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**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LONG BEACH**  
VICE PROVOST FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

**Memorandum of Understanding**

This MOU has been read and approved by:

Department Chair/Program Director: Heather Barker Date: 4/13/2022  
Heather Barker

Dean, College of The Arts :  Date: 4/13/2022  
Anne D'Zmura

Vice Provost Academic Programs: Jody Cormack Date: 4/13/2022  
Jody Cormack



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### **Memorandum of Understanding**

Department of Design

College of The Arts

December 2021

This Memorandum of Understanding outlines the consensus reached by the Department of Design, the College of the Arts, and the Division of Academic Affairs, based on the recently conducted program review (Self-study in March 2018, accreditation site visit in May 2018 and Action Report in November 2019, and UPRC report in November 2020). It describes the goals to be achieved, and the actions to be undertaken by all parties to this MOU to achieve these goals, during the next program review cycle. Progress toward goals is to be addressed in an annual report.

The Design Department offers degrees for the following programs: Bachelor of Fine Arts in Interior Design (BFA), the Bachelor of Science in Industrial Design (BS), and the Bachelor of Arts in Design (BA). The department's new MA\_HXDI (Human Experience Design Interactions) also received NASAD approval for implementation and began accepting its first cohort in fall 2019. Design is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD).

In their last Accreditation visit and MOU in 2010 the Department was asked to: 1) undertake strategic planning to consider issues such as Department size, tenure density, hiring, curriculum, and growth; 2) Monitor and manage growth by tracking the SFR, tenure density, student demand, and other indices; 3) assess direct evidence of student learning with some occasional indirect measures; 4) develop 4-year completion plans for all degrees and option, and provide a schedule of offerings that will enable full-time students to complete all degrees within 4 years; 5) revise the portfolio review process to help reduce the time to degree; 6) monitor retention and graduation rates for native and transfer juniors for all 3 undergraduate programs and develop strategies to improve student success; 7) continue its collaboration with the Department of Art in mutually beneficial areas; 8) work with College and University to account for the unique needs for Departmental space so the Department could be competitive in obtaining external funding; 9) As budget allows, work with College and University to give priority to tenure-track searches. Progress towards these recommendations were not addressed in the UPRC report.

A number of strengths were identified in the reports.

- The program's mission and curriculum align with State of California employment and civic needs, as well as addressing changes within the discipline.
- The department's faculty-student collaborations on design projects and exhibitions, noting that "the gallery and exhibition spaces are excellent and appear to offer many undergraduate and graduate opportunities to access them." The accreditation report

provided by NASAD demonstrated appreciation for faculty members' commitment and excitement to the diversity of the student body.

- The department uses endowed and other funds to organize vigorous programs of visiting artists, designers, scholars, and other speakers on topics of interest to specific classes beneficial for students and the general population. The continuous process of updating student knowledge through these organized programs involving local artists, experts, and alumni reflects the department's commitment to meeting the program's missions and changing trends, a process that positively improves department commitment and student learning.

Areas of Concern and Opportunities for Development were noted in the reports.

- The external visitors expressed concerns regarding resources including "significant faculty, staff, space, and equipment needs" and in particular noted the necessity of planning for replacement of core faculty. This faculty resource issue was described by the external visitors as potentially a "significant threat" to the department in terms of future accreditation standards.
- The department outlines current efforts in lowering units and time to degree, particularly among transfer students. One of the recent strategies for addressing skill level in incoming transfers has been the implementation of the Summer Design Academy, though it is not entirely clear how much assistance this has provided with transfer grad rates.
- Resources for new and updated equipment vary based on one-time funding opportunities. Also, the physical resources' current status does not support the department's continuous increase of FTEs. Deferred maintenance of facilities, equipment, and other physical resources could hinder instruction and students' learning activities. The pressing facility needs, such as proper ventilation in the laser cutter room, are a concern as they are not aligned with safety standards.
- Although the cohort of the BA in Design has shown an increase, the major's headcounts in Industrial Design BS and Interior Design BFA are showing a decline in cohort sizes over the past several years, though headcounts of pre-majors programs are increasing
- While the department's 5 and 6-year graduation rates for First Time Freshmen has shown strong improvement and are commendable, the 4-year graduation rate for FTF is still below college and university averages. Similarly, the department's 5th Semester 3 and 4-year graduation rates for (native juniors) has shown commendable improvements although the 2-year rate has tended to fluctuate. Graduation rates for transfer students in Design is showing gradual improvements, with increases in 2, 3 and 4-year rates.
- The HXDI program was discussed in the NASAD report, but at the time of the site visit had not yet been implemented and therefore had not graduated its first cohort. The Chancellor's Office requirement is that a new program be reviewed within the first five years of implementation. This is also in keeping with CA legislative requirements regarding performance data and program review.
- The BA in Design was discussed by the external reviewers as not always conceptualized to fully engage its students. BA in Design majors often struggle with how to identify themselves in terms of being a professional degree or a liberal arts degree.

It is therefore agreed that the Department will:

1. Develop and implement an assessment plan that includes closing the loop assessment activities. Provide an annual assessment report (due June 1) including progress made towards the actions agreed to in this MOU to the COTA dean, the Vice Provost for Academic Programs, and the Coordinator of Program Review and Assessment. In its 2020 Action letter NASAD awarded an 8-year accreditation approval, therefore the review cycle will be from 2020-2027. A comprehensive self-study will be due June 2027 for 2027-2028 Academic Year accreditation and program review process.
2. Continue to analyze time and units earned to degree, particularly among transfer students, and strategize methods in trending toward college and university averages (articulation agreements, supplemental skills courses, etc.).
3. Continue to analyze differences between pre-major headcount and major headcount in the BS and BFA degrees and develop an action plan as needed.
4. Continue to monitor and develop strategies to improve graduation rates (particularly 4-year FTF and 2-year Transfer) that trend toward college and university averages.
5. To improve Transfer student success the Department will work with the College to:
  - a. seek student funding resources for a Summer Design Academy
  - b. develop a resource platform and continue collaboration with community colleges to facilitate articulation agreements.
6. Continue to develop opportunities to promote service-learning and community engagement opportunities that are appropriate to Design's discipline specific project-based learning opportunities.
7. Plan for a Spring / Fall 2023 review of HXDI with a streamlined PARC process (shortened self-study, data tables, and assessment reports). The next NASAD accreditation will deal with a well-established degree program.
8. Consider curricular or other programmatic changes to more fully integrate the BA in Design students into the Department.
9. Work with the College to negotiate and collaborate with the College of Health and Human Services and the Fashion Design program in Family and Consumer Sciences to meet the NASAD accreditation requirements for Fashion Design.
10. Work with the College to develop a plan to ensure that all degrees and courses have adequate faculty support. This plan may include strategic hiring of tenure track faculty and/or lecturer faculty with expertise in niche areas, as resources permit.
11. Continue to update the college with concerns regarding the upkeep of facilities and labs, and work with the College to develop a plan for upgrades and safety orientations as needed and according to available resources.