

SUMMARY OF HLC/NASAD VISITORS REPORT and NEXT STEPS

Prepared for the Academic Affairs Committee by:

Cynthia Lynch
David Martin

September 8, 2010

PREFACE

A comprehensive evaluation visit by MIAD's accrediting agencies, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and the National Association for Schools of Art and Design (NASAD), occurred on April 26-28, 2010. As a result of this visit, the college received the Visiting Team's recommendation for ten years of continuing accreditation, pending final approval by a Readers Panel of the Higher Learning Commission this Fall, 2010.

In addition to their recommendation for continuing accreditation, the Visiting Team's report identified thirteen institutional strengths and ten "challenges" where HLC criteria or NASAD standards did not appear to be met. To address the most serious of these challenges, the team is requiring that the college prepare three reports regarding health and safety issues, assessment, and finances.

In this document we provide:

- 1. A summary of the strengths and challenges and the three required reports identified by the accreditation Visiting Team;**
- 2. A status report of the college's actions since receiving the Visiting Team's report;**
- 3. Suggestions for responding to the report findings through the creation of a comprehensive academic plan.**

1. SUMMARY of STRENGTHS and CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED by the HLC/NASAD ACCREDITATION TEAM

Strengths

The team identified thirteen strengths that “well position the institution to address its enrollment, development, assessment, and financial challenges” (p. 37):

1. *MIAD benefits from a committed, informed, cohesive, well-qualified Board of Trustees whose members possess a good complement of skills, and as a group, is invested in the continuing life of the institution.*
2. *Based on the team’s observation and input from others, the president is a visionary, energetic individual who possesses the business and development leadership experience to move the institution forward financially and continue to improve its public image.*
3. *MIAD’s dedicated faculty demonstrates a high level of commitment to student learning and genuine care and concern for students that positively impact student retention and alumni connectedness.*
4. *MIAD is fortunate to have an outstanding staff that is well qualified, enthusiastic, and totally supportive of the educational process.*
5. *MIAD faculty, staff, and students are highly involved in community service, and students’ service-learning experiences inform and enhance their artwork.*
6. *MIAD’s location within a cultural center of the city provides synergistic opportunities for outreach and service, as well as opportunities for student interaction with practicing professional artists and designers.*
7. *Through the use of a hardware leasing arrangement, MIAD has maintained state-of-the-art digital labs that enhance students’ professional development and creativity.*
8. *The high quality of the Senior Exhibition creates a clear example of the strength of the program and, therefore, serves as positive outreach to the local community and good publicity for MIAD.*
9. *There is evidence of engagement with the community, corporations, and non-profit organizations that result in financial sponsorships and in-kind gifts, enhanced instruction from practicing professionals, and student-internship opportunities.*
10. *Career services and the placement rate of MIAD graduates are commendable.*
11. *The new strategy for the educational outreach program seems to have a high potential for success; the current precollege program is effective; and, after a one year hiatus, the newly structured continuing education program has been reinstated under the program title, Creative Connections. Precollege has continued under its own administration, which oversees both programs.*
12. *The academic resource center and the library provide an invaluable support for liberal arts, art history, and studio research and evaluation reports.*
13. *Facilities and maintenance departments do an outstanding job dealing with a large, complicated physical plant and accommodating the instructional program and external events.*

Challenges

The team identified the following ten instances in which HLC criteria or NASAD standards did not appear to be met, which will require institutional attention:

1. *MIAD needs to update and reinstate in a collaborative manner the Faculty Handbook as quickly as possible. (HLC Criterion One)*
2. *All aspects of the planning process need to be better integrated. (HLC Criterion Two)*
3. *Limited financial resources have made it difficult to tie budgeting to the planning process. Bringing planning and budgeting into line with each other will be instrumental in determining the long-term success of institutional planning. The institution must keep this issue in the forefront. (HLC Criterion Two)*
4. *Majors without viable enrollment result in small class size and some “stacked,” as well as inefficient use of various resources such as space and full-time faculty. (NASAD II. Purposes and Operations, B. Size and Scope standard appears not to be met; HLC Criterion Three)*
5. *Health, safety, and organizational space issues exist in the 3-D and sculpture labs. The space available in 3-D and sculpture is not properly allocated given the number of students using the space and equipment in these two labs. Printmaking studio is filled with an odor of chemicals and solvents, and the space available in the industrial design lab is inadequate for the number of students using it. While the campus has made some infrastructure changes in the past decade, there is a need to prioritize ongoing deferred maintenance for the future and to tie it to the planning and budget processes. (NASAD II. Purposes and Operations, F. Facilities, Equipment, Health, and Safety standard appears not to be met; HLC Criterion Three)*
6. *The new academic governance structure, including faculty chairpersons, faculty senate, and committees, needs to be clarified, regarding roles, leadership, and decision-making. (NASAD II. Purposes and Operations, D. Governance and Administration standard appears not to be met; HLC Criterion One)*
7. *In the program of Interior Architecture and Design, two areas of professional competency appear not to be met. (NASAD IX. Specific Professional Baccalaureate Degrees in Art and Design, M. Interior Design, Section 3 Essential Competencies, Experiences, and Opportunities, c. Understanding Technical Issues of Human Factors . . . and d. Knowledge of Technical Aspects of Construction and Building Systems, and HLC Criterion Four)*
8. *The program of Art History appears not to meet the curricular competencies in specific majors, including Communication Design, Interior Architecture and Design, Industrial Design, Photography, and Illustration. (NASAD IX. Specific Professional Baccalaureate Degrees in Art and Design, J. Graphic Design, K. Illustration, L. Industrial Design, M. Interior Design, P. Photography standards appear not to be met; HLC Criterion Four)*
9. *The program of Liberal Studies appears not to meet the competencies for General Studies. (NASAD VIII. All Professional Baccalaureate Degrees in Art and Design, A. Principles and Policies 6. General Studies (7) Understanding an experience in art forms other than the visual arts and design standard appears not to be met; HLC Criterion Four)*
10. *Since the Staff Handbook was last updated in 2003, it should be revised and brought in line with current organizational and governance structure as soon as possible. (NASAD II. Purposes and Operations, D. Governance and Administration standard appears not to be met; HLC Criterion One)*

Required Reports

The team is requiring the college to prepare three reports as a Condition of Affiliation:

An HLC Progress Report on Assessment to be due before September 1, 2011, that demonstrates the following:

- *Stated student-learning outcome goals for all majors and liberal studies*
- *Evidence that results have been generated for all majors and liberal studies*
- *Evidence that analysis of the results have been used to improve student learning*

An HLC Progress Report on Safety and Health Issues to be due before December 30, 2010 that demonstrates the following:

- *Progress on addressing the health and safety issues identified by the team, including space allocation of laboratories according to the numbers of enrolled students and shared spaces and the type and size of equipment necessary for the program, proper and secure storage of equipment and chemicals, and adequate ventilation of workspaces.*

An HLC Monitoring Report on Finances to be submitted before December 1, 2011 that demonstrates the following:

- *Progress on the Financial Recovery Plan and improving composite DOE ratios.*
- *Progress on balanced budget, update on debt and payment structure, and progress toward projected enrollment goals*
- *Progress toward achieving new campus building plans, including housing and academic facilities. If the Monitoring Report does not prove adequate, then a Focus Visit on Finances should be scheduled within twelve months.*

2. STATUS REPORT of the COLLEGE'S ACTIONS since RECEIVING the VISITING TEAM'S REPORT

General Actions

- A draft of the Visiting Team's report was sent to the President this summer. Neil, Cynthia and David reviewed the draft and found it acceptable, with only a few minor errors of fact that were communicated to the team. These errors were corrected and the final Visitor's Report was received in August. The college has accepted the report and has elected an HLC Readers Panel process for review and final acceptance.
- Copies of the corrected visitor's report were sent to the Board in August.
- The final report will be distributed to staff and faculty after the Board meeting on September 14, 2010.
- The college will begin to address the challenges listed in the report by identifying key individuals in the areas that need to respond and begin to develop appropriate action plans for improvement.
- The college will also begin to create teams to address the three progress and monitoring reports identified by the visiting team.
- This Fall the college will begin the process of creating a comprehensive academic plan that is driven by our response to the visitors report.

Initial Responses to the Ten Challenges

Below each of the challenges identified in the Visitors Report we have noted what action the college is currently taking, or what action the college will take, to meet the challenge.

- 1. MIAD needs to update and reinstate in a collaborative manner the Faculty Handbook as quickly as possible.**
As a committee of the whole, faculty have been charged with re-inventing their governance structure during Fall 2010. Revision of the faculty handbook will be undertaken as soon as this task is complete.
- 2. All aspects of the planning process need to be better integrated.**
The college has created a new position, Associate Vice President for Academic Planning and Assessment. The college is beginning the process of outline an academic plan that will align budgets, academic programs and assessment. The plan will also connect with recruitment and retention of students, student services, and facilities planning and development, all of which will be portions of an institutional master plan.
- 3. Limited financial resources have made it difficult to tie budgeting to the planning process. Bringing planning and budgeting into line with each other will be instrumental in determining the long-term success of institutional planning. The institution must keep this issue in the forefront.**
The college is creating a new process that will link budget preparation with institutional and academic planning. Budget planning must be an all-inclusive institutional activity driven by the academic plan.

- 4. Majors without viable enrollment result in small class size and some “stacked,” as well as inefficient use of various resources such as space and full-time faculty.**

This will be a key discussion point as we conduct academic planning, facilities planning, and enrollment management. Continuing current curriculum discussions, as well as comprehensive academic area review reviews, will assist the college in making decisions informed by research and best practices.

- 5. Health, safety, and organizational space issues exist in the 3-D and sculpture labs. The space available in 3-D and sculpture is not properly allocated given the number of students using the space and equipment in these two labs. Printmaking studio is filled with an odor of chemicals and solvents, and the space available in the industrial design lab is inadequate for the number of students using it. While the campus has made some infrastructure changes in the past decade, there is a need to prioritize ongoing deferred maintenance for the future and to tie it to the planning and budget processes.**

Safety and Security meetings, including all personnel with jurisdiction in these areas, began in August; these meetings will address the issues outlined by the Visiting Team and will result in revision of institutional priorities and policies. A full report will be submitted by December 1, 2010, as requested. The comprehensive progress report will include discussion of space allocations regarding size of majors.

- 6. The new academic governance structure, including faculty chairpersons, faculty senate, and committees, needs to be clarified, regarding roles, leadership, and decision-making.**

The faculty chairs continue to refine their areas of responsibility and are working with all faculty to re-define the structure and role of committees and the Faculty Senate. A major change to the academic governance structure was made on August 1, 2010, with the creation of a new Associate Vice President position that will focus on academic planning.

- 7. In the program of Interior Architecture + Design, two areas of professional competency appear not to be met.**

Faculty in IA+D have been informed of the Visiting Team’s review and how the current program does not comply with NASAD accreditation standards. An action plan has been drafted that includes the following steps:

- i. Revise the course learning and performance objectives for Fall 2010 implementation;*
- ii. Implement classroom management and delivery expectation changes immediately, beginning Fall 2010;*
- iii. Identify major-specific learning outcomes, identify specific moments IA+D will assess their students’ learning, and by what specific assessment instruments;*
- iv. Begin the academic program review process immediately in which IA+D addresses the two areas of professional competency that are not being met in the current curriculum structure, as well as other areas of professional preparation.*

- 8. The program of Art History appears not to meet the curricular competencies in specific majors, including Communication Design, Interior Architecture and Design, Industrial Design, Photography, and Illustration.**

Offering discipline-specific art history courses for each of the college’s eleven majors is not financially viable. Finding faculty who are prepared to offer this diversity of expertise would require hiring additional full-time art historians. Colleges larger than MIAD, even multiversities, do

not offer discipline specific art history courses in the art history curriculum for all of their studio majors. The best way to address this need is for faculty in the major disciplines to fulfill the art and design history requirement as part of their studio curriculum, whether as discrete courses or as elements incorporated in assignments, as MIAD's Communication Design now does. In 2009 the Photography curriculum has included the history of photography within the Sophomore year as a studio course – the course had been approved and existed "on the books" for over five years, but was never offered until Fall 2009. It's also possible for studio courses to either beef up the required reading and research required in their courses or for each area to consider developing a "Readings in _____" course that could address art and design history issues or other content areas that the studios presently do not address. These are three models for addressing the need for specific art history in the majors.

9. The program of Liberal Studies appears not to meet the competencies for General Studies. (Understanding an experience in art forms other than the visual arts and design standard appears not to be met.)

MIAD's art history and humanities curriculum includes many courses covering art forms including opera, movement, literature, and book arts. MIAD will continue to offer these courses and encourage the development of new courses that focus on art forms beyond the visual arts and design.

10. Since the Staff Handbook was last updated in 2003, it should be revised and brought in line with current organizational and governance structure as soon as possible.

During summer 2010, MIAD's Human Resources Coordinator has drafted revisions to the staff handbook and is distributing the draft to key individuals for review. The document should be completed in fall 2010.

Status on Preparation of Three Reports as a Condition of Affiliation

A. HLC Progress Report on Assessment to be due before September 1, 2011 that demonstrates the following:

- **Stated student-learning outcome goals for all majors and liberal studies**
- **Evidence that results have been generated for all majors and liberal studies**
- **Evidence that analysis of the results have been used to improve student learning.**

The college has named Library Director and former Self-Study Coordinator, Cynthia Lynch, as the Associate Vice President for Academic Planning and Assessment. This Fall, working with the VPAA and the Faculty Chairs, she will create a comprehensive college assessment calendar and plan based on the pilot program that was implemented in 2009-2010. This calendar and plan, preliminary results and recommendations will constitute the progress report that will be prepared in summer, 2011, and submitted to HLC.

B. An HLC Progress Report on Safety and Health Issues to be due before December 30, 2010 that demonstrates the following:

- **Progress on addressing the health and safety issues identified by the team, including space allocation of laboratories according to the numbers of enrolled students and shared spaces and the type and size of equipment necessary for the program, proper and secure storage of equipment and chemicals, and adequate ventilation of workspaces.**

The President has initiated a broad-based approach to addressing health and safety issues across the campus. An inventory of all campus health and safety issues has been created; meetings of staff and administrators are taking place to clarify areas of responsibility. This process will result in a redefinition and improvement of health and safety responsibilities and practices throughout the college. A report will be submitted to HLC in December 2010.

C. An HLC Monitoring Report on Finances to be submitted before December 1, 2011 that demonstrates the following:

- **Progress on the Financial Recovery Plan and improving composite DOE ratios.**
- **Progress on balanced budget, update on debt and payment structure, and progress toward projected enrollment goals**
- **Progress toward achieving new campus building plans, including housing and academic facilities.**
- **If the Monitoring Report does not prove adequate, then a Focus Visit on Finances should be scheduled within twelve months.**

The college's DOE ratio for 2010-2011 was above the required 1.50 threshold. The college's business office and financial aid functions are being restructured. The president and the Controller will work with the Board to address financing and budget issues for the college. A monitoring report will be prepared and submitted to HLC by December 1, 2011.

3. *SUGGESTIONS for RESPONDING to the REPORT FINDINGS through the CREATION of a COMPREHENSIVE ACADEMIC PLAN*

An academic plan provides the college with a dynamic blueprint for the future.

Just as the Board's summer 2010 retreat challenged the Executive Committee and the Senior Staff to identify critical continuing challenges for the 2010-2011 year, as well as the need to address continuing capital projects and contextual issues (such as branding, competition from for-profit institutions, and increasing public awareness), the development of a comprehensive academic plan takes a broad-based approach in addressing the college's future needs.

The process of creating a comprehensive academic plan will be new to the college. Such a plan will be steeped in the college's mission and a vision for the future. The plan will be grounded by MIAD's values and the continuing goals identified in the strategic planning process in 2007.

The advantages of creating an academic plan are obvious. In the past, college planning has almost exclusively been confined to a year-to-year maintenance, based largely on the inability to predict enrollment. With significant improvements in Enrollment Management processes, however, the college has been able to increase retention and get better at predicting future enrollments. Strategic planning and new leadership have created a climate in which faculty and staff now see the value of planning. It is now possible, for the first time in its history, for the college to create a five-year academic plan with specific goals that will be supported by clearly-identified budget priorities. The academic plan, with clearly articulated goals guided by a vision, in conjunction with the college's master plan, must drive the budget. The most important discussion in the academic plan must be the realization of teaching and learning.

Just as strategic planning guided the creation of MIAD's Self-Study, the recommendations from the resulting Visitor's Report will drive the shaping of MIAD's academic plan. The success of the college's academic plan depends on the continued alignment of available resources with the pursuit of academic and programmatic goals.

The Academic Plan Outline

The academic plan must preserve and strengthen what MIAD already does best while providing a sound basis for continued improvement. The plan must allow maximum flexibility to keep priorities in line with changes in the educational environment and economic realities. Because all areas of the college ultimately provide support to the academic plan, a comprehensive structure of inter-departmental connections must be created.

- **Initial Goals:**

1. Identify a comprehensive planning process by which the academic needs of the college will drive strategic budget decisions and incorporate institutional planning (facilities, enrollment, equipment, personnel, etc.).
2. Build on the strategic planning goals identified in 2007.
3. Respond to the college's plan for increasing the student population to 1,000 students.
4. Implement integrated learning throughout the college.
5. The academic plan will be complete no later than June 1, 2011.

DRAFT: Initial Outline of the Academic Plan

The college initiated strategic planning in the Fall of 2007 as way to foster institutional transformation. This process led to the development of five goals identified by faculty, staff, trustees and students:

Goal A: Increase Quality, Diversity, Quantity, and Retention of Students

Goal B: Financial Viability

Goal C: Expand Name Recognition and Visibility

Goal D: Attract, Develop and Retain Diverse Full- and Part-Time Faculty and Staff

Goal E: Revise and Improve the Curriculum

These goals will be embedded in the academic plan.

Initial Outline of Academic Plan

1.) The college's assessment plan

a. Academic programs

- Craft an academic vision to help guide academic planning process
- Regular comprehensive reviews of majors programs
- Identify goals for each of the academic programs
- Assessment and improvement of individual classes
- Assessment of college-wide learning outcomes
- Continue to revise curriculum

b. Ongoing assessment of faculty

- Recruitment and retention of nationally recognized preeminent faculty
- Provide increased professional development opportunities for faculty
- Guidelines and processes for assessing faculty teaching effectiveness and professional accomplishments (The overall goal is faculty excellence, to be supported with appropriate recognition and compensation, the ability of faculty to meet or exceed their students' expectations, and professional accomplishments.)
- Strengths and weaknesses of full- and part-time faculty in relation to the curricular needs of the college
- Establishment of criteria and priority hiring for all faculty hires
- Strengthen pedagogy

c. Student services

- Regular assessment of services provided
- Continual re-alignment with student satisfaction

2.) Budget Planning: create annual and long-range budgets to meet academic goals

a. Size and scope of programs

- Manage the efficiency of class enrollment levels in relation to the academic goals and the college's budget;
- Determine the overall long-range enrollment and the distribution of enrollment in each of the academic units;

b. Facility and equipment needs

- The academic programs of the college must have sufficient financial support to fulfill their goals
- Short term and long term facility and equipment needs

c. Technology needs

- Strategic planning for IT to meet college's academic and non-academic needs

d. Staffing needs

- Recruit and retain nationally-recognized preeminent faculty
- The number of full and part time faculty necessary to meet the academic goals of the college as well as the related duties in their departments, student advising, planning, etc.
- Identify opportunities for professional development to prepare faculty for new teaching assignments
- Define staff needs necessary to achieve the program and enrollment goals

3.) Issues of Academic Affairs Governance and Faculty Handbook

a. Faculty need to address the issue of governance, the Faculty Senate, and faculty committees

b. Faculty work with college leaders to develop Faculty Handbook

c. Faculty chairs continue to refine their areas of responsibility

4.) Curriculum Development

a. Foster college-wide discussions about learning

b. Creation/realignment of programs that address ongoing changes in art & design

c. Monitor the implementation of laptops into the studios and classrooms—How are we taking advantage of digital learning?

The academic plan must connect with the following external elements:

1.) The enrollment management plan

- a. Recruitment
- b. Retention

2.) The master facilities plan

- a. Building maintenance and renovation
- b. New construction
- c. Long term and short term improvements

3.) MIAD's financial plan

- a. Create a budget planning process that is based on shared strategic budgeting
- b. Development

4.) Student services network

- a. Incorporate co-curricular activities, residence living with the academic programs (such as visiting artists, lectures, galleries and exhibitions);

5.) Technology plan for the campus – staff and infrastructure

6.) Campus community