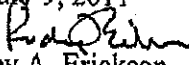




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DATE: February 9, 2011
FROM:  Rodney A. Erickson
TO: Barbara Korner
SUBJECT: Core Council Recommendations Regarding the College of Arts and Architecture

The Academic Program and Administrative Services Core Council ("the Core Council") has discussed the recommendations received from Susan Welch, Chair, on behalf of the University Park Academic Review Coordinating Committee (UPARCC) regarding the College of Arts and Architecture programs and operations, and the background information and strategic priorities you have provided about the College, its successes, and its challenges. The Campus Academic Review Coordinating Committee (CARCC) also reviewed curricular and operational matters that might affect one or more campuses and these comments were taken into consideration in the formulation of the UPARCC recommendations to the Core Council.

The purpose of this memo is to share with you the response of the Core Council to various College of Arts and Architecture organizational, operational, and curricular issues and initiatives, and to make recommendations for further changes based on the analysis and deliberations of UPARCC and the Core Council.

Context:

The College of Arts and Architecture plays an important role in elevating the cultural life of the University and the wider community, and provides education in the arts and design to thousands of Penn State students through its four schools (Architecture and Landscape Architecture, Music, Theatre, and Visual Arts) and two independent departments (Art History and Integrative Arts). With an overall student credit hour (SCH) production of about 95,000, the College provides many General Education courses as well as instruction in the arts and design to about 1,400 undergraduate majors. Although the College's overall SCH production has grown steadily since 2000 as the University Park freshman class size has increased, the number of undergraduate majors has declined from 1,720 to 1,411 (about 18%) during that time. Its Masters' programs have had a steady enrollment of about 150 and the College's relatively small-enrollment Ph.D. programs have increased from 54 to 70.

The Core Council commends you for the actions you have already undertaken to streamline College operations, including changes to the administrative organization of the College resulting in reductions in staff through attrition; merging the departmental staffs

in the Stuckeman School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture resulting in position savings; restructuring the College's IT unit to take advantage of scale and promote greater network security; and initial planning to consolidate studio and lab spaces, which can result in cost savings to the College and the University.

Recommendations:

1. Establish a Stronger Strategic Focus with Better Performance Indicators

The members of the Core Council are well aware that the College has multiple missions, including General Education, professional education, and liberal education in the arts and humanities. Each is an important aspect of the College's portfolio and contribution to the University's educational programs. While there are many interrelated aspects in these multiple missions, there are also differences in how educational programming is delivered and the relative resource requirements associated with each. A particular challenge within this milieu therefore is finding the right strategic balance among these missions in the College's future.

The Core Council believes that the College of Arts and Architecture could benefit from a stronger strategic focus that revolves around fewer, but more distinctive clusters of instructional and research/creative activity. The College's programs are currently scattered among many quite small, loosely related degrees, which tend to make its mission less clear than it might otherwise be. In addition, many small programs do not appear to have critical mass and, as a result, do not attract and take advantage of related faculty expertise in other colleges. It is admittedly difficult to judge the strengths and weakness of many of the College's programs, however, inasmuch as successes and failures are less easily established in the fields represented in the College. Nonetheless, the College should work hard to assess its student outcomes and establish appropriate performance indicators to ensure that graduates are well-equipped to compete effectively in an increasingly challenging external environment for the arts and design.

The College's own assessments of its strengths (and weaknesses) are often anecdotal. However, in the National Research Council (NRC) doctoral program assessment in 1995, Art History was ranked 34th out of 38 programs. In the 2010 NRC assessment, this program's quality assessment range at the 5th and 95th percentiles was 21 to 37 out of 58 programs, something of an improvement, but only slightly above the mean. In 2008, the *U.S. News and Report* rated our fine arts programs as 50th nationally, but there is not much more detail in that report, and only the visual arts were ranked. *U.S. News and World Report* stopped ranking Music and Theatre graduate programs more than a decade ago, when theatre was then ranked 14th nationally. The Core Council appreciated receiving your anecdotal evidence about the outstanding record of success of some Penn State arts and design students in a variety of professional venues and graduate programs; however, anecdotes are not substitutes for systematic and comprehensive assessments of program quality and/or the success of graduates broadly speaking.

Among those College programs that are regularly ranked by external organizations or professionals, the strongest programs are in architecture and landscape architecture. *DesignIntelligence* has ranked our professional degrees in Architecture and Landscape

Architecture in the top 15 nationally for the past several years. In 2010 Landscape Architecture was 5th and Architecture was ranked 9th. Furthermore, Landscape Architecture has been ranked in the last two years as the most admired program in the field by deans and department heads.

The Core Council commends your leadership and on-going efforts to streamline College programs, improve their quality, develop new programs in forward-looking areas, and drop some under-enrolled or poorly performing programs, such as the Master of Fine Arts in Lighting and Scenic Technology. The College also continues to make important contributions to online education and the World Campus, especially in General Education coursework. That said, the Core Council wants to push the College to a stronger strategic focus supported with performance measures and data. We believe the following recommendations will help to achieve that goal.

2. Restructuring the Visual Arts and Design Areas

The College currently offers several programs in the visual arts and design. For instance, the School of Visual Arts includes studio programs, and art education, while graphic design and digital photography are located in the Department of Integrative Arts. There are also design areas in the Stuckeman School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture. In examining the College of Arts and Architecture's departmental structure, the Core Council was struck by the fact that most of the integrative arts faculty are in areas often associated with visual arts and design. This departmental structure seems to create divisions in areas where faculty should be working closely together. Moreover, the School of Visual Arts, the Stuckeman School, and the Department of Integrative Arts are investing in digital design faculty and equipment, but doing so separately.

We believe that digital design could be an area of great strength if properly organized and positioned. The following related recommendations are designed to help facilitate that outcome, to streamline and conserve resources currently spent on duplicative infrastructures and shadow programs, and to improve quality over time.

A. Eliminate the Department of Integrative Arts

The Department of Integrative Arts should be eliminated as a stand-alone unit because its original reason for existence has evolved over time. Founded originally to address the demand for General Education arts courses, the College has allowed General Education to be concentrated in one unit rather than shared among the collection of departments/schools. While Integrative Arts has addressed the need for General Education, we understand the College is now working with other units to provide General Education in a variety of formats that will diversify offerings for the University. Further, the Department of Integrative Arts has provided a solution to the difficulty inherent when a professional, client-based program (such as Graphic Design) is housed within in a studio-based school (such as Visual Arts) The Department also sponsors the Integrative Arts major, a student-designed arts major focusing on a theme not normally available in other majors. Now enrolling 93 students, it is considerably smaller than the 162

enrolled a decade ago and about the same as in 1993-94. The major could be managed in another department of the College.

In this phase out, the Core Council notes that the College will need to provide extended leadership for faculty at the two (and potentially more) Commonwealth Campuses that continue to offer some Integrative Arts courses; although enrollments are currently small, there appears to be some potential for SCH growth at the campuses and we recognize it will continue to fulfill a need for students to develop options in the arts outside the professional programs at University Park. In carrying out this reorganization, the interests of the two Commonwealth Campuses that currently include the Integrative Arts degrees (Abington and Altoona) need to be incorporated into the planning.

The Core Council recommends that the College consolidate design and digital media by moving faculty in the graphic and digital design areas into the School of Visual Arts or the Stuckeman School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture and phasing out the remainder of the Department of Integrative Arts. This should result in a significant financial savings while bringing together faculty in closely related areas.

B. Expand General Education Offerings in Other Units

Integrative Arts faculty taught more than 16,000 of the college's 54,000 SCH General Education offerings last year. This is a large proportion of the College's General Education courses through resident and online instruction in topics such as popular music (with over 2,000 enrollments annually), the history of rock and roll, Elvis Presley (which each enroll about 600 students annually), the history of punk rock, and the history of hip hop (these two each have less than 100 enrollments).

The Core Council encourages the College to expand General Education offerings in other departments and on topics in addition to popular culture. It is important that the College's key General Education courses (or replacement courses), enrolling about the same number of students, be located in other departments/schools so this important element of the College's mission will not be reduced. This redistribution of responsibility for General Education will require strong leadership and a culture of greater service orientation in other units.

C. Establish Curricular and Research Programs Focused on Design and Digital Media Design

As part of re-focusing, the College needs to capitalize on the possibilities in digital media design studies. For example, the School of Visual Arts has developed an undergraduate program, Interdisciplinary Digital Studio, which focuses on digital technologies to bring "transformational change to the arts and design disciplines... and to the traditional boundaries between those disciplines." It has 17 baccalaureate enrollments, a small number, but one that has increased and appears to have potential for future growth. Currently, another option in the School of Visual Arts is New Media. The Council recommends merging these two separate small programs together within the School of Visual Arts.

We also recommend that, with the closure of the Department of Integrative Arts and the move of Graphic Design to the School of Visual Arts or the Stuckeman School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, the Bachelor of Design in Graphic Design major be brought into a closer relationship with other design areas.

The College should also consider developing an interdisciplinary graduate degree in design (including digital), involving collaboration with faculty in Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and design faculty in other departments and colleges. The Core Council also believes that the College could strengthen its research ties with design faculty in other units of the University, perhaps through the formation of a research center on design. There is tremendous potential for Penn State and its students in the area of digital and other areas of design such as product design. This program, or some segment of it, needs to reach across disciplinary lines to faculty in Engineering, Communications, Education, Information Sciences and Technology, Liberal Arts, and other areas also doing work in digital design. Although the Core Council is reluctant to recommend investments in new centers at this time of tight finances, this could be one that would be valuable in positioning Penn State as a leader in the field.

D. Restructure the Graduate Programs in Art Education

The School of Visual Arts manages the Art Education program. This program has had an illustrious history at Penn State, but appears to have fallen on hard times. Although about 50 undergraduate students major in Art Education, only four students are enrolled in the M.Ed. and three in the M.S. The Art Education Ph.D. enrolls 28 students, and has granted 20 degrees in the past five years (2005-06). The average GRE scores of students enrolled in the doctoral program are very low in comparison with the rest of the University.

The Core Council recommends that the Master's programs in Art Education be closed. Instead, the School should develop an Integrated Undergraduate-Graduate (IUG) Program in partnership with the College of Education, modeled on the Education-Science IUGs now being developed. That would allow students interested in a teaching career to earn a degree in an art-related field (e.g., studio art or art history) to receive certification to teach.

The Core Council recommends that a moratorium be placed on admissions to the Ph.D. program in Art Education effective immediately until the School can produce a viable plan to strengthen the program, including improving the pool of applicants, the yield on offers, graduation progress/rates, and documentable placement. Attention should be given to how quality improvements will be accomplished and what resources will be devoted to recruitment, placement, professional socialization and other elements of a successful graduate program. You should submit a report to me on these plans by October 1, 2011, and consideration should be given at that time to whether or not admission to the program should be reopened. In Spring 2014, you should submit a report to the provost and the dean of the Graduate School indicating

how these plans have been implemented and the outcomes in terms of the criteria noted above. If significant improvements have not been made by that time, this Ph.D. program should be eliminated.

E. Strengthen the Ph.D. in Art History

Art History is a small department within the College, with an annual operating budget of nearly \$2 million supporting nine standing faculty, two fixed term faculty, four staff, and 22 half- and quarter-time graduate assistantships. In addition to its strong connections to the Palmer Museum, the program teaches all the required art history courses for Visual Arts and Architecture majors and provides a key component for many of the Integrative Arts majors. In 2009-10, it offered about 9,400 SCH, and had about 50 undergraduate majors, larger than a decade ago and about the same number as 20 years ago. The Department reports that about 80% of its SCH is offered in General Education courses. It also has 11 M.A. students and 27 Ph.D. students, many of whom are involved in delivery of General Education courses. Data on time-to-degree suggest that the Ph.D. students in this program take a very long time to complete their degrees.

The Core Council recommends some shrinkage of the unit's faculty and staff lines over time. The doctoral program would benefit from greater interactions with other academic units inside and outside the College, including Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and a variety of humanities programs such as English, French, German, Comparative Literature, Philosophy, and History. The Core Council recommends that the Ph.D. program in Art History be reviewed relative to its significance and contribution to the future of the field, its enrollment, its graduation rates, its placement, and the resources devoted to it and in comparison to national norms and to other programs at Penn State. As part of its response to this letter, the College should provide a three-year plan that will include an option for eliminating this degree if key performance measures are not met. The unit should also consider whether dual title degree possibilities exist that would strengthen its connection to other units within and outside the College.

3. Reduce the Spate of Degree Programs in the School of Music

This School may have more degrees than any other departmental or school entity in the University. The faculty of 44 tenure line faculty plus an additional eight fixed-term faculty, offer four undergraduate degrees, nine Master's, six IUG's, and two Ph.Ds.

There are about 220 undergraduate students majoring in Music, and about 130 in pre-major status. Because undergraduate music majors don't officially declare one of the four degree tracks until after a mid-program review at the end of the sophomore year, the following figures represent junior and senior enrollments only. The School's four undergraduate degree programs include the Musical Arts degree (B.M.A.), which had only three students in Fall 2009. This program was inaugurated in 1992 and, in the past five years, has graduated only 10 students. It is designed to prepare students at a high level in a performance area plus give them skills in a non-music area. Perhaps the aims of the degree

are opaque or unpopular, the requirements unrealistic, or the marketing deficient. The B.A. in Music has only nine students, a decrease from 15 students five years ago. The Bachelor's of Music, a professional degree, has 30 enrollees, an increase from 19 five years ago, and has given 55 degrees in this time. The Bachelors in Music Education currently enrolls about 50 students, a decrease from 58 five years ago. The College should illustrate how the pre-majors fit into the overall music program.

At the graduate level, a total of about 60 students are enrolled in the School's nine Master's programs. Only one, the Master's in Performance, has more than seven students. Five of the programs (piano performance, composition theory, music theory/history, piano pedagogy and performance, music theory) have zero to three students. While it is true that students in these different programs take many of the same courses, it does not seem reasonable to us to offer programs with such small cohorts. Conducting and voice performance are slightly larger (7 students each) but also seem not to have critical masses of students and are not growing. The ninth Master's degree is Music Education with six students, having granted 19 degrees over the past few years.

The School offers two doctoral programs. One is in Music Education, a program that has granted only one Ph.D. in five years, although it has eight students currently enrolled (six were enrolled five years ago). The School recently instituted a D.M.A. in Piano Performance with an enrollment of four students and no graduates yet.

The Core Council recommends that School of Music faculty consider the aims, marketing, and student success of the B.M.A. and the B.A. degrees with the possibility of combining them, and requests a report on what action has been taken in this regard by Spring 2012. It is further recommended that the School combine their non-education Master's programs into one, offering options as appropriate.

The Core Council recommends that a moratorium be placed on admissions to the Ph.D. in Music Education effective immediately until the School can develop a plan to strengthen the program, including improving the pool of applicants, the yield on offers, progress/graduation rates, and documented placements. Attention should be given to how these objectives will be accomplished and what resources will be devoted to accomplishing the elements of a successful graduate program. I am requesting that you submit a plan to me by October 1, 2011, with consideration given to reopening admission at that time if a workable plan has been articulated. In Spring 2014, you should submit a report to the provost and the dean of the Graduate School on how these plans have been implemented and the outcomes in terms of relevant criteria. If significant quality improvements and program critical mass have not been achieved by that time, the program should be eliminated.

Finally, the Core Council recommends that the School of Music explore the growing area of digital media design as noted above, taking advantage of interest in music production and sound design.

4. Assess Other Small Degree Programs for Viability

The Departments of Architecture and Landscape Architecture also have majors with small enrollments. The B.S. in Architecture has few students, although we understand this is a degree earned by students who do not complete the requirements for the five-year professional degree. The department is currently revising and broadening the degree. The Core Council is also concerned about the small Master's programs in both Architecture and Landscape Architecture. Architecture offers a Master's in Architecture with only 10 students. Landscape Architecture offers two Master's degrees, including a new M.S. degree and an M.L.A. recently revised to a three-year degree to meet accreditation requirements. The impact of these changes in Landscape Architecture Master's degrees on enrollments should be closely monitored over the next few years. A Ph.D. in Architecture has been approved by Graduate Council but is on hold, and the Core Council has serious reservations concerning its long-term viability. The Council suggests that these degrees, particularly those in Architecture, be rethought to focus on interdisciplinary design degrees incorporating Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and selected Engineering programs, which we believe would also be in keeping with the unifying aims of the Stuckeman School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture.

5. Center for the Performing Arts (CPA)

The Center for the Performing Arts provides a high-profile venue for many artists and performers of national and international stature, thus helping to serve the cultural needs of the University, community, and region. Part of the CPA's costs of operation is covered by ticket sales, and private philanthropy and the University subsidy cover the other direct costs. The University's direct subsidy for the CPA is about \$1 million annually, not including fringe benefits for staff or the costs of operating and maintaining facilities or other support services.

The Core Council recommends that the CPA, as a University facility supported in part by student tuition, should annually feature two or three student performing arts programs, such as major orchestral or choral works, a major musical or opera, or a musical theatre performance. By so doing, the CPA will be giving more visibility to our best student performers and performances and, at the same time, better justify the University's subsidy.

The College/University should also develop a plan to reduce the CPA's subsidy over time, especially at a time when academic programs are being closed. Since there are clearly limits to increasing ticket prices, more dedicated efforts should be devoted to establishing larger endowments to support the Center and its performances. A \$10 million endowment, for example, would allow the annual subsidy to be reduced by almost half. Although it may not be as exciting to make this existing program a development priority as it is to feature new programs, such an endowment could be an important element in sustaining the arts at Penn State and regionally. The case for the endowment could also be tied to interests in featuring our students.

6. Under-enrolled Courses/Sections

In Fall 2009, about 40% of the College's courses/sections were under-enrolled, including about 75% of graduate courses, 24% of 0-199 level sections and around 40% of 200-499 level classes. Under-enrollment is particularly high in the School of Music (56%), School of Visual Arts (33%), and Theatre (51%), and it is also well above the University Park average of 9% in Architecture (16%) and Landscape Architecture (23%).

The members of the Core Council realize that our faculty cannot teach students to play the piano, become proficient actors, or learn to paint well in groups of 25 or more. Thus, the under-enrollment data are less useful to us than for other colleges. But, on the other hand, we do not think the College should be given a pass on this issue. After all, minimum class sizes for graduate courses are five, and still 50-80% of courses in all the College's graduate fields, except Art History, are under-enrolled.

The Core Council recommends that the College benchmark several large university Arts and Architecture peers to see how they handle under-enrollment issues.

7. Infrastructure Issues

The College has undertaken a review of its infrastructure and should begin to consolidate studio and lab spaces where appropriate and practicable. Similarly, consolidation of business services should be investigated. The Council also wonders if the College has a central system to monitoring use of its performance spaces and costs associated with their use and has concerns about the overall use of performance venues, including opportunities and costs for student groups. We urge continued exploration of these issues and attendant consolidations.

The Core Council is encouraging all budget executives to streamline administrative infrastructure. At the same time we do not believe that the university's budget problems can or should be solved on the backs of the staff alone. We recommend that when staff sizes are decreased, colleges and other budget units should work to place downsized staff who are performing their jobs effectively in other units over time.

Please report back to the Core Council the actions that have been or will be taken in response to these recommendations by May 1, 2011.

cc: Core Council