



Department of Art History

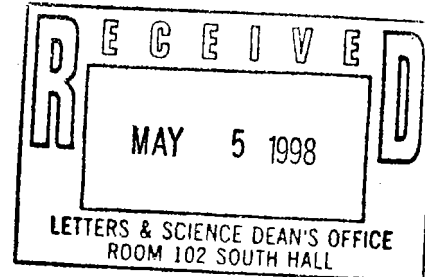
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Memorandum

To: College of Letters & Science
From: Department of Art History
Re: Assessment Report
Date: 4 May 1998



Department Name: Art History

I must report that as new chair, with a new office staff, I did not give adequate attention to the assessment program. To make matters worse most of the data gathered through August 1997 has been stored in the former chair's office and not together in one lot where its identity was evident. I appointed an assessment committee but did not check on it; nothing was done except some normally kept records. I'm certainly learning what needs to be done this next academic year. So I'm afraid I have nothing useful for the Assessment survey. I have gathered what material we have from other sources than those stated as our tools in our original assessment plan.

I do apologize for this document and shall see to it that we send out surveys to our undergraduates graduating here this month; that the one proseminar held this semester will have its papers on file; that a committee will survey these papers together with proseminar papers for next year and submit a report by this time in 1999; that graduate seminar papers are kept and that these also will be analyzed.

Abstract:

Given the rough statistics we have on hand, it would seem that generally speaking our the departmental goals are being achieved on both an undergraduate and a graduate level. Clearly there is much we can do to refine and improve our program. In accordance with the 5 year plan and the self-study completed in the last few years we have undergone curriculum change, MA requirement alterations, alumni contacts through a newsletter, weekly bulletins to faculty, staff and students concerning departmental activities, etc.

Educational Goals and Objectives

The Art History Department seeks to educate undergraduate and graduate students on the artistic and architectural productions of diverse regions and periods as they have shaped and been shaped by culture and history. Art History fulfills its goals through consideration of theory, technique, composition, subject matter, and content, and thus reaches beyond formalism and aesthetic appreciation. Methods of comparative study impart a broad range of

knowledge, in areas of social, economic, political, and philosophical thought. Students learn to analyze art within the context of the culture that produced it and to gain access to a large and diverse body of knowledge.

A. Undergraduate Major

At the 100- and 200-level, lecture and discussion courses provide students with basic skills for applying the language of the discipline. Study of stylistic progression, culture-based and thematic narratives, and arrays of examples develop the students' visual memory. Descriptive analysis and content comparison help them gain an art-historical eye. Curricular area requirements provide them with overviews of western, Asian, and African art and architecture. At the next stage, 300-level courses focus on specific fields, periods, and regions. In these courses students acquire greater awareness of historiography and research methods, reach an increased sophistication in reading pictures, sculptures, and buildings, and improve their writing skills. Courses at the 400- level share pedagogical aims with those at the 300-level, but their range of subject matter is more specialized, and their research and writing expectations more rigorous. Finally, all majors take a 500-level proseminar before graduation. This is our students' last opportunity to work on semester-long research and write on projects that hone their critical, analytic, and descriptive skills.

B. Graduate Major

As an M.A. and Ph.D. granting program, Art History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison accepts students with the primary purpose of advancing their knowledge and training them in methods of art-historical interpretive research and writing. While additional lecture courses are required, seminars and independent research become increasingly significant. Necessary language skills, pertinent minor fields of study, research travel, archival investigations, and interviews become essential to the pursuit of an M.A. or a Ph.D. The doctoral process culminates in the writing of a dissertation and its final defense before a faculty committee.

Assessment Tools Used:

Undergraduate Program

Capstone seminar ["proseminar"]...papers kept for 556, Spring 97, but no others consistently retained. Without comparative data one can only report grades.

Forms filled out by students entering as undergrad majors: these should be used in the future, particularly with responses upon graduation. This has not been done systematically, but could be very useful.

A selection of statements on expectations of majors gathered from 1998 academic year include:

"My major expectation of majoring in art history is that I will become prepared for further study in the area. Long term goals range from curatorial work to professor."

"I expect that it will provide me with exciting course material...for future employment my interests vary from further gallery experience, auction houses, museum curator, teaching, publishing and guest lecturing."

"At the UW I want to use the opportunity to gain a more in-depth and systematic knowledge of art...After the end of my formal education I hope to embark on some sort of an academic career, so that I don't have to stop learning."

"I'm declaring a major because I like the courses, find the work interesting and I like the interdisciplinary aspect of Art History, i.e., how it overlaps into literature, history, etc.

"I became an art history major because I love art. I enjoy learning how history, literature, science, philosophy, and religion tie into art of different cultures."

Surveys sent to alumni for our annual Newsletter garnered information in 1997^ξ indicated the general goals listed by above new majors were achieved by graduates who pursued a number of art-related jobs:

BA '75. Chief Development Officer for the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago.

BA '93. Director of Client Services at a consulting firm which advises cultural organizations, projects, and institutions including the National Jewish Museum, the Trust for Museum Exhibitions, the Executive Council on Diplomacy.

BA '89. Assistant Manager for Program-Film/Video at Walker Art Center in Minneapolis.

BA '67. Art teacher, interior designer, docent, board of the Rye Arts Center, Rye New York

BA '87. Vice President, Director of Coins and Medals. Sotheby's, NY.

BA '94. Ph.D. candidate at Brown University.

BA '60s. Treasurer, Curator at the U of Conn. Museum, Storrs.

BA '94 Curator at the Richard York Gallery, New York City

Graduate Program:

Surveys for Graduate Program. Sent to those who have graduated the last 5 years-- these were returned to the Department on 25 August 1997. They have been buried until yesterday!

19 received

64 sent out

The results of this survey were quite mixed, though the majority found the graduate

program positive, particularly the experience of learning to write long projects---seminar papers and MA theses. The professions pursued are also quite diverse. Again the majority have gone into the arts in some way: museum, galleries, auction houses, editors at presses, photography:

The most constructive question was "Which aspects of your experience as a graduate student in our program do you value the most?"

"Lecture courses to increase wide-range knowledge as well as seminars to develop critical thinking skills."

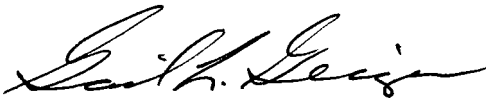
"...researching and writing the Master's thesis...focused work in seminars...teaching as a TA was highly valuable...."

"researching and writing thesis believe it or not!"

"learning research methods...."

"writing my master's thesis--the process of writing, editing a document of that magnitude was extremely satisfying." [This student now in Yale School of Architecture]

"seminar...getting to the point and writing it with clarity and focus."



Gail L. Geiger
Associate Professor and Chair

xc: Dean Yvonne Ozzello