

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSE ART PROGRAM REVIEW

Review presented: May 20, 2008

Response: October 2, 2008

Prepared by Steve Ward

Your review uses images and words skillfully to communicate the aspirations and achievements of your faculty and program. The central impression created is vitality and commitment: You are engaged in a wide variety of creative and scholarly activities that greatly enrich our students and community, consistent with our college's mission. But the breadth of your program/discipline is both a strength and a challenge.

Your program review begins by identifying the essential role that visual arts and art history play together in a liberal arts education. Your integration of art history and studio art is commendable—we understand that some programs separate the two streams of art education. Further, your courses support Career Technical Education programs in Graphic Design, Interior Design, and Multimedia, and you have developed a special art history course on American Residential Architecture for the Architectural Drafting and Design program. You offer a wide variety of foundation and specialized studio art courses that help students prepare for transfer to a four-year art program and/or prepare for a career as an artist. At the same time, you incorporate a number of college initiatives in your courses, including service learning, learning communities, sustainability, and diversity and internationalization. Wow!

You effectively link your curriculum to the college's mission and master plan, both broadly and through systematic analysis of how your courses address PCC's Core Outcomes. You also list the several ways that PCC faculty and staff help the broader community access art, including through college-wide celebrations such as Art Beat as well as through displays of art both on and off campus. The productivity of your faculty and staff as artists and scholars inspires and informs our students and community. Your on-going efforts to offer art history courses via distance learning also improve access to increased understanding and appreciation of art—please keep it up.

It is perhaps inevitable that measuring the effectiveness of such a broad, diverse program is difficult. You note on Page 15 of your report that you do not do any “formal indirect assessments, such as job placement statistics,” since you are not a vocational or certificate-granting program. However, you point out that you are aware of enrollment records and try to stay abreast of changes and trends in the discipline and job market. You might consider asking your CTE partners for feedback on your curriculum as it relates to their programs. No doubt you do so from time to time, especially when developing specialized courses such as American Residential Architecture, but asking for and reporting systematic feedback from CTE partners could be an informative part of your program review.

You include in Appendix 7 four letters from former students, which you describe on Page 6 of your review as a “sampling” of letters you received in response to a request for input from former students. These letters are “thoughtful and insightful,” as you note, and they are also quite complimentary. But where are the others? Similarly, you list in Appendix 3 accomplishments of “a few” of your former students. We know that it is difficult to track down former students, but it seems difficult to assess the effectiveness of your program on the basis of the accomplishments of eleven students, some of whom are unnamed, especially without knowing when they completed their art studies at PCC. Perhaps you might attempt a broader survey of recent students for your next program review. Further, since you list a number of schools at which your students have continued their studies, you might ask art faculty members at those schools for their assessments of your students’ preparation for advanced study in art or art history. You might also participate on or consult with the recently created Faculty Assessment Council, chaired by Sylvia Gray, to develop other ideas about how to evaluate student learning in your program/discipline.

You identify a number of resources needed for the continued success of your program. You correctly note that several of your needs represent college-wide patterns—certainly programs throughout PCC would like to have additional full-time faculty and support staff. But you include one statement regarding art faculty that is questionable: you claim that the “ratio of full-time to part-time faculty is disproportionate to college average” (p. 16). Part of the problem is a lack of detail: What is the “college average,” and how was it derived? If you simply looked at full-time to part-time faculty ratios for the various disciplines across the college, you compared a lot of apples and oranges. Different kinds of programs (CTE versus transfer, for example) have different ratios of full to part-time faculty (CTE is typically lower than transfer), and ratios also vary among the campuses. Another important question is how many students are involved. Each year the Institutional Effectiveness Office produces a spreadsheet for the Deans of Instruction that includes a comparison of programs throughout PCC on the basis of the ratio of student FTE to full-time faculty FTE. At the time of your program review, 2006-2007 was the most recent year when that information was available. The Rock Creek Art Department had the lowest ratio of student to full-time faculty FTE that year at 18.4 to 1. The Sylvania Art ratio was 19.8 to 1, and Cascade was 35.6 to 1. (The three-year average ratios were 22.5 for Rock Creek, 21.0 for Sylvania, and 33.8 for Cascade.) For 2006-2007, Rock Creek and Sylvania were middling ratios among the 69 transfer programs throughout PCC, with Rock Creek 31st highest and Sylvania 36th. In contrast, Cascade was 60th. Given these figures, it is no surprise that Cascade’s academic plan calls for adding a full-time art instructor during the next biennium.

A special need identified in your program review is funding for visiting artists and lecturers. Although she cannot promise funds, the Vice-President for Academic and Student Affairs invites you to submit proposals for such visitors to her office.

One of your needs—funding for construction of additional studios in growth areas such as Digital Photography, Printmaking, Time-Based Arts, Ceramics, Sculpture and other interdisciplinary curriculum—will require careful consideration and planning, especially

in light of the current breadth of your discipline. Those of you who have been at PCC some years may recall that the outside evaluator you brought in to respond to your last program review suggested that some of the areas that you wished to develop then were more properly addressed at the upper-division level. She was especially critical of your plans to develop printmaking. You responded that printmaking was an important part of art programs throughout the Portland area, at all levels. Obviously, we have followed that vision since. But economic limitations persist, and so does the concern of the Deans of Instruction that PCC programs articulate rather than compete with programs at four-year institutions offering art education. Certainly Art at PCC must continue to evolve, but we must use our resources wisely. The upcoming FATE convention that we are co-hosting with PNCA should provide an important forum for a thoughtful examination of future directions in art education. It is exciting that many of you will participate in the conference.

Thank you for your dedication to your discipline and to our students and community. Your program review is thoughtful and articulate. Please continue to discuss among yourselves and with your administrators how we can work together to offer high-quality art education at PCC. Craig Kolins, the Dean of Instruction and Student Development for the Extended Learning Campus, specifically invites you to explore with him how the selection of studio art and art history courses might be expanded at the Southeast Center.