates. The sole exception at the time of the self-study report, is the availability of their Path to Graduation scheme, which is available in brochure format for advising but not yet available on their website; the Department states it will be posting that information.

The Department reports four full time faculty out of eight teaching in the graduate program plus one lecturer; five faculty participate in graduate student advising (DAI Response, April 2011). There is one faculty member assigned to the Industrial Technology area, three for Product Design, four for Visual Communication Design and two for Research/Education.

**Overall Program**

The APRC notes the low proportion of FTES (approximately 5 percent of the total in AY 2008) and majors (only 6 percent of total majors) for the graduate program relative to the undergraduate program in the Department. This proportion is small in comparison to other graduate programs of similar size.

The APRC notes that this is undoubtedly due to the fact that there are only two graduate courses being offered per semester and that a large number of graduate students (without an appropriate background in design) have to take undergraduate courses in order to develop the necessary background for the graduate program.

In addition, APRC realizes that these proportions will undoubtedly change after undergraduate impaction has been implemented and has been in place for several years. If the graduate program is the flagship program for the Department, the APRC expects that these ratios will change dramatically to appropriately illustrate that fact.

Based on the interview and other materials APRC has reviewed, the pride and passion the faculty have for their graduate program is very clear. What is also clear is the striking support of the faculty for one another, their department and the design discipline.

The external reviewers recommended that the Department engage in a full strategic planning process (External Reviewers, p. 5) to help determine where they would like to go as a unit. The APRC supports that recommendation and further suggests that an explicit part of that process be to develop the relative proportion of resources and faculty effort that go into the graduate program relative to the undergraduate. APRC believes that the program should use this planning process to
develop a clear persuasive rationale for the MA degree distinguished from the BA and BS degrees.

**Curriculum**

The reviewers stated, "We suggest that the department seriously reconsider the kind of degree that they are offering and the value of that degree to students (for example: an MFA, terminal degree, would enable graduates of the program to teach)." (External Reviewers, p. 3) In the APRC interview, Creative Arts Dean Daw also suggested he thought the Department should consider a possible MFA and the growth potential associated with it. The Department also notes that it is possible to obtain some types of teaching positions without terminal degrees (MFA), depending on the institution and the candidate’s professional experience. (DAI Response, April 2011)

The Department's response in the interview was that they did not view the MFA as a realistic possibility given the level of resources it would require. In addition, they felt it could distract the department from other priorities. They were thinking, instead, of changing the name of their graduate degree from Master of Arts in Industrial Arts (MAIA) to a MA in Design Studies to reflect the current shift from technical education to design.

The APRC believes deciding among various degree options should be part of a conversation that happens within the context of a full strategic planning process and should be based upon data on past and current enrollments, potential student demand and the possibility of collaborations with other departments on whatever path they take. The reviewers noted the department is missing opportunities to expand their interdisciplinarity by not engaging more fully with other departments and by not taking more advantage of the fact that their students do come from so many other disciplines.

The APRC notes the lack of annual, formal assessment of student learning outcomes within the graduate program required by the University, which leads to questions about the quality of the program. The APRC recommends this become a priority for the department so that the faculty can use that information to make further improvements in their program.

In the area of outreach, the Department has made excellent strides in recent years and the APRC applauds them for those. However, there are still steps that need to be taken -- such as establishing an advisory board to enhance their profile and take advantage of the rich resources in the San Francisco design community. In a variety of other areas, the
Department also needs to improve its marketing efforts. A more effective website, brochure, continued development of partnerships with community groups, agencies and companies (like Acumen, discussed during the interview), are all important steps to take.

**Faculty**

Like many other departments, the faculty workload in this Department is heavy. This workload has been increased due to two crucial retirements without the ability to search and replace those positions. Just recently, however, the Department has received approval to hire a position in industrial design with a focus on rapid prototyping, one of their current needs. The external reviewers believe the situation is so critical that faculty could leave due to lack of time for research or design projects; they identify this issue (External Reviewers, p. 4) as a crucial one for the Department. The APRC recommends the Department help find ways for the faculty to achieve synergy between creative work, community service, teaching, and the student experience.

In addition, the Department has never had release time for their graduate coordinator position. The APRC recommends that, until the immediate goals of the graduate program are achieved, the Department reduce the coordinator’s teaching load by at least one course per year so that some basic tasks for the graduate program can be achieved.

**Student Experience**

The APRC commends the Department and its graduate coordinator for their most recent work in improving the structure of the graduate program. The cohort format, oral defense of creative work, a clear sequence of classes and writing rubric, for instance, have evidently improved student morale and the overall student experience (Interview with Department, October 2010).

Other improvements would also enhance the program and assist students in graduating in a timely manner (External Review, p. 6). Among these would be the development of a student handbook (posted online), a new student orientation program, and the development of a more cohesive department "community" for students. Also important for enhancing the community experience would be additional diversity among students, so that no student would have to feel they are the sole member of any particular group. In addition, we recommend the Department offer workshops or colloquia that target the 70 percent of students coming from outside the design field have been able to apply that experience in the design area. Finally, we recommend a formal
internship program so that students can experience the field directly tied to industry and applied work experience.

The external reviewers noted, "There were complaints amongst the students about certain classes not being offered, particularly requirements outside of the major. There is also the question of consistency across multiple years. By rotating the faculty through some of these courses, this gives little assurance that student experiences are consistent across years." (External Review, p. 4) The APRC recommends the Department develop and publish a schedule of classes to be offered ahead of time and post it to their website so that students can plan ahead. In addition, courses need to be put on a regular schedule to be offered.

The reviewers also noted (External Review, p. 6) that graduate students in upper division undergraduate courses were not being given different content. The APRC notes that this is a requirement for paired courses (or undergraduate course that accept graduate students) and recommends that the Department immediately incorporate this requirement and educate instructors that graduate students in paired courses need to be given differentiated, graduate-level work in the course.

The APRC also recommends the Department develop tracking systems for current students and for alumni. The system for current students would allow the Department to monitor their progress and, for students who leave before completion, give them a better opportunity to determine why they are leaving and where they are going. For alumni, it will allow the Department to more effectively track them, bring them back into the Department and to allow current students to have additional networking opportunities.

**Conclusion**

The APRC commends the Department for undertaking changes in curriculum and strengthening the graduate program over the past several years, but urges that even more changes be made to further improve the graduate program. It is clear to the APRC, based on the preponderance of data gathered and reported during this review process, that the MA program is very small, struggles with a lack of resources, and lacks rigorous administrative oversight. While there may be a legitimate need and desire for a graduate program in DAI, the Department should implement a formal strategic planning process to establish the need and provide direction for future changes. The outcomes of this process should guide the difficult decisions regarding
curriculum, faculty and student experience, and resources that are required to justify and maintain the long-term health of the MA program.

With dedicated attention to the issues identified in the self-study, external reviewers report, and this report, APRC believes that the program will be poised for future success.