

Visual Arts' Response to AUR

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As I was not Head of Visual Arts when the initial AUR was conducted, it is interesting to respond to (and in some ways) evaluate the original External Review Report recommendations, and our 5 year "follow up". While many recommendations could not be enacted, I am largely pleased with our trajectory. Given the increasingly challenging budgetary times we continue to offer strong programmes and generate excellent students who move capably and confidently into the world, beyond the warm embrace of the university.

Regarding the specific recommendations >>

1. We remain at 2 full-time Art Historians. Our qualified pool of sessional and UTF instructors has increased, and our offerings are broad (in a very positive sense).
2. Art History research and teaching continues to evolve, and we are very pleased with increased focus on curation and curatorial offerings; something that interests and benefits both Art History and Studio Art students.
3. A very generous donation from a retired Art History faculty member resulted in an important refit of the Fifth Parallel Gallery. In addition, the Department of Visual Arts has committed to using one of our studios as a dedicated student-centred gallery space to support curation and curatorial pedagogy ("The Corner Gallery"). MAP has recently acquired some hallway display cases, near the Dean's office, which hold the promise of possible curatorial interventions by students. We have also just begun a new curatorial relationship with the President's Art Collection, and the inaugural project involves a curatorial student planning a thematic installation for RC247 (Visual Arts meeting room/Department Office). For the record, we strongly endorse the recommendation for a "purpose-built professional Class-A facility university museum" but this goes well beyond the scope of our department.
4. We have enacted an "Art Bank" which provides students in most or all of our 200 level studio courses with access to basic, professional materials, for a very fair fee. The Art Bank has proven very effective for students and faculty, alike.
5. We have continued to set aside money, when available and appropriate, to support a new darkroom. It is unlikely, given the current budget climate, in addition to the skyrocketing cost of materials and construction, and the ever-shrinking list of potential spaces, that the darkroom, as originally dreamt of, will come to pass.
6. The Department of Visual Arts prioritizes our popular and long-running Art For Lunch lecture series. We attempt to set aside money each year, to maintain, and ideally grow the programme. AFL pays CARFAC rates (professional Artist rates), and in addition to seeing excellent speakers speak, our guests typically engage in one-on-one studio visits with graduate students. Our guest speakers include contemporary artists, curators, and related arts professionals. Operating on a relatively small budget, AFL serves the department, and the public, well, and is intimately integrated into ART400/401 and ART801-4, our Professional Practices courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels, respectively.

7. While this has largely been the dominion of individual professor supervisors, students have been strongly encouraged to archive their thesis projects via the library's archive system.