



BOARD OF GOVERNORS PUBLIC MEETING

Monday, January 29, 2024
3.30pm to 5.00pm

Clock Tower Building, Third Floor, CT309 Boardroom

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER — M. McLean

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2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES

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4. BUSINESS

- a. Presentation from D. Lawrence on behalf of the Department of Visual Arts
- b. Advice regarding the future of the Visual Arts Programs (Information) — Brett Fairbairn
 - i. Senate's advice to the Board
 - 1. [Report from Senate's Academic Planning and Priorities Committee](#)
 - 2. [Written submissions of eight \(8\) stakeholders](#)
 - 3. [Arts Faculty Council submission](#)
 - c. Recommendation from administration for discontinuance of four (4) Visual Arts Programs (Approval) — Gillian Balfour
 - i. Report to the Board
 - 1. [2011 review of Visual Arts](#)
 - 2. [IPE Report on comparator programs](#)
 - 3. [BFA Student Pathway](#)
 - 4. [Space utilization](#)
 - 5. [ED 08-4 Program Review](#)
 - 6. [BRD 08-4 Program Reductions and Eliminations](#)

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5. TERMINATION OF MEETING

To: Board of Governors, Thompson Rivers University

From: Associate Teaching Professor Alan Brandoli; Lea Bucknell, Studio Technician; Assistant Teaching Professor Twyla Exner; Associate Professor Darlene Kalyinka; Professor Donald Lawrence

Date: 16 January 2024

Re: Proposed elimination of the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Visual Arts

Dear Board members:

Introduction

With this submission, four permanent faculty members in Visual Arts (VA) and one Studio Technician declare their hope for the continuation and renewal of TRU's Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in VA. VA professors recognize there are challenges that need to be addressed, including some that we perhaps could have addressed earlier. Equally though, faculty consider there to have been many challenges faced by VA in its efforts towards innovation and renewal, including resource-related shortfalls that were identified as a "major issue" in the 2011 Program Review. The issues at hand are complex, more multi-dimensional than what the Dean of Arts has generally characterized as the BFA being outmoded and VA faculty being unresponsive to calls for program innovation. In what follows, we draw upon material from stakeholders' 18 September Senate presentations in support of the BFA (shared with presenters' permission), partially because they provide multiple perspectives on the BFA and because the Board has likely not seen them directly.

Nature and Significance of the BFA:

In their Senate presentation, Associate Teaching Professor Alan Brandoli stated that "as at other postsecondary institutions in Canada and the U.S., the Bachelor of Fine Arts represents the core undergraduate program in the study of history, theory, visual culture, and the production of contemporary art. As a specialized degree, the BFA serves as the anchor point for connecting academic, creative, community, and research cultures," noting also that "the BFA is considered as the qualifying credential for teaching, entering cultural professions, or pursuing advanced studies in the art and cultural fields."

In response to a senator's question following their presentation as a community stakeholder, Margaret Chrumka, Executive Director of the Kamloops Art Gallery (KAG), confirmed such an appreciation of the professional importance of the credential, including as a point of entry into relevant employment, observing that "the BFA credential is key here - it supports emerging artists in their future employment in the cultural sphere, as practicing artists, educators, and curators." Chrumka responded that KAG would not hire a cultural worker with less than a BFA. Chrumka noted that 30% of KAG's staff are alumni of TRU's BFA program, that current BFA students are also employed as children's art instructors, and that previous employees who are TRU alumni have advanced in their careers, including to obtain such positions as head preparator "at Catriona Jefferies, one of the most prestigious private galleries in Canada." To understand the relevance of Chrumka's perspective it is useful to note that they began by accurately contextualizing the KAG as not only an art gallery in the Kamloops community but also one parallel to public art galleries across Canada - that as a member of the Canadian Art Museums Directors Organization, Chrumka works closely with the professional visual arts community across Canada, with members including the director of the National Gallery of Canada. TRU's VA students and alumni are fortunate to benefit from what Chrumka described as the interconnectedness between KAG and the BFA program, noting that of "the 84 exhibitions we have brought to the community over the past 10 years, nearly 50% included BFA faculty, a faculty partner, or a BFA student. These exhibitions are promoted nationally and visited by thousands of visitors and are shared online in perpetuity". On Campus such cultural presence is reflected and celebrated in collected student artworks, providing a tangible record of student accomplishments. The majority of these artworks would not, however, exist were it not for the BFA program. Appropriate support locally leads to achievement and recognition for TRU nationally. At the same time, it is worth recognizing that the BFA is a studio art program and as such, it trains artists. Employment surveys that use the same instruments to measure, say BBA graduate employment, is not useful. Artists make art and earn money in all kinds of ways that do not fit into these metrics.

Alumni Success

Among the alumni who benefited from close ties to the KAG is Levi Glass (BFA 2017), who then completed an MFA at UVic and is a current faculty member at Camosun College. In their Senate presentation, Glass stated that “it’s crucial to underscore the exceptional undergraduate research opportunities that make [TRU’s BFA] program stand out among the rest. While TRU as a whole maintains a strong commitment to encouraging undergraduate research through its incredible research office, the roots of this practice run deep within the Visual Arts program,” indicating that their “undergraduate research experiences at TRU laid a solid foundation for my pursuit of a Master of Fine Arts degree at the University of Victoria” (something also observed by U-Vic faculty members). Glass spoke of experience gained at TRU as a research assistant as enabling them to obtain a “Canada Graduate Scholarship from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), making me the only [MFA] student in my year to receive this prestigious scholarship.” Glass noted that “the support from TRU faculty remained unwavering even after my graduation. Whether it was being recommended for the Lind Prize at the Polygon Gallery, inviting me back for artist talks, or offering opportunities to publish or exhibit my work, their guidance and support has been instrumental in shaping my artistic success.” Levi Glass is one shining example of TRU BFA alumni and its important to note that he is not the only BFA grad to experience success. Such a list includes alumni locally, such as Emily Hope and Elsie Joe, alumni regionally, such as Garnet Dirksen and Robin Hodgson, with alumni such as Casey Koyczan and Xiao Han practicing nationally.

Research Creation

- What is at play through such instances of student/alumni success – and students’ experience in 4000-level VA courses – exemplifies the ideas of “practice-based research” and “research-creation”. While the latter phrase was mentioned in the APPC report as an area of emphasis in VA programming during the 11 December presentation to Senate, there was not sufficient context provided to understand what the term means or how such significant student/alumni success as noted above would follow from it. In essence SSHRC defines this as “... an approach to research that combines creative and academic research practices, and supports the development of knowledge and innovation through artistic expression, scholarly investigation, and experimentation ...” (SSHRC adopted the phrase c.2003). TRU’s Visual Arts program has a record of faculty and student engagement in Tri-Council (which includes SSHRC) funded research well above the provincial and perhaps also the national norm of peers. Multi-year programs of research have variously included VA faculty as co-applicants and as PI, with associated international research teams that have included BFA alumni, and that have engaged VA students and alumni in research training). Such a local coming together of research, teaching and training under the rubric of “Research Creation” has been recognized by peers provincially, nationally and internationally, as well as by TRU itself. The 2011 Program Review calls for a clearer articulation of practice-based research at the program level. More can be done in such respects and the following provide a basis for doing so: 1) the success of alumni such as Glass and their peers speaks to the efforts that VA has made to articulate and negotiate such interests for students, especially in 4000-level VA courses; 2) holding open forums for students, and mentoring them towards on-campus research opportunities, and; 3) in-hand draft plans for BFA revision (as should be explored with an external program review team) include collaborating with KAG to formalize the long record of quasi-formal practices that have been widely recognized as a recipe for student success. If TRU is to pursue the long-term interests of being a university (as a member of the Research Universities Council of BC since 2011) it is best to support and nurture research-inclined programs and pedagogy rather than terminating such opportunities for students where there is clear evidence of student and alumni success, as is the case in Visual Arts. A well contextualized look at the BFA’s success in these areas, such as a Program Review should undertake, will show not only success in but also a successful model for **graduate employment/continuing further studies**. VPA’s submission to the Arts Academic Plan (APP) provided suggestions towards approaches for enhanced student engagement in such regards, that should further interests in enhancing **student demand**. However, the Dean’s decision to eliminate the program after cancelling the ED 8-4 mandated external review prevented us from implementing such improvements.

Diverse Students, Diverse Success

Also relevant to **student demand**, at Senate, Levi Glass emphasized “the vital role that [the BFA] program has played in promoting Indigenous culture and fostering a sense of belonging for Indigenous students like myself. TRU’s

Visual Arts program has gone beyond the conventional and has provided an inviting space for exploration and practice of our Indigenous cultures,” also noting that “the journey of Indigenous revitalization and resurgence began for me, as well as many of my peers, within the nurturing environment of this program, as we embarked on an artistic voyage of self-discovery.” What Glass spoke of provided a first-person perspective of what 2019 alumna Lyn Richards spoke to during their Senate presentation. With an earlier MA in Psychology and related experience as evidence of their professional experience Richards stated that:

“the BFA program offers an invaluable, accessible entry point to post-secondary education for those who have experienced inequity in educational opportunity. TRC Call To Action #10 explicitly references the educational achievement gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students due to inequity in the education offered to Indigenous students—a discrepancy exacerbated by the effects of intergenerational trauma arising from the abuses experienced in residential schools and several centuries of racism... This lends critical importance to a visual art program that offers a relatively safe point of entry to post-secondary education, and opportunity for success despite educational attainment issues. I have seen how important such success was for Indigenous fellow students who gained the confidence to successfully tackle other academic studies. Some moved to different academic programs, which may appear to be program attrition: I would call it a program success.”

Noting the value of the BFA program’s open access towards such ‘entry points,’ Richards

“... also learned from fellow students of Indigenous heritage—four of whom were in my graduating class of 13 (30%)—the tremendous importance of opportunities to explore and create within their own cultural traditions that this program encourages, especially for healing the wounds inflicted by colonization—colonization that was motivated primarily by the pursuit of profit. Surely, we would not close this valuable program for purely financial reasons, thereby perpetuating the wrongs of colonization.

TRU’s BFA program serves the northern part of the province, and regions further north (Casey Koyczan (Dene), one of the BFA’s most successful alumni, came to TRU from Yellowknife and celebrates the program’s culture of supportive learning). 25% of current program students are of declared indigenous ancestry, with 20% of those being First Nations, the highest such percentage in any program in the Faculty of Arts (IPE). In the closing remarks of their presentation to Senate presentation Dessa Gottfriedson, Education Manager at KIB, stated that if, in addition to supporting the programs that the Dean indicated as being of value to Indigenous students, the Band would continue to support the BFA. Such a statement of support was an important moment in the process and narrative that has unfolded. During their Senate presentation, current BFA student Adrian Romeo noted that the VA program “is a lifeline for students from here north pursuing BFA’s ... is a draw for international students. It aligns with all the messages that TRU wants to convey about itself, and should be treated as an asset.”

Planning

“Planning” is a complex topic in any consideration of the BFA, its cancellation or its renewal. In their 20 October letter to the Board recommending BFA cancellation, the Dean provided what they described as “a 5-year Strategic Plan that was created by the Faculty of Arts in a collaborative and collegial manner,” to “provide context” and “to support” the recommendations. On 1 December the Board Chair emphasized such supporting context, as being “across the Faculty of Arts, in their own Strategic Plan”. Following a pattern established during Senate meetings, the Dean’s letter indicates that phasing out the BFA “will allow the Faculty of Arts to redirect teaching resources to new program areas”. What the Board was not told during the public meeting on 1 December is that Arts Faculty Council (AFC) never had the opportunity to discuss and vote on the AAP. This is a critical lapse of TRU’s collegial governance process as set forth in the Senate bylaws, specifically Appendix B (<https://www.tru.ca/senate/bylaws.html>). David Hill, AFC chair, has pointed out that the Senate delegates the authority for Division level academic planning and priority-setting and that TRU’s collegial governance process as stipulated by the Senate bylaws state that “No recommendation on behalf of a Division or its departments will be made to a senior governance body without the approval of that Division’s Council”. Without AFC approval of the AAP, this plan should not have been presented to the Board or Senate as evidence that the Arts Faculty support this plan. We believe that this sets a dangerous precedent for collegial governance at TRU. In September 2022, CVA members were clearly informed that “all five [department level] plans will be discussed and explored, until a final 5-year plan is approved at AFC in June.”

Alongside the general absence of the BFA, what is not reflected in the Plan are more specific planning contributions offered along the way by Visual Arts. Several things may be noted:

- On the cusp of realignment of departments in Arts (the alignments known to the Dean but not yet known to faculty/departments), the Visual and Performing Arts Department (VPA) submitted to the Dean a comprehensive contribution to the AAP – the submission fully ratified by VPA faculty, following numerous meetings and a department-level retreat. Key elements clearly demonstrate interests and planning in keeping with the 2011 Program Review: 1) a Mission Statement; 2) a section on Research and Professional Opportunities which further articulated VPA's approach to integrating research and pedagogy; 3) VPA-approved revisions to the BFA program that were detailed to include the reduction of 51 course prerequisites, a restructuring of 3000-level courses, revisions to Foundation courses and other program requirements (a restructuring of the VA Minor was also detailed); 4) a 30 credit Postbaccalaureate in "Visual Arts or Creative Practices more generally," such as may be offered in collaboration with other programs or departments. The latter idea speaks to a strength of VPA's submission, for the manner in which it identified the potential of cross-department planning, which included VPA's invitation to the English and Modern Languages (EML) and the Communication and New Media (CMNS) departments to take part in the VPA Fall 2021 retreat (an offer taken up by EML). It was hoped that the VPA-approved course revisions and VA Minor would be implemented through 2022/2023, as was considered during the formation of the new Department of Communication and Visual Arts (CVA).
- Of particular relevance to the current deliberations is the manner in which VPA's submission to the AAP spoke in a collegial manner towards planning in the area of Design, clearly encouraging collegial planning that – in a manner at odds with the narrative that has been constructed by the Dean – speaks to a collegial and inclusive approach. Given its relevance, a section of VPA's AAP submission is quoted here:

Return to investigating options for the creation of a design program that: is an area of academic study situated between/across VPA and JCMN: acknowledging and building upon the history, investment and expertise of both departments in this area. A survey of programs provincially shows that structuring design, digital, graphic and design programming in a manner that is parallel across such areas as the creative arts and communications is a typical model and would prove to be a good approach in TRU's Faculty of Arts. Where possible, consideration may also be given to working with select areas in SOBE and Trades. Investigate what may be of value to such a program by way of Open Learning offerings, within a structure that is primarily on-campus.

The "Return to" reference is significant as Visual Arts had in previous years entered in good faith into planning discussions with previous Deans and Chair of CMNS around design planning, with proposals being submitted to but not endorsed to the Dean of Arts in 2016. The Dean at the time acknowledged challenges faced by Visual Arts towards such planning, with promises to return to those discussions – something that did not happen during the remainder of their term in office. Through their term, the most recent Chair of VPA encouraged the current Dean to return to such discussions, as reflected in the collegial language of the department's 2022 AAP submission.

Indirectly related to recent AAP-related planning, it should be noted that VA had in fact provided significant response to other aspects of the 2011 Program Review, including in the area of technical support. The report itself indicated not only insufficient support – in this area, essential to visual arts programs – but also a lack of institutional understanding of what is required. As may be seen in existing documentation, much effort has been made to address this situation by VA but a lack of resolution remains. If the 2011 Program Review is to be a point of reference, there should also be well-informed questions asked around the ways in which there has, and has not, been institutional-level support to address the Review's recommendations.

In the period following the 2022 realignment, Visual Arts faculty entered into further planning stages towards Arts' Academic Plan with good intent, including in areas around design. A new bipartite faculty member – the first tenure-track hire in Visual Arts in 17 years – brought new and significant expertise to such planning. Since obtaining their MFA in 2010 and in addition to establishing a significant record of professional/national artistic accomplishment, Twyla Exner brought a new and specifically relevant set of skills to such planning, which Exner summarised during their Senate presentation as including: "9 years of experience as a curator, educator, and executive director at museums and galleries ... 5 years of experience teaching post-secondary

courses and developing curriculum in visual art, art education and graphic design for 5 institutions, including Emily Carr and Sheridan College, 2 of the most prestigious art schools in Canada.” There has not, however, been significant uptake for the ideas around design-related planning presented by Visual Arts faculty in CVA’s subsequent contributions to Arts’ Plan – not for a lack of material and ideas put forward.

Towards enhanced **Financial Effectiveness**, in-hand plans for BFA revisions supported by four of VA’s professoriate constitute a refined version of materials contributed towards Arts planning over the past two years. The plan responds to stated needs for further digital content (building upon what has been built into courses and the program, including new courses, since the 2011 program review); builds upon the program’s strong record of community engagement and the local cultural community and is streamlined with an eye to workloading, scheduling, and students’ program completion, including an extensive list of course-level and program-level changes approved by VA (including the reduction of over 50 course prerequisites), as part of the February 2022 submission to the Dean towards the AAP and pending implementation. The current version of these documents is in tandem with considerations towards a reduced footprint for VA’s facilities, representing a potential 25% reduction to the present footprint and thus responding to expressed concerns in that area. We consider this to be a primary document to be considered during an external program review of the BFA. As per ED 8-4 a review was due in 2018 and was cancelled while in progress. On Oct. 13, 2023 a majority of CVA members in attendance at a meeting to consider the BFA passed a motion stating “That the Department of Communication and Visual Arts requests a Program Review of the Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) and its associated programs, to support the implementation of Category III changes,” which was followed by a motion passed by AFC on Nov. 17 to “petition the Dean of Arts to reinstate the external program review of the BFA program mandated by ED 8-4”.

Visual Arts and Community Engagement

A part of what Twyla Exner accomplished in the important area of community engagement during their first year provides a basis for concluding this letter. Visual Arts is well known for its connections to the local and regional community (research practices have also engaged extended “communities” nationally and internationally, including where community-based creative practices have been an explicit focus of the research program). In Winter 2023 Exner taught a Selected Topics VA course, *Making Art with the Community*. In collaboration with a recently hired faculty member in Geography and their students in GEOG 4990, Exner’s students partnered with the Kamloops Food Policy Council, resulting in an off-campus, community-based exhibition bringing all of these groups together. Funded as a pilot project of the Research Office, outcomes of this course (anthologized in an accompanying [website](#)) extended a legacy of community-engaged research established two decades ago with the SSHRC-funded “Small Cities’ CURA” (2000-2011, Garrett-Petts PI), in which Visual Arts faculty and students collaborated closely with such areas as Early Childhood Education, English, Geography, History and Sociology. Exner’s example speaks to three things: 1) the timely relevance of Visual Arts in extended, socially and community based settings beyond such already art-inclined settings as the Kamloops Art Gallery and Community Arts Council; 2) the manner in which such current instances of community-engaged activities extend a decades-long practice of Visual Arts’ working both formally and informally with the local community, with such organizations as Arnica Artist-Run Centre, Art in the Park, Gallery 768, Kamloops Art Gallery, Kamloops Arts Commission, Kamloops Library, Kamloops Museum and Archives, Kamloops Printmakers, the Kamloops Symphony Orchestra, and STIR, and; 3) the important ways in which community, pedagogy and research may be linked together. Doing so exemplifies some of the best things that can be accomplished in the context of a BFA program. It is hoped that the Board will recognize that by supporting the BFA’s proven track record of community engagement that there is significant opportunity to advance TRU’s reputation of contributing to the community and region, that those accomplishments in the area of cultural sustainability may then contribute to national identity (as per the local/national relationship that KAG’s Executive Director Margaret Chrumka outlined).

To dismantle what has been established and nurtured in such respects over more than two decades would be very unfortunate for TRU, its students and its communities, to significantly compromise the image that it presents of itself. We request that the Board support the delayed external program review (mandated by its own policy), towards determining how the BFA may be the best that it can be in the long-term interests of the university.

Motion approved at Senate, January 22, 2024:

On a one time, non-precedent setting basis, Senate shall provide the following to the Board as advice from Senate:

- The APPC report
- Written submissions of 8 stakeholders
- Arts Faculty Council submission



MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Governors
FROM: Gillian Balfour, Provost and Vice President Academic
DATE: January 26 2024
SUBJECT: BRD 8-4

Purpose

This memo serves as a summation of the information gathered since March 2023 as required under [BRD 8-4](#), to assist the Board in reaching its decision on the elimination of the specific Visual Arts programs. The Board's decision is to be based on the following criteria set out in the policy: financial effectiveness, student demand, graduate employment, and alternative program providers.

Background

Visual Arts (herein VA) are a suite of nested undergraduate programs within the Department of Communication and Visual Arts, comprised of a 6 separate credentials that include: Bachelor of Fine Arts (Visual Arts, Major), Minor in Visual Arts, Diploma in Visual Arts, Visual Arts Studio Certificate, Certificate in Literary and Art History, and Certificate in Drawing and Painting. The application of BRD 8-4 pertains to the following list of credentials within VA: Bachelor of Fine Arts (Visual Arts, Major), Minor in Visual Arts, Diploma in Visual Arts, Visual Arts Studio Certificate.

The purpose of BRD 8-4 is to empower the Board of Governors:

To ensure that resources are used to meet the needs of students and to meet the goals and objectives of the institution efficiently and effectively. The regulations provide guidelines and an orderly process by which the Board of Governors shall decide on the need for reduction or elimination of particular programs.

BRD 8-4 sets out a process that is specifically focused on the financial viability of a program in terms of its resource utilization, enrolment and graduate rates, and comparator programs (competition). Throughout this lengthy deliberation over the elimination of some VA programs, Senators have asserted the right to direct a program review under ED 8-4. However, ED 8-4 is not the policy being applied in this matter.

BRD 8-4 is not intended to assess the integrity of the curriculum as a rationale for elimination. Curriculum re-design or improvement is guided by policy [ED 8-4](#), and is the responsibility of the Dean of the Faculty to ensure a program review is done every 7 years as part of TRU's quality assurance requirements. It is through ED 8-4 that matters of program integrity or curriculum revisions are addressed. For ease of reference, the process is outlined below:

Program Review Process (ED 8-4)

TRU carries an EQA (Education Quality Assurance) designation which is required by the Province for TRU to receive funding and student tuition. To maintain that designation, we are required to complete an institutional level QAPA (Quality Assurance Process Audit) assessment once every 8 years; as well as maintain records of our internal review of program/academic units as part of that quality assurance process. In 2016, EQA introduced a new designation process that required academic program reviews on an 8-year rotation, with centralized report to DQAB and mid cycle reviews monitoring implementation of recommended program changes. In 2020, TRU adopted and implemented the revised cyclical review process (ED 8-4). A robust program review workbook was developed by the Office of Quality Assurance. Program review process, supported by CELT, is a collegial self-study which focuses on:

- What does your program do well?
- What does your program need to improve?
- Where does the program want to be in 5-7 years?
- How is the program going to get there?

Program review is designed to meet the following outcomes:

- support continuous quality improvement;
- review all TRU programs at least once every seven (7) years;
- maintain a collegial, team-based approach that is faculty-led;
- consider diverse perspectives of students, staff, faculty, and administration;
- follow an evidence-based approach to improvement;
- maintain an open, transparent process;
- leverage self- and peer- evaluation; and,
- develop an Action Plan for program improvement that is multi-year and formative.

Brief History of Visual Arts Program Review

The last [Visual Arts program review was in 2011](#) under the terms of an earlier internal process then specified in ED 8-4. The external reviewers made a series of recommendations. There is no record of any implementation of the recommendations by the program from that 2011 review. The programs were expected to undergo the program review process again in 2018.

In 2020, office of the Q&A introduced a new cohort based more comprehensive program review process targeting to start at the beginning of 2021. A 7-year cohort-based schedule was implemented at that time, and Visual Arts related programs of Faculty of Arts were scheduled by the provost office (Quality Assurance) to be included in the cohort of 2021. In 2021, multiple programs within Visual Arts initiated the program review using following 8-modules cohort-based approach of the program review process. Following list highlights the modules and their status of completion:

Module 1: Orientation --**COMPLETED**

Module 2: Program Learning Outcomes and Curriculum Map - -**COMPLETED** (with help of CELT)

Module 3: Surveys (Students, Alumni, Faculty, Employers) - -**COMPLETED**

Module 4: SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) Analysis - -**COMPLETED** (with help of CELT)

Module 5: Self-Study - **Not-Completed** (To write self-study report, IPE provided the program faculty with supporting data in February 2022 that highlights Visual Arts Credentials awards, enrollment data, and Baccalaureate Graduates Survey data)

Module 6: External Review, Site Visit - **Not-Completed**

Module 7: Action Plan - **Not-Completed**

Module 8: Report to University Community - **Not-Completed**

The program review process after Module 4 was put on hold by the request of the Dean of Arts with the advice of the office of Quality Assurance, due to the upcoming revision of the Bachelor of Arts degree. To date, the BA revision is still before the Arts Faculty Council, and has not been completed.

ED 8-4 sets out the oversight of APPC for the quality assurance of process for academic programs. This is part of our provincial EQA designation as is intended to provide provincial oversight of quality of student learning experience and currency of curriculum content.

The cyclical program review is not intended to assess financial viability of a program, and if a program(s) is/are to be eliminated. Resource allocation is the fiduciary responsibility of the Board of Governors. The Board must seek the advice of Senate on educational impacts of any program elimination. A program with financial effectiveness of the program, other program providers in the post-secondary sector, rates of attrition and graduation, as well as career outcomes of graduates.

Overview of BRD 8-4 Process Followed to Date:

A lengthy process has ensued since March 2023 culminating in several Senate meetings wherein the advice of Senate to the Board was sought. The advice of Senate is to provide perspective on the educational and resource implications of a program elimination. A chart outlining the regulations and guidelines of the policy is provided below, showing when each requirement of the policy was met. The Chair of Senate has received a report from the [Academic Policy and Planning Committee](#), [the Report of the Dean of Arts](#), and has heard from [8 stakeholder groups](#) selected by the Steering Committee of Senate, as prescribed under the terms of BRD 8-4. Of note was the submission of Tk'emlúps representative Dessa Gottfriedson who spoke on behalf of Chief in Council, to the community need for TRU to provide access to programming that focused Indigenous healing from intergenerational trauma.

Policy BRD 08-4 – Regulations and guidelines checklist.

Regulation	Action
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. The Board must consider the following, provided by the Deans: financial effectiveness, student demand, graduate employment/continuing studies, alternate program providers, other relevant criteria as deemed by the Board.	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. The Provost must consult with the Deans (individually and jointly) concerning the accuracy and	<i>The Dean of Arts met with the Provost on April 13 and April 19th 2023 to discuss the viability of Visual Arts studio based</i>

Regulation	Action
completeness of the data and information as identified in Step 1.	<i>programs. Items reviewed were financial effectiveness (salary costs), enrolment data and graduation rates of the programs, and space utilization metrics. Student applications to the 4 studio-based programs were suspended as of April 20th.¹</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Senior Executive must write to the department when a program is being considered for elimination, which will include a rationale for the elimination and invite the division to comment. The chair of Senate must be copied on this correspondence.	<p><i>June 1st 2023, an email was sent to the Dean of Arts from the Provost advising them of the proposed reduction or elimination of the Bachelor Visual Arts, Minor, Diploma and Certificate. The rationale given was the Provost's review of information provided by the Registrar's Office, Finance, and Faculty of Arts Strategic Plan. Notice of a Special Meeting for Senate to respond to the rationale for the proposed elimination was shared that time as well.</i></p> <p><i>June 2023, the Dean of Arts made a presentation to Arts Faculty Council outlining the rationale and basis for the decision to proceed under BRD 8-4.</i></p> <p><i>September 28 2023: Provost sent a formal request to the Dean.</i></p>
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. The Dean must write a response to the Senior Executive within 15 working days or such time as the President deems reasonable. The response <u>could</u> include suggestions that would allow the program to continue. The chair of Senate must be copied on the response.	<p><i>Oct 20th 2023: The Dean responded to the September 28th email from the Provost outlining feedback and suggestions regarding for alternatives to program elimination (all or only some of the programs). He recommended retaining three programs (Visual Arts Diploma, Certificate in Literary and Art History and Certificate in Drawing and Painting) based on the potential alignment of those programs with a new degree in Digital Design.</i></p>

¹ Applications to programs are managed through the Registrar's Office and are deactivated through administrative authority and as part of program review/renewal processes. Suspending applications into a program allows for program changes to be implemented and are reactivated once program is restructured. Suspension also takes place as part of a course section management in instances where programs have a historical pattern of no enrolments. Suspension does not require the approval of the Provost or APPC, rather notice is given by the Registrar to the Provost.

Regulation	Action
<input type="checkbox"/> 5. The Senior Executive will review the submission from the Dean and, if a decision to eliminate is made to proceed, a recommendation will be made to the Board who will take into account the submission from the Dean (ie: the Dean's submission in number four, above, must be provided to the Board).	<i>The Dean's report was shared with the Board at the December 1 2023 meeting.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> 6. The Board, prior to making the final decision on whether there is a need for elimination, will seek the advice of Senate. The Board must request advice on the matter by giving Senate at least 10 working days, and normally a month, notice, before the Board will deal with the matter.	<i>January 22, 2024: Senate's advice was given by way of a motion: "On a one time, non-precedent setting basis, Senate shall provide the following to the Board as advice from Senate:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• The APPC report</i> <i>• Written submissions of 8 stakeholders</i> <i>• Arts Faculty Council submission"</i>

BRD 8-4 provides guidelines to assist Senate in forming their advice to the Board. These guidelines are not regulations. The advice of Senate to the Board is guided (not regulated) by the following principles:

Guideline	Action
<input type="checkbox"/> Guideline I. When the department receives notification, Senate will call a special meeting (First Special Meeting) to familiarize faculty, staff, students and administrators with the guidelines that Senate will apply to its deliberations <u>should</u> the Board ask Senate to proceed.	<i>September 12 2023: A special meeting of Senate was held as per Guideline 1 following from the June 1 2023 notice to the VA faculty. A presentation was made to Senate by the Dean of Arts for the purpose of Senate discussion to assist in developing their eventual advice to the Board.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Guideline VI.(1). Senate must schedule a meeting (second Special Meeting) of at least one hour to hear presentations from affected parties (see Stakeholder Groups in the Policy).	<i>September 28 2023, a two hour meeting of Senate was held; 8 representatives of the designated affected parties submitted written statements and gave 20 minute presentations. The submissions were selected by the Steering Committee of Senate with special consideration for the inclusion of Tk'emlúps Chief in Council. Senate met after the presentations for deliberation.</i>

<p>□ Guideline V. Senate will accept written input from any person or group received at least one week prior to Second Special Meeting.</p>	<p><i>Approximately 100 pages of emails received by the Secretariat and the Steering Committee of Senate were provided to Senators. Emails were received from alumni, Kamloops Art Gallery, faculty from other university and college Visual Arts programs.</i></p>
<p>□ Guideline VI(2). Senate will <i>normally</i> request a presentation from APPC to obtain a more complete picture of the impacts of the proposed elimination.</p>	<p><i>The Chair of Senate requested a presentation from APPC on September 29th 2023. The presentation is intended to assist Senate in forming their advice to the Board. The APPC report is scheduled for presentation at the Dec 11th Senate meeting.</i></p>

Analysis

As per Regulation I of BRD 8-4, the Board shall consider any of the following:

1. Financial Effectiveness

- a. FTE costs (full time equivalents: The VA faculty have implemented self-selected course caps much lower than other programs, on pedagogical necessity for studio space instruction. As a result of this practice, the average program course cost per FTE (student) is \$44,094 whereas a Humanities course cost per FTE is \$7,849. VA salary costs represent 10% of the Faculty of Arts HR costs yet are only 4% of enrolments. HR costs remain high due to lowered student enrolment caps being taught by the existing tenured and tenure track faculty as well as sessional costs given the heavily prescriptive nature of the program design which requires a very high number of required courses.
- b. Space utilization: Total current indoor space is 28,146 square feet (approximately 8 studios and allocated classrooms). All space is dedicated to the VA program is not bookable by other programs or service areas. Space utilization is the highest amongst any department at TRU.
- c. Scheduling impacts: The program scheduling standard at TRU is 65 schedulable hours per week (approximately 23 3-hour blocks in a week). The Registrar strives for 70% scheduling capacity of 15 3 hours blocks per week per program. Visual arts course enrolment levels of 730 FTEs over the past 5 years amount to only 17% scheduling efficiency. This scheduling inefficiency is due to intractable program selected course caps and studio requirements. Thus, in the same space (18, 42 seat classrooms) there are 11,340 possible course enrolments.

2. Student Demand

Enrollment attrition: IPE data indicates a 76% attrition rate from year 1 to year 4 of the VA program (approximately 112 in year 1 to 31 in year 4). Over the past decade, the programs collectively graduate 9 students per year. Enrolments of non-program (non-declared major students) are almost double that of program students, indicating value of

VA courses as electives at the 1000 and 2000 level. IPE data of BFA student pathways indicates almost all VA students leave TRU without a credential.

Special attention was paid to the rates of Indigenous student enrolment and degree completion. Tk'emlúps reported that in the past 10 years only 3 members of their community have enrolled in Visual Arts, and none have completed the program. As shown in the APPC report, the number of Indigenous students who enrol in and graduate from the programs is very low although given the small size of the overall student cohort, this does mean that approximately 30% of VA students are Indigenous.

3. Graduate employment/continuing further studies

The APPC report provides an overview of the success of students in the specified programs. The information suggests a narrow range of pathways and outcomes for graduates that are associated with, and dependent uniquely on, the programs under review, and this should be balanced against the high resource demands of the credentials. Graduate career tracking and graduation pathways indicate the relatively narrow impact the program has for student outcomes, with predominant focus on a research/professional art stream. 42% of graduates over the past five years going on to take further studies. In addition, based on an employment outcome survey of graduates, only 16% of respondents (4 people) were working in a category of “likely related to degree”.

4. Alternative program providers

A report generated by IPE that outlines the scope of alternative Visual Arts programs in B.C and Alberta. That report indicates there are 18 certificates, 32 diplomas, and 43 baccalaureate programs, and 8 graduate level programs. The fulsome report is available [here](#). These data suggest ample opportunities for studies in Visual Arts exist across the province, however, TRU's program is the only one in the interior region of B.C.

5. Other considerations: Employment impacts

There are 4 faculty members, 1 currently untenured faculty member who teaches in both Communications and Visual Arts department. One member has a reduced teaching load due to early retirement. Thus, there are two faculty members exclusively in the studio-based VA program. There are no faculty job losses that will result from this process, as key VA courses could be integrated into the Communications program and taught by the remaining VA faculty. Currently the highest enrolled courses are in the first and second year, taken by non-majors (that is, as electives). These well enrolled courses will continue to be taught by VA faculty.

Summary

Visual Arts at TRU has a long-standing relationship to the Kamloops community. However, over the course of 10 several months of deliberation and research, it is clear the specified VA programs have very low graduation rates, with many students not completing the credentials or leaving TRU. The largest enrolments are in years 1 and 2 and attract non-program students (those who take VA as electives). As well, very few Indigenous students register or complete

these programs in the programs. Overall, those students who do graduate, very few attain a career directly related to their program. TRU is committed to retaining the art gallery space, as well as electives in areas of visual arts that are of relatively high student demand. The studio and classroom space currently allocated to VA programs, could be rescaled to provide more programming and student service options.

The process followed has been thorough and purposeful in efforts to share information with Senate and to hear from various stakeholders, to assist in their crafting of advice to the Board. There were assertions at various times in Senate that some aspects of the process were not followed, but these assertions rested largely on interpretations or extrapolations of what is in the policy. For example, some Senators raised the expectation that the board convey its wishes by motion and in writing, when this is not specified in the policy and is not the board's practice. Some Senators raised the topic of academic program review, which as highlighted earlier in this report, is not the purview of the Board but rather is a responsibility of the program and faculty Dean. There were some ways in which matters did not arise in the order foreseen by the policy, chiefly that the Dean of Arts raised the initial idea of program discontinuance, rather than as the role of respondent to the provost, and because of this some steps did not occur in the sequence listed in the regulations. No set of rules can foresee every future circumstance, and this is particularly true of rules penned almost a generation ago. Despite the inherent challenges, the administration adhered as closely as practical to the spirit of the policy and did cover every specified step in it.

Shulan Baylour