



## CHAPTER 4: LEARNING

### Revise and Improve the Curriculum

IT IS ALWAYS ABOUT INQUIRY...

*“About knowing, seeing learning, doing. That is what we do here. Inquiry: intellectual, emotional, aesthetic. The mind, the hands, the heart, the soul. The whole being.*

*Here at MIAD we use tools to express and render, to capture and create, to explore and resolve. We wield charcoal and brushes, manipulate pixels and software, we cut and bind wood and steel, we alter paper and canvas. We build models. We design. But it’s never about the tools. We are a creativity college. So it’s what we do with the tools that is vital. We make things visible. We animate. We breathe life into ideas and words. We exploit visual language and verbal language. We think and rethink. We juxtapose. We create.*

*Creation is all about inquiry, an active, dynamic process of knowing. We make people see and feel and understand. One of the most popular metaphors for describing an education in art and design is that you learn how to solve problems.....Whether we change people’s thinking or invite them to experience things differently, we are “solving” some problem. What makes MIAD different, and MIAD students so interesting, is that we do more than solve problems. We seek problems. A designer*

*friend of mine, Michael Gibson, once said that it was never enough to be a problem solver....If you want to be someone who changes the world, you need to be a “problem-seeker.”*

*A problem-seeker is someone who can solve problems, who recognizes more than the obvious, who reframes the question. A problem-seeker sees more and does more. A problem-seeker is someone who thrives on inquiry. Inquiry changes us. Inquiry invites us to grow and discuss, to question and probe more deeply, to engage in critical and creative thinking, to see and re-see beyond what others see. Creative inquiry is how we change ourselves and the world. That’s our story here. We invite you into the world of creative inquiry. We hope you’ll join our story.”*

*Provost’s Statement on MIAD Web Page*

## **Curriculum Overview**

Since MIAD was founded, the curriculum has been a four-year, sequential academic experience in which students progress from incoming freshmen with varying levels of preparation in art and design to graduates with an expertise in a major supported by a rigorous general education. All freshmen complete an initial year of study in Foundations, a skill-based and exploratory core of two-dimensional and three-dimensional courses, grounded by a two-semester Art History survey and Writing and Humanities courses. After this preparatory year, students move on to their majors, where they remain for the next three years in close proximity with their peers and studio faculty. All faculty who teach at the college are required to be practicing designers, artists, writers and/or scholars. If there is a core activity that defines the college, it is this blend of professionals and educators working beside students in a single-purpose, studio-based institution.

## **The College Curriculum Committee (1d, 3a, 3b)**

The new mission created by the strategic planning process in 2007 dramatically shifted focus from a curriculum-centered, linear and sequential mission to one that focuses on learning. While the shift may appear to be minor, the college has been discovering that it is not. In fact, the new mission has been a powerful tool that has opened thoughtful discussions about integrated learning, assessment, learning outcomes and program reviews.

The “curriculum overview” given above remains an accurate depiction of the four-year *structure*, but the students’ experience of that structure is changing swiftly as a result of continuing discussions about learning. The college is pursuing a shift from the linear, sequential focus of its curriculum in favor of a more integrated approach to learning that will challenge students to ground their acquisition of skills with the ability to contextualize their creative work. The integrated approach will focus less on curricular structure and more on preparing students to assess what they know and to learn what questions to ask, linking critical thinking to visual skills and inquiry.

The intellectual climate of the college is also changing as faculty look outward at other college programs and best practices. After the change in the mission, and the “Curriculum Jam,” the college realized it needed to continue to address curricular issues. In July 2008, the College Curriculum Committee was formed, comprised of the Provost, the interim Faculty Coordinators, the Dean of Foundations, Director of Library Services, Chair of the faculty’s Academic Policy Committee and a student representative. The committee’s mission is to drive a broad-based discussion of curriculum. Beyond fostering discussion, the committee seeks to create a seamless flow of ideas about learning and to encourage implementation of curricular ideas and initiatives.

The committee’s first charge was to define the term “curriculum.” This was done to break through preformed ideas about the term. The committee researched and reviewed over 15 definitions, and then created its own “working definition” which it shared with the faculty. The purpose was to invite faculty to open up their thinking about familiar concepts. The committee’s definition:

*“The term “curriculum” at MIAD refers to a fluid, flexible construct of learning through planned educational experiences and ongoing dialogic exchange among students, faculty, staff. Curriculum is a dynamic process of delivery, reflection, analysis, discussion, and assessment. As educators, we design and foster curriculum to enable a learner to increase his/her acquisition of knowledge, skill, individual discovery and expanded perspectives.”*

Faculty were encouraged to foster problem-based learning whenever appropriate, and to lead students to think more deeply and critically. Defining “Curriculum” helped clarify the relationship between the “received curriculum,” what the student actually learns, and formal curricular goals and outcomes, a distinction critical to the assessment process.

The committee's second charge was to draft a set of learning outcomes for the college's B.F.A. degree. Members researched and reviewed the learning outcomes of other colleges, and discussed how these might apply to the educational experience of MIAD students. Committee deliberations were guided by the following question: *How do we educate artists and designers to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?"*

#### LEARNING OUTCOMES (3A, 4B, 4C)

Based on their research of other colleges, the College Curriculum Committee drafted a list of eight measurable college-wide learning outcomes in November 2008. These learning outcomes were distributed to faculty for discussion and input through affinity groups, and were subsequently refined and accepted as part of the college's assessment program. The college-wide learning outcomes are:

1. *Apply critical and analytical thinking*
2. *Effectively communicate and express ideas visually, orally and in writing, using appropriate terminology*
3. *Conduct independent inquiry and research through critical engagement with technology and information sources*
4. *Apply creative thinking to problem solving; identify, define, intuit and resolve problems creatively*
5. *Demonstrate mastery of techniques and skills within one's chosen discipline(s)*
6. *Demonstrate an understanding of professional practices maintained in one's field(s) of study*
7. *Build an individually distinct body of work*
8. *Create productive relationships in the community*

These college-wide learning outcomes serve both as the core of the students' general education goals and those of their major education.

In spring 2009, the faculty turned their attention to identifying student learning outcomes for each major. Discipline areas in Liberal Studies and Foundations also participated in the process of identifying learning outcomes. To keep initial assessment efforts effective and manageable, faculty in each area were encouraged to limit program-specific learning outcomes to three to five in number.

Faculty also identified key assessment strategies, assessment moments and assessment instruments in their majors. By linking the process of crafting learning outcomes with assessment strategies, the faculty took significant steps toward creating meaningful, effective and manageable assessment plans. Faculty members have started to shift their thinking toward the new learning-centered mission. The high involvement of faculty in both processes is encouraging.

#### DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES (3A, 4B, 4C)

When the College Curriculum Committee was conducting “best practices” research they discovered an intriguing list of outcomes from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. They offer two sets of complementary outcomes: a list of “developmental” outcomes supported and matched by an accompanying set of measurable “learning” outcomes. The committee found the concept of developmental outcomes important because so much fundamental learning in the art and design studios depends on *process* and helping students understand this learning process.

Giving value to process greatly benefits studio faculty, especially faculty who struggle with understanding the value of measurable learning outcomes. In a studio-based education, faculty trust process. Action words such as develop, acquire, and integrate define the college’s developmental outcomes. This language acknowledges process and lends credence to measurable learning outcomes. Developmental outcomes serve as pathways to what is measurable.

The eight developmental outcomes that lead to the measurable learning outcomes are:

1. *Identify, analyze and integrate ideas and information from multiple approaches and perspectives*
2. *Develop a work ethic that advances personal achievement and professional development*
3. *Develop the ability to communicate effectively*
4. *Develop skills for lifelong learning, including information and digital literacy*
5. *Understand the role of creativity, ingenuity, risk-taking, innovation, discovery and expression across disciplines*
6. *Acquire a body of knowledge and a mode of aesthetic inquiry*
7. *Develop self-awareness by knowing one’s personal abilities informed by a variety of life experiences and interpersonal exchange*

### 8. *Develop civic responsibility*

These developmental outcomes identify the values, such as work ethic, lifelong learning and aesthetic inquiry, for example, that are highly prized not only by faculty but also by the professional communities that MIAD graduates will enter. They also embody and reinforce the college's core values:

- *Education and lifelong learning*
- *Visual, verbal, written and media literacy*
- *Critical thinking and creative problem solving*
- *Innovation*
- *Quality*
- *Passion, commitment and dedication*
- *Diversity*

In the long process of identifying measurable learning outcomes, the Curriculum Committee and faculty discovered that learning outcomes alone would not measure a complete MIAD education. It is important that the processes – the experiential, developmental processes –that lead to the outcomes be recognized.

### **MIAD's Assessment Challenges**

In spring 2003, the college hosted a “focused” visit from the Higher Learning Commission regarding assessment. (*Focused Visit and all other prior accreditation documents: **Resource Room -- Intro. #2.***) At the time, the college presented an assessment plan that, in addition to a schedule of program reviews, critiques and portfolio reviews, included plans to:

- *Transform the college's Foundations “Student Progress Assessment Form” and employ it as a tracking tool;*
- *Use external surveys, such as CIRP (Cooperative Institutional Research Program), NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement) and FSSE (Faculty Survey of Student Engagement);*
- *Devise a series of internal assessments regarding Student Life;*
- *Develop a deeper discussion of the formative “gestalt,” a “believability” that results from the curriculum.*

The visitor's report suggested that the college "strive for simplicity." The team also suggested that the college "publicize its assessment program," involve students on committees and "archiv[e] the visual evidence of learning, possibly in digital format." (Team Visit Report, p. 19) The intention for the college's plan was to create a holistic approach to assessment grounded in data. Within a year of implementation, however, the assessment plan was indeed "simplified," when the college was unable to provide funding for external surveys. Assessment at the course level continued, but the college lacked the ability to gather and interpret evidence. However, the faculty continued to look directly at student learning and provided thoughtful feedback to students.

### **A New Assessment Plan Emerges (2c, 3a)**

In spring 2007, assessment became a major priority of Academic Affairs. As a result of attending the national Higher Learning Conference, the Provost realized that assessment could be meaningful, effective and manageable – *if* the college was willing to shift its thinking from being *teaching-centered* to *learning-centered*. Previous discussions regarding assessment had lost momentum because faculty had difficulty distinguishing assessment from evaluation and did not fully support the assessment program.

In fall 2007 the Provost initiated efforts to rethink and redirect assessment. He set three guidelines: 1.) Provide a succinct definition of assessment; 2.) Get faculty involved; and 3.) Make assessment meaningful, effective and manageable.

Because previous assessment efforts were insular and not broadly communicated to faculty, a workshop was planned in which a consultant would bring credibility and clarity to the assessment discussion. In February 2008, Dr. Barbara Wright, an Associate Director of Western Association of Schools and Colleges, led faculty and key academic staff in a workshop entitled, "The Art and Science of Assessing Student Learning." (**SEE Resource Room – Cpt.4 #1**) That in-service workshop re-introduced faculty to assessment and verified that college faculty were already conducting assessment, but not completing the assessment cycle. Dr. Wright determined that while faculty had used a multitude of direct methods to assess student learning, they had not collected *evidence* of that

learning, and then *interpreted* that evidence. The workshop helped faculty understand how assessment is connected to learning, and, for the first time for many faculty in the college, assessment became a real, manageable process of understanding and improving student learning. They learned that they needed to identify instruments to collect and measure evidence of student learning.

With this insight, it was relatively easy to involve faculty in creating a college-wide assessment plan. Faculty worked in affinity groups to identify learning outcomes for each of the majors, as well as key assessment moments and assessment tools. The Provost compiled these outcomes, moments and tools and assembled a college-wide plan. Subtitled, "Creating a Culture of Evidence," the assessment plan guides faculty in the process of gathering the evidence necessary for measuring student learning. The plan signals the transformation: from an institution that has struggled with understanding the value and purpose of assessment to one that is completing the assessment cycle to advance learning. (*SEE Assessment Plan: **Appendix #8***) The college is implementing the new plan incrementally in the 2009-2010 year, beginning with a pilot schedule of assessments to identify strengths and weaknesses in the plan before full implementation begins. The pilot will provide evidence for five of the eight college-wide learning outcomes, as well as evidence toward major-specific outcomes in Communication Design and Sculpture. All of these will build on existing assessment experiences. To make this assessment plan visible, the college-wide and major-specific learning outcomes are being communicated to students and their parents, college faculty and staff, administrators, and the community via the college website.

As mentioned previously, one of the most effective assessment tools has been the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), which has been administered twice, in fall 2007 and fall 2009, and will be administered once more. As MIAD continues implementing its assessment plan and responding to the iterations of the Student Satisfaction Inventory, the college will need to commit additional resources to assessment. For example, the new functional leadership structure calls for the creation of a Vice President of Assessment & Evaluation position, a new office to oversee these two critical functions in

the college. The purpose is to substantially revise and reinvent faculty evaluation at the same time that assessment responsibilities grew. This position has not been filled, however, and it will be implemented in stages, as funds become available.

### **Assessment Process at MIAD (3a, 4c)**

When linked to direct methods of assessment, rubrics make it relatively easy for faculty to collect evidence of students' learning that can be compiled as data in aggregate form. This data can then be reviewed and interpreted to make curriculum improvements.

An important example of how this process can work at the course level occurred six years ago when the college first piloted a rubric in the sophomore Writing portfolios. The rubric focused on discrete research skills. Anecdotally, Writing faculty thought that their sophomore's overall research skills were meeting course performance objectives. But when the rubric was applied to assess student portfolios, they discovered that the students' research skills were far less accomplished than they believed. The data, provided in aggregate form, allowed the faculty to see their students' learning in a new way. The next semester, faculty changed its focus on research skills and a follow-up with the research portfolio rubric that demonstrated significant student improvement.

Using rubrics will provide almost immediate evidence regarding specific learning outcomes. The experience in sophomore Writing was quite possibly the college's first experience with "evidence-based" assessment in which the evidence was interpreted and the loop to improvement was closed.

The assessment plan addresses all four years of the students' education. In the final year, each major culminates in a significant senior experience, either a "thesis" or a senior capstone course or studio/seminar. This experience is connected to a public exhibition of their work, including a series of critiques, portfolio reviews, artists' talks and critical presentations, activities that often include faculty from other disciplines and professionals from the community. The plan includes several instances in which faculty gather evidence of student learning at the most important moment of the

students' college careers and at the completion of the curricula. Previously, this gathering of evidence during the senior year was not evident.

Faculty acceptance of the new assessment plan is an important shift. The new plan positions the college to analyze student learning with the goal of making this visible to all faculty, staff and students, to value what assessment provides, and to incorporate all into future academic planning.

### **Ongoing Assessment: A Critical Visual Environment (3a, 3c)**

The college operates as a “critical visual environment.” All faculty members, including those teaching in Liberal Studies, post examples of current student course work on hallway walls throughout the semester. This is a primary, and highly visible, “assessment” that surrounds everyone – students, faculty, and visitors – every day. This also enables faculty to keep apprised of their colleagues' work and the progress of the curriculum throughout the year. As a part of this visual environment, the college assesses student learning in individual assignments and projects through a variety of indirect and direct measures.

Key parts of the critical visual environment begin in the first year: Foundations faculty routinely critique all student work and select the best work from Drawing, Visual Dynamics, Visual Statements and Space, Forms and Materials courses for display in the hallway. In addition to individual assignment review, freshman and sophomore Liberal Studies faculty employ portfolio grading as a way to encourage process thinking and student self-assessment and self-reflection. In the spring of the first year, Foundations students participate in a juried exhibition that is curated by an outside juror; chosen work is then displayed in the student gallery.

The students' four-year education culminates in “thick” moments of direct assessment, including capstone courses in the major and writing, the completion and exhibition of a significant senior project and a senior critique process. These key assessment and evaluation components have been in place in the college for some time. As the Assessment Plan is more fully developed, the college will be able to ground this “critical visual environment” in evidence and apply assessment to improvement.

## **A Grounding in Intellectual Inquiry (4b, 4c)**

The college has consistently been committed to intellectual inquiry and general education. Intellectual inquiry is the driving force of the critique, the essential discussion that occurs in studios and classrooms throughout the students' four years at MIAD. Currently, faculty are paying even greater attention to the development of "critical thinking." This focus has come from several sources: faculty assessment "talkback" discussions of the written theses; faculty's increasing expectations of student responses in advanced-level critiques; and Foundations faculty's observations about "millennial" students' skills. As faculty have engaged in the process of identifying college-wide learning outcomes, methods of assessing student learning and creating a new freshman "core" course, their attention to "critical thinking" has increased.

Faculty engage students with experiential and active learning strategies in general education courses. Writing classes employ writing groups and inquiry-based learning to invite student participation. Art History surveys offer museum field trips to Chicago, where museum research is blended into cross-disciplinary assignments that integrate Liberal Studies and Foundations studio courses. Students in natural science courses conduct science experiments and create posters that display their scientific problem solving and research for public presentation of their results. First-year Humanities students act out scenes from Greek tragedy and explore the relationship between thought and action. Service Learning students take their inquiry into the community by committing time and skills to non-profit agencies. These experiences are often transformative and open up new ways of looking at the world.

The college has a history of grounding its general education in a write-to-learn philosophy. The general education program relies on a 12-credit Writing requirement (one 3-credit course per year), beginning with introductory composition and culminating in the Senior Writing Seminar, one of the college's "capstone" courses. These courses are process-based and steeped in portfolio assessment. The Writing Seminar challenges students to write comprehensive investigations into their creative lives.

General education also includes a 12-credit Art History requirement. The six-credit freshman survey introduces active learning strategies, research skills and weekly writing assignments. Juniors take the Service Learning course in which they write threaded journal entries in response to their service experiences and assigned readings. Students also write “This I Believe” essays that explore how their service experiences affect their convictions. All general education courses are making increasing use of the MOODLE courseware which fosters student inquiry and interaction, and enables students to become content creators.

MIAD’s 43-credit general education program is sequential in structure. Liberal Studies faculty often engage in students’ studio activities, including critiques and thesis preparations. Course offerings are locked within a linear sequence providing students only one elective choice. While the content of the courses continually changes, with the exception of the introduction of Service Learning and the invigoration of Science offerings, the structure has remained the same over the last ten years.

The strategic planning initiative, “improve and revise the curriculum,” is leading the college to rethink the curricular structure and improve the students’ four-year experience. Historically, there was a disconnect between Foundations students and advanced-level students, shaped largely by the “Bauhaus-like” model on which the first-year curriculum was designed. This model presents the first year as a skill-building “boot camp,” a pedagogy that characterized nearly all art and design schools throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Nevertheless, art and design are changing rapidly as are our students. Many of our students perceived these “skill-building” courses as a roadblock to their majors. At the same time, faculty know that first-year students need skill-based preparation for their advanced-level studies. These skill-building experiences must be complimented by broad-based learning and opportunities to contextualize their learning.

In the spring of 2009, the President and Provost charged the new faculty chairs with leading a college-wide discussion that would result in a “contiguous first- and second-year experience,” grounded in a more integrated approach to learning. This charge was intended to alter the perception

of our students that they are taking disconnected courses, and address the isolation that foundations students experience. This perception is corroborated by our upper-level students and alumni.

The college has relied on the structure of its general education curriculum to serve as an integrating force in students' education. Students are asking for more breadth and rigor in their Liberal Studies offerings. As a result of a recent program review, the writing program has been revised to focus more on inquiry and research, especially in the first and second years. Revisions in the third and fourth year Writing courses utilize students experience in the studio as a basis for deeper intellectual inquiry.

There is a growing awareness among faculty that that first-year students must begin to contextualize their learning. Today's millennial students expect a wider range of learning experiences than their predecessors. Learning tools and art and design education must change to reflect new media and new ways of constructing knowledge. The faculty are aware that they need to teach students to think critically and to challenge them to both create and critique simultaneously. In order to meet these students' needs, it will be essential for general education to shift away from the linear, sequential structure to one that allows greater choice and mastery of digital as well as traditional skills.

To prepare for this shift in general education, at the fall 2009 faculty orientation faculty identified the essential characteristics of an integrated first- and second-year experience. Discussion revealed a number of innovative ideas and strategies to promote rethinking of the curricular structure:

1. *The making of meaning in students' lives (working with upperclassmen);*
2. *Integration improvement; earlier connections to existing Liberal Studies and Art History content – reinforce value (unlock the curriculum);*
3. *Diversify curricular delivery;*
4. *Drive connectivity;*
5. *Seamlessness: Freshmen/sophomore faculty able to discuss issues; freshmen/sophomore students as well;*
6. *During 1<sup>st</sup> year, one project introduced from every discipline → create & critique together;*
7. *Dispel the notion that Foundations should be separate from the majors program;*

8. *Conduct a school-wide discussion on what our students need to know;*
9. *Provide more experiences for our Foundations students that offer context and real-world applications to what they're learning & experiencing.*

The faculty chairs used these ideas and strategies as a catalyst to formulate their thinking about the first- and second-year experience. The Chairs met with their faculty and culled additional ideas that could transform the structure and content of our first and second year. These discussions have resulted in the following formative ideas to shape the students' learning in their first and second years:

- *Offer an "integrating" freshman seminar that stresses early inquiry and contextualization;*
- *Introduce a first semester studio/Liberal Studies hybrid course, where students learn to think about contemporary culture and how it influences their art making and intellectual grounding;*
- *Revise the two-semester art history survey to a one-semester course, allowing students more time to study discipline-specific art and design history;*
- *Provide students with an opportunity to take a course in their major during their first year;*
- *Update the traditional Bauhaus first-year skill-building courses by creating courses in 2D, 3D, and 4D investigation;*
- *Provide students with the computer and digital literacy skills to increase their grounding in digital technology (this is increasingly important as the college shifts to a laptop environment);*
- *Create freshman/sophomore opportunities where students at different levels can learn simultaneously;*
- *Implement "theme-based" inquiry through the first and second year in order to further contextualize and organize the students' learning;*
- *Be more thoughtful about introducing, and building on, the critique process—the quintessential learning process for students in studio arts.*

The faculty are currently working with these formative ideas and exploring ways in which to implement them incrementally, beginning in fall 2010. This is the first time in over a decade that the faculty have embraced such comprehensive change. By focusing on student learning rather than the curricular structure, the college is creating exciting discussions that will lead to significant change and improvement to the current linear and sequential curriculum.

## **New Majors: Integrated Studio Arts (ISA) and Time-Based Media (Video and Animation) (2a, 4c)**

In 2003, the college applied to HLC and NASAD to offer two new major programs: Integrated Studio Arts and Time-Based Media (TBM). The rationale behind offering the programs included the student interest in a more diverse experience, recruiting and retaining more students, and a desire to keep pace with our competitors, who were offering such programs, especially in digital media. The Fine Arts faculty had long been discussing their student's interest in multidisciplinary study. The idea for a Time-Based Media major was tied to the Title III grant the college had received, providing the necessary infrastructure, hardware, facilities construction and software to initiate such a budget-intensive program. It was anticipated that, once installed, the new TBM major would bring as many as 30-45 new students to the college every year.

However, the college has not witnessed the influx of students interested in Time-Based Media that it had anticipated, only attracting 20 to 25 sophomore through senior TBM majors, including Video and Animation. To date, the college has supported the Fine Arts/Video aspect of TBM, but has struggled with Design and Animation. Coordinating the major between two divisions, Fine Arts and Design, has made it difficult to capture a cohesive vision of the Animation program.

In contrast, students have been attracted to the Integrated Studio Arts major, the college's other new degree program. Within three years, it became the second most highly enrolled major in Fine Arts. In the past three years, Fine Arts faculty has begun to refine the major and, in response to student feedback and the faculty's observations of students' work, has made structural changes in the requirements of the major. First, faculty introduced a required two-semester sophomore experience, and based on the success of that requirement, introduced a required two-semester junior experience, Integration and Intersection, as well. Now, as a result of assessment based on the ISA major learning outcomes, Integrated Studio Arts has a more clearly articulated structure.

As these two programs enter their sixth year, the college is initiating comprehensive reviews of both majors. Reviews will offer the opportunity to assess the quality of the programs, and to resolve fundamental issues and questions, including the sustainability of the Time-Based Media major. Some

Fine Arts faculty would like to see all Fine Arts majors considered as “integrated,” since the arts are increasingly integrated and/or interdisciplinary. However, this is not a universal belief and will need to be explored in the review and beyond. The question the college needs to address is this: Can the college offer disciplinary integrity and credibility and also invite interdisciplinary breadth, depth and diversity?

### **Program Reviews (1d, 2c, 4c)**

Faculty regularly conduct comprehensive investigations that lead to improvements of their program curriculum. MIAD’s review processes and methodology vary with each academic discipline, but each review requires that full-time faculty and academic leaders in the curricular area analyze the courses and their content in detail, determine what is working well and what is not, and identify new developments in technology, knowledge or pedagogy that need to be considered. Program reviews take one to two years to complete.

Below is a table of the formative program and curricular reviews that have been completed at the college since 1999, identifying their dates of implementation.

#### ***PROGRAM/CURRICULAR REVIEWS: Formative Reviews Completed Since Last Accreditation Visit***

<i><u>DIVISION/AREA</u></i>	<i><u>Date Begun</u></i>	<i><u>Date Completed</u></i>	<i><u>Date of Approval/Implementation</u></i>
<i>Foundations / Drawing</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>Faculty Senate 4/13/01</i>
<i>LS / Art History</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>Board approved 7/23/03</i>
<i>Foundations / 2D/Color</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>Faculty Senate 12/09/03</i>
<i>LS / Humanities &amp; Sciences</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>Passed AAC 2004</i>
<i>Design / Illustration</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>Board approved 5/05/2004</i>
<i>Fine Arts / Photography</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>FS approved 12/01/08</i>
<i>Fine Arts/ Printmaking</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2006</i>
<i>LS/ English - Writing</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>FS approved 4/22/08</i>
<i>Design / Industrial Design</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>FS approved 10/07/08</i>

Following is a brief discussion of some of the more distinctive program reviews completed in the last ten years, and what the college has, as a result of conducting this self-study, learned about the academic program review process.

### *PHOTOGRAPHY (2004-2006)*

Since the mid-1990s, the Photography area had been debating the transformation that was taking place in the photo industry – the shift from predominately silver-based photography to digital-based photography – and how MIAD’s program should reflect this. Because the Photography area operates via an informal network of connections between full- and part-time faculty, students, alumni and members of the professional community, the debate took place both in formal program reviews (2004-2006) and in ongoing discussions, which could be characterized as continuous, informal program reviews.

In fall 2004, after Kodak and other manufacturers began phasing out the film business, the department had difficulty getting film for view camera classes, providing needed impetus for those who had been strong advocates for the change to digital. Photo convened an informal, focused review. Based on previous input from the diverse communities mentioned, and propelled by industry changes, they crafted a proposal to revamp the Photography program and presented it to the Provost and to the Academic Policy Committee of the Faculty Senate. After some initial skepticism, approval was granted to change the emphasis of the Photography program from film to digital. Funding from the Title III Grant was used to implement the changes. Ultimately, this did not change the essence of the curriculum, only the techniques that would be emphasized. Later reviews, most recently in spring 2009, suggested the need for more fundamental, conceptual shifts; those are still pending.

From the Photography review, the college learned that quick, focused programmatic change is possible. Faculty and the college successfully responded to the dramatic change in media brought about by changes in the film industry.

## *ART HISTORY (1999-2002)*

The Art History program review of 2002 presented the college with a thoughtful and holistic approach to the required 12-credit sequence of courses. The review, the first ever undertaken for Art History at MIAD, was precipitated partially by the 1999 NASAD accreditation visit, which identified a need to increase the percentage of general studies credits. The review also responded to an expressed need for greater emphasis on student research skills and an interest in expanding content to include non-Western cultures.

After investigating programs at other institutions, the proposal was written by the Art History faculty and the divisional dean. A draft of the curriculum was brought to each division to solicit feedback. Controversy was created when advanced level, discipline-specific courses (i.e., History of Photography and History of Sculpture) were replaced with more inclusive History of Modernism courses; studio faculty had hoped for discipline-specific history courses in each of the majors. After the APC and Academic Affairs Committees and the Faculty Senate accepted the proposal for revision, a petition declaring refusal to support the proposed changes was submitted to the Provost by the Fine Arts faculty. The Provost reviewed the petition but refused to act. Because the vote in the senate was extremely close, the Provost forwarded the proposal to the Board of Trustees for approval. Negative feelings persisted long after the curriculum was revised but have abated somewhat over time. In fall 2009, Photography began teaching a “historical perspectives” course within its own program, improving upon the old “History of Photography” Liberal Studies class that was eliminated by the Art History program review.

What did the college learn from the Art History review? That a programmatic change that affects all majors requires diplomacy and open discussion throughout the process. Although Liberal Studies faculty discussed the new curriculum with majors faculty early in the curriculum development process, they stopped reaching out once the proposal was complete and made no attempt to build a dialogue or suggest a process of how discipline-specific art historical content might be delivered to students. Majors faculty hoped to outvote the proposal at a critical moment: The vote was extremely

close, and discussion was passionate. Rather than finding ways to work together, each group retreated to entrenched positions, leaving the real issue of how to work collegially unresolved. Majors faculty want discipline-specific Art History courses taught in the Liberal Studies department; however, the college does not have the resources to fund 11 different Art History courses. A possible alternative may be the one presented by Photography: provide history as a part of studio instruction.

#### *ILLUSTRATION (2002-2004)*

The Illustration curriculum review focused on the question, “What knowledge must students have for meaningful involvement as professional illustrators?” To answer this question, the review had to go beyond a gathering of internal data, including analyzing student course evaluations, surveying current students regarding their experiences in the program, and critiquing student work and senior theses, to collecting external data from other institutions and practitioners active in Illustration.

Sophomore Illustration students were surveyed over a three-year period to gather internal feedback regarding student experiences, needs and ideas for future academic opportunities. The resulting data identified the need for an Illustration computer lab with appropriate software and hardware, and a strong interest in additional academic elective offerings in picture book illustration, sequential art and painting for illustrators. Review of student work and comparison with degree requirements revealed the need to add a requirement for courses in Drawing beyond the freshman year.

The “market place benchmarking” included a survey of best practices in Illustration programs at other institutions, a survey of alumni and a survey of faculty and other external design professionals to identify the skills necessary in the field. The Professional Illustrator Survey asked how well recent graduates performed as employees: are their technical skills adequate? What strengths and weaknesses are apparent? What coursework could address those weaknesses and best prepare a student for a career in illustration?

The data collected from external sources identified two major needs: All students needed a stronger understanding of typography, and a better understanding of professional business issues and concerns. As a result, a typography elective became a junior-level requirement, and a senior-level Illustration V course was reorganized to be “Professional Practice for the Illustrator.” Other changes included the development of electives in picture book illustration, figure painting for illustrators and an introduction to sequential art. Marked improvement in student drawing skills was noted; senior theses began to reflect the influence of the new electives via fully realized picture books and animation projects. Alumni reported increased employment in their profession.

What did the college learn from the Illustration review? That external, evidence-based and data-driven research provides solid ground for substantive program development and improvement. The Illustration review report was also a model of clear methodology and good organization. The review transformed a traditional program that was not focused on the current marketplace to a state-of-the-art one that graduates professional illustrators well prepared to enter the marketplace and find work as professional artists and designers.

### *INDUSTRIAL DESIGN (2008-2009)*

The Industrial Design (ID) review is especially notable for being highly thorough, and, due to its timing, reflective of the strategic planning process. To include the opinions and expertise of an incoming faculty member, the review timeframe was extended by one year. The majority of changes that were made after conducting the review came from an exhaustive analysis of all course master syllabi: To provide a clear and understandable curriculum navigation map to students, all syllabi were revised.

Industrial Design curriculum standards that are approved by NASAD include the extensive input of the Industrial Designers Society of America. For this reason, specific requirements for course content and sequencing are designed to ensure that students graduate with skill levels meeting acknowledged industry standards. Faculty conducting the review focused on the content and

sequencing of ID courses only; other NASAD requirements, such as business education, that are not taught as part of the ID curriculum were not addressed as part of the review.

The review resulted in the following changes: Course description and names supported clearer sequencing of classes; class titles more accurately described content; class content reflected technology upgrades that would provide students with state of the art tools. In addition, learning outcomes were revised or created for all courses to ensure programmatic uniformity and measurability; placing these outcomes in the syllabi gives students a clear understanding of faculty expectations from the first day of class.

What was learned from the Industrial Design program review? That although reviewing and updating all course syllabi was extremely time intensive and laborious, representing three years of effort by the faculty involved, the long-term intensity of focus gave faculty opportunities to connect their efforts to programmatic suggestions, personnel and resource planning, and budget requests. Learning from the ID experience, the new academic program review procedure will provide a structure that connects the college's traditional curricular planning with more broad-based budgeting, personnel and resource planning, resulting in an academic plan connected with future decision-making.

### **Improving Program Reviews: Methodology, Communicating Results, Scheduling (1d, 2c, 4c)**

In conducting this self-study and analyzing past reviews, the college recognized that it needed to look more closely at Academic Program Reviews. Many academic reviews –although not all – tend to be insular. Faculty are often unaware of the program reviews that have been conducted in other areas. In addition, previous reviews have focused only on revising or developing courses – little attention has been given to resources, personnel and planning.

It has become clear that the college needs to develop a template to guide future academic program reviews. Subsequent reviews need to be rigorous and thoughtful, guided by best practices, and grounded in external research and evidence. To address these findings, a new academic program review procedure has been devised (**SEE Resource Room – Cpt.4 #2**). Salient features of future program reviews will include:

- *Input of students and faculty from outside the disciplinary area*
- *Regular communication with the VPAA and the faculty's curriculum committee (APC)*
- *Inquiry-driven, with questions to be formulated by a variety of sources*
- *Discussion of assessment efforts in the area*
- *Comparison with five other college programs.*

The research and new procedure will include curricular, resource and personnel needs of each academic program.

In fall 2009, four academic program reviews (Painting, TBM, ISA and IA+D) began; Sculpture will complete its review in spring 2010. Because several academic areas have not completed reviews recently, the plan calls for each area to complete an academic program review during the next five years. If the college follows this schedule, a comprehensive review of all curricula will be accomplished in a relatively short time and the Academic Affairs unit will be able to construct a cohesive academic plan, something that has been missing from the college. Early reports from the four academic areas currently conducting academic program review reveal that faculty are invested in the review process with clarity, direction and purpose.

Concomitant with this process and the recent organizational change, the college will also need to examine its curriculum review structure. In the past, curricular proposals could begin with either deans or faculty, and both groups had a significant role in their review and vetting. Now that the dean positions have been discontinued, faculty serve as chairs and the review role played by academic leadership outside the faculty must be evaluated. The college will need to think about reviewing curricular proposals in a way that ensures collegiality while maintaining the integrity of due diligence and best practices.

### **Preliminary Calendar of Academic Program Reviews**

<b><i>Major/Disciplinary Area Being Reviewed</i></b>	<b><i>Review Year</i></b>	<b><i>Committee Chair</i></b>	<b><i>Result</i></b>
<b>INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN</b>	2009-2010	Robert Lynch	In Progress
<b>INTEGRATED STUDIO ARTS</b>	2009-2010	Bob Smith	In Progress

<b>TBM – VIDEO, ANIMATION &amp; TBM</b>	2009-2010	James Barany	In Progress
<b>PAINTING</b>	2009-2010	Bob Smith	In Progress
<b>SCULPTURE</b>	2009-2010	Bob Smith	In Progress
<b>LS WRITING “Focused” WR300</b>	2009	Courtney Maloney	Completed. Passed by APC & Faculty Senate, Dec. 2009
<b>COMMUNICATION DESIGN / ILLUSTRATION</b> <i>(May be postponed to 2011-2012 due to two CD faculty sabbaticals in 2010-2011)</i>	2010-2011 2011-2012	James Barany	
<b>FOUNDATIONS</b>	2010-2011	Jason Yi	
<b>ART HISTORY</b>	2010-2011	Deb Ripley	
<b>SERVICE-LEARNING</b>	2010-2011	Courtney Maloney	
<b>DRAWING</b>	2011-2012	Bob Smith	
<b>HUMANITIES</b>	2011-2012	Courtney Maloney	
<b>WRITING</b>	2012-2013	Courtney Maloney	
<b>SCIENCE</b>	2012-2013	Deb Ripley	
<b>PHOTOGRAPHY</b>	2013-2014	Bob Smith	
<b>PRINTMAKING</b>	2014-2015	Bob Smith	
<b>INDUSTRIAL DESIGN</b>	2014-2015	Robert Lynch	

### **Innovations in Program and Course Design to Improve Teaching and Learning (3b, 4c)**

The strategic planning process triggered several curriculum improvement initiatives. These included objectives focused on creating a more integrated approach to learning and the curriculum, examining the structure of the curriculum, redesigning the first-year curriculum, and “unlocking the curriculum” to make it more integrated and flexible.

Based on these curricular initiatives, or growing from them, several integrated courses and innovations have been recently developed. Some of these innovations include:

- Biomimicry (a team-taught course by Industrial Design, Sculpture and Biology faculty in fall 2007);
- Where Art Meets the Natural Sciences (a team-taught course by Art History and Biology faculty, fall 2008);
- PowerSports (an Industrial Design elective sponsored by Harley-Davidson for two years, 2008-09 and 2009-10);
- Junior- and senior-level Communication Design courses now incorporate student work from Natural Science courses and Service Learning experiences as primary “content” for design projects (fall 2008 and 2009);

- A Public Art debate course (fall 2008);
- An elective, “Urban Ecology Center,” formed in fall 2009 to support a unique inter-collegiate project between MIAD, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and Milwaukee’s non-profit Urban Ecology Center.
- Hybrid Practices: Digital Integration, the first broad-based digital practices course for Fine Arts students;
- Foundations Visual Statement: Sense of Time/Sense of Place, an three-credit honors offering of an otherwise 1.5-credit freshman course (spring 2009), which paired select freshmen with area artists for collaborative projects exhibited at the Milwaukee Art Museum;
- An eight-week collaboration with the Harley-Davidson Museum to create an exhibit: The Helmet as Function and Art (fall 2009). The college’s largest interdisciplinary learning project to date involves students and faculty from Industrial Design, Sculpture, Integrated Studio Arts, Communication Design and Interior Architecture + Design. Even the Library participated: sample helmets and resource materials were housed at the Library circulation desk for ongoing ease of student access.
- Digital Painting: Students capture the nuances of color and light with Adobe Photoshop while utilizing 21" Wacom Cintiq displays that allow them to draw directly onscreen.

In addition to these courses, the Humanities 380: Service Learning course deserves mention again because of the depth of its innovation and impact not only on the MIAD community, but also on the Greater Milwaukee community.

Another innovation, described previously in the section, “A Grounding in Intellectual Inquiry,” is the proposal to create a contiguous first- and second-year experience. One of the mainstays of the curriculum has been a familiar split: the freshman Foundations program and the majors chosen by upper-level students. While variations of this divide exist on many art and design campuses, the split at MIAD creates a climate in which students sometimes dismiss the value of their Foundations experience. To address this divide, the new department chairs have been asked to look at the freshman and sophomore years as a continuous experience. Initial discussions have focused on the need to rethink how the college considers the Foundations year. Department chairs are redefining the climate – viewing the Foundations as something more than a “one-size fits all” program, and more

clearly connected to the majors. Such a shift in climate and perception will require innovative thinking and programming. The first attempts to address this challenge have included:

- *Inviting all advanced-level majors faculty to teach Foundations courses in spring 2010;*
- *Creating an integrated “core” seminar experience for first-semester freshmen;*
- *Fostering the development of e-portfolios;*
- *Activating critiques across class levels;*
- *Creating a college retention plan that focuses on the quality of the academic experience, especially in the Foundations year.*

### **Student Skills and Professional Competence for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (3c, 4c)**

All majors offer some kind of “Professional Practices” course in which students are introduced to contemporary methods and professional expectations in their discipline and the marketplace. Part-time design and art professionals teach courses, either as semester adjuncts or as five-week rotating seminar instructors. These faculty members help to bring real-world practice into the classroom. In Communication Design, designers from the professional community participate in senior thesis critiques and portfolio reviews. In Industrial Design, students work in teams as they complete projects for collaborative corporate sponsors – this partnership provides students the opportunity to meet with professionals both as clients and as critics. Practicing fine artists bring real world experience to the classroom as well. Students in most majors seek internships where they can bridge their classroom and studio skills with the professional world. (SEE “Internships” in **Chapter 2: Students**)

The College Curriculum Committee grounded its thinking and research in the Essential Learning Outcomes from the AAC&U (Association of American Colleges & Universities) “College Learning for the New Global 21<sup>st</sup> Century”, as well as the learning outcomes of other forward-looking colleges. As a result of this research and the importance the college places on developing student skills in professional practice, one of the eight learning outcomes that the college adopted was “Demonstrate an understanding of professional practices maintained in one’s field(s) of study.”