

Assurance Argument

Art Academy of Cincinnati - OH

1/24/2017

1 - Mission

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.
2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission.
(This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

Argument

HLC CRITERION ONE

Mission

Outline of Evidence

1.A - Core Component

The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1 The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.

In August of 2014 the board of trustees for the Art Academy of Cincinnati (AAC) directed president John Sullivan to form an Ad Hoc Committee for the purpose of reviewing the institutions Mission, Vision and Core Values. The committee was referred to as the Mission Task Force and was comprised of a diverse section of members from across the college. The members included the Chair of the Board, Chair of the Board Committee on Instruction, three members of the faculty, one student, Director of Student Services, The Executive Secretary to the President, with one of the faculty chairing this task force.

The task force was primarily interested in insuring that the new mission statement would accurately reflect the "new AAC", it's students, staff and faculty, location, curriculum, programming, constituents and institutional structure. The most significant factor central to recent changes was the move of the college from it's founding location in Eden Park in 1869, to

it's current location in the [Over the Rhine](#) district in the city center of Cincinnati. This move was bold. It changed who we were and wanted to be in the future. It changed how and who we would recruit, who are stakeholders would be, and an educational philosophy, and a new set of goals and [educational objectives](#), [student learner outcomes](#) and curricular structure that includes the [majors](#), [minors](#) and [degrees](#) granted.

The language and attitude in the new mission needed to change in a way to actually reflect who we are. The former mission reflected who we were. As the task force crafted the language of the mission to reflect change, we felt it critical to respect and celebrate our illustrious and long history as a leader in quality arts education in the city of Cincinnati and the region. The core values were designed and written to drive the mission and vision. The six values articulate those qualities that are central to the what is unique about this college, focus on the artist/designer as learner, learner as process, the power of imagination, the contributions to the culture and community and the celebration of a storied history.

On February 25, 2015, the Board approved the new Mission, [Vision](#) and [Core Values](#) statement.

2 The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.

Because of our agile size and work ethic, we immediately began to incorporate the new mission in all of it's manifestations into all areas of the institution beginning with the [AAC Academic Catalog](#), and those that most affected students- the general curriculum which also includes the AAC [Universal Educational Goal, Educational Objectives](#) and [Student Learner Outcomes](#). This work was accomplished by the newly formed Academic Management Team (AMT) comprised of full time faculty, key staff that interact with students and the department chairs and deans.

We redesigned the first year program and tuned other areas of the general curriculum to reflect the new [Core Values](#). For example, we no longer teach the survey of Art History chronologically. It is now based on contemporary issues, ideas and media. Students can now begin the study of a major concentration in the first year. Freshman English classes are geared towards the student as an artist. An examination of the [Foundation Program](#), and particularly the [Sample Schedule](#), you can see that the way we have integrated the freshman experience as an integration of both studio and liberal arts classes. It is the desire and will of the AAC administration, staff, faculty and Board of Trustees to provide a dynamic, cutting edge curriculum that serves to empower students to make a difference in their own lives and the lives of others. Aspiring to such a goal requires a Mission that is bold, something we would all consciously need to work hard every day to realize. We all agreed a mission that was too easily achieved would not reflect what we want for students of the Art Academy of Cincinnati.

While the academic departments and Academic Management Team have wholly accepted and integrated this new mission into our daily practice. An example of this is reflected in the content and titles for courses in the curriculum inspired by the language in the Core Values and Mission. Examples include, [Designed and Illustrated: A Curious History of the Graphic Arts](#), [Zen and the Creative Process](#), [The Universe in One Thing](#), [Experience Design](#) and [Painting: Voice and Vision](#). Other areas of the institution including some administrative departments and to a certain

extent the Board of Trustees have been slower to respond. We accept the challenge to spread the philosophy and spirit of the mission to these areas and also the student body.

Recent changes to the physical space including the lobby design "[Mission Wall](#)", a student design project, publications such as the [AAC Academic Catalog](#), [View Book](#), [Title IX Brochure](#), the [AAC Website](#), [Social Media](#), posters and other print and electronic media material by design and verbal and visual language embody the new mission and have served as a catalyst for promoting a common voice and vision amongst all AAC constituents.

In the past ten years and particularly the past 5 years, the college has invested heavily in bringing our student services and enrollment profile. We have a full time Student services director who fulfill all aspects of compliance with federal laws concerning Title IX, Violence Against Women Act, Clery and others, This position facilitates college life management, personal counseling and social activities vital to fulfilling the mission as it relates to the total AAC experience for our students. We are relentlessly committed and strive to retain every student that enrolls at the college.

3 The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission.

(This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

See Section 5.C.1

Sources

- 2016-2017-Academic-Catalog
- 2016-2017-Academic-Catalog (page number 6)
- 2016-2017-Academic-Catalog (page number 7)
- 2016-2017-Academic-Catalog (page number 10)
- 2016-2017-Academic-Catalog (page number 15)
- 2016-2017-Academic-Catalog (page number 17)
- 2016-2017-Academic-Catalog (page number 18)
- 2016-2017-Academic-Catalog (page number 19)
- 2016-2017-Academic-Catalog (page number 23)
- 2016-2017-Academic-Catalog (page number 27)
- 2016-2017-Academic-Catalog (page number 31)
- 2016-2017-Academic-Catalog (page number 60)

- AAC Website Home Page
- AAC_ViewBook_PressRelease
- Art Academy of Cincinnati Education Goal
- Beaux Arts Ball Statement
- Binder 1 +B
- Course Descriptions of Mission Driven Classes
- Designed and Illustrated Course Description
- FINAL Major EG's EO's SLO's copy
- Mission Core Values 1.5.15 MT
- Mission Wall Project
- OTR Chamber OTR Recent History
- SLO Guide
- Social Media Icons on Website
- TitleIXAAC
- Web PAGE example of Mission

1.B - Core Component 1.B

The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

Argument

1.B Core Component

The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.

The AAC Mission permeates all aspects of the college. Its substance as a philosophic mandate identifies the AAC as one of the most unique independent colleges of art and design in the country. The AAC Mission is the essence of our purpose, and its message is clear, strong, and defining. We are proud to share our Mission both within the AAC family and with all who come into contact with the college through our [Website](#), the [Academic Catalog](#), recruitment publications such as the [View Book](#), National Portfolio Day Poster, development publications, [social media](#), Community Education program literature, official AAC filings and public notices, our comprehensive stationery suite, faculty [letters of appointment](#), and all print and digital marketing materials. The Mission appears on our academic documents such as [syllabi](#), [Course Evaluations](#), and [End-of-Year Review](#) forms.

Our mission, which is at the core our existence, is about taking risks. Moving from a campus set in the idyllic, provincial setting of Eden Park to Over-the-Rhine – an urban district characterized by divisive racial, economic, and cultural demarcations – in the early 2000's was risky. We relied on resourceful thinking, partnership, and collaboration to manage our way through the early years and even today. As taking risks is the only way to reach lofty goals, we instill this aspiration in our students, support them in their efforts, and lead by example.

In the Spring Semester of 2016, the Office of Institutional Advancement created an opportunity to celebrate and advance the Mission of the AAC through a project titled "[Mission Wall](#)." Two "Level 2" design classes interpreted the language of the mission, vision and core values statements into 2'x 2' typographic collages. The collages have been fabricated in vinyl and

installed in the main lobby of the college as a testament to our collective commitment for all who visit to experience. The result is the inclusion of a student-designed interpretation of the AAC mission, now installed in the entrance area as one of the “experience attributes” of the makeover of the gateway to the college.

2.The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution’s emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.

As a result of recent collaboration in crafting, adopting, and implementing new mission, vision and core values statements, we have accentuated their integration into all aspects of the college. The majority of the faculty and staff are experiencing a new energy for this new mission as it validates our intuitive understanding of the shape and scope of a radical education in art and design.

The new mission drives and mobilizes the academic departments, programs and initiatives, and serves as a critical checkpoint for all initiatives. The language and spirit of the new mission are evidenced in the weekly Academic Management Team (AMT) meeting discourse, [new course titles](#) and content, social media and branding materials and publications from admissions, student services, and the registrar’s office.

Our [Core Values](#) address the key aspects of the mission related to instruction, scholarship, research, and creative works and have had a profound impact on the economic viability and development of the community in which we exist. A [2016 economic impact report](#) that specifically studied the Art Academy’s economic influence on the Over the Rhine neighborhood affirms the college’s mark on the community. We are engaged beyond economic impact with our involvement, collaboration, and partnership with many other institutions, businesses, and events including [SCPA](#), Second Sunday on Main, internship and creative partnering relationships such as those listed at the end of Core Component 1.D.3, FOTOFOCUS, Cincinnati Fringe Festival, Luminosity, Project Operation Paydirt, City of Cincinnati, Health Department, ArtWorks, and many others.

3.The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

The mission statement itself identifies or names several key constituents and their relationship to the mission philosophy. They include [the extended] community, educational partners, students, community of artists, creative professionals, visual artists, and designers. When programs, development initiatives, and services are promoted or presented in documents or publications, the mission or appropriate aspects thereof are accentuated. In general publications, such as the [Academic Catalog](#), the mission has a prime placement at the front, and it is evident in the overall branding as in the [AAC View Book](#) and Website.

Sources

- 2016-2017 AAC Academic Catalog
- AAC Official Syllabus Template_08.01.2016
- AAC SCPA Pilot Program 61515
- AAC Studio Review Form 2016 and Portfolio
- AAC Website Home Page
- AAC_ViewBook_PressRelease
- AACSCPA Articulation PR MT edits
- Art Academy Community and Economic Impact study Final Version
- Calendar-2016-17
- Course Descriptions of Mission Driven Classes
- Designed and Illustrated Course Description
- Final Course Evaluation Procedures Fall 2013
- Letter of Appointment 2015
- Mission Core Values
- Mission Wall Project
- Print Lab
- Social Media Icons on Website

1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.
2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Argument

1.C - Core Component

The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.

Art and design by nature are meant to engage all people. Our [curriculum](#), our services, and our mission are designed to engage the students, faculty, and staff within a diverse and changing world. Our move to the inner city was a deliberate endeavor to become part of a more diverse community and to be influenced by that community. The tenets of [Community](#), [Individuality](#), and [History](#), as three core values of our mission, embody a primal commitment to embracing a multicultural world from the inside out. The work in which visual artists engage, is often based on a range of social issues. These issues are the content that students explore in academic courses such as Visual Culture, Anthropology, [Experience Design](#), and many others that are incorporated into the fabric of the curriculum. The new mission encourages engagement with humanity in all its manifestations and supports the value of cultural immersion as a means of developing empathy, respect, and life-long inquiry within and among diverse cultures.

2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

The college recognizes the rich learning opportunities within the community for interaction with individuals and groups from varied backgrounds. The Art Academy's faculty and staff proactively encourage students to pursue both curricular and co-curricular experiences that underscore humanity as an eclectic entity characterized by diversified expressions of what it means to be human. Serving as a vehicle for instilling this value throughout the AAC community, the Art Academy's Mission is a benchmark for ensuring conscientious programming that gives voice and viability to all our constituencies. This aspect of our Mission is reflected in the Art Academy's exhibitions programming, public talks, website, academic classrooms, community classrooms, and public service projects. Through making human diversity absolutely essential to the Art Academy's Mission, we continually create positive, welcoming environments within which all constituents are recognized as vital to the history and future of the college. In

this way, the AAC Mission helps all members of the Art Academy community to develop into culturally sensitive citizens in a diverse and ever-changing society.

The Art Academy of Cincinnati's Diversity Statement, which is in the Academic Catalog, says:

"The Art Academy of Cincinnati is committed to providing an educational experience that prepares our artists and designers to enter a diverse and global community. Even our AAC mantra, "Make Art, Make a Difference," connects art/design making to the broad world which the students inhabit. Students at the Art Academy learn to live and work in a community that draws from many varied elements. It is a driving factor in producing great art. We want our students to explore all the layers of society that are available beyond our front door while enjoying a safe and productive college experience. The Art Academy's commitment to diversity encompasses much more than race and gender. Our students experience various ages, interests, family structures, future plans, value systems, sexual orientations, religious and political beliefs, and physical abilities. The Art Academy strives to provide equality to all individuals through nondiscriminatory policies and procedures.

The [Policies Prohibiting Harassment](#) section in the Academic Catalog identifies the importance of diversity and the AAC's commitment to protecting the diverse members of our population defining these principles: [Sexual Harassments Policy](#), Discriminatory Harassment Policy, and Bullying and Cyber-Bullying Policy. [Our policy of Non-discrimination in Employment and Education is also clearly stated on our website. "The Art Academy of Cincinnati does not discriminate for reasons of race, color, national origin, gender, age, sexual preference, or disability in admission or hiring of faculty or staff or in any terms of conditions of employment. Additionally, the Art Academy of Cincinnati's position on diversity is directly expressed in its Core Value: "Rebellious", which is defined "INDIVIDUALITY--originality, uniqueness, independence, vision, entrepreneurship, DIY work ethic", and our Core Value: "Radiant", which is defined "COMMUNITY--outreach, stewardship, involvement, partnership, contribution, connection", both of which are stated clearly on our website.

In August of 2016, the AAC published a [Title IX compliance pamphlet](#), which includes information on the [Violence Against Women Act](#) and the [Clery Act](#), which has been distributed to the students, faculty, staff, and the Board of Trustees.

In Fall 2014, total enrollment was 209 FTE, including 15 undergraduate transfer students and eight graduate students. Currently, 95% of our students are identified as full-time and 5% part-time. Of all AAC students, 61% are female and 39% are male. While the majority (78%) of AAC students are white, we are working to more fully integrate the student body. At this time, 10% of AAC students are black or African American, 6% are Hispanic/Latino, 2% are Asian, and 2% identify as Mixed Race. Students who are age 24 or under comprise 90% of the student body, as compared to 9% who are age 25 or over. The majority of students (68%) are in-state, and 32% are out-of-state. These statistics are posted on the AAC's website.

Ethnic diversity is demonstrated in the AAC's promotional materials such as the [View Book](#) and the News section of the AAC website, both of which profile the academic and artistic accomplishments of students of various ethnicities. The Admissions area of AAC website

presents information on the Ohio College Opportunity Grant. Currently, we do not have a diversity initiative in admissions. However, we are creating an Enrollment Management Committee that will be led by Tyson Betts, the Vice President of the Board of Trustees. He is interested in pursuing this for the future.

The AAC provides learning assistance through writing and studio tutors, assistance for the hearing impaired, and elevators accommodate certain mobility disabilities.

As an arts institution, the AAC fosters multiculturalism through its exhibitions and activities, both on campus and in the Greater Cincinnati community. Recent on-site art exhibitions that specifically address multiculturalism as a theme include Fotofocus: *Migrantes and Aftermath*, and Fotofocus: *Positive Exposure, the Spirit of Difference*.

Also on location, The Homeless Coalition delivered an all school presentation in the spring of 2016. The AAC has strong ties with [AIGA Cincinnati, the professional association for design](#), and regularly hosts the association's local events. The AAC works beyond its walls to impact the greater Cincinnati community. For the two past academic years, B.F.A. students have created work for The Ronald McDonald House. [In spring of 2015, the AAC's [Art Design and Social Practice](#) course collaborated with internationally known sculptor Mel Chin and the Health Department of Cincinnati on Chin's Operation Paydirt and Fundreds projects, using art and design to raise awareness for lead poisoning and its affects on primarily children in Cincinnati's inner city.

AAC courses that focus specifically on diversity include Art Design and Social Practice (collaboration with Mel Chin's Operation Paydirt and Fundreds projects), History of African American Art, Women in the Arts, The Personal is Political, African American Studies in Literature-- Music and Art: 1965-Now, Islamic Civilization, World Cultures, Cultural Studies: Identity and Diversity, and Art and the Occult. Course descriptions for these and all other courses can be found in the Course Description section of SONIS.

Sources

- 2016-2017 AAC Academic Catalog
- 2016-2017 AAC Academic Catalog (page number 16)
- 2016-2017 AAC Academic Catalog (page number 88)
- 2016-2017 AAC Academic Catalog (page number 94)
- AAC_ViewBook_PressRelease
- AAC_ViewBook_PressRelease (page number 2)
- AIGA Cincinnati Mission
- Course Descriptions of Mission Driven Classes
- Mission Core Values
- Mission Core Values 1.5.15 MT
- Operation Paydirt ArtDesignSocialPractice
- TitleIXAAC
- TitleIXAAC (page number 5)

- TitleIXAAC (page number 6)
- TitleIXAAC (page number 7)
- TitleIXAAC (page number 12)

1.D - Core Component 1.D

The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Argument

1.D - Core Component 1.D

The Institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.

In an amazing moment of lucid, dynamic, all-inclusive creativity, in the winter of 2014, the institution representing all its constituencies came together and drafted the current declaration of Mission, Vision, and Core Values identified collectively as the [Mission Statement](#). The creation of this document was accomplished with such clarity and focus that it was instantly and enthusiastically embraced by all readers and approved by the Board of Trustees on June 24, 2015. The primary reason for the universal acceptance of, and overwhelming support for this document is that it completely captures the essence of the college, including its enviable relationship with the community to which it primarily belongs.

Beginning with the Mission, the institution declares that its purpose is to create and sustain visual artists. But the declaration moves beyond this objective – which could very easily become a self-serving goal – to declare that those artists and designers will then use their abilities to make contributions that “. . . make a substantial difference in all the lives they touch.” In this language is framed the altruistic commitment of the institution and of the faculty, staff, students, and alumni, acting collectively and as individuals for the betterment of the community. The [AAC Educational Goal](#) states that the institution will work to provide students “. . . with the intellectual and technical tools they will need to navigate a life of creativity, curiosity, individuality, education, history, and community” demonstrating our commitment to our public obligation to place into the world responsible artists and designers.

2. **The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.**

The entire expenditure of the college is directed to educational purposes or to those activities that directly support these purposes. As reported in the most recent audited financials (source), \$5,807,803 was expended for Program Services (89.9%), \$623,866 was expended for Management and General (9.7%), and \$26,574 was expended for Fundraising (0.4%). As an independent, not-for-profit college of art and design, the Art Academy has no investors to whom dividends are paid, and no related or parent organization with which revenues are divided or shared. It does not support any interests that are external to the institution, nor does it support any interests or activities that are not directly related to the educational mission of the institution.

3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

The Art Academy of Cincinnati is fortunate to have been founded in a city that is justifiably proud of its arts and culture and one that supports, numerous arts organizations. The AAC partners with many of these organizations, with results that enrich the community and enhance interaction through the arts across the spectrum of cultural, social, and educational engagement.

Cincinnati has a notable urban mural effort that has been running for several years, mostly managed by ArtWorks, one of the AAC's neighbors and partners in Over-the-Rhine. This organization recruits primarily high school artists to work as apprentices on one of several mural crews each summer under the guidance and supervision of a professional artist. During the tenure of this program, 101 murals have been completed in 36 neighborhoods, and these projects are well publicized and celebrated, as they become "owned" by the citizenry. ArtWorks undertakes a significant community ideation process to determine the content and/or image that will be depicted for each mural and makes a conscious effort to replicate notable works by Cincinnati artists. Just recently, it was realized that all of these masterworks murals replicated works of art by Art Academy artists – Frank Duveneck, John Ruthven, Charley Harper, Tom Wesselman, and most recently, Elizabeth Nourse. In an indirect manner, this is an acknowledgement of the important contributions attributed to AAC artists, and now their images are accessible to everyone in the city and on a monumental scale.

The Ruthven mural was produced as one component of the *Summer of John Ruthven*, who is a notable wildlife artist in the Audubon tradition, a Presidential Medal recipient, and AAC alumnus. This 2016 summer events were produced by the Cincinnati Nature Center and the Cincinnati Zoo, and was supported at the AAC by an exhibition of his work, featuring the painting titled *Martha, the Last Passenger Pigeon*, reproduced as the mural on Vine Street in downtown Cincinnati. The AAC was also mural partner for a five-story mural at the corner of 12th and Vine Streets featuring *Energy and Grace*, a painting by Academic Dean Kim Krause, an AAC alumnus.

The AAC continues to support ArtWorks by providing space for the muralists and by providing studio space for the summer Hero Project. The institution has also supplied artists for the Heart Fence at Cincinnati's Ronald McDonald House and for projects at Cincinnati Children's Hospital. Students at the Art Academy recently completed a civic bike rack at the corner of 13th and Jackson Streets, for which they managed the project including fundraising, design, production, and installation. Students participate in a number of community activities, including

Operation Paydirt, Design for Good, Cincinnati Design Week, Second Sunday on Main events, Luminocity, ArtWorks, Cincinnati Design Week, AIGA Cincinnati exhibitions and lectures, Midpoint Music Festival and many other events.

Recently, the Art Academy has become the host institution for the annual [Scholastic Art and Writing Awards](#) for the Greater Cincinnati Region. In this capacity, the institution organizes the submission and adjudication process, exhibits the work, and (in partnership with the neighboring School for Creative and Performing Arts, SCPA) hosts the awards presentation. 2016 marks the third year that the AAC has sponsored the event.

Through the efforts of our studio program, office of Institutional Advancement and financial support from the Mayerson Foundation, AAC offers college-level design courses to SCPA high school students. These students enroll in design courses learning alongside our BFA students. The AAC and Cincinnati Public Schools have entered into an articulation agreement between [SCPA](#) and AAC for these classes to count towards the BFA in Design program at the AAC.

The college has also developed numerous partnerships within the local business district and cultural communities that serve our students and in turn receive services and support from the AAC. The school has had a robust relationship with AIGA Cincinnati, the professional association for design for over 10 years. AIGA Cincinnati holds its monthly board meetings at the college, presents speakers, panels, student events, sponsors gallery exhibitions, and sponsors student design competitions, resulting in scholarship opportunities for AAC students. The nature of these events and programming supports cutting-edge education through collaborative learning and promotes curiosity through the exchange of ideas and knowledge. Other collaborations include local creative firms such as LPK, Procter and Gamble, Intrinzie, Powerhouse Factories, Ruttle Design, HyperQuake, We Have Become Vikings, Possible Worldwide, Landor Associates, Envoi Design, Know Theatre, Gaslight, Interbrand, 3CDC, Brand Image, Pep, Topic and many others.

These relationships are vital to mobilizing the AAC mission. We are keenly aware that achieving many aspects of our mission requires the support and interaction with a vibrant community. The community helps breathe life into the education of our students. We pursue every potential opportunity to partner, collaborate, connect, and contribute with the community around us to make the AAC an integral player in the cultural fabric of the neighborhood, the city and the region.

Sources

- 2016-2017 AAC Academic Catalog
- AACSCPA Articulation PR MT edits
- Goals and Objectives for the Majors
- Mission Core Values
- Scholastics_Sponsor2016

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

Summary

The Art Academy of Cincinnati's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations. The creation and adoption of our new mission has provided renewed focus and reaffirmed our core values driving decisions in all areas of the college.

The renewed focus has reinforced broad "buy in" from divergent areas of the institution toward a common set of objectives. From curriculum and student services to the brand experience that includes recent changes to the "look" of the building, the lobby, print communications, website, admissions materials, and even the general attitude of the faculty and staff, the new mission has helped the school navigate change together.

The new mission has helped us to address "What do we need to think about everyday in order to exist" and "Why are we here"? The answer involves managing three core responsibilities, recruit, retain and educate. From building maintenance to financial aid to security and student services, human resources, the faculty, and the president's office, everyone is here to help our students succeed as the most radical, relentless, rebellious, cutting-edge, celebrated and radiant visual arts students and visual arts professionals that they can be.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A - Core Component 2.A

The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

Argument

The Art Academy of Cincinnati makes every effort to establish and follow policies and processes that ensure fair and ethical behavior in its practices with internal and external constituencies.

Following the close of each fiscal year, which runs from June 1 – May 31, [VonLehman CPA & Advisory Firm](#) conducts a comprehensive, independent audit of the institution's financial activities pertaining to the designated fiscal term. [Audited Financial Reports](#) for the past seven years are posted to our [website](#). The AAC's , [Graduate Tuition Statement, Net Price Calculator](#), [Billing and Receiving Policy](#), [Financial Aid Packaging](#), and [Loan Counseling](#) procedures are publicly disclosed in the [Academic Catalog](#), accessible via the website.

As a condition for affirmation of continuing accreditation, our last HLC review team pointed to the need for a [Chief Financial Officer \(CFO\)](#) and a Director of Human Resources (HR). The AAC hired a CFO in 2013. In 2015 the AAC hired an HR Director, Katherine Moore, who made significant progress toward establishing ethical structures, policies and procedures. After six months Katherine resigned citing family demands as the motivating factor. Within a month, the AAC hired another highly qualified and experienced HR Director, Linda Garret who continued the efforts of her predecessor in bringing our HR policies into compliance. In early January 2017, Linda Garret announced her resignation from the AAC to accept another position. The AAC is currently working to fill the vacancy. Both the CFO and HR Director positions have made considerable contributions to the professional operations and ethical stature of the college.

Reflective of this progress, the AAC's [Strategic Plan](#) exemplifies the Art Academy's commitment to integrity and prudent oversight. This plan identifies institutional needs, establishes goals, and recommends appropriate budgetary allocations. The President oversees the

strategic planning process, which is collaborative in establishing institutional objectives that garner multi-level support. Over the past five years, the AAC has implemented measures to systemize the institutional structure to more cohesively reflect our financial scope. Measures include condensing the number of full-time faculty, expanding the range of expertise among faculty by increasing the number of adjunct appointments, and filling essential staff positions within budgetary constraints. The Art Academy's executive leadership team analyzes and prepares the Strategic Plan annually and establishes clear goals for the hiring of faculty and staff to optimize curricular and operational functions, while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

In 2015, the AAC hired a [Vice President of Institutional Advancement](#) to generate non-tuition income and to ensure that our narrative, public image, and brand presence represent the AAC's historical roots, while demonstrating a firm commitment to the adaptive strategies essential to the AAC's future as a vibrant, engaged, forward-looking college that evolves with changing times. Though our Institutional Advancement office leads the AAC's efforts to bridge diverse ambitions, generations, ideologies, ethnicities, nationalities, abilities, financial capacities, and political perspectives, the entire college is invested in this work. We grasp the intrinsic notion that the history and future of the Art Academy of Cincinnati are integrated with, between, among, and in partnership with our constituents. Through hosting lectures, [economic impact studies](#), film screenings, community gatherings, [open forums](#), roundtables, exhibitions, poetry readings, and dialogues with our neighbors and the greater public, the Art Academy of Cincinnati continues to embrace the responsibilities we inherited in 2005 when we moved to [Over-the-Rhine \(OTR\)](#), the urban center of Cincinnati. Eleven years later, a bona fide indweller of the Gateway Quarter of OTR, the AAC has earned the respect, trust, and admiration of partnering institutions, alumni and students, parents and teachers, legislative officials, providers and consumers of social services, internship site managers, entrepreneurs, and major corporations. The Art Academy of Cincinnati maintains its standing through ongoing self-analysis, disciplined reflection, and engagement of internal and external constituents in collective, interdependent measures to ascertain the degree to which the AAC achieves its chief academic, operational, and fiduciary imperatives.

The AAC conserves the integrity of its relationships with donors and patrons through responsible, resolute stewardship. We regard with judicious circumspection the precise nomenclature, designations, and delimitative terms and requirements that benefactors stipulate on Donor Acknowledgement Forms ([individual](#), and [foundation](#)), and we exercise customary decorum and prudence beyond formal stipulations. The AAC upholds its duty of accountancy to donors, grantmakers, partners, stakeholders, administrative boards, students, and regulatory agencies by substantiating the responsible application of resources entrusted to the college through proactive disclosure. We disclose fundamental business operations and curricular imperatives through official proceedings, resolutions, audits, financial reports, and analyses to disclose pertinent information to benefactors and agencies. However, as a college of art and design, the AAC has the unique advantage of publicly exteriorizing our state of affairs and our achievement of projected outcomes through literally opening our doors to the public. We invite

constituents to witness critical aspects of our operations through exhibitions, literary performances, town-hall style charrettes, and community participation in curricular programming such as [Senior Thesis capstone events](#). These interactions become bases for enhanced participatory engagement, institutional progress, and persistent stewardship of our mission.

In 2015, the AAC formed a task force to review its mission. The task force included representatives from the Board of Trustees, Student Services, full-time Studio Program faculty, Department of Liberal Arts faculty, and the student body. Following a comprehensive process of meetings, task force meeting notes, discussions, and presentations to AAC constituencies, the Board approved a new mission statement on February 25, 2015. [The Mission Statement](#) is a collective document consisting of the Art Academy's [Core Values, Mission](#).

Upon adoption of the new Mission Statement, the faculty collaborated to identify progressive [Educational Objectives](#) that align with the refined Mission. Faculty realigned the [objectives for each major](#) and the [Student Learner Outcomes \(SLOs\)](#) for each course to support the Educational Objectives. This coincided with the adoption of an institutional [Syllabus Template](#), branded with the comprehensive Mission Statement, rendering each syllabus, for each course an emissary for the newly energized AAC Core Values, Mission, and Vision, thereby influencing the educational, artistic, and cultural development of every enrolled student over the course of his or her curricular experience.

Since 2013, all academic affairs operations of the AAC have been managed by the [Academic Management Team \(AMT\)](#) which includes the Academic Dean, Associate Dean, all full-time faculty members, and representatives from key offices including Student Services, Enrollment Management, Office of Financial Aid, and the Office of Registrar. The AMT meets weekly to manage the academic matters of the institution, which are recorded in the [AMT minutes](#). The AMT conforms to the Robert's Rules of Order and votes on institutional policies, curricular initiatives and changes, and procedures pertaining to students and faculty. This structure allows heightened transparency among participants and overall greater efficiency, as opposed to multiple committees.

The Department of Enrollment Management has established clear criteria for admission to the college. Requirements align with national standards for acceptance to schools of art and design and set realistic expectations for success. [Application Requirements](#) are published in the Academic Catalog and [View Book](#) and are on our website.

The AAC establishes, reviews, and follows policies to ensure fair and ethical behavior and integrity in personnel operations. [Full-time faculty receive letters of appointment](#) annually, and [adjunct faculty are formally appointed](#) each semester. Staff receive an employment agreement upon hiring. Faculty and staff employment agreements reference the appropriate personnel handbooks as described above. Policies and procedures include:

[FSLA Regulations](#)

[Employment Policies and Practices](#)

[Equal Employment Opportunity](#)

[Policy against Workplace Harassment](#)

[Consensual Relationships](#)

[Nepotism](#)

[Staff Performance Reviews](#)

[Disciplinary Action and Procedure](#)

[Grievance Procedure](#)

[End of Employment](#)

[Personnel Records](#)

[Confidential Information](#)

[Conflict of Interest](#)

[Gift Acceptance Policy](#)

Over the past five years, the AAC has experienced an unprecedented number of personnel changes.

In 2013, the AAC eliminated six full-time faculty positions. The AAC, forced by economic realities, urged full-time faculty to consider voluntary separation from the college. Among other terms, the [Voluntary Separation Agreement \(VSA\)](#) provided severance pay based on years of

service. Of the five full-time faculty members who accepted the VSA, several assumed adjunct faculty positions with the AAC. Throughout this faculty turnover, the AAC maintained its faculty rank and promotion policy, promoting several meritorious faculty members to higher ranks with modest pay increases. The AAC followed the prescribed [rank application and review policy, faculty responsibilities by rank policies, and processes for fair and ethical faculty practices](#). The Board of Trustees undertakes an annual evaluation of the Art Academy President. All faculty must submit transcripts substantiating their awarded degrees and submit an updated CV annually. The Academic Dean [reviews all full-time faculty](#) annually. Staff evaluations, which have occurred with less structure, will occur in accordance with a more regulated schedule. The CFO and Director of Human Resources will create a schedule for regular staff performance reviews and plan to publish this schedule in Spring 2017.

Faculty continue to earn salaries far below the national average and well below peer institutions. Most AAC employees have not received salary increases in the last 10 years. Shortly after the

exodus of faculty members, the administration modified the [Strategic Plan](#) to requisition both the reinstatement of a full-time professor of photography and the seamless and immediate re-hiring of a full-time Print Media professor who had been terminated. After [a national search](#), we filled the Photography position. A full-time [Art History faculty position](#) was reinstated for the 2016-2017 academic year.

The full-time faculty structure, wherein each program/major has a designated full-time faculty member to manage the objectives, courses, faculty, facilities, and advising within his or her program, has been restored.

Staff positions have experienced significant turnover in the past five years as well.

Within the last year, staff replacements have occurred in Human Resources, Financial Aid, the Office of the Registrar, Enrollment Management, Student Services, Facilities Management, Community Education, and Marketing and Communications.

The AAC maintains agreements with vendors that fulfill auxiliary functions for the institution, including **campus security**, AED and first-aid services, housing, information technology, onsite package delivery and pick-up, and mechanical maintenance. Vendor partnerships include [Urban Sites](#), [student housing agreement](#), [Encore Technologies contract](#), [University of the Cumberlands counseling agreement](#), and the **Sonis** academic management software through a **contract with Jenzabar**. The AAC currently maintains an informal agreement with **Kaldi's**, the campus food service provider. In addition, the AAC fulfills snack and beverage demand through contracts with professional vending services. Auxiliary services are evaluated through Student Satisfaction Surveys annually [\(2015\)](#) [\(2016\)](#) in order to maintain quality.

The Art Academy has established a [Code of Regulations](#) which governs the actions of the Board of Trustees of the college in fulfilling its fiduciary responsibilities to “. . . exercise, conduct, and control all the corporate powers, property and affairs of the corporation.” The Board of Trustees establishes policies and procedures to fulfill the primary functions of the college, as stated in the AAC Mission. The Code of Regulations establishes the bylaws necessary for the Board of Trustees to function in an ethical and honest manner that is beyond reproach. A committee system comprised of members of the Board, community volunteers, faculty, and staff examines and authenticates the discretionary functions of the Board, as mandated by the Code. The standing committees meet [per a set schedule](#) and report to the Board, as recorded in the [Board meeting minutes](#). The standing committees are: Executive, Facilities, Finance, Governance, Instruction, Trustees, Development, and Marketing.

Each member of the Board of Trustees must submit an [Annual Disclosure Statement](#) acknowledging that he or she has, or has not read the policies governing [Conflict of Interest](#), [Whistleblower](#), [Joint Venture](#), [Records Retention](#), [Process for Determining Compensation](#), [Gift Acceptance](#), and [Expense reimbursement](#). Further, each Trustee must formally agree or disagree to abide by these policies. Each member must disclose any known violation of any of these policies. Approved on March 19, 2009, these policies are stated clearly in the Board of Trustees Orientation Manual.

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2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

Argument

In 2013, we hired a Website Manager, who produces and uploads photographic, audio, and video documentation of student work as part of his appointment. Over the last three years, this has resulted in increasingly engaging and media-rich website redesigns and a fully functional mobile site. These new web platforms focus on clarity of information, visual impact, documentation, and regulatory compliance in respect to institutional consumer information. All critical institutional documents are displayed clearly on our website in their respective categories, so that the public, parents, and students can easily find—and cross-reference—the information they need.

The CFO coordinates with Admissions, the Business Office, the Office of Financial Aid, and our Website Manager to promptly review and post up-to-date costs of tuition and fees in print and on the website. All [admissions requirements and deadlines](#), [transfer](#) and [international student requirements](#), [academic programs](#), [NASAD accreditation](#), [HLC accreditation](#), and [four-year sample schedules](#) are published in both our Academic Catalog and View Book and are posted to the website.

The Website Manager position has allowed us to consolidate all of our consumer information on one resource page, satisfying the requirements for disclosure of such documentation. This comprehensive consumer information resource page includes [AAC Financial Statements](#), [retention and graduation rates](#), [student privacy/FERPA information](#), [services for students with disabilities](#), [student body diversity ratios](#), [undergraduate cost of attendance](#), [graduate cost of attendance](#), [net price calculator](#), [tuition refund policy](#), [textbook information](#), [program offerings \(AS, BFA, MAAE\)](#), [facilities](#), [faculty](#), [accreditation](#), [copyright regulations](#), [student technology policy](#), [student activities](#), [career services](#), [financial aid information](#), [health and safety information](#), [campus security](#), and [Clery Act compliance](#).

The Art Academy uses Sonis, a course administration and enrollment management software suite to publicly host our academic course offerings and course descriptions. All information regarding course credits, schedules, and instructors is conveniently posted [here](#).

Updated [staff](#) and [faculty](#) information pages accompany a comprehensive [directory](#) and include headshots, biographical information, and contact information to help students, parents, visitors, and regulatory officials identify appropriate personnel. The [Employee Resources page](#) provides direct tabs to essential resources such as the respective personnel handbooks. In addition to contact information, AAC faculty pages present current work, CVs, and links to professional websites.

Faculty and Student Services staff communicate directly with the student body via a Facebook student group page, an effective tool for large-group notification about events, deadlines, or time-sensitive information. In 2016, the AAC hired a part-time Social Media Practitioner, who has proliferated our followers on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#). These platforms are vital in optimizing recruitment initiatives, retaining students, and keeping students, alumni, the Board, and the general public informed of AAC events, fundraisers, exhibitions, and recruitment events.

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2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.
4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

Argument

The [AAC Board of Trustees](#) operates on a committee structure and holds regular meetings to conduct official business and employs counterbalancing measures that ensure impartiality and sound judgement unimpeded by external influences and inappropriate application of the powers so entrusted. The full Board [meets bi-monthly](#), as does the [Executive Committee](#). The [Finance Committee](#), the [Development Committee](#), and the [Alumni Council](#). The [Enrollment/Marketing Committee](#), [Facilities Committee](#), Governance Committee, and the Committee on Instruction meet quarterly. A self-sustaining entity, the Board accommodates the perspectives of students, staff, faculty, community members, and business professionals, though it does not sway to them. Indeed, AAC Board adheres to prescribed procedures and policies that best serve the institution, thereby, considering external perspectives only insofar as such perspectives reflect what the Board deems to be in the best interest of the college.

[Full board minutes 2016](#)

1. **The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.**

The Mission of the college and the priorities identified in the Strategic Plan guide the Board's deliberations, motions, and actions. For example, in [2014 the Strategic Plan](#) called for the establishment of an [Office of Institutional Advancement](#). The [Board Development Committee](#) provided the infrastructure necessary to fully pursue this directive and requisitioned funding and collateral relationships to achieve this goal. In 2015, the awarding of a grant was instrumental in launching the AAC's first Office of Institutional Advancement. AAC contributions to the funding of that office will increase over a three-year period. This was a

Board-directed initiative that the President led to create a much needed, self-sustaining fundraising office that would contribute significantly to the financial stability of the college.

- 2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.**

Participants in the Board of Trustee meetings include the President, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Finance and Operations, Vice President of Institutional Advancement, the Director of Enrollment Management, and a student representative, resulting in representation from all aspects of AAC internal constituencies. Also present is the president of the AAC Alumni Association to represent that important constituency. The Governance Committee maintains a [demographics spreadsheet](#) listing each board member, expertise, gender, age, board term(s), and committee service, in order to balance and diversify board representation in respect to experience and viable connections with the greater external community.

The Board of Trustees' primary means for considering the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituents is the occurrence of regular meetings of the board committees. Interests and concerns are both generated within the committees and may be brought to the appropriate committees by non-members. For example, the Academic Affairs Advisory Committee suggested that the AAC create a film/video major, citing community demand for creative filmmakers. Academic Affairs administrators proposed this suggestion at a recent meeting of the [Board Committee on Instruction](#), followed by a recommendation that the Strategic Plan include

- 3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.**

Each member of the Board of Trustees must complete an [Acknowledgement and Annual Disclosure Statement](#) annually to ensure that any activities or relationships on the part of individual board members do not influence Board decisions.

As noted above, the statement includes [Conflict of Interest Policy](#), [Whistleblower Policy](#), [joint Venture Policy](#), [Records Retention Policy](#), [Process for Determining Compensation Policy](#), [Gift Acceptance Policy](#), [Expense Reimbursement Policy](#), and [Code of Regulations](#) .

As a private, not-for-profit institution, it would be unusual for elected officials to press an undue influence on our mission or operations. We acknowledge that the acceptance of grants and awards from outside agencies, foundations, and institutions come with specific obligations including progress reports and evaluation of outcomes. We carefully monitor for undue burdens or inappropriate influence that could in any way, compromise the institution's mission.

4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

The AAC maintains a Board-approved [organizational chart](#) clearly displaying the line of decision-making authority from the Board of Trustees to the President, the three Vice Presidents, the Director of Enrollment Management, and all respective departments and employees. The Department of Academic Affairs, led by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, is responsible for all aspects of the degree programs including curriculum design and offerings, faculty appointments, academic assessment at all levels, and curricular planning.

Link to the [Board Calendar of Meetings here](#).

Link to the [Board meeting minutes here](#).

Link to the [Executive Committee meeting minutes here](#).

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2.D - Core Component 2.D

The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Argument

The Art Academy's [comprehensive Mission Statement](#), revised in 2015, specifically highlights its commitment to a "Rebellious Individuality," which is addressed fully in the [policy of Academic Freedom in Artistic Expression](#) distributed to students, staff, and faculty. That statement is evidenced by the criteria for the review and evaluation of student work at all levels and especially in the senior "Thesis Exhibition Review Form," which appears in the [2016 Senior Thesis Handbook](#). Similarly, the [1st, 2nd, and 3rd year review forms](#) reflect passion for creativity, risk-taking, unique voice, vision, and expression. The [policy of "Faculty Rights and Privileges/Academic Freedom,"](#) stated expressly in the Faculty Handbook, pledges and affirms the Art Academy of Cincinnati's support of faculty classroom autonomy and faculty members' freedom to pursue chosen research and publication interests. Without question, as a college of art and design, the AAC understands the extension of this freedom to be conjointly applicable to exhibitions, performances, gallery talks, and creative productions, among other customary channels for the pursuit of authenticity in teaching and learning across all disciplines in art and design. The ["Academic Integrity & Appeals"](#) section of the 2016-2017 AAC Academic Catalog addresses this further, asserting in its [Academic Freedom in Artistic Expression](#) statement that "artistic expression in the classroom, the studio, and the workshop...merits the same assurance of academic freedom that is accorded to other scholarly and teaching activities."

The Art Academy hosts poetry readings by nationally acclaimed poets, lectures by local artists and curators, and a regional undergraduate art history symposium, allowing students to generate and articulate ideas in the company of professionals representing many artistic fields. Art Academy Exhibitions are promoted via [press releases](#) and are free, uncensored, and open to the public, positioning the college as a beacon for the freedom of expression and pursuit of truth in the broader community. As presented on [page 69 of the 2016-2017 AAC Academic Catalog](#), the AAC endorses the American Association of University Professors statement on academic freedom.

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2.E - Core Component 2.E

The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, students and staff.

1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Argument

The Art Academy of Cincinnati's [Faculty Hiring and Equivalent Experience Policy](#) is a quality-control measure that assures that those hired to teach in our degree programs possess appropriate education, certifications, professional preparation, and/or equivalent experience, as determined by Academic Affairs administrators charged with oversight of faculty and curricular programs and administration of faculty personnel policies in collaboration with the Director of Human Resources. As a baseline standard for authenticating faculty proficiencies and competencies, the Academic Dean, the Department Chairs, and the HR Director verify transcripts, academic records, and the professional expertise and accomplishments that prospective instructors claim. This process is essential to ascertaining levels of proficiency and competence among faculty and the propensity for relevant, responsible, credible scholarship across the faculty base, as well as potential effectiveness in committee work within and beyond the college.

Originality of research and scholarly practice are required of all Art Academy of Cincinnati faculty members. Further, ongoing professional engagement in visual arts scholarship, exhibitions/curatorial work, and effective mentorship to AAC students through adherence to high standards of educational assessment and self-development are expected. For optimal credibility as college-level faculty and scholars in art and design disciplines, AAC faculty members must use consistent application of evaluative measures in respect to student work, contemporary scholarship in art and design, and certainly in respect to their own work. As professors of art and design, AAC faculty are expected to lead by example, to maintain intellectual currency in the subject matters they teach, and to demonstrate a sophisticated discernment of quality as illustrated in the end results of design and fine arts scholarship. However, beyond this, AAC faculty must exemplify a predilection for commendable, rigorous processes that challenge the artist as scholar; provoke criticism, inquiry, and reasoned debate; and encourage pursuit of intellectually-stimulating frameworks that inform the studio practices of art and design students over the course of their lives and careers.

In addition to undergoing annual evaluation of scholarly practice (commensurate with faculty rank), AAC faculty are evaluated in terms of effectiveness as educators, as indicated by midterm and final course evaluations. In accordance with the Faculty Handbook, the Academic Dean completes annual reviews of full-time faculty members and those faculty seeking rank promotions. Full-time faculty submit an [Annual Personnel Update](#) consisting of a review of the courses taught and recommended changes, a statement of goals identified by the individual faculty, the Department Chair, and the Dean during the previous year, a current CV, which includes professional and scholarly endeavors, and goals for the upcoming year. Professional development programs are in place to support and encourage staff advancement and continued cultivation of knowledge, methods, and applications integral to integrity of research, familiarity with emerging technologies and policies, and enhanced scholarly practice among faculty.

A [Faculty Development Fund](#) provides reimbursement for faculty members who wish to participate in professional development activities, including travel to conferences and events, training, and publication preparation. Faculty submit [Check Requests](#) to the designated Department Chair and detail the use of the funds for which reimbursement is requested, though the Academic Dean has ultimate authority and oversight in respect to faculty development funding. Full-time staff and faculty are eligible for tuition waivers for enrollment in BFA courses, and they are encouraged to enroll in off-campus courses and workshops that can enhance their professional practice, subject to approval by their respective supervisors as applied to staff, or approval by the Academic Dean, as applied to faculty. Approvals are mission-driven and are granted based on significance and appropriateness to the college. The college hosts a biannual exhibition of faculty current work, which encourages faculty productivity and exposure and provides an opportunity for students to engage the work of their professors through the [Faculty Exhibition](#).

The integrity of student practice is emphasized in individual courses and in scholarship and review criteria. Scholarships and Awards for Continuing Students are outlined in the Academic Catalog on pages 79-81. Scholarship awards are overseen by one or more faculty members or an independent jury who ensure the integrity of artwork or research project submitted in application. Students agree to approach their work and that of their fellow students with integrity by signing the [Student Studio Contract](#), which encourages a mutually respectful and supportive community in and outside of the Art Academy. The AAC exercises appropriate oversight to ensure that its “. . . regulations and procedures do not impair freedom of expression or discourage creativity by subjecting artistic work to tests of propriety or ideology, as shown in the AAUP-based [Academic Integrity and Appeals statement](#) on page 69 of the Academic Catalog. ”

The AAC [Modeling Policies](#) guarantee our “commitment to providing an environment free of harassment, conflicts of interest, and situations that may give the appearance of improper conduct.” Only designated staff engage the services of models and manage their scheduling to

ensure proper and ethical procedures in management of figure modeling protocols. Our strict guidelines for working with models serves to protect all persons who participate in educational activities that include models, including the figure models, students, faculty, administrative staff, and others.

As a college of art and design, the Art Academy of Cincinnati does not have a precedent for oversight of research involving human subjects, as such involvement is highly uncommon in the research and practices of art and design faculty, staff, and students. Therefore, the Art Academy of Cincinnati does not maintain an Institutional Review Board, or publish IRB policies.

1. “Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.”

The Art Academy of Cincinnati values responsible scholarship, as evidenced on pages 69-71 of the Academic Catalog, which provides clear statements on the AAC’s [Academic Honesty Policy](#) and its [Fair Use & Copyright Infringement](#) policy.

The Art Academy is committed to students’ ethical use of information in the classroom and in pursuit of their own work. The AAC catalog includes a statement on [Fair Use & Copyright Infringement](#), given on pages 70-71 of the Academic Catalog. Based on Title 17 of the U.S. Code concerning copyrighted materials, the AAC statement mandates that all students and employees comply with U.S. Copyright Law, and it details the purposes for which reproduction of copyrighted materials can be deemed fair. Since many forms of visual communication at times involve repurposing images or the appropriation of images, AAC faculty members reiterate the mandate to comply with U.S. Copyright law and educate students on the pitfalls of using copyrighted materials in their works without obtaining the necessary permissions, as legally required.

Students in English, art history, and writing courses train in the proper and effective use of research sources from their freshman through senior years. This training focuses on the evaluation of sources and their proper documentation throughout the research process and in proper protocols for citations. Documentation of research is part of the criteria for reviews of student work each year, as referenced in the [2016 Senior Thesis Handbook](#) and the [1st, 2nd, and 3rd year review forms](#). Since 2014, this training has been reinforced by a review of ethical research practices in the Senior Seminar capstone course, as described in the [Senior Seminar](#)

[course syllabus](#). These efforts are aimed at reinforcing proper writing formats, preventing academic dishonesty, broadening the range of sources consulted by students and faculty, and encouraging original expressions of ideas.

2. **“The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.”**

The [Academic Honesty Policy](#) states: “The Art Academy of Cincinnati is a community of faculty, staff, and students committed to the exchange of ideas contributing to intellectual growth and artistic development.” Specific attending procedures and processes detail possible violations of that commitment and procedures for determining suspected violations and confronting those suspected of infringement. In the event that a professor suspects academic dishonesty, he or she voices concern with the student, notifies the Academic Dean, and presents to the Dean any purported proof of academic dishonesty. The Dean consults with the professor, the student, the student’s advisor, and the Department Chair before reaching a decision. If it is determined that violation of the Academic Honesty Policy has occurred, several punitive measures are considered, including assignment of an “F” for the project alleged to exhibit academic dishonesty; assignment of a grade of “F” for the course; loss of a scholarship; and expulsion from the college. The Academic Dean notifies the student in writing of the determination, as well as any punitive measures that could result in loss of scholarship monies or dismissal from the college. The student may appeal to the Council of Adjudication, as explained in detail on pages 87-94 of the Academic Catalog. The Academic Honesty Policy is referenced on all [course syllabi](#) and is outlined thoroughly on pages 69-71 of the Catalog.

Sources

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- 11-15-16 AAC Faculty Handbook (page number 11)
- 11-15-16 AAC Faculty Handbook (page number 20)
- 11-15-16 AAC Faculty Handbook (page number 22)
- 2016 Faculty Review Packet
- 2016 Faculty Self Evaluations and Dean's Response
- 2016-2017 AAC Academic Catalog
- 2016-2017 AAC Academic Catalog (page number 69)
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- 2016-2017 AAC Academic Catalog (page number 97)
- 2016-2017 SeniorThesisResourceBook FINAL
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- AAC EE Handbook Final October 2016.docx
- AAC Studio Review Form
- Accounts Payable Check Request
- AH211 Intro to Visual Culture Spring 2016 Kenny
- AH211 Intro to Visual Culture Spring 2016 Kenny (page number 5)
- APR Example
- Contract
- HU102-01 Artist as Reader Price Spring 2016
- PR Art Academy of Cincinnati - Faculty Exhibition Pearlman and Convergys Galleries Reception, January 29, 2016
- Review Forms
- Senior Seminar Syllabus
- Syllabus Template

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Summary

The Art Academy of Cincinnati (AAC) exercises sincerity and impartiality in respect to its academic policies, fiscal operations, business proceedings, personnel functions, institutional governance, and other regulative functions. A shared-governance institution, the AAC adheres to high standards of integrity and follows clearly-defined procedures to ensure that ethical and responsible conduct guides all aspects of the college. A [Code of Regulations](#) governs the actions of the [Board of Trustees](#) and ensures responsible conduct in respect to essential governance matters. The [Office of the President](#) maintains all Institutional Governance Documents, ([Articles of Incorporation](#), [IRS 501\(c\)\(3\)](#), [Code of Regulations](#), [OBR authorization](#), and [NASAD documents](#)) which are made available to the public.

In 2016, the administration analyzed the outdated personnel handbook, which had governed both faculty and staff employment since 2012. The Director of Human Resources recognized the need to restore a distinct faculty handbook that functions in concert with a comprehensive [Employee Handbook](#). College executives developed a new Employee Handbook that addresses applicable state and federal laws and formulates standards for workplace conduct, employee benefits, company policies, and hiring and promotion processes. Under the direction of the Academic Dean, the full-time faculty completed a draft of the new [Faculty Handbook](#) and routed the approved text to the Director of Human Resources for professional evaluation and seamless integration with institutional HR policies. Both handbooks, completed in Fall 2016, establish the expectations, procedures, responsibilities, and rights of their respective constituencies. Inasmuch as confidentiality and compliance with pertinent regulations permit, transparency in workplace policies is paramount, as evidenced in both handbooks. The review process for AAC personnel handbooks is thorough. After the Director of Human Resources evaluates and revises these documents, she routes them to the [AAC Legal Counsel](#) for specialized review. Following revisions advised by Legal Counsel, the President reviews these documents. Upon approval from the President, the handbooks are routed to the Board of Trustees for review and ultimate institutional approval.

Key [Academic Management Team \(AMT\)](#) members produce the [AAC Academic Catalog](#), which delineates requirements for completing the [Associate's \(A.S.\)](#), [Bachelor's \(BFA\)](#), and [Master's \(MAAE\)](#) degree programs. Moreover, the AAC affirms its obligation to provide the tools, resources, and support essential to student success in its programs by addressing throughout the Catalog known impediments to student achievement and by proactively identifying solutions. The Catalog includes information on [Disability](#)

[Services](#), [Academic Tutoring](#), [Studio Tutoring](#), and [Mental Health Counseling](#), which are among services available to students at no charge. In this way, students are assured access to actionable means that will support their intellectual development, civic engagement, wellbeing, and dexterity as artists and designers prepared for success in a complex world. This publication undergoes close examination and revision annually to ensure accuracy, currency, and clear conveyance of regulations, procedures, and guidelines, as well as attending rights, responsibilities, and repercussions.

The Art Academy of Cincinnati conforms to the [National Association of Schools of Art and Design \(NASAD\) Code of Ethics](#) and has been accredited by this association since 1948, a fact publicized in the Academic Catalog and all appropriate forums. The Catalog publicizes its [Non-Discrimination Statement](#), [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) provisions, [Fair Use & Copyright Infringement Policy](#), [Academic Honesty Policy](#), a statement on [Student Rights and Responsibilities \(FERPA\)](#), and the [Code of Student Conduct](#), among many institutional, state, and federal policies and regulations. The AAC does not tolerate sexual harassment or related conduct, and we educate all internal constituents of the school's [Sexual Misconduct Policies](#) and detailed procedural steps, sanctioning guidelines, and support resources available to all persons implicated in alleged violations of the policies. Beyond covering this topic in the Catalog, in Fall 2016, the Art Academy of Cincinnati produced and published [Understanding Title IX, the Violence Against Women Act, and the Clery Act: The Art Academy of Cincinnati's Statement on Gender Equality, Gender Equity, Sexual Discrimination, Sexual Violence, and Dating Violence](#), which served as the basis for mandatory, campus-wide education on these important matters. A direct link to this document is prominently positioned on the Employee Resources page of the AAC website, as well as other prominent locations.

Sources

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- 2016 Tutoring Evidence
- 2016-2017 Board Calendar - Full Board and Committees new
- 2016-2017 SeniorThesisResourceBook FINAL
- 2016-2017-Academic-Catalog
- 2016-2017-Academic-Catalog (page number 3)
- 2016-2017-Academic-Catalog (page number 15)
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- 2016-2017-Academic-Catalog (page number 69)
- 2016-2017-Academic-Catalog (page number 70)
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- AAC EE Handbook Final October 2016.docx
- AAC President
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- Accredited Institutions Search - Nation...society of Schools of Art and Design
- Annual Disclosure Statement
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- ArtAcademyOfCincinnati
- Articles of Incorporation
- Board Binder TOC
- Board Demographics 2016-2017 new
- Board of Trustees Roster 2016-2017
- Board of Trustees Roster 2016-2017 (page number 3)
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- NASAD Code of Ethics
- NASAD_HANDBOOK_2016-17
- NASAD_HANDBOOK_2016-17 (page number 21)
- NASAD_HANDBOOK_2016-17 (page number 29)
- State of Ohio Certificate of Authorization_AAC
- Strategic Plan Grid 2016-2019 Approved letter size
- Tax Exemption
- TitleIXAAC
- Trustees-Committees FY 2016-2017 new

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Argument

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.

The Art Academy of Cincinnati continually updates its programs, curricula, and courses to ensure relevance to 21st century art and design education. The AAC's newly updated [Mission, Vision and Core Values](#) state clearly and emphatically the role our students will play in the future of art and design. Our [Universal Educational Goal](#) supports our mission and vision, and to ensure ongoing adherence, they are prominently displayed on the [syllabus template](#) for every course taught at the AAC.

The AAC offers four programs: Bachelor of Fine Arts with majors in Design; Illustration; Painting and Drawing; Photography; Print Media; and Sculpture; a Master of Arts in Art Education; an Associate of Science in Graphic Design; and Community Education. Each degree program has Universal Educational Objectives that provide the groundwork necessary for building and maintaining curricular focus, consistency, and relevance. Each of the six majors in the BFA degree program has [Goals and Educational Objectives for the Major](#), aligned with the Mission and written by the faculty teaching in those areas with oversight by the Studio Chair and the Dean. Finally, every course has clearly stated and measurable Student Learner Outcomes presented in a consistent syllabus template that are created from the Educational Objectives. This clear lineage of Mission, Vision, Goals, Objectives, and Student Learner Outcomes ensure that AAC courses are in direct alignment with the Mission of the college: To create and sustain

radical, forward-thinking, contemporary visual artists and designers whose creative contributions make a substantial difference in all the lives they touch.

Courses in both the Liberal Arts and Studio areas maintain clearly defined criteria for determining appropriate course levels and prerequisites, as delineated in the [Definition of Course Levels in Liberal Arts and Studio Program](#) documents. The assignment of course prerequisites ensures that students have the necessary skills to complete the required coursework. Prerequisites for a given course are made by the Department Chair based on the course description and syllabus in conjunction with the curriculum, the Academic Dean, the faculty, and the outlined criteria.

The Liberal Arts component of the Art Academy of Cincinnati's BFA degree programs includes courses in Art History, Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences. The Department of Liberal Arts offers a variety of courses at all levels of the BFA program, tailored to the needs of developing artists and designers. These courses provide a backdrop against which AAC students develop their personal voice and vision, while making connections between their visual lives and the larger realms of human experience, other people, and the world. As such, the Department of Liberal Arts is a service department and is in service to the larger goal of

“ . . . creating and sustaining radical, forward-thinking visual artists and designers whose creative contributions make a substantial difference in all the lives they touch.”

Department of Liberal Arts faculty teach basic academic skills, vocabulary, and knowledge that help AAC students succeed in college and in their post-collegiate professional and artistic pursuits. In addition to two semesters each of foundational college English ([Artist as Reader Workshop](#) and [Artist as Writer Workshop](#)) and Art History, students must take an upper-level critical thinking course, which they can satisfy with [Aesthetics](#), [Introduction to Visual Culture](#), or [Philosophy](#). Through Senior Seminar, a required capstone experience, students connect their research and writing with what they make, how they make it, and why their visual art matters to them. Further, they develop the confidence, depth, and inquiry to see how their art effectuates the attitudes, beliefs, changes, and actions that matter most to them. Through this key, defining course, emerging artists and designers develop the critical thinking acumen necessary to develop their own voice and vision within a context enriched by both exposure to – and immersion – in inquiry as a necessary tool for creating a life worth living. To fulfill the remainder of the Liberal Arts requirements, students must complete two Art History electives, one Natural Science elective, one Social Science elective, one Humanities elective, and 12 additional LA credits (four courses), which can be any combination of Natural Science, Social Science, Humanities or Art History.

The college administers ongoing internal review to ensure that the curriculum is relevant, challenging, and enriching to the creative spirit at the levels in which the students are engaged. The Art Academy of Cincinnati [Academic Catalog](#) academic programs are updated annually by the faculty. This includes curriculum oversight of each degree offered and review of course descriptions and prerequisites, assuring the relevancy of program content and the appropriate sequencing of learning experiences.

An example of internal curriculum evaluation occurred in 2011; the Art Academy created a task force to determine the relevancy of current majors and their relationship to the number of students enrolled in the major. As a result, the task force determined that some required major courses lacked sufficient numbers for critical mass. Subsequently, we eliminated the BFA with a major in Art History, keeping the Art History minor, and combined the independent majors of Painting and Drawing into one major in 2015, following official approval from National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) to offer this new, combined major.

All curricular changes such as the reworking of the foundations year in 2014 and proposed new courses must be presented and approved by the [Academic Management Team](#). [Courses proposed in 2015](#) included *Art and the Occult*, *Exhibition Studio*, *Experimental Publications*, *Video Games: History, Culture and Practice*, *Performance*, *Naturalist Arts (Taxidermy)*, *Survey of Graffiti and Street Art*, and *Zen and the Creative Process*. During [2016, courses proposed](#) include: *Contemporary Practices Workshop*, *Exhibition Studio*, *The History of Tattoo*, *“Die, Die, My Darling”: The Female Corpse in Art*, *Creative Running*, *Novel Writing for Beginners*, *Low Brow Films and the Cult Phenomenon*. These new course offerings demonstrate the Art Academy’s commitment to maintaining an active, relevant, and current curriculum. It supports our commitment to providing students the opportunity to articulate “a unique and rebellious voice in their work in relation to the past, present and future of art and design”.

In addition to ongoing internal review, the AAC employs external resources to assess the relevance and effectiveness of the programs offered. Individual courses frequently hire guest critics and require client-based projects. In 2015, we invited professional artists, designers, curators, and educators to become charter members in the Art Academy [Academic Affairs Advisory Committee](#) (AAAC). The AAAC meets twice each academic year to discuss and suggest topics relevant to the education of Art Academy’s students, the curriculum, institutional priorities, challenges, and programs. This informal external review process encourages criticism and dialogue concerning the perceived strengths and weaknesses of our program with professionals in the field. The AAAC supports the BFA and MAAE programs providing community involvement to help make the Art Academy of Cincinnati:

. . . *the most celebrated, rebellious, cutting-edge and radiant community of artists and designers anywhere, at any time – the seers, the radicals, the innovators, and creative professionals who establish the rules that the future will follow.*

[The Board of Trustees Committee on Instruction](#) (COI) has ultimate responsibility for oversight of the academic programs, including assuring levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree. The Academic Dean and Associate Dean represent the faculty perspective in discussions regarding instruction that have an impact on curricular concerns. The COI serves in an advisory capacity and makes recommendations based on members’ experience in the greater artistic and cultural community.

To stress the importance of writing in every aspect of the art making process, the AAC employs a program called *Writing Across the Curriculum*. In addition to liberal arts courses where writing assignments are common, every studio course, must require at least one graded writing assignment and include it on the [syllabus](#). *Writing Across the Curriculum* thereby insures that

students will, at a minimum, write and be assessed on at least 40 separate occasions, and appropriate levels, during their 8 semesters. Their writing experience culminates in the thesis capstone experience in their senior year as described in the [Senior Thesis Resource Book](#).

The Senior Thesis Statement is a written documentation of the work foundational to the Senior Thesis Exhibition. This formal, scholarly paper addresses the relevant concepts, theories, influences, and experiences that form the basis of a student's work and development during his or her Art Academy tenure. Utilizing the resources of *Senior Seminar* and interaction with the thesis committee, the student prepares five drafts, each reviewed by the thesis advisor and *Senior Seminar* faculty.

Each senior must present an exhibition of artwork for evaluation by his or her thesis committee. The purpose of the Senior Thesis is for the student to demonstrate that they have achieved the Educational Objectives of the Art Academy of Cincinnati and may thereby be considered for the awarding of the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. The work presented must demonstrate the student's abilities to develop a successfully realized concept, displaying creativity, formal qualities, appropriate craftsmanship, visual impact, and appropriate presentation. This visual component is a professional exhibition for which the student is responsible for collaboratively coordinating a small group exhibition with announcements, a public reception, gallery installation, de-installation of the work, and restoration of the gallery space. [Senior Thesis Statement and Senior Thesis Exhibition Review Forms](#) are completed by the thesis committee to substantiate the culmination of learning in the program. Through Senior Seminar, the student is also required to include an artist statement and present a public gallery talk, experiences aligned with those expected of professional artists and designers throughout their careers.

2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.

The AAC has clearly articulated and specific learning goals for each of its degree programs: The Bachelor of Fine Arts degree programs, the Master of Arts in Art Education, and the Associate of Science in Graphic Design. The hierarchy begins with the Universal Education Goal and the Universal Educational Objectives. These documents were rewritten in 2014 to accommodate our curriculum revisions, which respond to our relocation from the provincial, scenic landscape of Eden Park to the inner-city environment of Over the Rhine (OTR). The contemporary culture of OTR, which we reference directly in our goals and objectives, enhances AAC programming by providing access to contemporary galleries, museums and branding firms.

To maintain alignment with the institutional Educational Goals and Objectives we have clearly articulated [Educational Goals and Educational Objectives for the Major](#) which funnel down into specific learner outcomes for each course in the major that all support these goals. As a result, Course Descriptions in the Major, Syllabi, and Student Learner Outcomes are all in direct alignment with the Educational Objectives.

The [MAAE program](#) integrates studio courses with seminars in educational theories and current practices in curriculum and assessment. The MAAE program has a specific [Educational Goal](#)

[and articulates specific MAAE Education Objectives](#) fulfilled through Student Learner Outcomes for each course as stated in [MAAE Course Syllabi](#).

The [Associate of Science in Graphic Design](#) is a two-year program comprising the first four semesters of the BFA major in Design, providing students with a combination of liberal arts and studio courses to become confident in the practices of Graphic Design.

3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consorial arrangements, or other modality).

The high standards set by the Art Academy's Mission, Vision, Educational Goal, and Educational Objectives as well as the checks and balances in place among internal and external review processes established by the [Quality Assurance Map](#) and the [Quality Assurance Program](#) continually ensure that the courses and programs are current, academically challenging, relevant, and responsive to contemporary art and design education and the art and design community at large.

The AAC currently has a single location for the degree program. We do not offer on-line, Dual Credit, or distance education programs. Currently, all degree program courses are taught in the classroom/studio at the 1212 Jackson Street location. However, students may earn credit towards graduation through other programs such as the Greater Cincinnati Consortium of Colleges and Universities (GCCCCU) where students from member institutions may take courses toward their degree, not offered in their own college, from other institutions.

Art Academy students are encouraged to pursue opportunities for study abroad. In consultation with the Studio Program Chair, the Registrar, and their advisors, students research and arrange matters related to study abroad with pre-approval from the Studio Program Chair to ensure that credits earned will transfer and apply to the students' degree programs. Recent study abroad institutions include: The University of Granada in Granada, Spain, Studio Art Centers International Florence (SACI), The Butler Institute for Study Abroad, and The Umbra Institute in Perugia, Italy.

The Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design (AICAD) is a consortium of over 40 accredited art schools in the United States and Canada as well as three international affiliates in Israel, Ireland and Japan. This consortium allows AAC juniors to participate in a one-semester program of study at other AICAD member institutions consistent with AAC learning goals.

Strict guidelines control the quality of educational experience that students receive off campus in [Internships](#). Students explore meaningful experiential-learning in which current skills are strengthened and new skills are obtained. In order for a student to receive credit for their internship, specific criteria must be met. Throughout the duration of the internship, the Director of Student Services communicates regularly with the site manager to confirm adherence to the [Learning Agreement in the Internship Experience Packet](#). Further checks and balances are employed following the completion of the internship, which include: the submission of a student evaluation by the site supervisor, submission of a site evaluation completed by the student,

submission of documentation evidencing completion of 120 hours of work, and an exit interview with the Director of Student Services.

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- HU201 Aesthetics Spring 2016 Hart
- HU210 Introduction to Philosophy Syllabus Spring 2015 Hill
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- Mission Core Values
- New Courses Proposed for 2015
- New Courses Proposed for 2016
- Open Internship Experience Packet
- Senior Seminar Syllabus
- Senior Thesis Resource Book
- Senior Thesis Resource Book (page number 20)
- Syllabus Template
- Syllabus Template (page number 3)
- Teaching Assistant Information
- Writing Standards Form

3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

Argument

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.

The general education program at the Art Academy of Cincinnati consists of multi-faceted curricula that demonstrate its Mission and Vision Statements while concurrently preparing students for both personal and professional success. This is accomplished by ensuring that all students acquire a basic foundation through [Required Courses and Electives](#). Irrespective of a student's declared major or discipline, the general education course offerings are required universally of each degree-seeking student at the AAC, while the required electives allow for students to choose, according to their specific paths of inquiry and individual interests, from a variety of course offerings.

In the first year all students take the same selection of studio courses which provide a foundation for all majors: [Studio Arts 1: Core](#), [Studio Arts 2: Creative Processes](#) and [Studio Arts 3: Color](#). Additionally, they can select two from [Analytical Drawing](#), [Observational Drawing](#), or [Digital Drawing](#). These first year courses are supported by [Foundation Educational Goals and Objectives](#) and all first year syllabi. Every course has clearly stated and measurable Student Learner Outcomes presented in the course syllabi that align with the AAC Educational Objectives, Mission and Vision.

AAC general education courses are offered through the Department of Liberal Arts whose [statement of philosophy](#) fully supports and is integrated into the mission of the college. The ACC's general education required course offerings are composed of *Artist as Writer*, *Artist as Reader Workshops*, and Art History in the first year. A critical thinking experience, courses in the humanities, social science, and natural science as well as additional courses in art history round out the 42 liberal arts required credits. [Senior Seminar 1](#) in the fall of the senior year teaches students to deeply explore their concepts, influences, and motivations for becoming a contributing creative in the community.

The [Artist as Writer Workshop](#) is designed to assist the developing visual artist through four major areas of writing pertinent to the field: 1) thinking and writing about art; 2) journaling; 3) argument and persuasion; and 4) self-analysis and promotion. In the [Artist as Reader Workshop](#), students read a variety of literary forms (short stories, poetry, plays, novels) as well as critical essays that reflect widely diverse cultures and time periods.

The required Art History courses, 20th and 21st Century Art and Design History, are divided up into two, discrete sections. [20th and 21st Century Art and Design History: Issues and Ideas](#) explores the plethora of issues and ideas employed by artists and designers in the 20th and 21st centuries. Race, class, gender, sexuality, and socio-political trends and upheaval are some of the concepts and themes to be investigated. [20th and 21st Century Art and Design History: Media](#) surveys the exciting developments in both two-dimensional and three-dimensional media in the 20th and 21st centuries, including developments in drawing, painting, printmaking, photography, film, video, sculpture, and installation.

The critical thinking experience encompasses a change to the AAC's previous requirement that all students take Aesthetics. The requirement is replaced with the option of taking one of the following: [Aesthetics](#), [Intro to Visual Culture](#), or [Intro to Philosophy](#). This change augments students' leverage in crafting their AAC education.

Required of all seniors, *Senior Seminar I* is a team-taught, multi-purpose course that connects a student's undergraduate experience to his or her life beyond the AAC as a graduate student and/or as a practicing professional. The course is designed to initiate students in both conceptual and practical aspects of articulating a life as a practicing professional. Additionally, the course may cover such topics as: goal-setting, the business of art, professional presentations, building a resume, and portfolio development, etc.

In addition to the required course offerings, the AAC also requires that students fulfill a minimum of 27 credit hours in required liberal arts course electives. Required electives include Art History (6 credits), Natural Science (3 credits), Social Science (3 credits), Humanities (3 credits), and 12 additional credits of any combination of the above. These additional elective requirements ensure that students continuously expand their practices as artists to be both informed by, and to influence, various other cultural spheres and zones of experience. The distribution of general education credit requirements is displayed on each students' [Degree Audit](#). [Course Descriptions](#) are updated annually and are found in the AAC Academic Catalog and on the website.

To support students in these general education requirements, the Art Academy of Cincinnati also provides an Academic Tutor who is available to students at regular office hours and by appointment during regular academic semesters at no cost.

The Master of Arts in Art Education Program also has a strong foundation of art education seminars and liberal arts offerings to ensure that all students acquire the same general competencies. The MAAE's required course offerings include four Arts Education Seminars and *Artistic Practice in the Contemporary World*. These requirements are displayed on the student's [MAAE Degree Audit](#).

2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.

The AAC articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements in a variety of ways including the newly updated Mission and Vision Statements, its clearly stated Core Values, its Universal Educational Goal, and Universal Educational Objectives, and specific Student Learner Outcomes as stated on every course syllabus. These statements make explicit to both students and faculty the skills and/or knowledge one is expected to have acquired as a result of having completed a particular course. All [Liberal Arts Course Syllabi](#) are required to state specific Course Goals and Student Learner Outcomes so that students understand what each course entails and what each instructor expects.

The Department of Liberal Arts seeks to provide challenging, provocative, and compelling courses that emphasize art history, critical thinking, the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. Such courses help expand the possibilities for applying creative problem-solving in radical, visionary ways. To this end, the Department of Liberal Arts has created a [Department of Liberal Arts Statement of Philosophy](#) to guide the teaching and learning in the general education courses.

Further, AAC Liberal Arts courses provide a foundation upon which students can locate themselves as creative people in our time. The definition of what it means to be an artist needs to be radically readjusted and expanded to accommodate new visions for creative living and problem-solving. Liberal Arts courses at the AAC are not in addition to a student's study of art and design, they are an integral extension of it. The Liberal Arts, are arts, after all. As such, our courses are tailor-made for the artists we serve.

Courses such as *Psychology*, *Creative Writing*, and *Taxidermy* are geared to our students' needs, rather than simply fulfill a requirement on the way to a student's real field of interest. Imagination makes the world, and in liberal arts courses, that imagining is unpacked, interrogated, and connected to the student's life goals.

These statements of purpose, content, philosophy, goals, and learning outcomes are disseminated thoroughly and variously. The AAC's Website is available to both the students and the public and includes an annually updated Academic Catalogue. Additionally, a printed version of the Academic Catalogue is distributed to students and instructors at the beginning of each academic year.

All instructors create and distribute syllabi for each of their classes at the beginning of each semester. The syllabi templates are standardized in their expression of the ACC's statements of Mission, Vision and Core Values across disciplines, departments and classes to demonstrate consistency and clarity of goals. However, each syllabus for a given instructor/class is unique in that it articulates specific Course Goals and Student Learner Outcomes for that class. This standardization of syllabi design allows students to become familiar with, and readily access, the specific expectations, necessary supplies and requirements for each of their classes.

3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

The Art Academy of Cincinnati grants a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with majors in Design, Illustration, Painting and Drawing, Photography, Print Media, and Sculpture. Students may minor in Art History, Creative Writing, Film/Video/Audio and/or in any major area.

The AAC employs recognizable and consistent strategies for mastering modes of inquiry. These principles move across and between every program. They are also integrated sequentially from the freshman core curriculum all the way to the senior seminar and thesis show requiring ever increasing mastery.

One important example of such strategies is the [Feldman Design and Art Criticism Guide](#). This guide is introduced to freshman in their first semester at the AAC and is integrated in both studio and academic classes. The purpose of the Design and Art Criticism Guide is to help students expand and direct their understanding of meaning in visual imagery. Feldman's principles are emphasized and expanded upon over the course of a student's trajectory at the AAC, culminating in their final thesis paper.

The [Design Program](#) integrates fine art studio practices and liberal arts inquiry with contemporary design education. Through courses in this major as stated on the [Design Syllabi](#), students learn to manage ideas, artistic processes, audience expectations, composition, typography, and imagery to create sophisticated and transformative design solutions. Students encounter challenges in areas such as brand identity, publication, environmental, product, promotional, interactive and Web design. Many Design program graduates go on to work at local, regional, national, and international design studios or in related fields such as architecture, exhibit and display, marketing, film, and the entertainment industry.

[Illustration Program](#) major courses, as stated in the [Illustration Major Syllabi](#), include many opportunities to incorporate design, digital media, painting, print media, drawing, 3D arts, and photography, allowing students to create a body of work that references the contemporary

illustration community and reflects their personal vision. Students who graduate with a major in Illustration are well-qualified to pursue work in such industries as book and magazine publishing, video games, packaging, corporate branding, retail merchandising, motion graphics, advertising, social advocacy, and entertainment.

[Painting and Drawing Program](#) majors, as evidenced in the [Painting and Drawing Major Syllabi](#), engage in research, problem-solving, and personal expression to develop an individual voice through a range of media. Artists are immersed in an environment that encourages an innovative definition of Painting and Drawing that promotes technical proficiency, focus, and exploration. Students graduating with a major in Painting and Drawing are a dynamic addition to the contemporary dialogue in an ever-changing art world and are prepared to begin their career as exhibiting artists or continue their education in graduate school.

The [Photography Program's](#) breadth of traditional and experimental processes is unique. [Photography Major Syllabi](#) outline students' opportunities to learn about 35mm, digital, medium-and large-format cameras, black and white printing, digital output, color shooting, experimental photography, and digital video. The major provides a blend of theoretical and real-world instruction that enables students to build careers as commercial photographers, professional artists, and photojournalists.

The [Print Media Program](#) emphasizes traditional approaches invigorated by new technologies. [Print Media Major Syllabi](#) explain how students are introduced to a full range of techniques, including monoprints, relief, lithography, intaglio, screen printing, letterpress, and book arts. Students employ both digital and manual approaches to making prints. Graduates in Print Media pursue a variety of career paths, including making prints at a cooperative press, working as a master printer in a professional print workshop, opening an independent press, screen printing at a professional design firm, and/or pursuing a graduate degree.

The [Sculpture Program](#) provides a strong foundation in traditional and contemporary 3D processes. Majors, as seen in the [Sculpture Major Syllabi](#), fuse old and new media and strategies into their own art-making processes. Many recent graduates are exhibiting their sculpture on the local, regional, or national levels. Others have entered top graduate programs or are working for successful designers, foundries, fabricators, display firms, and interior design firms.

The Art Academy also offers three minor tracks. The [Film, Video, and Audio Minor Program](#) prepares students to explore many of the most essential technical and creative aspects of video production. Being in close proximity to a burgeoning media environment, our students receive the technical and artistic grounding necessary to take advantage of the immediate expectations of internships, but are also offered the space, equipment and support they need to realize their own cinematic visions. During the hands-on learning process, the basics of field, studio and electronic arts production are covered by focusing on more traditional short documentary and fictional formats, as well as exploration of experimental, interactive New Media tools for use in contemporary gallery environments.

The [Art History Minor](#) combines the study of art history and studio practice with a foundation in academic research, art historical methodologies, and an optional Museum Studies Internship. As

evidenced in [Art History Minor Course Syllabi](#), this minor prepares students for further career preparation and/or graduate studies in a variety of arts-related fields. Students have completed internships in curatorial departments of the Cincinnati Art Museum, the Contemporary Arts Center, the Taft Museum of Art, and others.

Specially tailored for students who are engaged with language as a material, artistic medium, and/or who are interested in its narrative and poetic possibilities, the [Creative Writing Minor](#) offers students a variety of contexts in which to use language in the service of their larger artistic vision. As evidenced in the [Creative Writing Minor Syllabi](#) these courses focus on the craft of reading, writing, revising and performing with language in several different genres. Students come face to face with the power of words to re-imagine both the world as we know it and what it means to be human in our time. Collaboration and publishing are emphasized and students spend time with visiting professional writers.

The Art Academy of Cincinnati offers a low-residency [Master of Arts in Art Education Degree Program](#) that can be completed over 3-5 summers and is unique among graduate-level art education programs because of its strong emphasis on studio achievement. Art educators who are actively involved in making art are more engaged teachers. Our goal is to assist students in the development of a unique, active, and integrated studio practice that may be adapted and sustained throughout their professional lives. As evidenced in the [MAAE Course Syllabi](#) the program integrates studio courses with seminars in educational theory and current practices in curriculum and assessment. Each graduate must have a final thesis exhibition.

4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.

The production of art and the existence of art institutions, whether schools or museums, have served as litmus tests for the cultural health and vitality of civilizations since the beginning of recorded history. As a field of study and practice, art potentially extends into every other field and can respond to every aspect of human experience. It provides a zone of critical free-play and a platform for imagining new modes of social and personal organization. The AAC recognizes the power of art as a means of personal and social transformation at every level and strives to concretely manifest in all aspects of its curriculum the many ways art reflects and influences the cultural diversity of the world. AAC art history courses provide the study of the history of the cultural diversity of the world.

We continually develop courses such as [Art, Design, and Social Practice](#), which demonstrate the interdependence of all disciplines to fully address the needs of a culture. This class partnered with the Health Department of Cincinnati and the lead poisoning prevention project Operation Paydirt, to explore how art and design can be utilized to address and impact issues of lead contamination in Cincinnati. Other courses that explore human and cultural diversity include: [Introduction to Visual Culture](#), [Science/Religion Dialogue](#), [The Personal is Political](#), [Cultural Studies: Identity and Diversity](#) and [World Cultures](#).

The AAC's location in the heart of Over-the-Rhine, places it at the center of arguably one of the most culturally rich and diverse neighborhoods in the city. The school is in extremely close

proximity to several of Cincinnati's most firmly established cultural institutions which gives students easy access to The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, the Lloyd Library, The Weston Gallery, The Contemporary Arts Center, The Cincinnati Art Museum, The Taft Museum of Art, The Know Theatre, and many other important mainstays of cultural production.

The AAC faculty includes diversity of ethnicity, gender, and sexual preference and our Academic Catalogue includes a [Non-Discrimination Statement](#). We partner with the School for Creative and Performing Arts to provide design education for this high school of great student diversity.

The Art Academy's Educational Objectives which appear in our Academic Catalog, on our website and on every course syllabus include: "Community: Through their creative practice, students make meaningful connections with the diverse communities in which they live and work." The AAC is a member of the [Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design](#) (AICAD) which aspires to create a climate that recognizes and values diversity as central to excellence in art and design education. They have three international affiliates in Israel, Ireland and Japan and are currently pursuing an additional affiliate in China.

Extracurricular programming also supports the diverse culture in which we live and work. New student organization [QueerSpace](#) acknowledges the importance of developing a space for LGBTQ+ students. *QueerSpace* plans to hold bi-weekly meetings, movie screenings, drag shows, exhibitions, participate in the Cincinnati Pride Parade, and provide HIV/AIDS educational workshops with opportunities for free testing and community outreach.

Alumnus Matt Morris curated [Matt Morris with James Lee Byers The Perfect Kiss \(OO\)*
*questioning queer](#) at the Contemporary Arts Center and in conjunction presented a formal lecture and gallery talk for the AAC and community. Art Academy galleries continually expose students to the art of diverse cultures, such as *30 Americans Plus...The Region*, which recognized the diverse range of work offered by African American artists from our community who contribute to the conversation of the African American experience, heritage, and the present state of the arts within the region as a whole. This was a companion to the exhibit [30 Americans](#) at the Cincinnati Art Museum which focused on issues of racial, sexual, and historical identity in contemporary culture while exploring the powerful influence of artistic legacy and community across generations.

5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

The AAC's Mission, Vision, and Core Values clearly emphasize the role and importance of the discovery of knowledge and creative work for both faculty and students which is built into the core of our curriculum through the stated AAC Educational Objectives. AAC students and faculty are fully committed to the creative process continually placing into the world new objects, expressions, communications, and ideas. Annual student reviews and their accompanying [review forms](#) demonstrate students' abilities to contribute to the discovery of creative scholarship and knowledge.

At the conclusion of their final year, students undergo a rigorous process of writing a thesis paper and creating an exhibition to demonstrate that they have achieved the educational goals of the Art Academy. Thesis requirements, goals, guidelines, and procedures are published in the [Senior Thesis Resource Book](#). The written statement requires the inclusion of information concerning the development of their work as it pertains to creativity, curiosity, invention, and cultural/historical contextual awareness. It also requires the inclusion of scholarly influences on the work the student has produced and post-graduation goals.

The AAC ensures that its faculty contribute to, and participate in, scholarship and creative work. Faculty complete [Course Assessment Forms](#) twice each semester for each class they teach to assure that course content and mechanics are always pointing toward the mission. Full time faculty [Annual Faculty Personnel Updates](#) and all faculty CV's must describe professional development and contributions to the field.

The AAC is home to several galleries, which feature exhibitions open to the public. Exposure 13 is a student-run, AAC-affiliated gallery, which features work of AAC students, faculty, and alumni, on a rotating basis. Exhibitions Archives are listed on our website

The AAC Poetry Series has hosted readings by contemporary poets, essayists, and fiction writers such as Merrill Feitell, Ross Gay, Dobby Gibson, Sabrina Oran Mark, Sebastian Matthews, Anthony McCann, Kiki Petrosino, Nate Pritts, G.C. Waldrep and Dean Young, among others.

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- HU201 Aesthetics Spring 2016 Hart
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- LA481 Senior Seminar Syllabus F16 Gaffney Hart Thomas Williams
- MA5100 Art Design and Social Practice Syllabus Spring 2015 Mehiel
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- Review Forms
- Senior Thesis Resource Book
- SS224 World Cultures Course Syllabus SP16 Stambaugh
- SS314 Identity and Diversity Spring 2016 Ruffner
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3.C - Core Component 3.C

The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.
2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.
3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

Argument

1.The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including the oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.

The AAC employs extremely qualified faculty as evidenced in [Full-Time Faculty CVs](#) and [Adjunct Faculty CVs](#). Even with ever-increasing non-classroom responsibilities, AAC faculty members maintain rigorous professional lives. We maintain a strong presence in the community through our participation and professional work. There are currently 40 adjunct faculty teaching an average of 9 credits per year. Approximately one third of the courses offered per semester are taught by full time faculty and two thirds are taught by adjunct faculty. We are a faculty of practicing professionals with terminal degrees and/or equivalent professional experience in accordance with the [2015-2016 NASAD Handbook](#).

The Art Academy maintains a low student to faculty ratio at a current rate of 8.5:1. With a recent hire of a Professor of Art History, we have 10 full-time faculty. However, our administrators also teach. The Academic Dean carries a 6 credit/year teaching load, the Associate Dean, a 12 credit teaching load/year, and three Program Chairs each carry a 12 credit teaching load/year. Another faculty member has a 12 credit teaching load/year, in addition to serving as the Website Administrator and Digital Content Specialist. That leaves 4 full-time faculty with an 18 credit load/year. Unfortunately, there are programs we want to grow such as Film/Video and

Animation, but we don't have dedicated full time faculty members and currently there is curricular gap in the area of Design where we also need a dedicated faculty member. There is a [strategic plan](#) to add a full-time faculty member in this area but the budget must be able to support such a hire.

The AAC maintains a strong base of long-time faculty members (both full-time and adjunct), who are veteran contributors to local, regional, national, and international academic, arts, and arts education communities. Two full-time faculty have taught at the AAC for 25-30 years, five for 10-15 years, one for 5-10 years and two for 1-5 years. We are fortunate that four former full-time faculty members – two of whom are Professors Emeriti – have taught at the Art Academy for over 20 years each, maintaining unbroken tenures of teaching at the AAC. Five adjunct professors have taught at the Art Academy for 10-15 years, one for 5-10 years, and the remaining have taught at the AAC for 1-5 years.

With a decrease of full-time faculty and increasing numbers of adjunct faculty, the job descriptions of full-time faculty have expanded to include recruitment, retention, increased advising loads, review presence, and committee work. Nine full-time faculty and three adjunct faculty advise 15-28 students each. All full-time faculty participate in National Portfolio Days and Open House Events to aid in recruitment, but struggle with time to devote to these efforts.

In response to the reduction of full-time faculty in 2013 we formed the [Academic Management Team](#) (AMT) in order to efficiently streamline communication and workload. AMT includes the full time faculty, Academic Dean, Associate Dean, program chairs and pertinent staff. We eliminated most committees as separate entities, with the exception of technology and exhibitions which include 2-3 full time faculty. We rely on AMT to conduct the business of formerly separate committees and make decisions collectively. This has proved highly successful in bringing faculty and staff together and increasing transparency and communication. Scholarship judging and end of year student reviews are organized by the Studio Program Chair and the Associate Dean.

Faculty continue to oversee the curriculum and expectations for student performance. The full-time faculty, Chairs, Academic Dean, and Associate Dean have launched curriculum discussion sessions in which we meet to brainstorm ideas and analyze current practices and programs. The Chairs organize the notes from these meetings and present a report to AMT. The faculty determine which ideas enforce our Mission and act on them in accordance with the [faculty handbook](#). All new courses and curricular changes must be approved by the faculty and are voted on at weekly AMT meetings.

In addition to their role in the classroom, adjunct and full-time faculty and chairs participate in assessment of student learning outside of their courses. As outlined in the [End of Year Reviews Process and Schedule](#), every student is reviewed by a panel of full-time and adjunct faculty at the completion of every academic year. All full-time faculty and chairs as well as approximately 10 selected adjunct faculty participate. Both full-time and adjunct faculty participate in senior thesis reviews as part of the senior capstone experience.

What is lacking is dedicated faculty members to handle the workload in areas that need additional meeting time and discussion such as Scholarships and Reviews. The compensation of faculty has not corresponded to the increased workload and has, in fact, decreased. Full-time faculty are stretched thin but remain focused on serving the Mission and Vision for the institution and for our students. Regardless of financial hardship and lack of institutional support both adjunct and full-time faculty are absolutely dedicated to passionately pursuing their own professional goals and providing the highest quality education for our students.

2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.

All faculty, both adjunct and full-time, have a terminal degree or the equivalent of professional experience in their field. [Full-time faculty transcripts](#) and [adjunct faculty transcripts](#) as well as curriculum vitas are collected by the office of Human Resources.

3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.

There is a formal process in place for faculty evaluation as stated in the [Faculty Handbook](#). All adjunct and full-time faculty administer [student course evaluations](#) at midterm and at the conclusion of the semester. New adjuncts are periodically reviewed in the classroom by Department Chairs, the Associate Dean or the Academic Dean and documented on a [classroom evaluation form](#). Full-time faculty and department chairs provide mentoring and follow-up for adjunct faculty. Full-time faculty complete an [Annual Personal Update Self Evaluation \(APU\)](#) and are reviewed by the Academic Dean. The Academic Dean makes recommendations and the faculty member sets goals for the following year, in order to continually increase performance.

4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.

The AAC works with available resources to provide faculty the training necessary to be effective in the classroom. Additional funds could greatly increase the amount of training, conferences, and professional development available to faculty which would increase effectiveness. An increase in professional development resources and the reinstatement of sabbaticals would demonstrate institutional support and reenergize their passion for their work and teaching.

Each year full-time faculty are required to provide an updated CV to the Academic Dean as part of the APR process. The process concludes with a written evaluation by the Academic Dean, and a meeting if desired or required.

The AAC can occasionally afford to send full-time faculty to conferences such as AICAD, NASAD, HLC, and Associate Writing Program Training Conferences. Sonis training and technical support are provided to all faculty. Due to budgetary restrictions, the opportunity for

sabbaticals was eliminated in 2011. Full-time faculty are encouraged to utilize [Professional Development Funds](#) (up to \$500 each per Year). There are no such funds for adjunct faculty.

5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.

Instructors are present and available to students during published office hours and by appointment. Courses provide sufficient in-class time with faculty to complete assignments and work with faculty on an individual basis. Students are encouraged to meet with their faculty advisor at least twice per semester to review grades, course offerings for the following semester, and to discuss the student's overall success. Advisors play an integral role in students' development and are the first points of contact when issues arise that could impact the student. Students at risk are discussed regularly at AMT meetings, and advisors are asked to follow up in a timely manner. The AAC faculty go above and beyond to provide student support and considerable time goes into every possible means of encouragement.

Faculty communicate with students via Email, Sonis, personal texts, and numerous social media venues. Faculty utilize the [AAC Student Facebook page](#) as well as individual pages devoted to specific disciplines to communicate with students. Faculty Offices are conveniently located throughout our building which increases their access and availability.

6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, and co-curricular activities are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

Staff members providing student support services includes the Director of Student Services, Registrar, Counselors, Director of Financial Aid, and Wood Shop Technician. IT services are provided by Encore Technologies. The Director of Student Services holds a Master of Science Degree in Higher Education Policy, and is trained in Title IX compliance. Counselors hold appropriate degrees and are nearing completion of their doctoral program in Clinical Psychology. They are also supervised by a licensed mental health practitioner. The Director of Financial Aid holds appropriate certifications. Our Registrar has received training by Jenzabaar, our Student Information System, and our Wood Shop Technician is an experienced carpenter.

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- Student Course Evaluation Form

3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).
5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

Argument

1.The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student population.

Dynamic, co-curricular, social, recreational, intramural, and community-focused student life is an essential component of the AAC experience. The Director of Student Services provides a structure for personally customized support. Student Services often serves as student body liaison to Art Academy administration, ensuring the institution integrates student opinion into the decision-making process.

Student Services also provides and/or connects students with support services in areas such as Residence Life, Community Engagement, Learning Assistance, Career Services, Internship Management, Student Conduct, Counseling, Orientation, Alumni Engagement and Student Advocacy.

Student Ambassadors are chosen via a competitive process to work under the guidance of the Director of Student Services in planning, implementing, and leading student-centered activities with a focus on enriching the Art Academy student experience. Examples of student activities include: an annual trip to New York, smART Talk Lunch Series, Intramural Sports, Final Friday Exhibition Openings, holiday celebrations, and student sales.

Student associations and organizations that support the students' experience at the AAC include Poetry Workshop, AAC Comic Makers Association, Art Academy Book Club, Student Ambassadors, QueerSpace, the AAC Student Chapter of AIGA Cincinnati, and the "Art Academy Stinks" intramural sports team.

The Director of Student Services provides students with access to qualified faculty members who are [Writing and Studio Tutors](#). The Writing Tutor provides learning support and the Studio Tutor is available for learning support with technical skills, idea generation, and time management. Both are available by appointment.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the AAC provides students who have chronic medical, physical, or learning disabilities a range of services and resources through the Director of Student Services who works individually with these students to provide appropriate accommodations.

The Director of Student Services provides assistance to students seeking art-related jobs during the school year, over summer breaks, or after graduation by providing help with resumes and cover letters, posting part-time jobs and freelance opportunities, and internal employment through the Federal Work-Study Program.

The Art Academy offers a new student orientation before the start of each semester. These orientations help new undergraduates have a successful transition to college life. The program promotes discussion among parents, new students, continuing students, faculty, and staff about the expectations and perceptions of the campus community. By attending orientation, students can tour the facilities, locate their classes, meet their peers, engage with staff and faculty, obtain their student identification and security passes, and receive a comprehensive introduction to the school.

The Art Academy of Cincinnati's Enrollment Management team is dedicated to each student's journey to complete a college degree in art and design and ultimately to lead a career as a professional artist or designer. From the time students apply, to the time they matriculate, the Enrollment Management personnel tracks student progress, connects each student to areas of interest, and tracks data to maximize retention and student success.

The Enrollment Management team is dedicated to making the transition from high school to college as smooth and efficient for incoming students as possible. The AAC holds several Open House events each year, which provide students and their families a more personal view into the culture and structure of the Art Academy. These Open House events give students a vision of how they would fit into the AAC's vibrant, creative community. A recent addition is an event called Design Matters, which focuses on students interested in the field of design.

The Art Academy has recently changed its approach from group registration of new students to continuous registration on an individual basis. This approach allows students to register for classes as soon as they deposit, giving them quicker access to their course schedules and affording time to adequately prepare for the upcoming semester.

The Office of the Registrar supports students and the faculty and staff who serve them by maintaining the integrity of academic policies and the student information system.

Services include:

- Academic policies, interpretation, and enforcement of FERPA Compliance
- Class schedules
- Student registration and drop/add
- Grading and academic record maintenance
- Commencement processing and degree audits
- Degree applications and diplomas
- Honors calculation and dean's lists
- Consortium (GCCCCU)
- Transcription services
- Credit transfer, advising, and evaluation
- VA benefits and certification
- Verifications, enrollment and degree
- Sonis maintenance and permissions
- Course descriptions
- Student data and statistical analysis
- Academic Calendar
- Online Forms
- Assignment of Credits Policy
- Monitoring Satisfactory Academic Progress: Students at the Art Academy of Cincinnati are expected to maintain good academic standing. In order to remain eligible to collect Title IV funding (federal student loans and grants) and other financial aid, students must achieve all components of the AAC's Academic Standards policy:

The Art Academy of Cincinnati provides students Sonis, a fully web-based student information and academic administrative system. It is a database for colleges and universities to interface with accounting, learning management, and financial aid systems currently in place. This allows our students access to their schedules, individual course data, and advisor information. Students planning their schedules can view courses by semester, course information, and course descriptions. Faculty are able to communicate directly with their students and advisees through this platform.

Information Technology Services provides quality infrastructure and support in the delivery of information technology products and services. The Art Academy's electronic environment includes the use of computers, networks, digital printing, electronic communication, internet, and telecommunications. These services are essential for instruction, research, and administration. One of the lead systems engineers is onsite at the Art Academy as a full-time IT resource. There is also a help desk available 24 hours per day Monday through Friday to assist with all faculty, staff, and student technology needs

2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.

The Art Academy provides all students with a [faculty academic advisor](#). The advisors work with students to set academic goals, chart a course toward achieving them, and make sound academic decisions overall.

[College Life Component](#) is a series of lectures and workshops presented to students during their freshman year. These events are designed to help students develop time management, study skills, and life skills that will better ensure their success at the Art Academy. “Major Mondays” are events during which seniors present to first-semester students during their first Studio Arts course. These sessions are designed to introduce students to potential major areas of study and to reinforce the studio projects assigned in class.

The Art Academy has recently begun a [Teaching Assistant Program](#) which consists of hiring in-class teaching assistants to assist in particular studio and academic classes. These assistants are recent AAC graduates placed in their areas of competence. They assist the instructors and interact with students in class, offering feedback and informed, critical insight on student projects.

In *Studio Arts I*, reviews occur at midterm and near the end of the first semester. This allows students and instructors to examine progress and areas of strength and opportunity for improvement and assists students in identifying prospective majors. Every student is individually reviewed at the end of every year. Each student chooses several pieces of work completed throughout the year and presents them to a team of instructors for a critique and discussion of their progress. Students must also write a Student Self-Evaluation. This annual process serves as a regular progress check-in, both with instructors as well as students’ own self-reflections, and assists students in tracking personal progress throughout all four years of their AAC experience. End-of year review information is disseminated to students through [SSE Documents](#), and [Review Packet](#).

There are several [committees](#) designed to review and evaluate academic programs, school offerings and student progress. The Liberal Arts and Studio Program Chairs meet regularly to discuss and evaluate the courses offered and how they reflect and support the Art Academy’s Universal Educational Goal, Mission Statement, and Vision Statement. The Academic Management Team (AMT), consisting of faculty and staff, meets weekly to discuss the academic progress of students, proposed changes to the curriculum and school events. The Technology Committee evaluates and reviews current technology issues, including software and hardware availability and proposed improvements to services offered.

The Exhibitions Committee plans and executes exhibitions throughout the year to introduce students to new contemporary artists and collectors.

There are many ways in which the faculty at the Art Academy meet and discuss student learning and progress. At weekly AMT meetings, high-achieving students and students at risk are identified using information such as attendance and grades. Students needing attention are addressed by their advisors, instructors, and the Registrar. Faculty in *Advanced Tutorial* and *Senior Seminar* communicate and meet regularly to discuss students at risk and student progress.

Academic policies are published each year in the Academic Catalog and provide guidelines to help students navigate tasks such as adding or dropping courses, registering for classes and choosing a major. Academic policies and procedures allow students to clearly understand their rights and responsibilities.

3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.

The four-year college experience is a time of tremendous change, emotional unsteadiness, and significant personal growth and maturation, none of which comes easily. Each incoming student is assigned a faculty advisor. Faculty Advisors, whose responsibilities are published in the [Faculty Handbook](#), play an important role in helping students navigate the world at this crucial time. The advisor is available during office hours and by appointment providing information on school philosophy and procedures, programs of study, course requirements, and registration. Each semester, advisors may counsel advisees on academic progress, short and long-term goals, and career goals. Personal problems, adjustment problems, and academic problems can be discussed with the advisor.

Academic Advisors are given Student Folios for each of their freshman and new transfer advisees and are responsible for keeping them up to date as a repository of copies of important student records. They will provide advisors with as much information as possible to help guide and advise students.

The [Student Folio](#) contains copies of: admissions documents, [First Year Learner Profile](#), [Roommate Questionnaire](#), [BCSSE](#), review forms, grades, +B documentation if applicable, advising notes, notifications from the Registrar, the Academic Dean, and related offices.

If a student demonstrates inconsistent attendance or performance in a class, faculty members collaborate with the Advisor, Registrar, Academic Dean and/or the Director of Student Services, to develop a resolution plan for the student. They document their efforts with an [Early Alert Form](#). The resolution plan may include guidance from the advisor, tutor, or counselor. Faculty and staff track the student's progress and involve the Academic Management Team in the event of further non-adherence.

The advisor ultimately becomes the chair of the student's [Thesis Committee](#). They assist students in developing the Senior Thesis Statement, counsel them on their studio work, and advise them on the direction of their Thesis Exhibition.

The [+B Program](#) is a two-year elective educational experience which provides the collection and synthesis of Art Academy professional training in and beyond coursework. Students who participate in the +B Program develop their professional practice and grow their confidence in pursuing career opportunities. The Art Academy's active promotion of the +B Program demonstrates the school's commitment to preparing students for life beyond art school.

4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

The college provides 24-hour access to over 100 student studio spaces, instructional studios, and updated campus facilities. The Art Academy of Cincinnati was awarded numerous awards for the

development, design, and construction of its new facility and achieved LEED Certification by the US Green Building Council in 2008. The AAC has just completed a [Campus Master Plan](#) which will help in making future decisions concerning the facilities and resources.

Some highlights of the Art Academy's facilities include a printmaking studio that combines traditional and innovative technologies, a photo studio including a lighting studio and a darkroom and other well equipped studios. Liberal Arts classrooms, the Lecture Hall, and conference rooms are outfitted with presentation technologies. Two clean cube spaces are available for exhibition of visual art or performance art.

Four campus computer labs can accommodate up to 25 percent of the student body at one time. Our IT service, Encore Technologies, is contracted to provide information technology for the students, faculty and staff. The Art Academy's electronic environment includes the use of computers, digital printing, computer networks, electronic communication, internet, telecommunications, and voice mail systems. In addition, the school offers a comprehensive and user-friendly website, designed to meet the needs of our students, faculty, and staff. In fall 2017, the AAC will implement a Laptop Initiative, requiring laptops of all students while the AAC will provide the necessary software.

Several galleries provide students opportunities to exhibit their work and view work by professional artists in the field. The Pearlman and Convergys Galleries feature rotating exhibitions by regional and national artists juried by the Exhibitions Committee and are open to the public free of charge. The Chidlaw Gallery is student-run and exhibits primarily student work. Exposure/13 Gallery, located two blocks from campus, was made available to the Art Academy in August 2014. It is completely student-run: all cleaning, painting, installation, curating, marketing, and management functions are performed by the Student Exhibitions Committee. The space allows current students, alumni, faculty, and staff to exhibit their artwork in the community, extending the reach of the Art Academy within the Greater Cincinnati area.

Other support facilities include the Quiet Study Area, lockers, recreational and commons areas and a café. Once they have completed a written and hands-on test all faculty and students have access to the AAC Wood Shop. All tools and equipment are used under direct supervision of the instructor, the Wood Shop Technician, or the Wood Shop Monitor. There are two spray booths which allow students to use spray paint and adhesive. Faculty offices are located throughout the building for both full-time and adjunct faculty.

Much of students' development happens in their studios. All AAC juniors and seniors are provided shared studio spaces where they take ownership of their own education and creativity. Studios are open 24 hours a day, 7 days per week in the AAC's secure facility. The DeZignery is a dedicated space for seniors majoring in Design that supports collaboration and learning tailored specifically to advanced Design students.

The Art Academy of Cincinnati is fully committed to the safety of its students and faculty. AAC's main facility is a secure building: all students, faculty and staff must scan a magnetic security card in order to gain entry. The building has only one entrance, which is continuously staffed by security personnel. Our security maintains a highly professional working relationship

with the Cincinnati Police Department, meeting with them and other local organizations and businesses on a monthly basis to discuss recent crime and safety statistics compiled from neighborhood reports. The Art Academy of Cincinnati complies with the federal regulations outlined in the Clery Act as reported in the annual AAC [Clery Act Report](#).

Additionally, the Art Academy issues a password-protected e-mail account to each student. Access to passwords and/or secure areas of the AAC web site is restricted to authorized users.

The Art Academy offers class trips to local museums, such as the Taft Museum of Art, the Cincinnati Art Museum, the Contemporary Arts Center, and 21C Museum & Hotel. These museums provide free membership to AAC students. Additionally, faculty introduce students to local galleries such as Clay Street Press, Solway Gallery, Manifest Gallery, Weston Gallery, and Wave Pool Gallery.

5. The institution provides students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

The administration and Board of Trustees support the freedom of inquiry in alignment with the American Association of American Colleges and Universities and the American Association of University Professors.

The Art Academy of Cincinnati is a community of faculty, staff, and students committed to the exchange of ideas contributing to intellectual growth, artistic development, scholarly values, intellectual integrity, and respect for the ideas and work of others, which is essential to the college's mission. The Art Academy insists upon academic integrity at all times, and the [AAC Academic Honesty Policy](#) is referenced on all course syllabi and is published in the Academic Catalog. Faculty who suspect academic dishonesty have a concrete, outlined process with the Academic Dean and Department Chair to address malfeasance.

The vision and efforts of the faculty in recognizing what students need has proven substantial in bringing experiences and programs to fruition. Students utilize the Feldman Method of Art Criticism (Description, Analysis, Interpretation, & Judgment) to write critical analyses of a range of artworks. This approach refines each student's ability to absorb and critique artistic works.

In Studio Arts foundations courses students are introduced to several widely-used computer design programs including the latest editions of Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign. Faculty led experience with these programs is readily transferrable to real-world application after graduation.

The Art Academy continues to maintain a comprehensive writing program across the entire curriculum. Academic courses contain strong components of research and writing, and all studio courses require at least one graded writing experience.

Sketchbooks/Journals are required in Studio Arts 1 and 2, as well as in many other courses, including academic classes, where students record thoughts, collect imagery, research, and references. The Academy encourages students to use sketchbooks to visualize, explore,

articulate, and organize ideas as well as to conduct research from relevant sources. Ongoing sketchbook development provides a valuable resource for seniors writing about the progression of their work. Some form of sketchbook or journal is required at all year-end reviews.

Through a [Memorandum of Agreement](#) (MOA), The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County has been the official library for the Art Academy of Cincinnati since 2005. The library is located only three blocks from campus. Full-time Art Academy students may apply for borrowing privileges. Students are expected to use the library for out-of-class research. Before utilizing the library's resources, a librarian conducts a presentation on best practices and introduces MakerSpace, a resource that provides library patrons free access to 3D printers, audio and visual equipment, laser cutters and engravers, sewing machines, cameras, and other hardware and software tools.

Lynda.com offers high-quality online tutorials covering software, creative, and business skills to supplement curricula, promote faculty and staff development, support classroom technologies, and drive student engagement and success.

Founded with a mission to enhance scholarship and teaching through the use of digital images and media, Artstor is a nonprofit organization committed to digital collection solutions for universities, museums, schools, and libraries worldwide. Their ever-increasing digital library includes more than 1.9 million high-quality images for education and research from a wide variety of contributors around the world. They are also involved in many community initiatives in support of our mission, such as the Digital Public Library of America and the Built Works Registry.

The [Stephen H. Wilder Traveling Scholarship](#) is a prize given to a select few graduating students every year since 1949. Applicants must be Art Academy graduating seniors who desire to travel in order to continue their artistic education. Each applicant must submit a proposal that includes a budget, itinerary, senior thesis, visual documentation of work, and a description of how the proposed work will develop by traveling. Full-time faculty members, the Academic Dean, and the President vote to select the winners.

Sources

- 2012 Library Agreement
- 2015 Advising and The Student Folio
- 2016 Faculty Review Packet
- 2016-2017-Academic-Catalog
- 2016-2017-Academic-Catalog (page number 69)
- 2017 Thesis Advisors and Readers
- AAC Faculty Handbook 12216
- AAC Faculty Handbook 12216 (page number 6)
- AAC Faculty Handbook 12216 (page number 15)
- Academic Freedom - Whose Right (WEBSITE COPY)_6-26-02
- ACADEMIC MANAGEMENT TEAM Description

- BCSSE15 Institutional Report (Art Academy of Cincinnati)
- Binder 1 +B
- Campus Master Plan and PPT
- College Life Component
- Early Alert Procedure
- First Year Student Learning Profile 2015 (1) (1)
- Roommate Questionnaire 2016
- SSE
- Teaching Assistant Information
- TitleIXAAC
- Tutoring Services
- Wilder

3.E - Core Component 3.E

The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

Argument

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.

At the Art Academy of Cincinnati our co-curricular programs reflect the forward-thinking approach to creative learning. Our Mission is reflected in the events we host to support academic programming. A program series called smART Talks, hosts professionals in the art and design industry who present on relevant issues such as the *Business of Art* and *Preparing for Life as a Creative Individual* to enrich students' educational experience.

Another example is our [Internship Program](#). Students have the opportunity to engage with local artists and designers who require creative services. Students engage in professional experiences at businesses such as BLDG, an advertising agency, which offers students print and design based internships. These internships provide the student with tangible experience and credit towards their degree program. After completing 120 hours of professional service, the student earns 3 credits as a studio elective. The AAC's consistent relationship-building within the creative community supports these programs by cultivating opportunities for our students to gain experience.

2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

The AAC offers multiple programs such as our Yoga and Meditation Groups, faculty-led student trip to New York City, and classes in Social Practice which support the Academy's Mission, Vision and Goals. The annual New York trip offers students the opportunity to engage with faculty outside of the academic environment and to build peer relationships. Students and faculty view visual art and engage in studio/school/business visits, which provide examples of the many ways artists and designers can develop their careers. This trip references our mission by upholding the standard of "Creating and sustaining radical, forward-thinking, contemporary visual artists and designers."

The Art Academy engages in many types of community engagement, for example ArtWorks provides opportunities for students to work in the [Mural Arts program](#). They hire students to work with teenagers during the summer to paint murals in Cincinnati. ArtWorks also allows students, through its [Creative Enterprise](#) division, to foster a vibrant, sustainable community by providing creatives with training and assistance through education. The Creative Enterprise division benefits AAC students by expanding their knowledge base, offering support for their creative start-up projects, providing resources for planning and growing a business, and providing outreach to legal and financial advisors for sustainable planning.

For the last 15 years, the Academy has organized the AAC Poetry Series. Visiting poets have included: Dean Young, Terri Ford, Dana Ward, Darren Callahan, Anthony McCann, Shane Sullivan, Ben Doyle, Tyrone Williams, Sabrina Oran Mark, Ethan Pacquin, Nate Pritts, Jason Schneiderman, Josh Bell, Dobby Gibson, GC Waldrep, Sebastian Matthews, and Kiki Petrosino. Creative Writing minors and other gifted students often perform their original poetry at these public events.

In 2008 the Art Academy established a student chapter of AIGA Cincinnati. The AAC subsidizes student membership in this professional association.

Since 2005 the Art Academy has continued to have a positive impact on the Over-the-Rhine community. The Art Academy has strengthened the human capital of the neighborhood by developing and adding young professionals to the talent pool. This is made evident by the 65 small-businesses in the neighborhood that have employed Art Academy graduates or students as reported in [Art Academy of Cincinnati and Economic Impact Study](#). This study shows that many Art Academy graduates have become small-business owners, a symbol of the commitment that Art Academy graduates to investing in this community.

Sources

- Artworks Murals
- Binder 1 +B
- Creative Enterprise
- Economic Impact Study
- Internship Combined Info

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Summary

The Art Academy of Cincinnati continually updates its programs, curricula, and courses to ensure relevance to 21st century art and design education. The AAC's newly updated [Mission and Vision](#) state clearly and emphatically the role our students will play in the future of art and design and is supported by our Core Values and [Universal Educational Goal](#).

The AAC offers three programs: Bachelor of Fine Arts with majors in Design; Illustration; Painting and Drawing; Photography; Print Media; and Sculpture; a Master of Arts in Art Education; and an Associate of Science in Graphic Design. The Art Academy also offers three minor tracks: Film, Video, and Audio, Art History and Creative Writing. Each degree program has Universal Educational Objectives that provide the groundwork necessary for building and maintaining curricular focus, consistency, and relevance. The AAC has clearly articulated and specific learning goals for each of its degree programs. The syllabi for every course are standardized in their expression of the AAC's statements of Mission, Vision and Core Values across disciplines, departments and classes to demonstrate consistency and clarity of goals.

The high standards set by the Art Academy's Mission, Vision, Educational Goal, and Educational Objectives as well as the checks and balances in place among internal and external review processes established by the [Quality Assurance Map](#) and [Quality Assurance Plan](#) continually ensure that the courses and programs are current, academically challenging, relevant, and responsive to contemporary art and design education and the art and design community at large.

The AAC recognizes the power of art as a means of personal and social transformation at every level and strives to concretely manifest in all aspects of its curriculum the many ways art reflects and influences the cultural diversity of the world. Extracurricular programming also supports the diverse culture in which we live and work.

The AAC employs extremely qualified faculty. Even with ever-increasing non-classroom responsibilities, AAC faculty members maintain rigorous professional lives. We maintain a strong presence in the community through our participation and professional work. The Art Academy maintains a low student to faculty ratio at a current rate of 8.5:1.

With a decrease of full-time faculty and increasing numbers of adjunct faculty, the job descriptions of full-time faculty have expanded to include recruitment, retention, increased advising loads, review presence, and committee work. The compensation of faculty has not corresponded to the increased workload and has, in fact, decreased. Regardless of financial hardship and lack of institutional support both adjunct and full-time faculty are absolutely

dedicated to passionately pursuing their own professional goals and providing the highest quality education for our students.

The Art Academy of Cincinnati is a community of faculty, staff, and students committed to the exchange of ideas contributing to intellectual growth, artistic development, scholarly values, intellectual integrity, and respect for the ideas and work of others, which is essential to the college's mission. Dynamic, co-curricular, social, recreational, intramural, and community-focused student life is an essential component of the AAC experience. Student Services often serves as student body liaison to Art Academy administration, ensuring the institution integrates student opinion into the decision-making process. Student Services also provides and/or connects students with support services in areas such as Residence Life, Community Engagement, Learning Assistance, Career Services, Internship Management, Student Conduct, Counseling, Orientation, Alumni Engagement and Student Advocacy.

Since 2005 the Art Academy has continued to have a positive impact on the Over-the-Rhine community. The Art Academy has strengthened the human capital of the neighborhood by developing and adding young professionals to the talent pool. This is made evident by the 65 small-businesses in the neighborhood that have employed Art Academy graduates or students as reported in [Art Academy of Cincinnati Economic Impact Study](#). This study shows that many Art Academy graduates have become small-business owners, a symbol of the commitment that Art Academy graduates to investing in this community.

Sources

- 2016 Academic Affairs Quality Assurance Program 3
- AAC Mission Core Values
- AAC Quality Assurance Map
- Art Academy of Cincinnati Education Goal
- Economic Impact Study

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

Argument

4.A The Institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs

4.A.1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews

The Art Academy of Cincinnati's [Academic Affairs Quality Assurance Program \(AAQAP\)](#) document outlines the process by which program review occurs at every level in the institution from semester to semester and year to year. The program, demonstrated by the [Quality Assurance Map](#), ensures that review occurs in accordance with the college's Mission, Vision and Core Values in the interest of student learning, dynamic teaching, and a non-static, flexible, and contemporary curriculum, which can be adjusted expeditiously to accommodate student needs and interests, as well as the newest developments in art and design.

An advantage of being a small college is that program review is strategic, ongoing, and always focused on improving both teaching and student learning. Since the AAC is not saddled with the bureaucracy of a large university, necessary changes and adjustments can often be accomplished within hours, days, or weeks, rather than over a period of months, semesters, or years. The [Academic Management Team](#) (AMT), which includes the Academic Dean and Associate Dean (who teach in the BFA program), the Studio Program and Liberal Arts Department Chairs, the full-time faculty, the Director of Student Services, the Registrar, the Director of Enrollment Management, and the Director of Financial Aid meet weekly to discuss student engagement, academic affairs business, and program review. Items for discussion include enrollment management (recruitment, retention, persistence); student progress, needs and issues; program and curriculum development, technology needs and developments, etc. The weekly meeting [agenda](#) is set by members of the AMT, and the Academic Dean presides over the meeting. The AMT votes on items that affect teaching, and student learning, followed by implementation by the appropriate parties, as subject to AMT oversight and review, as outlined in the AAQAP document. The Executive Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs/Academic Dean records and distributes for team approval [Minutes of AMT meetings](#).

Recent program review discussion about students' preparation for the world of business led to the addition of the [+B Distinction program](#), which synthesizes and incentivizes a student's pursuit—both in and beyond their coursework—of practical and business related skills that will advance their professional practice beyond the student's time at the AAC. Enrollment in the program is voluntary, and students who complete its requirements receive +B Distinction (a transcribed credential) as part of the BFA degree. Students can engage in experiences as diverse as drafting and designing a resume, applying for a grant, writing an artist statement, mounting an exhibition, publishing a scholarly article, performing in public, applying to graduate school, participating in internships, shadowing professionals in the field, and creating a business plan, among many others. The program is based on a point system and is overseen by the student's advisor in conjunction with the Studio Program Chair and the Registrar. The first +B Distinction awards were presented at Commencement in May 2016.

Ongoing program review resulted in four reasoned and deliberate initiatives in the Department of Liberal Arts: 1.) a complete overhaul of the [Freshman Art History](#) curriculum; 2.) the redesign of Freshman English courses as interactive workshops, 3.) a resourceful application of the Incoming Writing Diagnostic; and 4.) a progressive and dynamic solution to making critical thinking and intellectual development more accessible to emerging artists and designers.

In January of 2015, the Academic Dean appointed two adjunct professors of Art History to re-envision the required Freshman Art History coursework, which replaced the traditional two-semester survey (Ancient to the Renaissance and the Renaissance to the 21st Century) with two new courses ([AH105: 20th and 21st Century Art and Design History: Issues and Ideas](#) and [AH110: 20th and 21st Century Art and Design History: Media](#)) designed to acquaint students with history through (and contextualized within) the fluid and dynamic visual culture of the recent past and present. Race, gender, sexuality, aesthetics, nationalism, war, and political and social commentary are among the themes and ideas that establish connections between modern and contemporary art and works of art created prior to the 20th century.

Similarly, in-depth program review led to the expansion of creative writing opportunities via Freshman English courses, [HU101 Artist as Writer Workshop](#) and [HU102 Artist as Reader Workshop](#). This was a natural progression, as the Creative Writing community at the Art Academy of Cincinnati has been thriving for years. As the demand for opportunities in narrative craft has increased, the AAC has broadened the scope of its curricular and co-curricular offerings to accommodate students' instinctive inclination toward radical approaches to creative processes, including those in which language—whether spoken, written, drawn, or collaged—is an artistic medium and a fundamental conceptual framework within which critical insight and creative pursuit intersect. As a result, students develop increased dexterity in the creation of literary art as their understanding of the formal qualities of literary craft deepens and evolves in the context of interactive critique and instruction. With this in mind, the AAC refashioned the traditional Freshman English courses (Artist as Writer and Artist as Reader) into interactive workshops driven by the tenet that interdependence is essential to effective learning. Students still write college-level papers, including personal narratives and persuasive, argumentative essays, but they do so in an environment characterized by engaged discussion, constructive peer-to-peer criticism, respectful dialogue, one-on-one sessions with faculty, and essential relationship-building.

As a collateral advantage to teaching English through poetry and narrative art forms in a workshop setting, students develop competence as public speakers, presenters, critics, and respondents, and they learn to take ownership of—and responsibility for—their perspectives and the underpinnings and outcomes of those perspectives. This model provides AAC students artistic leverage in utilizing the associative properties of language to intuit trans-disciplinary connections through their literary work, as they do through their visual work. Moreover, the growing popularity of the Creative Writing minor, the AAC Poetry and Reading Series, and guest performances by regional and national writers have resulted in full-capacity attendance of Liberal Arts events by students, parents, emerging writers, faculty, staff, alumni, visitors, and established writers who continue to look to the Art Academy for engaged inquiry continually refined by analysis of hard data, dedication to audience engagement, provision of unique educational experiences, ongoing self-reflection, and ever-adaptive modalities for teaching and learning.

In Fall 2013, the Chair of the Department of Liberal Arts conceived of an innovative application of the [Incoming Writing Diagnostic \(IWD\)](#) to be implemented in Fall 2014. The IWD—a baseline measure of an incoming student's proficiency with written expression—is utilized to assess the degree to which a new student is prepared to succeed in foundational college-level English coursework. Prior to Fall 2014, the student's advisor (in conjunction with the Liberal Arts Chair) utilized the IWD results solely to determine course placement and to outline remedial intervention, if warranted. Matt Hart redesigned the IWD structure so that it would serve as a mechanism for actively engaging both the student and the Freshman English faculty in the assessment process, which would become integral to the student's coursework and serve as a tool in his or her development as a college-level writer. Since Fall 2014, the IWD has been an essential interactive element in motivating student writing success. No longer merely a tool to assess a new student's readiness to perform college-level writing, the IWD is now a benchmark for devising a plan for success in college-level writing, resulting in direct action taken in respect to IWD results. Expressly, the student's Freshman English instructor tailors his or her assigned

work so that the IWD is integral to that student's progress throughout the first semester of college English. The IWD surfaces throughout the student's initial semester of college writing, serving as a continuum to document and evidence the student's growth as a writer and his or her enhanced preparedness to perform college-level research and writing.

Moreover, in response to a burgeoning need to adapt Liberal Arts courses to the distinct learning styles of present-day students of art and design, Matt Hart, the Chair of the Department of Liberal Arts, presented to the Academic Management Team a compelling proposal that we reevaluate the restrictive requirement that each degree-seeking student at the AAC take HU201 [Aesthetics](#), a 200-level course, which had been a curricular cornerstone for decades. Mr. Hart reasoned that while Aesthetics is among courses that cultivate intellectually resolute engagement in cross-disciplinary inquiry and analysis, this course is not the only means by which to stimulate intellectual awakening and critical reflection within our students. He reasoned further that this strict, albeit arbitrary requirement may impede our efforts to mitigate the DFWI rate, to achieve a stable degree completion track record, to retain and invigorate our students, and to recruit prospective transfer students. He proposed that we replace the universal, compulsory requirement to take Aesthetics with a new [Critical Thinking requirement](#), which students can satisfy by taking Aesthetics, [Introduction to Visual Culture](#), or [Introduction to Philosophy](#), thereby expanding opportunities for student learning, attenuating hurdles to degree completion, and attaining rigorous academic competency essential to college-level curricular achievement. This was approved by the AMT.

Recent Studio Department changes resulted from ongoing program review and have included the streamlining of majors and the consolidation of the Drawing and Painting Majors into a single [Painting and Drawing Major](#).

In 2015, the AAC formed the [Academic Affairs Advisory Committee \(AAAC\)](#) to support the BFA and MAAE programs, while providing community involvement to enhance the Art Academy of Cincinnati's fulfillment of its mission. The AAAC is comprised of local artists and designers nominated by the faculty, who are active community participants and knowledgeable about current trends in the business of art and design.

The AAAC meets twice each academic year to discuss and suggest topics relevant to the education of the Art Academy's students, curriculum, institutional priorities and challenges, and programs. Participation on the AAAC is voluntary and without compensation. Attendance at these informal meetings is not required, and members decide the extent to which they wish to contribute their time and resources. The Department of Academic Affairs and the Academic Dean organize the meetings and propose an agenda. AAAC members are encouraged to suggest discussion topics.

4.A.2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning.

[Policies governing the transcription of credit, including experiential learning and other forms of prior learning are outlined in the AAC Academic Catalog.](#)

These include limits on the number of credits that can be transferred, procedures for awarding life credit, and scores necessary for receiving AP, CLEP Credit, or International Baccalaureate Credit. In conjunction with the Associate Dean, Registrar, and Enrollment Management Team, the Studio Program and Liberal Arts Chairs complete a [Transfer Credit Evaluation](#) (TCE) form for each prospective incoming transfer student. Multiple layers of checks and balances ensure that all credit transferred aligns with AAC policies and standards. Official transcripts from accredited colleges and universities are required for the evaluation of all credit to be transferred from other programs. Based on the TCE, students are provided with a [College Plan](#) (prepared by the appropriate Chair and checked by the Registrar and the Enrollment Management team). This plan details the projected degree completion time based on the number of transfer credits awarded and the courses the student must complete.

Life and other forms of Experiential credit (which are not part of the AAC's Internship program—see below) require corroboration and appropriate documentation (which differs depending on the situation and the type of credit sought). The appropriate Department Chair evaluates these types of credit in conjunction with the Registrar and with the Associate Dean, in the event of any question of veracity or quality. Life Credit is not evaluated as part of the admissions process and is awarded (when appropriate) only after acceptance into the program.

Students enroll in internships as they would for any other course and receive AAC credit in accordance with the guidelines and policies defined in the [Open Internship Experience Packet documents](#). The Director of Student Services oversees and administers the AAC's Open Internship Experience program. The policies governing its implementation, including all the requisite documents, requirements, grading policy, and the way credit is awarded, are in the aforementioned packet, available on the AAC's Website (under Current Students/Careers and Jobs). Once a student registers for an Internship, that person completes the appropriate project paperwork and works with the project site manager and the Director of Student Services to verify internship participation and to receive credit. Before the internship begins, students must discuss their project with the Director of Student Services and complete an Internship Agreement Form, which will designate a particular internship site manager. In their capacity as interns, students must submit five reflection papers for every 24 hours of their internship and submit time sheets for all internship work. Upon completion of the internship, students must submit a site evaluation (completed by the student), submit an evaluation of the student's work (prepared by the site project manager), and attend an exit interview with the Director of Student Services before credit is awarded.

4.A.3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.

Students wishing to transfer to the Art Academy of Cincinnati from another college or university must submit to the Admissions Office all items required for admission, including all college or university transcripts. ACT/SAT scores are not required for transfer students.

AAC Department Chairs evaluate incoming transcripts and record the approved transfer credits in the student's [TCE](#). Up to 90 credits may be transferred to the BFA degree program, provided that the institutions that awarded those credits are accredited by the appropriate regional accreditation body. The transferable credits must represent coursework that is compatible with

the AAC's BFA curriculum, as determined by the Departmental Chairs upon completion of the TCE. In order for credits to be accepted for transfer to an AAC degree program, the student must have achieved a grade of at least "C" or 2.0 on a 4.0 scale. Acceptance of credits earned over 10 years prior will be at the discretion of the appropriate department chair and the Academic Dean. Students must complete the final 30 credits required for their degree programs in residence at the Art Academy of Cincinnati.

Graduate credits are not accepted for transfer into the MAAE program.

[Experiential/Life Credit](#) is rarely awarded outside the context of the AAC's Internship Program. However, in the event of such award, curricular quality is ensured through the process outlined above.

4.A.4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.

As part of the review process leading up to this HLC self-study, the AAC, through conversations among the Department Chairs and the Academic Dean, determined that course-level definitions had never been articulated, nor was a policy for the assignment of prerequisites established. This prompted the creation of Course Level and Prerequisite definitions for both the [Studio](#) and the [Liberal Arts](#) departments. The Department Chairs created this documentation at the request of the Academic Dean and then presented it to AMT for amendments/adoption. Both documents lay out a philosophy for course-level definitions and prerequisites in their respective departments, and then define course levels in terms of the assumptions and expectations for both teaching and student learning at each level. They ultimately define appropriate measures for evaluating and assessing teaching and learning at each level and provide guidelines for assigning prerequisites.

Access to learning resources to support teaching and student learning are reviewed by the AMT and managed by the Director of Student Services, the AAC Facilities Manager, and the AAC IT Department, which is contracted through Encore Technologies. Students can access four computer labs, a digital print lab, shops for metal, plaster, and wood, spray painting booths, painting, drawing, print media, sculpture, illustration studios; two clean cubes, and the Chidlaw and Exposure 13 Galleries. Additionally, seniors use the Convergys, Chidlaw, and Pearlman Galleries for their Senior Thesis Exhibitions. Student studios are assigned to juniors and seniors via a lottery overseen by the Director of Student Services. Exceptional sophomores may qualify for student studios, when available. Additionally, students have access to academic and studio tutors, as well as free mental health counseling through a [Memorandum of Understanding with the University of the Cumberlands](#).

Through a strategic [partnership with the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County](#), the Art Academy offers students access to one of the finest libraries in the country. Only three blocks from campus, PLCH serves as a primary resource for AAC students. The AAC maintains an Agreement of Cooperation (AOC) with the Library guaranteeing access to our students. Public

Library cards afford students access to many research databases, including Academic Search Premier, among others. AAC students also have access to the Cincinnati Art Museum Library (CAM) and the University of Cincinnati's Department of Architecture, Art, and Planning Library.

Standards for faculty qualifications are outlined in detail in the [2016 AAC Faculty Handbook](#). One of the most important qualifications for AAC faculty is their dedication to help AAC students understand the creative process through the primary discipline they teach, whether that is Sculpture or Psychology, Creative Writing or Physics. Teaching in an art school environment is about asking questions and exploring creative possibilities (often at the level of the individual student) and learning is about using those questions and explorations to produce more questions, more exploration—and to be inspired to create and innovate in radical, new ways. AAC students are art and design students, focused on using creative thinking to investigate subjects in ways that relate to their own artistic development—which is largely defined in terms of expectations to produce unpredictable, surprising results. The job of AAC faculty is to provide an atmosphere for creative thinking to take hold and manifest itself. This is already part of the mindset of faculty, who are themselves artists, writers, and thinkers. However, procuring Liberal Arts faculty, especially those who teach only one or two courses per year, is challenging, especially when seeking faculty who can readily apply this core value to their areas of expertise. This is one of the reasons we have thoroughly developed our [Department of Liberal Arts Philosophy](#) with an emphasis on the arts. This document helps establish the notion that Liberal Arts courses at the AAC are not in addition to a student's creative work, but rather an avenue integral to creative pursuit. Faculty are encouraged to activate this philosophy in whatever ways make sense in the courses they teach. This approach incites active learning, creative and critical thinking, collaboration, and classroom discussions that go well beyond the traditional tiered delivery of academic content. The Department Chairs and Academic Dean coach and assist AAC Faculty in applying this philosophy. These scenarios for active learning—and for emphasizing the visual arts in the liberal arts—play a prominent role in the institution's culture, and they set the AAC apart from its peer institutions. The success of implementation of this philosophy is assessed and revised via syllabus review, course evaluations, and occasional classroom visits by the Chairs or the Academic Dean.

The Art Academy of Cincinnati does not offer any Dual Credit courses.

4.A.5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.

The AAC, in addition to its HLC accreditation, is also specially accredited by the [National Association of Schools of Art and Design \(NASAD\)](#) of which it is a charter member. The AAC's NASAD reaccreditation process parallels the HLC process and typically happens every 10 years. NASAD's accreditation process promotes regular, high-level self-examination of the college's Mission, Vision, Core Values, and Objectives in the interest of improving and establishing curricular standards for schools of art and design. The next AAC NASAD self-study and review will occur in 2017/2018. [NASAD](#) “establishes national standards for undergraduate and graduate degrees and other credentials for art and design and art/design-related disciplines, and provides assistance to institutions and individuals engaged in artistic, scholarly, educational, and other

art/design-related endeavors.” The AAC is also a charter member of the Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design (AICAD), a consortium of 41 professional colleges of art and design, dedicated to the exchange of information and programs beneficial to students, faculty, and staff.

4.A.6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and AmeriCorps.)

As a not-for-profit, non-proprietary college of art and design, the AAC is committed to providing an atmosphere wherein students can tap into what makes them uniquely, imaginatively, and creatively who they are—not only as artists, but as human beings who will impact all the lives they touch. Upon graduation, AAC students apply themselves and their creative thinking in a variety of contexts. We encourage our alumni to surprise us (and themselves), to use their talents and abilities to make and remake the world in their image—to live a happy, productive and creative life. We revere the great artists of the past for the ways they established the rules, not for the ways they followed the rules. This is the core of innovation. At the AAC, visual arts innovation is the bedrock of a Liberal Arts education. The idea is that the students learn to favor their own new possibilities. Creative thinking broadens any experience and is valuable in any context, whether painting or rocket ship design or real estate investing or cooking.

Upon the establishment of an office for institutional advancement in 2015, the Vice President for Institutional Advancement prioritized creating a comprehensive [database of AAC graduates](#) and reinvigorating the AAC Alumni Association with the objective to maintain robust alliances with our graduates. This is certainly one area in which improvement needs to be made. Although the faculty are continually informed about the success of our graduates, this information has not been collected through a system. The Advancement team has been working to find and connect with our graduates and we hope to use this data to advance the mission of the college.

AAC is a member institution in SNAAP, [Strategic National Arts Alumni Project](#) through its affiliation with AICAD. SNAAP is “. . . an annual online survey that collects and analyzes data about the educational experiences and careers of arts alumni in North America. Participating institutions receive actionable findings on their arts graduates as well as comparative data from other institutions.” The AAC participated for the first time in 2014 and received the data in the 2015 SNAAP Institutional Report. We were able to glean interesting anecdotal evidence based on when someone had graduated. For example, those graduating over 25 years ago observed that they had not been offered internships (we began internships shortly afterward). The response rate for AAC alumni was statistically small compared to other art and design schools based on our current, and limited alumni database. Having assumed the task of expanding our alumni database through our Department of Institutional Advancement and new staff position to manage and develop this information, we expect our next SNAAP survey results to be more actionable.

As a member of AICAD, we received the latest aggregated results of [The Outcomes Survey](#) in the Spring 2015 AICAD Report. This survey asked recent graduates of AICAD programs about their current situation, finding that 79.4% of respondents indicated that their post-graduation occupation is either very related (51.6) or somewhat related (27.8) to their program area. The survey also covers satisfaction with career goals (78.4% satisfied) and motivation issues. Although aggregated, the results clearly show that art and design education within the AICAD consortium provides students with the tools they need to navigate their future.

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4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

Argument

4B. The institution demonstrates commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

As a college of art and design, the Art Academy engages in daily assessment of student learning through critical observation of artwork produced. At some level, student's art and design work must "make a substantial difference in all the lives they touch." Perhaps only in the arts are students required to constantly place their efforts in front of the learning community for critical response. This daily cycle of creation immersed in community critique does not mirror the typical college experience of disengaged and self-enclosed learning and private examination. At the AAC, student learning is not self-enclosed or hidden, but interactive while in plain sight. The accumulation of experiential learning over the length of the program is expected to gain strength and uniqueness as a deliberate expression of the human condition, and therefore assessment must be ongoing and incremental in order to be effective.

The Art Academy of Cincinnati's [Academic Affairs Quality Assurance Program](#) is comprised of four interdependent pathways: Student Learning, Teaching, Curriculum, and Resource Allocation. Each pathway for assuring quality in learning and teaching focuses on the work students actually produce. Student work (which includes artworks, process, and ideation) sits at the center of the map. As the central focus of the Art Academy's purpose, student work is the culmination and ongoing physical evidence that growth and learning are flourishing. Each pathway follows a course for quality assurance, efficient data collection, assessment, and improvement.

4.B.1 The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.

Admissions

Assessment of student learning begins with the application process for acceptance into the BFA, Associate of Science, or MAAE program. Applicants must [demonstrate through the presentation of artwork, transcripts, and test scores](#) that they can succeed as artists in our programs. This gateway has become more difficult as high schools around the country have limited, suspended, or eliminated visual arts programs due to severe budget constraints. Admissions counselors evaluate applicants' portfolios [using rubrics derived from the BFA Studio Review Forms](#), thereby aligning the incoming assessment with our Educational Objectives.

In the fall of 2015, we initiated [Student Folios](#) (comprehensive advising folios) which contain all relevant academic application materials, [incoming student housing questionnaires](#), a [first-year student questionnaire](#) completed during the first week, and other relevant information. The Student Folio, used to track and document students' academic progress, replaced and upgraded the Advising Folder, which was more limited in scope and application. That same year we administered the BCSSE survey for incoming students and will analyze this data for insights into how we can better serve this student cohort. The Student Folios provide academic advisors pertinent information useful in helping students navigate the rigors of college life and an Art Academy education. As the role of the Student Folio evolves, the [Academic Management Team](#) (AMT) will review the student folio system over the next several academic years and make adjustments and improvements accordingly.

Student Learning

Art Academy student learning flows from the [Mission](#). The Art Academy Mission establishes our collective purpose and dictates all decisions concerning learning, teaching, curricular design, and resource allocation. The [AAC Educational Objectives](#) derive from the Core Values, the foundation of the Mission. The [goals and objectives for the individual BFA majors](#), the [MAAE program](#), and the [Department of Liberal Arts](#) (responsible for general education requirements), were developed directly from the AAC Educational Objectives. [Student Learner Outcomes](#) stated on course syllabi fulfill the different program objectives, establishing a clear and direct path back to the Mission and Core Values. The links among these different levels of clarity and specificity, from Mission to student learning, are strong and direct. Each resultant directive is made actionable through curricular oversight and effective teaching. The outcome of this foundational approach is student learning – the Art Academy's essential purpose.

Curriculum

The curriculum is designed to fulfill the Educational Objectives, which are products of the Mission. The curriculum design is generated through an inclusive process among the faculty and associated constituencies, a hallmark of collaboration that leverages the advantages of our small scale which has resulted in the [AAC's 1:2:1 curriculum model](#). End-of-year reviews for freshmen, sophomores, and juniors provide students an important comprehensive evaluation of studio work while giving faculty opportunities to observe the strengths and weaknesses evidenced in student work. The design of course content by AAC faculty, who are also responsible for that content delivery, is a critical, motivating force in student learning. [Student Learner Outcomes \(SLOs\) for each course are stated on each course syllabus](#) and are aligned with the goals and objectives for each major and/or the general education requirements. The

Department Chairs review and approve all course syllabi used for courses in their respective departments. The Associate Dean ensures that all courses align with the AAC Educational Objectives. Throughout this process of syllabi generation and review, student learning remains aligned with the Mission and Core Values, irrespective of the role of any particular course in fulfilling the educational objectives.

In Studio Arts 1, reviews occur at midterm and near the end of the first semester. This allows students and instructors to examine progress and areas of strength and opportunity for improvement and assists students in identifying possible majors. Each student's work is reviewed at the end of every year using the [Studio Review Form](#) and [Writing Standards Form](#). Each student chooses several pieces of work in accordance with pre-established parameters, completed throughout the year and presents them to a team of instructors for a critique and discussion of their progress. Each student must also write a [Student Self-Evaluation](#) each year. This annual process serves as a systematic analysis of student progress through [first year](#), [second year](#), and [third year](#) review forms, assists students and advisors in tracking personal progress throughout their AAC experience. The culmination of student learning in the BFA program is confirmed through the [Thesis Exhibition](#) and [Thesis Statement](#). Each senior must produce a week-long exhibition in the AAC galleries that demonstrates that he or she has achieved the Educational Objectives of the college. Each senior is appointed a three-member [Thesis Committee](#) that guides the development of the senior's written Thesis Statement and the Thesis Exhibition. The student's Thesis Committee evaluates the work using the [Thesis Review Form](#) to determine if the student has achieved the objectives of the AAC and is thereby eligible for the awarding of the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree.

4.B.2 The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.

The Art Academy has established educational objectives and outcome statements at the institutional, program, and course levels, each carefully aligned with the mission. The art and design the students produce as a result of their learning is at the center of these objectives. Therefore assessing the specific art and design outcomes, representing the essential purpose of the institution, is at the center of assessment. A prerequisite for effective assessment at the course level is retaining and supporting accomplished artists, designers, and scholars whose personal philosophies and pedagogical philosophies concerning art and design practice most directly reflect the Art Academy's Mission and Core Values. These faculty are valued for their ability to disseminate essential information clearly and efficiently, stimulate student learning, and through their art and design practice or scholarly endeavors, become role models for emerging artists and designers, who embrace a life of creativity. The importance of a strong faculty cannot be underestimated.

Each course identifies specific [Student Learner Outcomes](#) (SLOs) that are assessed by the instructor through coursework. This is the primary means of assessing student achievement at the course level. An Art Academy student will complete approximately 40 separate course experiences with as many instructors who assign a grade for each course. A student's cumulative experience throughout the program, and the corresponding cumulative grade point average, are strong indications of the quality of student learning in achieving the stated learner outcomes. Via

Midterm and [Final Course Evaluations](#), students assess the degree to which specific learner outcomes are met. Beginning with the 2015-2016 academic year, students assess each projected SLO in accordance with a set quantitative scale. In concert with the student assessment of SLOs, faculty are asked to complete Faculty Course Assessments as a further gauge of curricular success. By comparing both sets of responses, faculty have new tools to understand the extent to which specific outcomes were achieved as anticipated, as compared to the degree to which more exploratory SLOs were achieved. This process provides faculty a tangible way to focus their efforts on continual course improvement. Department Chairs, the Associate Dean, and the Academic Dean review these responses and offer suggestions for course improvement if needed. Assessment of student work during annual reviews also plays a role in course content improvement. The Department Chairs [tabulate data from the Studio Review Forms](#) and Writing Standards Forms to determine the strengths and weaknesses of student work overall. They present the aggregated findings to the Academic Management Team (AMT) for review and discussion. Conclusions of the analysis are then directed to improvement plans in the curriculum as a whole, specific sectors of the curriculum, or to the SLO of individual courses as warranted.

In the capstone experience, the degree candidate's Thesis Committee evaluates the exhibition and statement during a one-hour, focused conversation that is documented through [Senior Thesis Exhibition](#) and [Senior Thesis Statement review forms](#), which restate the AAC Educational Objectives. Students must attain a passing score to be awarded the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. This [thesis review data](#) are tabulated and reported to the AMT for review, discussion, and BFA program improvement.

The MAAE program requires a similar review process, which includes a professional public thesis exhibition, demonstrating achievement of the educational objectives of the MAAE program as part of a final portfolio review requirement and capstone experience. The degree candidate for the Associate of Science in Graphic Design is assessed based on coursework only and is awarded the degree upon completion of stated requirements. Though this degree option has not been elected in recent years, we continue to offer it as it mirrors the first two years of the BFA in Design and does not present any additional encumbrance. (Need a statement concerning Co-curricular student services programming and survey results)

4.B.3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

The [Art Academy's Academic Affairs Quality Assurance Plan](#) was developed to generate only assessment data that could be identified as relevant, efficient in its gathering, and conducive to student learning improvement. Given the modest full-time faculty base, supported by a staff of one, the AAC does not have staff, faculty, committees, or departments assigned to focus solely on assessment initiatives. Assessment must occur as a routine aspect of curricular implementation by faculty and routine operations of the Academic Management Team (AMT). As engaged members of the AAC faculty, the Academic Dean, Associate Dean, and Department Chairs balance administrative work with their respective teaching loads. The advantages of having administration in the studio/classroom (and by default faculty in administration) the administrators who teach receive firsthand knowledge of student learning on a regular basis, resulting in more effective decision-making. The disadvantage is most felt in inadequate time to thoroughly analyze and act on assessment data. As the college begins to emerge from seriously

tight budget constraints, the hiring of at least two more permanent faculty members, as referenced in the current [Strategic Plan](#), will help with the distribution of assessment responsibilities.

The three primary sources of assessment data are: recorded midterm and final course grades; course evaluations at midterm and at the end of the semester; and data collected from annual student reviews. Collectively, these data reflect an interwoven relationship between teaching and learning.

The Registrar maintains assessment data, including midterm course grades and final semester grades and examines such data for trends and anomalies. After midterm grades were recorded in spring semester 2016, the Registrar determined that 65% of all failing grades originated from only two courses: Freshman English and Freshman Art History. The AMT was alerted, and department chairs investigated. The AMT determined that these gateway courses would be critical areas of focus in respect to efforts to enhance student persistence, retention, and success. At the end of the 2015-2016 academic year, the faculty convened to discuss student-centered active learning strategies to be implemented in Freshman English and Art History courses and considered ways to redesign the overall curriculum to more effectively reflect student learning styles, interests, and needs. In summer 2016, we were fortunate to hire Dr. Emily Everhart as a full-time Art Historian. Dr. Everhart received a course reduction for the Fall 2016 semester in order to fully research active learning strategies and to recommend ways to implement them, especially in gateway courses, which traditionally had been driven by intense content delivery. Through the SONIS software, the Registrar can determine via grade audits the distribution of grades by any faculty member and the average grade any individual faculty member awards. These data demonstrate that there are only a few outliers from the norm and that grade inflation is not problematic.

The Executive Assistant to the Academic Dean collects, archives, and routes assessment data from course evaluations and end of year reviews, as directed by the Academic Dean. The Studio Program Chair, the Chair of Liberal Arts, and the Associate Dean are tasked with [analyzing assessment data](#) and bringing those results to the AMT for discussion and action.

From our experience in art and design education, data alone does not promote or provoke change. We use assessment data to focus critical conversations about student-learning improvement toward realistic, achievable objectives, followed by active implementation of new strategies, whose effects are measured, tangible, and evidentiary. In art and design education, the artistic expressions of Student Learner Outcomes (SLOs), course goals, and curricular proficiencies cannot be assessed unequivocally, quantitatively, or categorically. Unlike SLOs customary for curricula in mathematics, physics, engineering, and other disciplines grounded in absolute, unrefuted measures of authenticity and correctness, art and design curricula cannot be measured or assessed in accordance with a strict, systematic criterion for determining accuracy or inaccuracy. This does not mean, however, that students of art and design are absolved of curricular mandates to maintain intellectual integrity, to demonstrate academic rigor, or to engage continually in curricular development consistent with their academic disciplinary pursuits.

Data gathered in our assessment process reflect this discussion. As a result of these evaluative discussions, values are assigned as an evaluation of achievement, or degree of student learning on [review forms](#), in an attempt to invigorate this discussion. These values, when aggregated, can expose strengths and weaknesses in courses or in the curriculum.

In the spring of 2016 an analysis of our DFWI rates in our first courses revealed a shocking statistic. Over the past 7 years the DFWI (students receiving grade designations of “D”, “F”, “W”, or “I”) data is [telling us we have ample room for improvement](#). A student receiving a DFWI in the first semester in only one of the gateway courses of Studio Arts 1: CORE, English, or Art History currently only has a 5% chance of completing the degree in 8 semesters. Receiving a DFWI in two gateway courses often means the student will never earn a college degree.

During the fall of 2016 Emily Everhart, PhD, Assistant Professor in Art History was given the task of developing new strategies in active learning for liberal arts courses, particularly in the required first year courses to improve the DFWI rates in these courses. Her research has shown us how the demographic profile of our students plays a significant role in their opportunities for success. However, her research also provided new resources for improving student success through active learning strategies and subsequently [conducted a faculty workshop](#) on how these strategies might be implemented at the AAC.

Changes in how we teach [Color Theory FO103](#), [Creative Processes FO102](#), and Introductory Art History courses resulted from analyzing data collected from First Year Reviews and analyzing course grades from Art History I and II. Color Theory and Creative Processes were expanded from 1.5 credit workshops to full 3-credit courses, following low First Year Review scores in both areas. We restructured [Freshman Art History, AH105 and AH110](#), from a dense, sequential survey course to a more connective educational experience that contextualizes contemporary art across a continuum of the past, present, and future.

We introduce students to a constellation of historical perspectives, using the students’ unique experiences of the Internet and social media as launch pads. From this point of departure, students attain a more fundamental and meaningful understanding of art history, as the subject matter is contextualized in a variety of ways, from a multiplicity of perspectives, and toward the students’ own innovative purposes, rather than merely tracing history from cave art to the present day.

Course evaluations are reviewed twice each semester by the department chairs and the Academic Dean. Data collected through course evaluations are retained as both digital and original, physical records. These data began to indicate that students were no longer responding to traditional drawing courses, or to drawing at all. To gain much-needed flexibility within the curriculum and to broaden students’ programmatic options, course evaluation data supported the decision to reduce the number of required drawing courses from 6 to 4, and then from 4 to 2, and ultimately combining the Painting and Drawing majors. Numerous drawing courses remain available to students who opt to exceed the number of drawing courses required for graduation. Course evaluations are determining factors in deciding which studio electives and liberal arts electives to offer and in selecting the faculty who will teach them. Instructors with excellent

course evaluations are sought for reappointment, and those with less than excellent course evaluations may be monitored more closely, or not rehired.

4.B.4 The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

The Art Academy subscribes to the principle tenets of the groundbreaking 1966 AAUP Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities, widely accepted as a cornerstone of the concept of shared governance. The AAC accepts and practices “shared responsibility and cooperative action among the components of the academic institution . . . to foster constructive joint action, both within the institutional structure and in protection of its integrity against improper intrusions.” To this end, the AAC curriculum has been developed through a transparent process with complete participation from full-time faculty. Guided by the conditions for membership in the [National Association of Schools of Art and Design \(NASAD\) Handbook](#) the Art Academy’s curriculum continues to meet or exceed all NASAD standards and has established methods for assessment, which member institutions have adopted. The AMT provides a forum for faculty and staff to discuss methods to assess student learning, to modify those methods, and to propose substantive changes. The AMT has proven to be a mechanism that only a college of modest size would be able to utilize effectively. The weekly presence of nearly all Academic Affairs stakeholders, including all full-time faculty, the Registrar, and Directors of Financial Aid and Enrollment Management provides transparency, immediacy of interaction, and engaged, interdependent participation. As stated in the AAUP guidelines for shared governance “a college or university in which all the components are aware of their interdependence, of the usefulness of communication among themselves, and of the force of joint action will enjoy increased capacity to solve educational problems.” The AMT continues to evolve as new challenges arise and has become the essential collaborative management structure of the AAC providing streamlined practices for maximum efficiencies.

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- ACADEMIC MANAGEMENT TEAM Description
- Department of Liberal Arts Philosophy
- Fall 2016 Syllabi_All
- FINAL 7-9-15 Creating Effective Learner Outcomes MT 7815
- Final Course Evaluations Fall 2016 optmzd
- First Year Student Learning Profile 2015 (1) (1)
- Memo to First Year Instructors FINAL
- NASAD_HANDBOOK_2016-17
- Roommate Questionnaire 2016
- Spring 2016 Syllabi_All

4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Argument

4C. The institution demonstrates a commitment to education improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs

4.C.1 The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.

The current [Strategic Plan](#) identifies precise goals with regard to student retention and degree completion. In 2015-16, the six-year average of full-time retention rate is at 75%, a measurement that IPEDS defines as the percent of fall full-time cohort from the prior year (minus exclusions) who re-enrolled the current year. The 10-year average of the six-year graduation rate is 45%, constituting the percentage of students who earned a BFA within 150% of the customary time. By 2017-18, the goal is 230 full-time enrolled with a six-year average of full-time retention rate of 79% and a 10-year average of the six-year graduation rate of 49%. In order to remain to track with these goals, the Art Academy is working diligently to curb attrition and to retain especially first-year students. To improve retention, the Art Academy has developed and implemented portfolio review protocols (detailed above) and has utilized advising and counseling interventions. The Enrollment Management team and Academic Affairs are collaboratively building strategies, policies, and procedures that will lay the groundwork for a Comprehensive Enrollment Plan. In order to attain AAC's goals for 2017-18 and to reflect our vision "to be the most celebrated, relentless, rebellious, cutting-edge and radiant community of artists and designers..." the AMT implemented strategic, definitive adjustments to the First Year curriculum (see Criterion 3). A [Retention Plan](#) was articulated in 2015 to guide our collaborative

efforts to improve retention. Since its recent adoption the year over year retention of first year has improved, although it will take several years to determine which aspects of the plan appear to be the most effective.

4.C.2 The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.

The Art Academy of Cincinnati has tracked retention, persistence, and graduation rates using the following: [Incoming Student Admissions Profile](#), [Early Alert Form for Students-at-Risk](#), [Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement \(BCSSE\)](#), [Freshman Survey](#), Course Evaluations, and daily attendance through the first four weeks of the semester. The weekly [AMT agenda](#) includes as a standing item, a discussion of students who appear to be at-risk of failing to complete courses and/or the BFA program. Serious cases are assigned follow-up protocols. Advisors, Chairs, and typically the Director of Student Services investigate the causes and attempt to provide support and assistance to mitigate risk factors. As AMT meetings are weekly, faculty and staff mobilize quickly to analyze obstacles to a student's success and formulate action plans. These measures provide actionable solutions for student success while affirming the Art Academy's team-based approach to academic management as a viable model for similar colleges. Unquestionably, the AAC's modest scale facilitates face-to-face interventions as often as possible well before a student is at substantial risk of failing or withdrawing from college.

Beginning in the fall of 2016 and looking back to 2011, the Registrar compiled the [DFWI rates for first-year courses](#) in an attempt to discover which courses were consistently "gateway" courses to the sophomore year. As anticipated, we identified art history and English courses as significant impediments to student success.

To address this, in the fall of 2016, Dr. Emily Everhart accepted a one-course release in order to research active learning strategies for first-year students in Liberal Arts courses. Parallel to this effort, Enrollment Management personnel analyzed the incoming first-year students' high school GPAs, ACT and SAT scores, AAC portfolio scores, on-campus and off-campus residency factors, and distance from home. Incoming students with low GPAs and entrance test scores were identified as having the greatest challenges and were targeted for additional proactive face-to-face contacts by instructors, advisors, and Director of Student Services. By the sixth week of the fall semester, there was 100% retention of the incoming class, a nearly unprecedented occurrence. As we reach the end of the 2016 fall term our retention of 87% of the incoming class is a realistic improvement. These strategies will be included in the Comprehensive Enrollment Plan, which is being developed.

In addition to collecting and analyzing our own data, the Art Academy participates in collections of retention, persistence, and graduation rates using the [Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System \(IPEDS\)](#) methodology and tools available through the [Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design \(AICAD\)](#). With these reports, the Art Academy has been able to track its progress towards its enrollment goals and compare our enrollment outlook to those of other institutions. The reports show the AAC has remained stable with its enrollments as others have declined, but has found growing the enrollment in the current environment to be one our greatest challenges.

4.C.3 The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of program to make improvements as warranted by data.

The Art Academy has taken significant measures to increase retention, persistence, and degree completion rates. Those measures include: [Student Folios](#), [First Year Surveys](#), [Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement \(BCSSE\)](#), a digital, interactive [Early Alert procedure](#), the expansion of on-campus [Student Counseling Services](#) to two part-time counselors, an updated and viable Advising Plan, and core curriculum changes.

[Advising](#) by faculty is a critical part of retention. It promotes faculty-student engagement and community-building, a core component of productive retention efforts. The Advising Plan outlines roles of advisors, policies, procedures, and effective ways to acquaint students with resources for academic success.

Other curricular changes include the elimination of the Art History and Drawing majors and the paring down of drawing credits required for graduation. Since the Art Academy has a history of graduating accomplished students in the disciplines of painting and drawing, the new consolidated major in Painting and Drawing provides an even stronger visual arts curriculum characterized by a rich history of overlap and further opportunities for mutual exchange, cross-disciplinary engagement, and expanded avenues for innovative teaching and learning in the visual arts. [Application to NASAD for this change was approved in 2015](#). Students benefit from cross-disciplinary activity, and the student/faculty ratio aligns more successfully with NASAD's recommended ratio of 12:1.

We analyzed course enrollment data to help identify the seven strongest disciplinary areas in the BFA program, which led to the elimination of the two majors that were under-enrolled: Art History and Drawing. This move and the program modifications that resulted allowed us to reallocate resources so as to develop our curricular strengths further. Improved course enrollment averages and stable representation across all program majors ensued, as anticipated. Further, we were able to broaden cross-disciplinary education for all majors. Precisely, by decreasing the requirement in drawing from 18 credits to 6 credits, we expanded the number of required studio electives, providing all students opportunities to achieve a more well-rounded education.

4.C.4 The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practices. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

The Registrar collects, analyzes, and archives data on student retention, persistence, and program completion rates. In accordance with FERPA, he distributes the data to appropriate parties, as necessary. Department Chairs and the Associate Dean analyze the data further and bring their findings to pertinent constituencies for appropriate action. An AAC student who withdraws must complete an [Exit Interview](#), which documents the reason for withdrawal, delineates near-term plans, and confirms that the student has consulted with the Financial Aid Officer and that he or she understands the effects of withdrawal on any financial aid obligations. Financial Aid staff

members analyze Exit Interview data for trends. [Though the AAC maintains one of the lowest costs of attendance](#) in our peer group and is competitive with the [University of Cincinnati in net cost](#), the most prevalent reason for withdrawal is still financial burden. While the College Scorecard analysis shows that the AAC is on average in relation to national graduation rates, we continue to be assertive and proactive in improving graduation rates. We have undertaken calculated measures to recruit prospective students who demonstrate a greater possibility of completion. These measures include directing recruitment efforts toward leading high school art programs, imposing a minimum ACT score, and building strong relationships with the students we envision as AAC alumni. These efforts have been strengthened significantly under Jamie Owens, Director of Enrollment Management, who joined the AAC leadership team in 2015.

Sources

- 2012-2016 DFWI First Year Courses
- 2015 Advising and The Student Folio
- 2015 Advising and The Student Folio
- 2016 Counseling Practicum Agreement
- 2016 Early Alert Form
- 2016 Exit Interview Form (1)
- 2016 Fall Incoming Class Stats and Retention
- 7-29-15 Retention Plan 2015
- 8-1-16 Strategic Plan Grid 2016-2019 Approved
- AAC IPEDSDFR2015_201061
- AICAD Spring 2015 12 mo aggregate report
- BCSSE15 Institutional Report (Art Academy of Cincinnati)
- College Navigator - Art Academy of Cincinnati
- College Navigator - University of Cincinnati-Main Campus
- First Year Student Learning Profile 2015 (1) (1)
- NASAD Final PTG DRW Major
- Painting and Drawing Commission Approval
- Template for AMT Meeting Agenda

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Summary

- The Art Academy of Cincinnati takes responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.
- The Art Academy of Cincinnati's [Academic Affairs Quality Assurance Program](#) (AAQAP) document outlines the process by which program review occurs at every level in the institution from semester to semester and year to year. The program, demonstrated by the [Quality Assurance Map](#), ensures that review occurs in accordance with the college's [Mission, Vision and Core Values](#) in the interest of student learning, dynamic teaching, and a non-static, flexible, and contemporary curriculum, which can be adjusted expeditiously to accommodate student needs and interests, as well as the newest developments in art and design.
- Policies governing the transcription of credit, including experiential learning and other forms of prior learning are outlined in the [AAC Academic Catalog](#). These include limits on the number of credits that can be transferred, procedures for awarding life credit, and scores necessary for receiving [AP, CLEP Credit, or International Baccalaureate Credit](#).
- [A Transfer Credit Evaluation \(TCE\) form](#) is completed for each prospective incoming transfer student. Multiple layers of checks and balances ensure that all credit transferred aligns with AAC policies and standards. • Official transcripts from accredited colleges and universities are required for the evaluation of all credit to be transferred from other programs.

The AAC is creating a comprehensive database of AAC graduates and reinvigorating the AAC Alumni Association with the objective to maintain robust alliances with our graduates. This is certainly one area in which improvement needs to be made. The Advancement team has been working to find and connect with our graduates and we hope to use this data to advance the mission of the college.

- The AAC has established Course Level and Prerequisite definitions for both the [Studio](#) and the [Liberal Arts](#) departments. Both documents lay out a philosophy for course-level definitions and prerequisites in their respective departments, and then define course levels in terms of the assumptions and expectations for both teaching and student learning at each level. They ultimately define appropriate measures for evaluating and assessing teaching and learning at each level and provide guidelines for assigning prerequisites.

- The AAC, in addition to its HLC accreditation, is also specially accredited by the [National Association of Schools of Art and Design](#) (NASAD) of which it is a charter member. The AAC's NASAD reaccreditation process parallels the HLC process and typically happens every 10 years. NASAD's accreditation process promotes regular, high-level self-examination of the college's Mission, Vision, Core Values, and Objectives in the interest of improving and establishing curricular standards for schools of art and design.
- AAC is a member institution in [SNAAP, Strategic National Arts Alumni Project](#) through its affiliation with AICAD. Participating institutions receive actionable findings on their arts graduates as well as comparative data from other institutions.”
- As a member of AICAD, we received the latest aggregated results of [The Outcomes Survey](#) in the Spring 2015 AICAD Report. Although aggregated, the results clearly show that art and design education at AAC and within the AICAD consortium provides students with the tools they need to navigate their future.

Sources

- 2016 Academic Affairs Quality Assurance Program 3
- 2016 TCE Form
- 2016-2017 AAC Academic Catalog
- 2016-2017 AAC Academic Catalog (page number 11)
- 2016-2017 AAC Academic Catalog (page number 13)
- 5 Definitions of Course Levels BFA 2016
- 6-3-16 AAC GUIDELINES FOR DEFINITION OF AAC LIBERAL ARTS COURSE LEVELS
- AAC Mission Core Values
- AAC Quality Assurance Map
- AICAD Spring 2015 12 mo aggregate report
- NASAD_HANDBOOK_2016-17
- SNAAP 2015 Institutional Report - AAC

5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

5.A - Core Component 5.A

The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.
3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.
4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.
5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

Argument

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

In recent years, the Art Academy of Cincinnati (AAC) has made numerous improvements in fiscal management, human resources, the physical infrastructure, and technological service. The AAC has stabilized its cash flow, [income statement](#), and [balance sheet](#) by utilizing sound fiscal oversight, refined expense management, and adjustments to [tuition revenues and student fees](#) over the past five years. Our [financial statement audits](#) have garnered unqualified opinions from [VonLehman CPA & Advisory Firm](#), our provider of audit services, and representatives of PNC Bank, the AAC's financial institution, have praised us for the dramatic improvements evident in our fiscal stability and resources.

In 2013, the AAC hired its first [Chief Financial Officer](#) (CFO), followed by the hiring of its first Director of Human Resources, and its first [Vice President of Institutional Advancement](#). Housed in two historic buildings, each over 100 years old, the AAC benefits from the massive 2005 renovation and construction effort (executed by the Miller-Valentine Group) that joined these buildings. This project resulted in a Preservation Merit Award conferred by the State

Historic Preservation Office, the official historic preservation agency of the State of Ohio, LEED certification, and an expansion that accommodates all of our academic programming.

Within the past two years, the AAC has replaced numerous components in its technological infrastructure, expanded its Wi-Fi capacity, and has converted many paper-based processes to electronic methods, reducing time required to enter and manage data. The AAC is preparing to invest in consolidating numerous data silos into an enterprise-wide system encompassing functions of [Enrollment](#), [Registrar](#), [Financial Aid](#), Business Office, and Academic Management under one platform. The [SONIS](#) product from Jenzabar is currently used as our student information system. It is a viable platform on which to build an integrated solution for all of these academic support functions.

The nature of academic programming at the AAC precludes online or off-site methods of delivering educational content to our students. Management has analyzed the possibility of offering some academic content via means other than traditional classroom settings. However, the college does not have the capacity to develop such offerings in a way that would be meaningful to the students we serve, as our programs are tactile and hands-on.

2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.

The AAC has no extracurricular departments, intramural or intercollegiate athletics, research departments, or non-academic divisions that compete for resources allocated towards academic programming. [Academy Academy Housing, Inc](#) is the AAC's sole subordinate entity (for housing), established purely for legal/tax purposes. This entity has not and will not be a potential recipient of resources designated for academic programming. The primary allocation of resources within the AAC goes toward personnel compensation. In all areas of responsibility, the college is at the minimums for employee headcount. Additional resource allocations will improve faculty compensation to mitigate employee turnover risk.

The AAC's Community Education Department (CE) received the mandate to become self-supporting, and through acquired revenues and grants, it has progressed toward achieving that mandate. In addition, CE is integral to long-term recruiting initiatives for our curricular programs. In fact, self-generated resources sustain many CE efforts that, in turn, support curricular programming.

3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.

Since our last review, the institution has employed a three-year [Strategic Plan](#) consisting of five major goals. At the close of each fiscal year, college executives review the plan, measure

progress on goals, and establish revised goals in alliance with budgetary implications. A series of planned "rollouts" based on the original goals has been effective in reframing the institution's priorities and in preparing for a 10-year strategic visioning process. In mid-2017, this process will render a new plan, scheduled for implementation in 2019-20. The current (and last) iteration of the three-year Strategic Plan will expire at that time.

During development of the original iteration of the three-year Strategic Plan, the institution was permeated with stress. The AAC's chronic dependence on tuition revenues (currently 88%) prompted analysis of our [Tuition Rate and Student Fees Schedule](#), discounting parameters, and related factors. Executives developed and implemented a series of annual improvements to remedy this aspect of the institution's overall revenue picture. A focus on enrollment growth is critical since such growth would conduce improvement to the comprehensive revenue picture.

Given the degree to which enrollment and overall revenue interact, the current iteration of the three-year Strategic Plan provides detailed analyses of goals pertaining to enrollment growth and revenue-development. Essentially, these goals petition the following improvements to tuition-and-fees-based revenue: \$7,081,700 in 2017-18; \$7,779,360 in 2018-19; and \$8,532,250 in 2019-20, with the expectation that expenses will increase during this time span. We anticipate that enrollment growth will reach the target of 250 FTE within this timeframe, and upon achievement of this mark, the institution will refine its admissions processes to optimize quality, selectivity, and retention prospects. The Strategic Plan addresses this in depth.

4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained

Updated [job descriptions](#) for all positions at the AAC identify contemporary certification and training standards—required or expected. We encourage all employees to engage with their colleagues via local, state, and national associations that advance those positions and to pursue continuing education opportunities that are relevant to their roles. As an incentive for employees to retain and refine their knowledge and skills, the AAC defrays costs associated with professional memberships and continuing education. Many employees already possess specialized credentials and continue to develop their proficiencies.

5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

The AAC identifies emerging institutional needs and addresses them in its short-term [Tactical Plan](#). Based on the principle that revenues govern expense allocations, this plan guides the review of revenues and expenses for the [current fiscal year](#) and [the one immediately preceding](#). After senior administrators consult with their respective subordinates on anticipated needs, several meetings to determine implementation strategies follow. The chief institutional focus is on supporting curricular programming, and the absence of distractions that could divert revenues to non-academic areas capacitates this focus. Administrators present [proposed budgets](#) to our

Finance Committee and to our [Board of Trustees](#). They substantiate our claims that the budgets, as proposed, would in fact, support both the Mission of the college and curricular programming.

Sources

- 8-1-16 Strategic Plan Grid 2016-2019 Approved
- AAC 11302016 Income Statement
- AAC 2015-2016 Audited Financial Statements
- AAC 2015-2016 Audited Financial Statements (page number 5)
- AAC 2015-2016 Audited Financial Statements (page number 7)
- AAC CFO Thomas Pack
- AAC Enrollment Office
- AAC Financial Aid Office
- AAC Job Descriptions
- AAC Registrar Office
- AAC Tuition and Fees 2014 through 2019
- AAHI Articles of Incorporation
- ART ACADEMY HOUSING LICENSE AGREEMENT 2016-2017
- Art Academy of Cincinnati - Staff Bios
- FY 2015-2016 2016-2017 Budget Summary Comparison
- Joan Kaup - VP of Institutional Advancement + VPIA Job Description
- SONISWEB - Art Academy of Cincinnati
- Trustees-Committees FY 2016-2017 new
- VonLehman CPA & Advisory Firm _ Cincinnati, Ohio _ Northern Kentucky

5.B - Core Component 5.B

The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.
3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

Argument

1. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

The structure of the Board of Trustees is formulated in accordance with the Code of Regulations, often called the bylaws. This document establishes several standing committees:

The [Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees](#) consists of the elected Committee Chairs, the elected officers of the Corporation, and other Trustees appointed to serve on this committee.

The [Executive Committee meets](#) six times each year, alternating months with the full Board of Trustees and holds authority to act on behalf of the full Board.

The [Facilities Committee](#) superintends all institutional buildings, facilities, and equipment and recommends capital expenditures to the Board of Trustees.

The [Finance Committee](#) establishes investment policies for the institution's endowments and other ventures; recommends investment managers; reviews reports prepared by financial service consultants; reviews budget proposals; approves transactions by the institution's financial agents, and recommends actions to the Board. Serving as the Board audit committee, the Finance Committee recommends to the Board the independent auditors for the college.

The [Finance Committee meets at least six times each year](#), in the months in which the full Board meets. Ad hoc meetings to review reports from auditors, investment managers, or other entities may also occur. At each regularly scheduled meeting, this committee receives a [Consolidated Balance Sheet](#) and a [Consolidated Income Statement](#), current as of the end-of-the-month immediately preceding the meeting. On an annual basis, the Finance Committee approves the

[audit](#), the [Investment/Draw Policy](#), and the [budget](#), recommending formal adoption to the Board of Trustees.

The [Committee on Instruction](#) oversees all educational programs of the college. This committee holds [bi-monthly meetings](#) during the same month in which the full Board meets. This schedule accommodates the Committee's responsibility to review requests from the President (as recommended by the Academic Dean) to grant faculty rank promotions to instructional staff members seeking such advancements. Following the President's endorsement, this committee petitions the Board of Trustees to promote the faculty members so nominated. Some members of the Committee on Instruction also serve on the [Academic Affairs Advisory Committee](#) (AAAC), which advises the Vice President for Academic Affairs on management of the college curriculum.

The [Governance Committee](#) determines the requisite qualifications for Trustees; identifies prospective candidates for election as Trustees; reviews the candidates; and presents its recommendations at appropriate meetings of the Board of Trustees.

The [Development Committee](#) establishes and leads the fundraising initiatives of the Board of Trustees. It creates policies for solicitation of funds; plans short-term and long-term financial support; and oversees procurement and growth of endowments and alternative forms of financial support.

The [Marketing Committee](#) supervises the creation and implementation of institutional marketing; recommends marketing professionals; reviews marketing plans, programs and proposals; reviews marketing expenditures, and determines the viability of outsourcing marketing personnel functions.

The [Enrollment Committee](#) superintends recruiting, admissions, retention, and other enrollment efforts regarding baccalaureate and graduate programs. It reviews the institution's marketing resources dedicated specifically to recruitment; makes recommendations regarding resource allocations; and presents to the Board of Trustees regular progress reports on enrollment initiatives.

The Board committee structure promotes a viable working relationship with AAC administrators, as each Board committee chair coordinates with the staff personnel charged with operational oversight of the respective college functions. These liaisons facilitate the effective transfer of Board-directed policies to the administration for implementation.

In 2009, the AAC's administrative staff enlisted the Board of Trustees to fulfill an unusual role. In the midst of considerable financial stress, the institution had a decimated staff struggling to manage the affairs of the college. With no chief authority at the helm, financial duress left the college without the resources needed to rebuild.

As an emergency measure, civic leaders worked with the Board to engage the services of a consultant who devised a plan to restore stability to the institution. The college sought to augment the Board with trustees possessing specialized qualifications, whereby they would

oversee critical operational areas. While implementation of this plan brought immediate relief, it precipitated the inherent challenge of integrating trustees with the daily activities of the institution in a meaningful way. Further, it gave nonemployees authority over critical administrative functions.

Institutional oversight was re-consigned to key faculty and staff, beginning with a new president in 2012 and working outwards through new vice presidents in finance and operations, academic affairs, and institutional advancement, effecting progress through all channels. Reinstatement of a conventional state of affairs was smooth, efficient, and absolute, resulting in a solid transfer of routine management of the college to the faculty and staff.

The current framework for strategic planning calls for an annual review of progress toward the three-year plan's goals and objectives. After this review, the year just completed drops off, and a new third year with specific goals and objectives is added. This process keeps three years of operational planning in the institution's view. A standard 10-year plan will replace this structure.

During the initial planning session (in 2012) for the first iteration of the three-year plan, a volunteer task force consisting of faculty, staff, students, and members of the Board drafted the original visioning and goals identification. While not intended to be a representative body, this task force nevertheless served that function well, as those who led the effort ensured that all voices were heard in the process.

In 2013, the work of the task force concluded with a draft of the [initial plan document](#), which the Board reviewed and approved for implementation. In progressive manifestations, as the year completed rolls off, a new year is added, resulting in cyclical requests that the Board review and approve subsequent plan iterations. This cycle has occurred four times, proving a viable model for establishing a "visioning task force." Such a task force would initiate a new 10-year plan, followed by Board review and approval as this document develops.

Many current Trustees have expertise in certain areas of operation, catalyzing our pursuit of them as AAC Board members. Notably, Trustees with experience in banking and finance, wealth management, institutional advancement, facilities construction management, employee relations, and specialized legal practice have provided invaluable guidance. Considerable Trustee involvement has helped facilitate development of numerous policies and procedures, including the [Investment Policy](#), the [Employee Handbook](#), the [Faculty Handbook](#), and the [Strategic Plan](#), among others, though our continued reliance on their expertise has diminished.

An additional benefit of the institution's access to these accomplished executives emerged as the institution systematically reframed the administrative staffing platform and recruited candidates to fill key roles. Trustees served on the search and interview committees and helped to ensure the application of sound hiring decisions. The present strength of the leadership team substantiates the percipience in having utilized the expertise of these trustees in this way.

The structure of the current Strategic Plan, as described above, automatically provides resource support. As a new third year populates, executives adjust tuition rates, initiatives for enrollment growth, fundraising goals, and compensation platforms accordingly. A budgetary sketch for each

plan year provides the foundation for all plan initiatives. Given slim economic margins and the AAC's stark dependence upon tuition revenue, this plan has proved invaluable in managing the institution during fiscal recovery.

As the proposed structure for the new Strategic Plan develops, the experience gained from the process will benefit the framing of the new plan.

2. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.

From its beginnings nearly 150 years ago, the Art Academy of Cincinnati has operated with a strong respect for democratic ideals. Irrespective of employees' roles within the college, all voices count.

Since the last review, volunteers from the faculty, staff, student body, and Board have fully supported significant planning activities, including the drafting of the [Strategic Plan](#) and the creation of a radical, new, comprehensive [Mission Statement](#).

Although not recently tested, experience suggests that top-down, unilateral policies simply cannot be sustained or tolerated. With this in mind, the current administration utilizes a transparent, engaging approach to decision-making.

3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

Prompted by recommendations from faculty and administrators knowledgeable about changes to expectations and requirements for institutions of higher education, the Committee on Instruction will devise and formulate the academic requirements, policies, and processes that govern and regulate the delivery of our academic programs. The absence of non-academic distractions to our curricular efforts permits focus on directing resources towards achieving those goals. The AAC's current financial constraints may limit the delivery methods for our academic programming. However, the resilience of AAC faculty and staff in creating innovative, collaborative, and effective methods to educate our students should not be underestimated. These constraints will neither define those limits nor jeopardize our responsibility to uphold our obligation to exercise fiscally responsible stewardship of AAC resources, as entrusted by all internal and external constituents.

The express nature of a college of art and design requires continual synergistic critique, engaged post-critique commentary, and responsible participation of all involved in this critical curricular exercise. This process promotes effective student academic progress; student development as

artists, designers, and critical thinkers; and collaborative problem-solving. As alluded above, the process of critique must be multi-directional, rather than delivered in a unilateral fashion (from faculty to student). At the AAC, [numerous communication outlets](#) between and among manifold AAC constituencies serve as channels for growth. The philosophy of strategic integration mobilizes student engagement in critical policy formation, institutional committee work, and service on high-level search committees. For example, the [Board of Trustees](#) includes a student representative who possesses full Trustee rights and responsibilities. Board membership is among many opportunities for students to [engage with administration and faculty](#), influence policy formation, and contribute toward inherent progress throughout the curricular experience.

Sources

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- 2016-AAC-Instagram
- 2016-AAC-Student-Facebook-Group
- 2016-AAC-Twitter
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- AAC 2016-2017 Committee Rosters
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- AAC 2016-2017 Committee Rosters (page number 2)
- AAC EE Handbook Final October 2016.docx
- AAC Faculty Handbook 12216
- AAC Investment Policy
- AAC Mission Core Values
- AAC Spending Policy
- AAC strategic plan combined2013-2019
- AAC Strategic Plan Grid 2013-2016 - final
- Board of Trustees Roster 2016-2017
- FY 2015-2016 2016-2017 Budget Summary Comparison

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.
5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

Argument

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities

The executive management team of the college meets weekly throughout the calendar year. Members include the President, the Vice President for Finance and Operations, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Vice President of Institutional Advancement, and the Director of Enrollment Management. The VPFO meets weekly with key operations staff, and the VPAA meets weekly with faculty and key Academic Affairs staff. This structure effects timely and efficient management of issues as they emerge.

In keeping with its mission, the AAC partners with many organizations, our partnership with the [Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County \(PLCH\)](#) being among the most pivotal. The vehicle of this partnership—an [Agreement of Cooperation \(AOC\)](#)—guarantees AAC students access to library resources. Subject to annual review, the AOC includes a provision for amendments, although a need to invoke it has not arisen since the agreement's inception in 2005. In addition to providing essential [library research services](#), PLCH recently launched its "[MakerSpace](#)," a manufactory that provides community access to industrial facilities and resources such as laser cutters, engravers, 3D printers, digital design stations, sewing stations, and production studios for digital audio, video, and lens-based work. As these resources dovetail with AAC curricular programs, they support the resource needs of our students. The inherent possibilities therein prompted our Head of Sculpture to pursue an even deeper interrelationship between the institutions, resulting in AAC students being the first patrons in line to use the Library's manufacturing equipment.

In recent months, the AAC has held strategic planning sessions with the [Cincinnati Art Museum](#), the [Contemporary Arts Center](#), the [Lloyd Library and Museum](#), [Miami University](#), [Xavier](#)

[University](#), [ArtWorks](#), and other entities to discuss emerging and ongoing partnerships. Through a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the [Taft Museum of Art](#), all admission charges—including those for special exhibitions—are waived for AAC students.

The AAC regularly partners in events and services with [Cincinnati Center City Development Corporation \(3CDC\)](#), [Downtown Cincinnati Incorporated](#), the [Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce](#), the [Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber](#), the [Hispanic Chamber of Cincinnati USA](#), the [Regional Economic Development Initiative \(REDI Cincinnati\)](#), and many other organizations.

2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.

The collaborative critique style described above is an excellent model upon which to base student learning assessment and evaluation of AAC operations and fiscal planning. This model fosters an environment of candor and examination utilizing multiple perspectives, providing a sound basis upon which to assess and evaluate critical areas. Important work accomplished by internal committees such as the [Academic Management Team \(AMT\)](#) and all committees of the [Board of Trustees](#) prepares the college on weekly, monthly, and quarterly bases in examining data essential to obligatory institutional reporting to numerous external entities. Insofar as we must report the results of our operations, understanding the multitude of meanings and interpretations indicated is critical. Arguably, the most important of these reported results is the degree to which the AAC has prepared its students for entry to the working world.

We consistently receive comments, survey responses, and testimonials resulting from both solicited and unsolicited means that circumstantiate our claims of successfully preparing our students for post-college careers. The work of the Department of Student Services is central to discussions among students, staff, and faculty regarding academic progress and opportunities for the AAC to continue to advance our success in student placement. Guidance from Academic Affairs, Development, Administration, Operations, and Board committees helps identify internal resources that can further those efforts.

Providing the resources essential to our academic programs is of paramount importance, and like other higher education institutions, the AAC's resources are finite. The uncommon challenge of having no significant endowment compels constant review of academic and non-academic programs and resources used to deliver those programs. Imperiled resources have resulted in consistent, productive dialogue and solutions between faculty and the administration, transforming budgetary constraints into collaborative means of advancing our curricular programming, while achieving our obligations to all AAC constituents. Enhanced understanding of the challenges that faculty and administration face in performing their respective duties has solidified a sense of shared mission, spawning improved clarity regarding interactivity among academic programming, financial aid, infrastructure, fundraising, technology, and the profusion of student services that enrich retention efforts.

The dire financial problems that had threatened the very existence of the college compelled the [mutual engagement of constituents](#) who perhaps had not been as engaged as in years more prosperous. The heightened alliance between faculty and administration described above resulted from each faction's understanding that apparently competing priorities were actually corresponding aspects of the same goal. This alliance was essential to the AAC's successful navigation through precarious times. Having achieved relative stability in operations, finances, and programming, we have internalized the wisdom that consistent assessment and re-assessment of all facets of the college must continue. Engaging all constituents, communicating needs effectively, and fostering an environment of broad-minded commitment to success have resulted in our community's instinctual, purposeful self-analysis in respect to coherence of all processes essential to providing the high quality academic programming that is expected of the AAC.

3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.

The dire situation we faced several years ago galvanized the evolution of our operational processes. If internal and external constituencies that were in place five years ago had not had the perspicuity and resolve to adapt to that situation, the Art Academy of Cincinnati would not be in operation today. This process has provided a comprehensive understanding of how one piece of the operations influences all other pieces. Planning truly involves all internal constituents (faculty, staff, students, administration and the Board) and external constituents (financial institutions, regulatory agencies, community arts entities, other higher education institutions, and philanthropic partners). All constituents are critical to the success of academic and non-academic programs; appropriate budgetary allocations and oversight; and the discipline to ensure that adequate resources support each program.

When new courses, degree programs, and collateral activities are proposed, faculty and administration determine the resources needed to support those endeavors. If the scale and scope of the proposed undertakings could affect our academic programs significantly, pertinent discussions with regulatory agencies would certainly occur. Prior to implementing new endeavors, we would engage with other schools and arts-supporting entities in our region to ascertain the presence of sufficient community support to ensure viability of the programming proposed. We cannot afford to operate in a vacuum or eschew community engagement. To an extent, the AAC operated that way for years, contributing to some harsh financial setbacks. Experiences gained during less stable times effectuated inestimable insight that continues to illuminate opportunities for the AAC to inspire interchange among community members by actively participating in their endeavors and inviting their participation in ours. We understand that considering the perspectives of internal and external constituencies is critical to the success of all AAC plans, whether endeavors projected are slated for short-term or long-range implementation.

4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.

The AAC has made tremendous progress over the past four-five years in gaining a sophisticated understanding of capacity, which has numerous contexts and definitions. We have determined an ideal student enrollment figure that would achieve the best use of academic personnel resources while maximizing use of infrastructure/operations resources. A convergence of those two numbers has been determined, which provides clarity and focus in understanding current capacity within those contexts.

Our [revenue-planning](#) revolves around tuition revenue, due to heavy reliance upon tuition to fund our operations. The AAC is immersed within a community that has the capacity for broader and deeper philanthropic support of our programs, both academic and non-academic. That potential support would disencumber overstretched resources to advance existing needs while providing the AAC reserve not currently available.

We are keenly aware of [population trends](#) and have adjusted our recruitment and retention strategies. We have made significant changes in planning for those two critical functions, and we routinely evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of our recruitment and retention efforts. Our elevated reliance upon tuition revenue forces us to continue improving in these areas. The capacity for recruitment and retention to advance our purpose and mission will drive our planning, our communications with all constituencies, and our engagement of current and prospective constituencies.

The AAC's current reliance upon state support is negligible. Beyond the grant and scholarship funding that our students receive, our only source of state funding is a [15-year grant](#) tied to capital improvements to our campus. As a private entity, we are not privy to state funding as are our publicly supported peers, but we are also not as exposed to the various changes in government priorities attached to that funding source. Thus, we maintain more in control of our destiny in the context of financial support for our school.

Certainly, local, regional, and national economic conditions impact us at various levels. The extremely limited influence that the AAC has on any of those conditions means that we cannot control what happens in any of those economies. Via our involvement in numerous [professional associations and consortia](#), the AAC keeps abreast of current events that could affect higher education. We evaluate those events in respect to their potential impact on our operations. Due to our relatively small size and private school status, we can respond quickly to changes dictated by significant economic shifts.

5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

The AAC remains apprised of emerging trends such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization. Further, we keep up with other trends that have a broad impact on our academic programs and our operations, as well as lesser impacts on individual departments or even individual employees. The effects of recent changes to FLSA exempt/non-exempt thresholds called out the dramatic adjustments to the way higher education entities (and millions of businesses across this country) plan for and allocate resources to deliver academic programming. We [evaluated every single employee position](#) beginning early in 2016 and continued those evaluations throughout the year as the new regulations approached finalization. As a result of those evaluations, we refined budgets and operational processes to support the changes we realized would be needed. We then implemented numerous adjustments to classifications, compensation, duties, and hours worked. Six months in advance of the anticipated effective date of the new regulations, we launched our first HRIS software, allowing employees and administration to track time worked and to document any leave taken.

We stay on top of emerging factors and those on the horizon through connections to professional societies and associations, collegiate consortia, specialty publications, and various continuing education programs that our employees attend.

Sources

- 2012 Library Agreement
- 2016_student_satisfaction_survey
- 3CDC about page
- AAC Accreditations and Associations page
- AAC Board of Trustees roster
- AAC FLSA analysis
- AAC PLCH Library AOC
- AAC Strategic Plan Grid 2013-2016 - final
- AAC Tuition and Fees 2014 through 2019
- ACADEMIC MANAGEMENT TEAM Description
- ArtWorks Cincinnati home page
- CAC Learning page
- CAM Schiff Library home page
- Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber about page
- Downtown Cincinnati about page
- Hispanic Chamber Cincinnati USA about page
- HS Graduate Population Trends graph
- Lloyd Library and Museum home page
- Miami University home page
- OCFC AAC Grant
- Over-the-Rhine Chamber Mission
- Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County home page
- Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County Makerspace page
- Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County research page
- REDI Cincinnati about page

- Taft Museum of Art about page
- Xavier University - Art home page

5.D - Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

Argument

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.

The recent establishment of an Office of Human Resources has enabled the institution to establish a formal cycle of annual staff performance reviews and faculty evaluations. These evaluative tools will serve primarily as a form of constructive assessment to benefit employees in setting individual performance goals and in providing a means to document these assessments.

While the institution has always utilized some form of annual performance review, without the benefit of management in this area, establishing a formal timeline was difficult. Some operational areas faced more challenges than others. The Academic Affairs Department has been very consistent with [faculty review processes](#) and other types of assessment, including course evaluations, end-of-year student reviews, etc., and the President has a formal 360 review every year. However, we have not maintained a regular schedule for administrative staff reviews.

At the institutional level, the AAC undertook a major evaluative initiative in mid-2014. The President announced a plan to review the [Mission, Vision, and Core Values](#) as part of the normal cycle of institutional assessment. This initiative garnered great interest and enthusiasm and resulted in a complete overhaul of these documents. Taken beyond customary, cursory review and tweaking, these declarations were examined thoroughly and rewritten. The resulting Mission Statement – publicized ubiquitously in digital, social media, and print outlets (including all course syllabi) – as guided virtually all decision-making processes at the institution since its adoption in 2015.

Implementation of the new Mission Statement has resulted in the work of the faculty and staff achieving a noticeably elevated level of efficiency and engagement. Likewise, levels of the Board and other internal constituencies demonstrate that a truly probative and evaluative process that leads to a well-defined, comprehensive Mission Statement can be of tremendous value in guiding the efforts of an institution of higher learning.

2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

As noted in earlier responses, the AAC [actively seeks feedback and critique](#) from internal and external constituents and then acts upon that feedback, utilizing what it has learned to guide improvement processes. Our effectiveness as an institution manifests itself in many ways and within a variety of contexts, not the least of which are the sustainability and coherence of both the academic and administrative components of our operations. We maintain a pointed, visionary focus in respect to our curricular programs, and typical distractions imposed by institutional mission, purpose, resource allocations, and focus on managing these factors simply are not present at the AAC, given our scope. Many programs and pursuits contribute to our expanding knowledge, which fuel direct, indirect, tangible, and intangible support of our academic programming. Our effectiveness, capacity, and ability to sustain our academic and operational imperatives link intimately to our curricular success. We have learned many hard lessons about planning, resilience, and perspective in the recent past, and we intend to advance those lessons through building strategic plans characterized by astute understanding of prudent and deliberate growth.

Sources

- 2016 Faculty Self Evaluations and Dean's Response
- 2016_student_satisfaction_survey
- AAC Mission Core Values
- AAC Strategic Plan Grid 2013-2016 - final

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

Summary

The Art Academy of Cincinnati has an ambitious [mission](#), and has dedicated all available resources towards fulfilling that [mission](#). All persons who participate in some way in our daily operations understand this mission, and have proven their fidelity in upholding that mission. Decisions made at numerous levels within the Academy are always made with at least this one consideration: "How will this impact the education of our students in a positive way?" This sharp focus on our students, coupled with a lack of institutional distractions such as research, sports and other resource-intensive operations, allows us to uphold our obligations to [direct resources](#) in support of our academic programs and our mission. AAC has had financial challenges in its past, but has overcome those challenges to where we are now [at a point of financial stability](#). Our stability has allowed us to thoughtfully plan, both tactically and strategically, for our near and long term future. There will always be threats to our stability, but we have included internal and external constituents with considerable knowledge and experience to help anticipate and deflect those threats. Our plans for the future are ambitious, but also realistic and grounded in support of our mission.

Sources

- AAC 2015-2016 Audited Financial Statements
- AAC 2015-2016 Audited Financial Statements (page number 7)
- FY 2015-2016 2016-2017 Budget Summary Comparison
- Mission Core Values