**Department/Program Review Summary**

**2014-15**

**Department:** DESIGN -Visual Communications and Interior Design (VIS & IND)

**Date of Review:** February 27, 2015

**Review Team Members and Titles:**

Dave Collins, Provost

Marita Abram, Instructor, Biology

Mark Cela, Owner, Mark Cela Graphics

Bruce Clayton, Research Analyst, Research Analytics & Reporting

Jared Cutler, Assistant Provost of Accreditation and Assessment

Jason Jia, Associate Professor, Computer Information Systems

Tammy Lowe, Assistant Professor, Nursing

Heidi McGrew, Division Assessment Coordinator, Liberal Arts, Communication and

Social Sciences

Dodie Munn, Senior Academic Advisor, Academic Advising

Tony Ponder, Dean, Science, Math and Engineering

Susanne Raffee, Professor/Chair, Dental Health Sciences

Katie Wenning, Graphic Designer, Huffy Corporation

**Department Members Present:**

Shari Rethman, Dean, Liberal Arts, Communication and Social Sciences

Amanda Romero, Chair, Visual Communication and Interior Design

Faculty and Staff:

Susan Barnes

Cynthia Cully

Kyle Fisk

Jeanine Kincheloe

Diana Leakas

Tim Ryan

Adam Thompson

Katherine Trigg

COMMENDATIONS:

* First and foremost, the department should be commended for the quality and dedication of its faculty and staff. Visual Communications and Interior Design are fast moving fields where change is frequent, and is fortunate to have a number of individuals who are very experienced but who also maintain a current knowledge of their field of expertise. Their commitment to quality is truly outstanding.
* That commitment to quality is tied to a remarkable capacity for self-reflection. During the meeting with the Review Team the department noted that the discussions they had in the development of the self-study did not differ appreciably from the types of discussions that they typically have in their regular department meetings. The department indicated that often these meetings involve strong expressions of differing viewpoints – which is crucial to ensuring that there is a free and full discussion of issues that the department needs to address. It appears that these discussions may at times be vigorous, but that the department generally emerges from these discussions having developed a consensus and with a united approach. This practice of regular, frequent self-assessment has led to a proposal for an annual review of the department that is demonstrative of the department’s commitment to continuous improvement. Most of the recommendations of the Review Team were directly derived from suggestions for improvement that the department itself made in the self-study and in the discussions with the Review Team, highlighting the department’s self-awareness and overall level of self-examination.
* With such a strong emphasis on continuous improvement, the department has developed an appreciation of and skill in using data. Department personnel appear to have a hunger for data that they want to use in improving their teaching and learning of students. The Review Team was impressed by the amount of data that the department provided to support the narrative in the self-study, and the department appears to want to increase its already strong use of data, discussing development of a list of data requests that they plan to make to Research, Analytics, and Reporting (RAR) in the near future. There is a strong emphasis on using data to help students succeed that is part of the culture of the VIS/IND department.
* Related to the department’s thoughtful use of data are their strong assessment practices, which are very impressive. Typically Review Teams must make recommendations for improvement of assessment practices through the Program Review process – that wasn’t the case with this department, because the existing assessment processes are simply superb. Through the First Year Assessment (Formative) and the Second Year Assessment (Summative) the department is able to monitor the progress of each of their students on important outcomes. The Annual Portfolio Show is used to assess mastery level of program outcomes and many General Education outcomes. The Exit Survey from Internship Opportunities provides crucial assessment data to help the department know if their students are performing where it really counts – in the workplace. Although no data were reported for some program outcomes in the self-study, it is clearly evident that a strong assessment structure is already in place, and that the results are used to inform department policy and curriculum.
* The Annual Portfolio Show deserves special mention as a unique event that draws students, faculty, and local employers together to assess students’ skill and achievement, display the results of their work, and provide a valuable bridge between the campus and the working world. This is a powerful practice that provides benefits on a number of levels, and is deserving of high praise.
* The Review Team was impressed with the thought and effort that the department put into development of the self-study. The department started early, and began with a Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis that laid a strong foundation for the development of the rest of the self-study. It is clear that all faculty and staff in the department were involved in a collaborative effort to develop the self-study. The inclusion of the Advisory Committee in reviewing the SWOT analysis as part of the development of the self-study was particularly impressive.
* This is a department with exemplary external connections. The department’s relationships with local businesses are superb, as attested by the members of the review team who were external to Sinclair. These relationships have been leveraged to provide excellent opportunities for internships for students, which have in some cases led directly to full-time employment. This department is a model of how Sinclair’s programs can use internships to provide students with valuable employment experience and tap into potential full-time employment upon graduation.
* Further evidence of the department’s external connections is their heavy involvement in Service Learning. As part of the capstone course, all program students must participate in Service Learning projects that allow them to use their learning to benefit the community. This is a highly commendable practice that benefits students with additional work related experience, benefits community partners who are the recipients of this service, and benefits Sinclair as the institution is seen making valuable contributions through the service work of its students.
* The implementation of the new student orientation was a strong indicator that the department is monitoring program and course success, and is implementing strategies where they feel improvements need to be made. This was also evident from the strategies that the department described in Section I to address increasing completion and course success rates. The department constantly tracks student success data, and is savvy in the use of that data to suggest strategies for improvements.
* The department’s extensive use of common exams/assignments is truly commendable. This level of standardization in assignments and student portfolios facilitates assessment processes, positioning the department to have a better grasp of where they can improve student learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION:

* The strong assessment practices of the department were noted in the Commendations – the department’s assessment work is truly a strength, and something to be emulated by other departments. However, it was noted by the Review Team that assessment data was not provided for some of the program outcomes, and while the Review Team has no doubt that assessment of these program outcomes is occurring, would just remind the department to report these results fully in the next Program Review. Also, many of Sinclair’s General Education outcomes are assessed in the Annual Portfolio Show and the First and Second Year Assessments – can this be expanded to include all General Education outcomes? In making this recommendation, the Review Team wants to again emphasize that these suggestions represent small tweaks to the impressive and robust assessment practices that the department currently employs – overall the department’s assessment work is spectacular.
* In the self-study the department suggested development of relationships with Workforce Development that would allow them to provide non-credit instruction – the Review Team strongly recommends that the department initiate steps to begin working on these relationships. In doing so, it is recommended that the department partner with Workforce Development to create offerings that could be articulated for credit into its academic programs – models for this currently exist in Workforce Development agreements with other departments. The department should work through the dean, and if necessary, the Provost’s Office in the establishment of these relationships.
* One topic of discussion during the meeting with the review team was the excellent consortium arrangement that the department has with Wright State whereby Wright State students take studio courses at Sinclair that count toward their Bachelor of Fine Arts. It was noted that many Wright State students are unaware of this opportunity, and the department is encouraged to develop strategies to inform more Wright State students of this opportunity. It is recommended that the department reach out to Sinclair’s campus marketing, and develop creative strategies if additional resources are needed.
* The department’s capacity for self-reflection was noted at length in the Commendations – in the self-study the department suggested implementing a yearly self-review. The Review Team recommends that the department adopt this practice, and further recommends that it takes place in conjunction with the preparation of the department’s Annual Update submission to the dean and the Provost’s Office. Formalizing a process for an annual self-examination is an excellent idea.
* It was suggested during the meeting with the Review Team that there are students who are unaware of opportunities to proficiency out of VIS courses who could possibly benefit thereby – with the view of increasing student completion, the department is encouraged to find ways to inform students of proficiency opportunities, and to monitor whether the number of students taking advantage of these opportunities increases as a result of their efforts.
* The department noted the challenges of expanding its high school offerings. With the advent of College Credit Plus, the department is strongly encouraged to continue its efforts to increase its offerings to high school students. The department should engage in a formal analysis of these challenges, and in consultation with Sinclair’s College Credit Plus office, should develop an explicit strategy for increasing high school student participation and success in the department’s course offerings.
* The department has set a goal for development of online courses for one or more design history courses – the department is encouraged to pursue this goal, but in ways that preserve the “hands on” nature of the discipline. The Center for Teaching and Learning provides resources that can be helpful in this regard.
* Finally, the department has noted the possibility for improved learning with consolidated lecture/lab instructional spaces. Consolidation efforts involving Health Sciences departments may provide ‘ripple effect’ opportunities for similar consolidation for other departments, and as the Health Sciences initiative progresses the department is encouraged to move in this direction as the opportunity arises.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF DEPARTMENT’S PROGRESS AND GOALS:

This is a high functioning department, with a strong commitment to remaining current in the discipline and to providing its students with every possible opportunity for preparation for the workforce. The department regularly takes stock of what it is doing, how well it is serving students, and what improvements it can make – it is truly a college exemplar of self-examination and continuous improvement. The department is without peer in its efforts to build relationships with local employers that provide valuable internship opportunities for its students, and in its commitment to inculcate in its students the value of community service through the Service Learning that is required of all students. It is a department that looks inward to ensure that it is doing the right things for its students, and outward to ensure that it is doing the right things for its industry and community partnership. Strong leadership and an equally strong climate of faculty and staff engagement and collaboration have kept this department moving forward and continuously improving. There are many, many things this department is doing that other departments on campus should take notice of and seek to emulate, and the Review Team came away from the self-study and the meeting with the department deeply impressed with everything the department is doing. It is hoped that the department maintains this culture of improvement and self-reflection in the future.

INSTITUTIONAL OR RESOURCE BARRIERS TO THE DEPARMTENT’S ABILITY TO ACCOMPLISH ITS GOALS, IF ANY:

* In its meeting with the Review Team, the department noted it felt there was a lack of marketing resources available to the department. It should be noted that there have been leadership transitions in the Marketing department in recent years, and it is hoped that the department may be able to reach out to the Marketing department after the most recent transitions and have access to more resources.
* The desirability of integrated classrooms was mentioned – this has the potential to benefit many departments on campus, and with the aforementioned Health Sciences initiative, there may be opportunities for many departments across campus to move in this direction.
* The department noted barriers to joint use of equipment across different disciplines or by different offices or divisions within the college – there is little doubt that other departments experience similar challenges, and that improvement of collaboration between units in the college in terms of resource sharing could help lower costs and improve efficiencies.
* The Review Team noted the service to the community that this department provides through its Service Learning requirement for students – cataloging the community involvement for all departments at Sinclair would be invaluable for maintaining community relations, and could prove to be a positive influence as the next levy approaches.
* This department is not unique in experiencing a tension between the vision of the department and the increasing number of federal and state mandates, in addition to changing accreditation requirements. While many of these demands are beyond Sinclair’s control, a coordinated response to the similar challenges that many departments face with the changing higher education environment could be valuable.