Assurance Argument

Art Academy of Cincinnati - OH

Review date: 9/1/2026

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 articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
2. The mission and related statements are current and reference 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 and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

Argument

CRITERION 1. Mission
The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

1. A - Core Component

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.

The Board of Trustees (BOT) adopted the Art Academy of Cincinnati's (AAC) current Core Values, Vision, and Mission Statement in 2015 (AAC Catalog, pg. 7), and the college has continued to examine these guiding principles to gauge the progression of operational structures and maintain applicability across generations of internal and external constituencies. The Mission Task Force worked to ensure that a multiplicity of voices and perspectives were included in the process. Key to this process was an understanding of the ways the previous founding principles were poised to fail to attract and retain diverse student and employee populations; to mobilize the partnership of forward-thinking community stakeholders, and to enhance the engagement of like-minded philanthropists.

The Task Force developed a three-part Mission Statement that would reflect and foster sustainable visions for the college. The work of the Mission Task Force brought a welcome challenge to a core group of internal constituents who represented many students, staff, faculty, and alumni who had witnessed unprecedented apathy and estrangement at the presidential level from 2012 – 2018.

The process of defining the Art Academy's new Core Values, Vision, and Mission invigorated the

faculty and staff with a renewed morale and a sharpened insight. Our reinvigorated posture changed how we intended to recruit; who our target audiences would be; and how best to deploy the radical, revisionist axioms that would guide the way we leverage our enthusiasm for prime stakeholders such that we would entice the alignment of these individuals, organizations, and associations with the Art Academy's future as we participate in theirs. The faculty and staff realized that the critical work of developing new Core Values, Vision, and Mission statements would require an overarching institutional Strategic Plan and a leader who understood the purpose and value of such a plan. However, in order for the newly restored employee morale to translate into institutional wellness and progress, express and decisive change was imperative.

Effective June 8, 2018, the BOT appointed Board member and former Chair, Mark Grote as Interim President. He had a three-decade career at Procter & Gamble as Director of Research and Development and served as the President of Grote Consultants, Inc. Under Mr. Grote's leadership from 2018-2019, the college developed its 2019-2022 Strategic Plan scrupulously based on the Core Values, Vision, and Mission.

Mr. Grote embraced the Core Values, which guide both the Mission and Vision – which themselves guide the curriculum, operations, and institutional planning. He established a gateway between the daily business of the college and the BOT. This enabled effective communication among the administration, its employees, and students. In sharp contrast to the unilateral, closed-door governance that had plagued the school with distrust for the previous six years, Interim President Grote promised to actively facilitate openness, transparency, and dialogue between the college and the Board.

By instating new leadership, the BOT had facilitated AAC's ability to refocus on our chief reason for being: the curriculum. The Full-Time Faculty examined the school's educational philosophy through the lens of the Core Values, Vision, and Mission. This inclusive process galvanized the prospect of rebuilding the curriculum to define appropriate Educational Objectives, (SLOs), and the curricular structure, which includes the majors, minors, articulation agreements, and degrees offered.

The Core Values were written and designed to guide the Vision and Mission. These values articulate those qualities that are central to the Points of Difference that characterize AAC's curriculum.

2. The mission and related statements are current and reference 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.

We have worked for seven years under the direction of the current Mission, Vision, and Core Values statements. These interrelated statements profess a range of ideas and ideals from the aspirational to the practical. We promote radical creativity, relentless curiosity, and rebellious individuality in our classes, in our student services programming, and in our impact on the community. We have been challenged to engage our communities with a purpose that is equitable, diverse, and inclusive. We have invested in diversity training, an Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging, ongoing training in Title IX, expanded student services, and a pursuit of new partnerships that represent under-represented people.

We continue to incorporate the Mission in all its manifestations into all areas of the institution including the Academic Catalog, the curriculum, which also includes the AAC Educational Goal and Objectives, Learner Outcomes, the work of the Academic Management Team (AMT), the Board

Committee on Instruction (BCOI), and all academic committees.

The Mission precipitated a philosophical shift in the First-Year Experience (FYE) ([AAC Catalog, pg. 17](#)) and Senior Pathways ([AAC Catalog, pg. 67](#)), changing the focus from an independent, discipline-based approach to an interdisciplinary professional development-based approach that emphasizes a 21st-century skill set including collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking. The shift features flexibility and choice for students in planning their academic paths.

In November of 2019, AAC established the Corrina Mehiel Center for Urban Impact in collaboration with Mel Chin's [S.O.U.R.C.E. STUDIO](#). This initiative will bring diverse woman-identified artists to Cincinnati to work within the community. The first two Corrina Mehiel Fellows: Muse Dodd and Jackie Sumell were scheduled to engage with AAC and the city this summer and fall but were delayed due to COVID-19. Muse Dodd will be visiting in the spring 2022 semester.

3.The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.

The Mission Statement addresses the higher education offerings and services the institution provides by establishing our intentions regarding our relationship with our primary constituents (students); articulating the outcome of that relationship; and framing the nature of that outcome in aspirational terms.

The Vision speaks to the scope of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides by proclaiming who we aspire to be and defining our aim as a forward-thinking community.

Core Values are designed to further define the scope of offerings and services from a specific to a more organic structure. Each level precisely articulates what is relevant to the institution and further defines the nature of who we are, what we do, our priorities, ethics, and specified relationships.

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

The Core Values, Vision, and Mission statements address a range of ideas and ideals. From 2015 – 2018, these guiding principles did not find full expression due to the absence of strong leadership. However, for the last four years, AAC's guiding principles have facilitated ongoing development within our curricular programs and have spurred enthusiasm among faculty, staff, current students, prospective students, alumni, Board members, and partnering organizations.

Under Mark Grote's leadership, we saw positive results from the implementation of a Strategic Plan that sought to take calculated risks in investing in programming and facilities. After Mr. Grote's planned resignation, AAC conducted an extensive and thorough search for a permanent president. The presidential search committee – comprised of members of the BOT, faculty, staff, and a student representative – conducted a six-month search. President Girandola has proven to be inspiring, strategic-minded, and knowledgeable of higher education in the arts. He is a true ambassador and friend of the AAC community and our constituents.

[President Girandola](#) began in August of 2019 and he laid the groundwork for future plans. The BOT has grown from 12 members in 2018, to 23 re-engaged and re-invested members. They are committed to the new direction of the college and are actively involved in AAC task forces. President Girandola met with Ohio Governor Mike DeWine and Ohio Department of Higher Education

Chancellor Randy Gardner and presented a compelling appeal, which resulted in the state releasing the bulk of AAC's $600,000 grant awarded by the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission in a lump sum for immediate use and implementation.

The academic departments have integrated the Mission into our daily practice. We recognize that the Mission is largely responsible for a recent philosophical shift in the first year and capstone curricular components called the "First-Year Experience" and "Senior Pathways" respectively. The shift involves a more flexible, choice-driven, forward-thinking first year based on professional development, digital literacy, collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking. We have also added a drawing requirement with four courses of choice that support the major areas of interest, including Digital Form and Space, Representational Drawing, Writing as Drawing and the Other Way Around, and Expanded Drawing. FYE Drawing Courses Syllabi Combined

The Mission is reflected in many new facilities changes designed to support new curricula. Notable modifications within Student Services include expansion of the Tutoring Office into a fully staffed, comprehensive Collaborative Learning Studio (CLS) headed by a full-time associate director. Other improvements include expanded offices for Mental Health Counseling, Professional Development, Design Suite, Textile and Garment Lab, Apparel Printing Lab, a student commons area, newly renovated lecture hall, remote learning technology, technology to support video and animation, and the new 100+ bed dorm which opened in 2020.

Recent changes to the physical space include the renovated SITE1212, an 8000-square-foot space now used for learning, community engagement, and college events. Other renovations include a lobby redesign, which was a student design project. There have been improvements in publicity outreach as well, including the Academic Catalog, Viewbook, Title IX Hub, the AAC website, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, posters, a COVID wayfinding system, and other print and electronic media whose language embodies the Mission, which is a catalyst for promoting a common voice and vision among all AAC constituents.

5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.

The 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 Mission are evidenced in weekly AMT and Full-Time Faculty meetings, new course titles and content, social media, and expanded student services including professional development.

The AAC Mission permeates all aspects of the college. It is the essence of our purpose, and its message is defining. We share our Mission both within the AAC family and with all who encounter the college through the AAC website, the Academic Catalog, and all course syllabi, among other materials. Our Mission is about promoting creativity through education in the arts, taking risks, building community, and making a difference. We view our location in the city center as a mandate to be a creative hub of the city and the region. We rely on partnerships and community collaborations to achieve this goal. A 2016 economic impact report that specifically studied AAC'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 School for Creative and Performing Arts (SCPA), Blink Art Festival, FotoFocus, AIGA Cincinnati, ArtWorks, City of Cincinnati, Cincinnati Fringe Festival, Know Theatre, Cincinnati Music Accelerator, and many others. With sound, new leadership, a more stable financial position, an expanded and committed BOT, and an improved

message of purpose among community partners, AAC is poised to prosper and will deliver on the promise of its Mission, Core Values, and future vision.

Sources

- 2019-2022 Strategic Plan
- Academic Catalog
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 7)
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 17)
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 67)
- Dorm
- FYE Drawing Courses Syllabi Combined
- Instagram
- Points of Difference
- President Girandola
- S.O.U.R.C.E. Studio
- SITE1212
- Title IX HUB
- Viewbook

1.B - Core Component 1.B

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

1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.
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 external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Argument

1. B Core Component

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

1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution, or any superordinate entity.

Beginning with the Mission, the institution declares that its purpose is to develop and sustain visual artists. But this declaration surpasses this objective by proclaiming 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 commitment of the institution and of the faculty, staff, students, and alumni to act 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.

As an independent, not-for-profit college of art and design, AAC 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 related to the educational mission of the institution.

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

AAC 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. 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.

For example, Cincinnati has a notable urban mural effort that has been running for several years, mostly managed by ArtWorks. This organization recruits AAC artists to work as apprentices on 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 makes a conscientious effort to replicate notable works by AAC artists including Frank Duveneck, John Ruthven, Charley Harper, Tom Wesselman, and Elizabeth Nourse. AAC was also the mural partner for a five-story mural at the corner of 12th and Vine Streets featuring *Energy and Grace,* a painting by former Academic Dean Kim Krause, an AAC alumnus.

Beyond its association with ArtWorks and its mural projects, AAC maintains a close relationship with area galleries, museums, and arts events. These include the Contemporary Arts Center, the Cincinnati Art Museum, the Taft Museum (which offers AAC students and faculty free admission), Pique Gallery, Weston Art Gallery, Wave Pool, Know Theatre, and many others. AAC was a central partner for the Blink Cincinnati Light-Based Art Festival in October 2019. It drew over one million visitors to downtown Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky with Over-the-Rhine (OTR) as the central location. AAC students and faculty created exhibitions for the event. Other events include Summerfair Emerging Artists that annually includes three AAC juniors and seniors in an exhibition and competition, Art on Vine, City Flea, Crafty Super Market, and Second Sundays on Main.

AAC hosts the annual Scholastic Art and Writing Awards for the Southern Ohio, Northern Kentucky, and Southeastern Indiana Art Region. In this capacity, the institution organizes the submission and adjudication process, exhibits the work, and hosts the awards presentation. AAC has sponsored the event since 2012.

The college has developed numerous partnerships within the local business district and cultural communities that serve our students and in turn receive services and support from AAC. The school has a robust relationship with AIGA Cincinnati, the professional association for design, which 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. Other collaborations include local creative firms such as LPK, Procter & Gamble, Powerhouse Factories, Ruttle Design, Leap Frame, BLDG, Possible Worldwide, Landor Associates, Envoi Design, Know Theatre, 3CDC, Cincinnati Music Accelerator, and many others.

These relationships are vital in mobilizing the AAC mission. We are keenly aware that achieving many aspects of our mission requires 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 solidify AAC as an integral player in the cultural fabric of the neighborhood, the city, and the region.

Sources

- Academic Catalog 2020-2021
- Artbound Initiative
- ArtWorks
- BLINK
- Census Blog Post
- Internship Program

1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.
2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.
3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

Argument

1. C - Core Component 1

The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.

AAC's co-curricular programs reflect a forward-thinking approach to creative learning. Our Mission is reflected in the events we host to support academic programs. The Associate Director of Professional Development (ADPD) initiated a series of programs to contribute to student experience in their professional lives and personal well-being. The Art and Money Series addresses topics such as Goal Setting and Financial Wellness. The Life After Art School panel assembled a variety of arts professionals to provide students with advice and wisdom as they prepare to graduate art school and enter the professional world. AAC partners with Artbound Initiative (ABI) and KIIS Study Abroad to offer students opportunities to engage in art education and professions outside of the Cincinnati community, providing a global view of their professions.

Further, our Internship Program immerses students in professional experiences at businesses such as BLDG, an advertising agency that offers students print and design-based internships. These internships provide students with tangible experience and credit toward their degree program. AAC's relationship-building within the creative community supports AAC's programs by cultivating opportunities for our students to gain experience.

The college recognizes the rich learning opportunities within the community for interaction with individuals and groups from varied backgrounds. AAC'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. AAC'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 AAC's exhibitions programming, public

talks, website, academic classrooms, community classrooms, and public service projects.

Our curriculum, our services, and our Mission are designed to engage students, faculty, and staff within a diverse and changing world. In 2020, Associate Professor Emily Momohara launched a Student Census Awareness campaign to educate students about the impact of Census participation and encouraged them via a Census Blog Post and additional means to participate. Ms. Berteaux spearheaded a thriving "Get Out the Vote" campaign to support students' participation in local, state, and national elections in 2020.

Our move to the inner city placed us in a more diverse community with opportunities to partner with a variety of institutions and organizations that include businesses in the creative industry such as theatres, design firms, galleries, arts engagement non-profits, community service agencies, and the local government. The precepts of Community, Individuality, and History, as three core values of our mission, embody an essential commitment to embracing a multicultural world from the inside/out. The work that visual artists and creative writers undertake is often based on a range of social issues and engagement with a community. This is often the content that students explore in academic courses such as Intro to Visual Culture, Anthropology, From the Inside Out A Survey of Graffiti and Street Art, Artistic Practice in the Contemporary World, Art, Design and Social Practice, Cultural Studies: Identity and Diversity and others that are incorporated into the fabric of the curriculum. (AAC Catalog, pg. 61) Studio Arts courses that engage the community include Internship (AAC Catalog, pg. 60) and Academy Design Service (AAC Catalog, pg. 28), which focuses on design service for local non-profits. The mission encourages engagement with humanity in all its manifestations and supports the value of cultural immersion as a means of developing empathy, respect, collaboration, community, inclusion, equity, and life-long inquiry within and among diverse cultures.

2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.

The college has developed an office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) with a full-time director. This office advises on all aspects of institutional governance, programming, hiring and human resources. One result of AAC's commitment to the decolonization of the curriculum is demonstrated in course release time awarded to Ms. Momohara in 2021 to further her exploration of decolonization theories and praxis. The result was a series of three engaging educational, interactive Decolonization Workshops that she facilitated in fall 2021 with faculty and staff, who examined approaches and practices for curricular change. (Decolonization Workshop 1, Decolonization Workshop 2, Decolonization Workshop 3)

In 2020, AAC established a Core Community Principle, which is a statement that addresses our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. This statement exists alongside our Core Values, Vision, and Mission:

"The AAC stands for justice, truth, empathy, and the belief that life should be honored and respected. We want our students to understand that AAC acknowledges that structural, systemic, historical, and intersecting forms of oppression require our ongoing attention, action, innovation, and leadership for positive change. The AAC is committed to protecting the rights of all our students, alumni, faculty, and staff." The office of DEIB is establishing a Council on Diversity that includes students, faculty, staff, alumni, board members, and the OTR community.

The Policies Prohibiting Harassment section in the Academic Catalog (AAC Catalog, pg. 106)

identifies the importance of diversity and AAC's commitment to protecting the diverse members of our population. Defining these principles, the Policies Prohibiting Harassment document lays out: the Sexual Harassment Policy, the Discriminatory Harassment Policy, and the Bullying and Cyber-Bullying Policy. (Our policy of Non-discrimination in Employment and Education (AAC Catalog, pg. 104) is also clearly stated on our website.) Additionally, AAC's position on diversity is directly expressed in its Core Values, which includes the term "Rebellious", which modifies "INDIVIDUALITY," and which is defined as "originality, uniqueness, independence, vision, entrepreneurship, DIY work ethic," and the term "Radiant," which modifies "COMMUNITY," and which is defined as "outreach, stewardship, involvement, partnership, contribution, connection." These concepts are stated clearly on our website.

AAC's Title IX policy can be viewed on the Title IX HUB, which includes information on the Violence Against Women Act and the Clery Act, which has been distributed to the students, faculty, staff, and the BOT.

AAC provides learning assistance through the newly developed CLS which is staffed by the Associate Director of Academic Success to support all students with an emphasis on students at elevated risk, with tutoring, personal organization, and writing assistance.

In the spring of 2021 AAC design students partnered with AIGA Cincinnati and Breakthrough Cincinnati to offer professional design experience workshops for Cincinnati Public Schools elevated risk, high potential high schoolers. Workshops introducing the design profession and a college design education were presented. AAC now offers the Thom Shaw Diversity Scholarship and financial study abroad opportunities in the KIIS Study Abroad Program.

Sources

- Academic Catalog 2020-2021
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 28)
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 60)
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 61)
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 104)
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 106)
- Artbound Initiative
- Census Blog Post
- Decolonization Workshop 1
- Decolonization Workshop 2
- Decolonization Workshop 3
- Internship Program
- KIIS
- Title IX HUB

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Summary

AAC's Mission is recognized throughout the institution with a growing understanding within our constituent community. As stated above, it guides every aspect of the college's operations. The creation and adoption of the Mission and accompanying Vision and Core Values provided philosophic navigation for our Strategic Plan and urged us to invest in ourselves, take strategic risks, and believe in the resourcefulness of the staff and faculty to grow the college regarding facilities, technology, programming, personnel, and enrollments.

Our renewed focus has reinforced broad buy-in from all areas of the institution toward a common set of objectives. From curriculum and student services to the brand initiative that includes recent changes to the look of the building, the lobby, the development of SITE1212, critical improvements to facility and technology infrastructure, print communications, website maintenance, admissions materials, marketing, and a current rebranding initiative by Leap Frame, the Mission has provided inspiration for the school to navigate change together.

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 establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.
2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

Argument

CRITERION 2. INTEGRITY: ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT

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

Core Component 2. A.

The institution establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

1. The institution develops, and the governing board adopts the mission.

AAC makes every effort to establish and follow policies and processes that ensure fair and ethical behavior in its practices with internal and external constituencies.

The current AAC Mission Statement was approved by the BOT in 2015 after a thorough process that included participation from the BOT Student Services, Studio Arts Department faculty, Department of Liberal Arts faculty, and our students.

The AAC Educational Objectives are aligned with the AAC Mission Statement ([AAC Catalog, pg. 8](#)). The Educational Objective for the Majors and the SLOs for each course support the Educational Objectives. All course syllabi follow the institutional syllabus template ([Fall 2021 New Syllabus Template](#)), which includes the comprehensive Mission Statement, rendering each syllabus for each course an emissary for AAC's Core Values, Mission, and Vision, thereby influencing the educational, artistic, and cultural development of every enrolled student over the course of the student's curricular experience.

The hiring of a new President in 2019 and the evolving nature of arts education require a re-examination of AAC's Mission, Vision, and Core Values. The [Strategic Plan 2022-2025 (Draft)](#) lists "revisit Mission and Vision" as an action Item under the Marketing and Enrollment section.

2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

Following the close of each fiscal year, which runs from June 1 – May 31, Von Lehman 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 12 years have been posted to our website. The Net Price Calculator, Tuition, Refund Policy, Financial Aid, and Entrance and Exit Counseling procedures are publicly disclosed in the Academic Catalog and are accessible via AAC's website.

AAC conserves the integrity of its relationships with donors and patrons through responsible stewardship. We regard with judicious circumspection the precise nomenclature, designations, and delimitative terms and conditions that benefactors stipulate on Donor Acknowledgement Forms (Donor Acknowledgement Letter Individual), and we exercise customary decorum and prudence beyond formal stipulations. AAC upholds its duty of accountancy to donors, grant-makers, 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 make pertinent information available to benefactors and agencies. As a college of art and design, AAC has the unique advantage of publicly exteriorizing our achievement of projected outcomes by physically 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 through Senior Thesis capstone events (Senior Winter Expo, Senior Capstone Group 1, Senior Capstone Group 2, Senior Capstone Group 3). These interactions become the basis for enhanced engagement, institutional progress, and persistent stewardship of our Mission.

In 2019, AAC implemented a Four-Year Tuition Promise for undergraduate students. Students enrolled at AAC prior to 2019 receive the Tuition Promise set at the 2019 tuition rate. Implementing the Tuition Promise is an ethical and responsible action that allows students and families to plan, knowing exactly what their financial responsibility will look like over a four-year span. The renewable entrance scholarships that students receive upon acceptance will have the same fiscal impact throughout their college careers at AAC.

The Business Office has experienced several changes since 2017. In 2020, Anna Dowell resigned as Chief Financial Officer (CFO). After a search for a new CFO, Maria Keri was hired to replace Ms. Dowell, who helped train and onboard her replacement. Following issues with accounts receivable and other factors under Ms. Keri's purview in 2020, the new CFO resigned, and two business office staff were terminated. Devoted to AAC's mission and business, Ms. Dowell returned to AAC in 2021 as a member of the BOT and now serves as Co-Chair of the Finance Committee. In 2021 the Board Finance Committee contracted with CliftonLarsonAllen LLP (CLA) to outsource accounts payable, month-end reconciliation, and other business functions. The Accounts Payable Specialist was promoted to Business Office Manager. This position works directly with CLA to ensure services performed are consistent with the needs of the institution. Currently, there is a search for a Vice President of Administration and Finance, who will oversee all matters related to business and finance.

Since 2017, the position and job description for Institutional Advancement/Development has evolved. Most recently the duties were shared between Jennifer Spurlock (who served as Director of

Development and Community Education Coordinator) and President Girandola. Ms. Spurlock resigned in spring 2021 and President Girandola continues to perform fundraising duties while seeking a Development Officer.

In March of 2020, in response to State of Ohio restrictions, AAC formed a COVID-19 Task Force (CTF) to establish policies and procedures for delivering the curriculum during a global pandemic. The CTF included members of the administration, faculty, and staff who continue to meet weekly to discuss evolving regulations and recommendations from the CDC and the State of Ohio.

The CTF determined policies that governed senior capstone requirements, safety protocols, and capacity limitations for the graduating class of 2020.

Since the close of the 2019-2020 academic year, the CTF has continued to meet to monitor the pandemic and to establish strategies and policies. In August 2020, AAC hired Mary Cadek, RN to serve as the Health and Wellness Coordinator. Nurse Cadek coordinates and records testing for students, staff, and faculty. She also coordinates flu shots, maintains vaccination records, and ensures that processes and practices are HIPAA compliant. Nurse Cadek's clinical and industry expertise was integral to developing a college-wide pandemic wellness plan to govern the fall 2020 semester with recommendations each semester thereafter.

The CTF adopted the COVID-19 Success and Wellness Plan and included a banner link to the plan, which was adopted and included in the COVID-19 information page, featured prominently on AAC's website homepage. This link serves as a portal to consumer information about vaccinations and COVID-19 cases within the AAC community. COVID-19 classroom protocols, procedures, and etiquette were published on the AAC Syllabus Template with COVID Language Spring 2021.

The AAC Academic Catalog is reviewed and edited each year to ensure that academic requirements, policies, and procedures are accurate and compliant. Faculty are responsible for editing the content related to their respective major areas. They are responsible for keeping the required major course sequence current and relevant to the evolving nature of their respective disciplines. Proposed changes to major requirements are brought to the AMT for discussion and approval by the Full-Time Faculty.

Since fall 2013, all AAC Academic Affairs operations have been managed through weekly meetings by the AMT which includes the Academic Dean, Associate Dean, Executive Assistant for Academic Affairs, all Full-Time Faculty members, and representatives from key offices including Student Services, Enrollment Management, Office of Financial Aid, and Office of Registrar. In 2019, the Full-Time Faculty determined that the AMT would meet every other week to manage the academic matters of the institution, which are recorded in the AMT Meeting Minutes and Faculty Meeting Minutes. On alternate weeks, the Full-Time Faculty meet to discuss and manage issues pertaining directly to the faculty, curriculum efficacy, and student success. Both the AMT and the Full-Time Faculty team adhere to Robert's Rules of Order and vote on institutional policies, curricular initiatives and changes, and procedures pertaining to students and faculty. This hybrid structure allows heightened transparency among participants and overall greater efficiency.

The Office of Enrollment has established clear criteria for admission to AAC. Requirements align with national standards for acceptance to schools of art and design. Application Requirements are published in the Academic Catalog and on our website.

AAC establishes, reviews, and follows policies to ensure fair and ethical behavior and integrity in personnel operations. The Human Resources Officer has contributed significantly to AAC's ability to

act in an ethical and responsible manner with respect to its employees. The HR Officer served on the CTF to establish and enforce policies related to COVID-19 protocols to ensure the health and safety of students, faculty, and staff. In summer 2021 the HR Officer implemented an updated revision of AAC's Employee Handbook.

Full-Time Faculty receive letters of appointment every three years, and Adjunct Faculty are formally appointed each semester. Staff receive an employment agreement upon hiring. Faculty and staff employment agreements reference the appropriate personnel handbook(s): Employee Handbook and/or the Faculty Handbook as described above.

AAC follows the prescribed Rank Application and Review Policy, Faculty Responsibilities by Rank Policies, and processes for fair and ethical faculty practices. The Board Chair undertakes an annual evaluation of the President. The Academic Dean reviews all Full-Time Faculty annually. All Full-Time Faculty must submit transcripts substantiating their awarded degrees and annually submit a Faculty Self-Evaluation including an updated CV, a review of goals from the last year, and goals for the upcoming year. The Dean responds to each Faculty Self-Evaluation in writing.

Performance reviews for staff have been implemented through the Paychex Flex portal.

All staff have received raises of at least 3% for the past three years. Some have received larger percentages to get them closer to the industry average.

In response to the 2017 HLC response, and in alignment with the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan, Full-Time Faculty have received 5%-6% pay increases over the last two years. Sabbaticals for eligible Full-Time Faculty members were reinstated in fall 2019. While salaries for Full-Time Faculty are still below that of peer institutions, these increases have demonstrated that the institution understands and values the contributions of the faculty and is addressing deficiencies systematically through the strategic planning process.

AAC maintains agreements with vendors that fulfill auxiliary functions for the institution. Vendor partnerships include an expanded partnership with Urban Sites (AAC Urban Sites Loft Lease), a new AAC housing location at 1225 and 1227 Jackson St., a partnership with LaSoupe, and a contract with Sunny Blu, the campus food service provider. Academic management software has been upgraded and transitioned to Campus Cafe.

Long-standing vendor agreements including AED and first-aid services, information technology with Encore Technologies, and mechanical maintenance are maintained and reviewed as needed. Auxiliary services are evaluated through Student Satisfaction Surveys annually (Student Satisfaction Survey 2018-2019, Student Satisfaction Survey 2019-2020, Student Satisfaction Survey 2020-2021) to maintain quality. Rental of AAC facilities is administered using the Facilities Rental Agreement.

Student Services has expanded significantly since 2019. In 2018, AAC hired a new Director of Student Services (AAC Catalog, pg. 3) The department has since expanded to include a full-time Mental Health Counselor (AAC Catalog, pg. 96), terminating our counseling agreement with counseling interns at Xavier University, as well as adding an ADPD (AAC Catalog, pg. 94) to oversee career services, professional development opportunities for students, and increase documentation of and support for AAC Alumni. In August of 2021, the department hired a full-time Associate Director of Academic Success (AAC Catalog, pg. 102), who oversees and develops our tutoring services and academic support programs.

The AAC Code of Regulations governs the actions of the BOT in fulfilling its fiduciary responsibilities to ". . . exercise, conduct, and control all the corporate powers, property, and affairs of the corporation." This code establishes the bylaws necessary for the BOT to function in an ethical and honest manner. A committee system comprised of members of the Board, community volunteers, faculty, and staff examine and authenticate the discretionary functions of the Board, as mandated by the Code. The standing committees meet per a set schedule (2021 AAC Board Meeting Calendar) and report to the Board, as recorded in the Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes.

Each member of the BOT must submit an Acknowledgement and Annual Disclosure Statement (AADS) acknowledging that they/he/she has or has not read the policies governing Conflict of Interest, Whistleblower, Joint Venture, Records Retention, Process for Determining Compensation, Gift Acceptance, Expense Reimbursement, Investment, and Spending. 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. These policies are stated clearly in the BOT Orientation Manual.

Sources

- 2019-2022 Strategic Plan
- 2021 AAC Board Meeting Calendar
- AAC Code of Regulations
- AAC Syllabus Template with COVID Language Spring 2021
- AAC Urban Sites Lofts Lease
- Academic Catalog
- Academic Catalog (page number 102)
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 3)
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 8)
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 94)
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 96)
- Academic Catalog 2021-2022
- Academic Catalog 2021-2022 (page number 102)
- Acknowledgement and Annual Disclosure Statement
- AMT Meeting Minutes
- Application Requirements
- Audited Financial Reports
- Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
- CliftonLarsonAllen LLP
- COVID-19 Success and Wellnes Plan
- Donor Acknowledgement Foundation Sample
- Donor Acknowledgement Letter Individual
- Educational Objectives for the Majors
- Employee Handbook
- Entrance and Exit Counseling
- Facilities Rental Agreement
- Faculty Handbook
- Faculty Meeting Minutes
- Faculty Self-Evaluation
- Fall 2021 New Syllabus Template

- Financial Aid
- LaSoupe
- Refund Policy
- Senior Capstone Group 1
- Senior Capstone Group 2
- Senior Capstone Group 3
- Strategic Plan 2022-2025 (Draft)
- Student Satisfaction Survey 2018-2019
- Student Satisfaction Survey 2019-2020
- Student Satisfaction Survey 2020-2021
- Tuition
- Tuition Promise
- Vice President of Administration and Finance Job

2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.
2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

Argument

CRITERION 2. INTEGRITY: ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT

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

Core Component 2. B.

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.

AAC employs an in-house Website Manager, who produces and uploads photographic, audio, and video documentation of student work as part of his appointment. 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 can easily find the information they need.

In 2019, AAC was involved in litigation over an embedded YouTube video not providing closed captions for its content. This suit originated over ADA web accessibility issues, and AAC took action to achieve ADA compliance across our website. This Accessibility Statement will be the institutional standard moving forward.

The President 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 on the website. All application requirements and deadlines, transfer student information, international student requirements, academic programs (AAC Catalog, pg. 14), NASAD and HLC accreditation (AAC Catalog, pg. 11), and four-year sample schedules (AAC Catalog, pg. 24) are published in our Academic Catalog and posted on the website.

AAC's website will undergo a comprehensive "re-skin" beginning in early 2022 in conjunction with

a brand refresh by Leap Spark.

The Website Administrator consolidated all AAC consumer information on one resource page, satisfying the requirements for disclosure. 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, 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.

In fall 2020, AAC changed course administration and enrollment management software from Sonis to Campus Cafe to publicly host our academic course offerings and course descriptions. All information regarding course credits, schedules, and faculty is conveniently posted here. Campus Café integrates functions for Admissions, Billing, Finance, Financial Aid, Alumni, and Career Services.

Human Resources, Facilities, and authorized leadership personnel can utilize the automated texting and phone call service Dial My Calls for voice and text broadcasting to faculty, staff, and students. This allows the vital sharing of urgent or emergency information.

2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

AAC offers multiple programs such as our Life-Skills Workshops which address mindfulness and self-care. A faculty-led student trip to New York City and courses in Social Practice 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, and business visits, which provide examples of the many ways artists and designers can develop their careers.

AAC engages in many types of community engagement, for example, ArtWorks provides opportunities for students to work in the Mural Arts program. They hire AAC students to work with teenagers during the summer to paint murals in Cincinnati. 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. In 2017 and 2019, AAC participated in the BLINK interactive art and light festivals centered in the OTR community. The large-scale, lighted sculptures created by AAC students were displayed on our front sidewalks and viewed by international audiences throughout the four-day events.

For the last 15 years, AAC 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 Orah 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, AAC established a student chapter of AIGA Cincinnati. AAC subsidizes student membership in this professional association. Our student members network with design professionals

and receive portfolio reviews.

AAC has continued to have a positive impact on the Over-the-Rhine community. In late August 2021, AAC hosted a public event to officially open SITE1212 in a previously undeveloped, street-level space. The 1212 House Party was a celebration of the history and community of the AAC in a newly renovated and adaptable space with large garage doors to remove the walls between AAC and the community. Over 3,000 people attended the 12-hour event, which featured a variety of music performances and visual art. A team of internal stakeholders has formed a committee to establish a review process for proposals from AAC constituencies to reserve the space for purposes of community impact and revenue.

Currently registered AAC student organizations and active groups include Student Communication Council, WAAC, First Gen, Black Student Union, Queerspace, Fellowship of Christian Artists, Non-Traditional Students, Social Impact, BIPOC, and Student Ambassadors.

All student organizations conduct events that engage the local community, most notably the Social Impact Club through youth engagement, Fellowship of Christian Artists through food drives, Queerspace through pride events, and WAAC through the publication of a literary and art journal.

Sources

- 1212 House Party
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 11)
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 14)
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 24)
- Accessibility Statement
- BLINK
- Consumer Information Resource Page
- Dial My Calls
- New York Trip
- SITE1212
- WAAC

2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.
5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

Argument

2. C. The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

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

The AAC BOT operates on a committee structure and holds regular meetings to conduct official business. It employs counterbalancing measures that ensure impartiality and sound judgment unimpeded by external influences and inappropriate application of the powers so entrusted. The full Board and committees meet per a set meeting schedule (2021 AAC Board Meeting Calendar). A self-sustaining entity, the Board accommodates the perspectives of students, staff, faculty, community members, and business professionals, though it does not sway them. The AAC Board adheres to prescribed procedures and policies that best serve the institution, thereby considering external perspectives only as far as such perspectives reflect what the Board deems to be in the best interest of the college Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes 2017-2021.

The Mission and the Strategic Plan guide the Board's deliberations, motions, and actions. For example, the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan lists numerous action items that were subsequently approved by the Board and implemented by stakeholders including designing and implementing an innovative first-year curriculum, implementing a Four-Year Tuition Promise, hiring a full-time Mental Health Counselor, implementing short-term facilities, and technology improvements, opening a new dorm, restoring faculty sabbaticals and implementing regular employee performance evaluations. Each initiative has contributed to the greater health and sustainability of 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.

Participants in the Board of Trustee meetings include the President, VP for Academic Affairs, VP of

Marketing and Enrollment, Human Resources Officer, Director of DEIB, and a student representative, resulting in representation from all aspects of AAC internal constituencies. Also present is the President of the AAC Alumni Association. The Governance Committee maintains a Board Demographics 2021-2022 spreadsheet listing each board member, expertise, gender, age, board term(s), and committee service, to balance and diversify board representation with respect to experience and viable connections with the greater external community. The BOT's primary means for considering the relevant interests of the institution's 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.

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 BOT 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. The statement includes policies including Conflict of Interest, Whistleblower, Joint Venture, Records Retention, Process for Determining Compensation, Gift Acceptance, Expense Reimbursement, and Code of Regulations. 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 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.

AAC maintains a Board-approved organizational chart clearly displaying the line of decision-making authority from the BOT to the President and all respective departments and employees. The Department of Academic Affairs, led by the VP 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.

Sources

- 2019-2022 Strategic Plan
- 2021 AAC Board Meeting Calendar
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021
- Acknowledgement and Annual Disclosure Statement
- Board Demographics 2020-2021
- Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
- Board of Trustees Roster 2020-2021
- Organizational Chart
- Tuition Promise

2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Argument

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

AAC's Mission Statement highlights its commitment to a "rebellious individuality," which is addressed fully in the policy of Academic Freedom in Artistic Expression (AAC Catalog, pg. 91). That statement is evidenced by the criteria for the review and evaluation of student work at all levels and especially in the Senior Thesis Review Form 2021, which appears on the Thesis Resources Page of AAC's website. Similarly, the Student Year-End Review Form for first, second, and third-year students reflect a 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, pg. 21, pledges and affirms AAC's support of faculty classroom autonomy and faculty members' freedom to pursue chosen research and publication interests. This freedom is 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, design, and writing. The Academic Integrity & Appeals (AAC Catalog, pg. 91) addresses this further, asserting in its academic Freedom in Artistic Expression (AAC Catalog, pg. 91) 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."

AAC 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. AAC Exhibitions are promoted via press releases in the Exhibitions Archive 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. AAC also endorses the American Association of University Professor's statement on academic freedom (AAC Catalog, pg. 91).

Sources

- Academic Catalog 2020-2021
- Academic Catalog 2021-2022
- Academic Catalog 2021-2022 (page number 91)
- Exhibitions Archive
- Faculty Handbook
- Faculty Handbook (page number 21)
- Faculty Self-evaluation
- FY105 DigitalLiteracy Syllabus
- Senior Thesis Review Form 2021
- Student Year End Review Form
- Thesis Resources Page

2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.
2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.
3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.
4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Argument

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

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.

AAC's Faculty Hiring and Equivalent Experience Policy in the [Faculty Handbook, pg. 11](#) is a quality-control measure that assures that faculty hires possess appropriate education, certifications, professional preparation, and/or equivalent experience, as determined by Academic Affairs and the Director of Human Resources. The HR Officer verifies transcripts, academic records, and the professional expertise and accomplishments that prospective faculty 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.

2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.

The originality of research and scholarly practice is required of all AAC faculty members. Ongoing professional engagement in visual arts scholarship, writings and publication, exhibitions and curatorial work, and effective mentorship to AAC students through adherence to exacting standards of educational assessment and self-development are expected. For optimal credibility as college-level faculty, AAC faculty must use consistent application of evaluative measures with respect to student work, contemporary scholarship in art, design, writing, and in respect to their own work. 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. However, beyond this, AAC faculty must exemplify a predilection for commendable, rigorous processes that challenge the artist or writer as a scholar; provoke criticism, inquiry, and reasoned debate; and encourage the pursuit of intellectually stimulating frameworks that inform the creative practices of art, design and writing students.

In addition to undergoing annual evaluation of scholarly practice, AAC faculty are evaluated in terms of effectiveness as educators, as indicated by Student 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 Faculty Self-Evaluation consisting of a review of the courses taught and recommended changes, a statement of goals, a current CV, which includes professional and scholarly endeavors, and goals for the upcoming year. AAC hosts a biennial exhibition of faculty current work, which encourages faculty productivity and provides an opportunity for students to engage with the work of their professors.

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. (AAC Catalog, pg. 128) Awards are overseen by faculty members or an independent jury who ensure the integrity of the creative or research project submitted in the application. Students agree to approach their work and that of their fellow students with integrity by signing the Student Studio Contract and the Academic Catalog which includes the Code of Student Conduct (AAC Catalog, pg. 105). This code encourages a mutually respectful and supportive community in and outside of AAC. The AAC exercises appropriate oversight to ensure that its ". . . regulations and procedures do not impair freedom of expression or discourage creativity by subjecting creative work to tests of propriety or ideology, as shown in the AAUP-based Academic Integrity and Appeals statement," (AAC Catalog, pg. 91).

As a college of art and design, AAC 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, design, and writing faculty, staff, and students. Therefore, AAC does not maintain an Institutional Review Board or publish IRB policies.

3. The institution provides students with guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.

AAC values responsible scholarship and provides clear statements on AAC's Academic Honesty Policy. (AAC Catalog, pg. 91)

AAC is committed to students' ethical use of information in the classroom and in pursuit of their own work. AAC Catalog includes a statement on Fair Use & Copyright Infringement. (AAC Catalog, pg. 91) Based on Title 17 of the U.S. Code concerning copyrighted materials, AAC 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 forms of visual communication can involve repurposing images or appropriation, AAC faculty reiterate the mandate to comply with U.S. Copyright law and educate students on the pitfalls of using copyrighted materials without obtaining the legally required permissions.

Students in English, Art History, and writing courses train in the proper and effective use of research sources from their first through senior years. This training focuses on the evaluation of sources, proper documentation, and proper protocols for citations. Documentation of research is part of the criteria for reviews of student work, as referenced in the 2021 Thesis Resources Page and the Student Year-End Review Form. Since 2014, this training has been reinforced by a review of ethical research practices in the Senior Seminar capstone course. Additionally, since 2019, every first-year student is required to take the Digital Literacy course that educates all AAC students on the sourcing and Fair use of Information as evidenced in the FY105 Digital Literacy 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.

4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

The Academic Honesty Policy (AAC Catalog, pg. 91) outlines specific processes for violations. If a professor suspects academic dishonesty, they/he/she voices concern with the student and presents any proof of academic dishonesty to the Academic Dean. If it is determined that a violation 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/or expulsion from the college. The Academic Honesty Policy is referenced on all course syllabi.

Sources

- 2016-2017 SeniorThesisResourceBook FINAL
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021
- Academic Catalog 2021-2022
- Academic Catalog 2021-2022 (page number 91)
- Academic Catalog 2021-2022 (page number 105)
- Academic Catalog 2021-2022 (page number 128)
- Articles of Incorporation
- Faculty Handbook
- Faculty Handbook (page number 11)
- Faculty Self-evaluation
- FY105 DigitalLiteracy Syllabus
- IRS 501(c)(3)
- NASAD Code of Ethics
- OBR authorization
- Student Course Evaluations
- Student Year End Review Form
- Student Year End Review Form(2)
- Thesis Resources Page

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Summary

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

AMT members produce the Academic Catalog, which delineates requirements for completing AAC degree programs. 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 and implementing solutions. This publication undergoes close examination and revision annually to ensure accuracy, currency, and a clear conveyance of regulations, procedures, and guidelines, as well as attending rights, responsibilities, and repercussions.

AAC conforms to the NASAD Code of Ethics and has been NASAD-accredited since 1948. The Catalog publicizes AAC's Non-Discrimination Statement, Students with Disabilities 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. AAC does not tolerate sexual harassment or related misconduct, and we educate all internal constituents on the school's sexual Misconduct Policies (AAC Catalog, pg. 110) and detailed procedural steps, sanctioning guidelines, and support resources available to all persons implicated in alleged violations of the policies.

Sources

- Academic Catalog 2020-2021
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 110)
- Articles of Incorporation
- IRS 501(c)(3)
- NASAD Code of Ethics
- OBR authorization

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its 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

3. A. The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

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

AAC continually updates its programs, curricula, and courses to ensure relevance to 21st-century art and design education. AAC's Core Values, Mission, and Vision (AAC Catalog, p. 7) state clearly and emphatically the role our students will play in the future of art and design. Our Educational Goal (AAC Catalog, p. 8) supports our Mission and Vision, and to ensure ongoing adherence, they are prominently displayed on the Fall 2021 New Syllabus Template for every course taught at AAC.

AAC offers four programs: Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) with majors in Creative Writing; Design; Digital Arts Animation; Illustration; Painting and Drawing; Photography; Print Media; and Sculpture; a Master of Arts in Art Education (MAAE); an Associate of Science in Graphic Design (AS); and Community Education. In April of 2021, the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) approved the Digital Arts Animation Major, which launched in Fall 2021. Each degree has Universal Educational Objectives (AAC Catalog, p. 8) that provide the groundwork necessary for building and maintaining curricular focus, consistency, and relevance. Each major has Educational Objectives for the Majors, aligned with the Mission and written by the Major Heads, the Chairs, and the Dean. Every course has clear and measurable SLOs presented in a consistent syllabus template that is created from the Universal Educational Objectives.

This clear lineage of Mission, Vision, Goals, Objectives, and SLOs ensures that AAC courses are in

direct alignment with the Mission of the college. Courses in both Liberal Arts and Studio Arts maintain clearly defined criteria for determining appropriate course levels and prerequisites, as delineated in the Definitions of Course Levels BFA DOLA and Studio 2021 documents. The assignation of course prerequisites ensures that students have the necessary skills to complete the required coursework. Prerequisites for a given course are based on the course description and syllabus in conjunction with the curriculum, the Academic Dean, the Chairs, the faculty, and the outlined criteria.

The Liberal Arts component of AAC's BFA degree program includes courses in Art History, Critical Thinking, Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences. The Department of Liberal Arts offers a variety of courses at all levels, 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. Department of Liberal Arts faculty teach academic skills, vocabulary, and knowledge that help AAC students succeed in college and their post-collegiate professional and artistic pursuits. In addition to two semesters each of Art History and foundational English: HU102 Artist as Reader Workshop and HU101 Artist as Writer Workshop, students must take an upper-level Critical Thinking course, which they can satisfy with HU201 Aesthetics, AH304 Doing it in the Dark or HU210 Introduction to Philosophy. Through requirements of the capstone experience, students connect their research and writing with what they make, how they make it, and why their creative work matters. Further, they develop confidence, depth, and inquiry to see how their art affects the attitudes, beliefs, changes, and actions that matter most to them. 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, a newly developed course, Going Big: Professionalism Workshop, and 9 additional LA credits, which can be any combination of Natural Science, Social Science, Humanities, or Art History.

As evidenced by the Quality Assurance Map and the Quality Assurance Program, the college administers ongoing internal review to ensure that the curriculum is relevant, challenging, and enriching.

In the Academic Catalog, academic programs are updated annually by the faculty and staff. 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, in 2018, the faculty embarked on a significant reworking of our First Year Experience (FYE). We began this meeting with a Curriculum Faculty SWOC 2018 of the first year, the second and third years combined, and the fourth year. We developed a list of objectives, formed committees, researched other institutions, and created several drafts of a new FYE, and our First-Year Experience Final 2019 was implemented in fall 2019. We created an FYE Rebuild Draft and FYE Course Descriptions and SLO's 2019.

AAC Faculty created the basis of this new FYE from research accumulated from member institutions of the Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design (AICAD), course assessments, student review forms, faculty assessments, and research of skills that all college graduates need upon graduation in the 21st Century. We provided a rationale in the document titled "FYE Course Descriptions and Alignment with 4 C's."

We also worked in unison with Heads of Majors to determine which skills students needed in order prepare to enter their major courses.

Although the completion of the first year of this curriculum coincided with a shutdown of in-person learning due to COVID-19, the faculty continued to meet and assess the work and learner outcomes of the first-year students. Based on student coursework in First-Year courses and Year-End Reviews, we determined that the decision to no longer require drawing was a mistake, so we created a task force to look at The Role of Drawing at the AAC. We determined that a required drawing component from a list of courses from which to choose would best serve our students. We also determined that FY103 Discovery and FY104 Voice were too similar, so we combined these into one course, FY106 Discovery + Voice. We implemented these curricular changes (First-Year Experience Revised 2020) last Fall which included new FYE Drawing Courses 2020-2021. We are currently finalizing our Strategic Plan 2022-2025 (Draft) and will include future curriculum review initiatives.

Simultaneously, we embarked on an assessment of our Senior Capstone Experience. Our requirement of a gallery exhibition was no longer providing students in Design, Illustration, and Creative Writing with a capstone that mirrored their professional endeavors. Now, rather than requiring every student to install a gallery exhibition, students work with their Senior Pathway faculty to determine the most appropriate creative project presentation form and venue. Pathways are determined each year based on student needs and interests. They include, but are not limited to, Fine Art Studio Practice, Creative Industry Practice, Community Practice, and Writing Practice (AAC Catalog, pg. 67). Presentations are scheduled and developed through the Senior Thesis and Senior Pathways classes. The public presentation of the work is an important means for the student to connect to the community, both internally and externally. Creative projects can be presented in a variety of formats and venues such as an exhibition in a gallery, creating a portfolio, producing a body of work, or developing an extended project that can be printed and mounted, projected, or presented in the context of a finished website or on a portfolio host site. Multimedia, video and animation-based works can be projected in one of the galleries or in an alternative space. Other presentation forms could include web-based publications, physical books, performances, and pop-up shops. All thesis requirements are published in the Senior Thesis Resource Book 2020-21.

The Full-Time Faculty have paid particular attention to the first and fourth years and understand the need to examine the second and third years, and the major and minor courses that students take in their sophomore and junior years, relative to the changes in the first and fourth years. Many of these initiatives are outlined in the Strategic Plan 2022-2025 (Draft).

Writing, along with courses in the Humanities, the Natural and Social Sciences, Critical Thinking, and Art History help provide the foundation for our students' visual work in terms of content, aesthetics, and sensibility. Writing is central to this, as language is the fundamental conceptual framework through which we make sense of our experience, other people, ourselves, and the world. By identifying aspects of a student's writing that need improvement, we can help them establish achievable, demonstrable, and measurable semester (and longer-term) goals for improving their language skills and critical thinking.

To assess incoming students' writing, each AAC Artist as Writer Workshop instructor administers the Incoming Writing Diagnostic and Procedure Fall 2019 to their students. This consists of a rough draft and a final draft, each of which is accompanied by a completed Writing Standards Form 2019 filled out by the faculty member utilizing the Writing Standards Form Rubrics and the Writing Standards Form Conversion. In addition to preparing a WSF for each student, the instructor will identify specific aspects of the student's writing that need work. This can help drive both the semester's course instruction and provide a focus for the work that needs to be done by and with each individual student.

All curricular changes must be formally presented and approved by the Full-Time Faculty via a majority vote. Courses recently approved include SS323 Gods and Monsters: A Social History of Horror, NS314 Natural World Building, PC201 Going Big: Professionalism Workshop, AH104 Global Art Histories, AH223 Gender in Art and Visual Culture, DR205 Expanded Drawing, HU328 Queer Lit and Theory, SC308 Sculpture: Materials Lab, SC220 Ceramics, SC210 Duck Tape Studio, CR302 Songwriting Workshop, DA213 Sound and the Moving Image, HU327 Native American Literature, and FA331 Shifting the Gaze of Race and Identity in Visual Art. These new course offerings demonstrate AAC'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, AAC employs external resources to assess the relevance and effectiveness of its programs. Individual courses such as IL303 Illustration Special Topics, DS302 Systems Design, DS303 Experience Design, and DS311 Academy Design Service, frequently hire guest critics and require client-based projects. During the annual schoolwide event, Senior Winter Expo, we hire outside reviewers who provide a Senior Winter EXPO Outside Review. We were unable to hire outside reviewers during COVID-19.

AAC also relies on our regional accreditor, Higher Learning Commission (HLC) (HLC Art Academy of Cincinnati Final Report), and our specialization accreditor, NASAD (NASAD Final Report) to provide meaningful feedback on AAC's teaching, learning, and assessment. These areas continue to earn high marks during reviewer visits.

The BCOI has oversight of the academic programs, including assuring levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree. The Academic Dean and Studio Arts Chair represent the faculty perspective in discussions regarding instruction that has an impact on curricular concerns. The BCOI serves in an advisory capacity and makes recommendations based on members' experience in the greater artistic and cultural community.

The Senior Thesis Statement is a written documentation of the work foundational to the Senior Thesis Presentation. This formal, scholarly paper addresses the relevant concepts, theories, influences, and experiences that form the basis of a student's work and development during their AAC 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 Thesis faculty.

Each graduating senior must present creative work for evaluation by their/his/her thesis committee and must demonstrate achievement of the Educational Objectives in order to be considered for the BFA 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. The thesis committee completes the Senior Thesis Review Form 2021 to substantiate the culmination of learning in the program. Through Senior Seminar, the student is also required to present a public talk and like experiences aligned with those expected of professional artists, designers, and writers throughout their careers.

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

AAC has clearly articulated and specific learning goals for each of its degree programs. The hierarchy begins with the Educational Goal and the Universal Educational Objectives.

To maintain alignment with the institutional Educational Goal and Educational Objectives, we have clearly articulated Educational Objectives for the Majors. These documents were revised and updated in 2020-21 to accommodate our curriculum revisions in the first and fourth years. They funnel down into specific learner outcomes for each course in the major that all support these goals. As a result, Course Descriptions in the majors, syllabi, and SLOs are all in direct alignment with the Educational Objectives. The MAAE integrates studio courses with seminars in educational theories and current practices in curriculum and assessment. The MAAE Educational Goal and Educational Objectives (AAC Catalog, pg. 80) are fulfilled through SLOs for each course as stated in MAAE Course Syllabi.

The AS degree (AAC Catalog, pg. 14) 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 Arts courses to become confident in the practices of Graphic Design. The program has few completions as most students, once enrolled, decide to switch to the BFA program.

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 censorial arrangements, or other modality).

The aspirational standards set by AAC'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 courses and programs are current, academically challenging, relevant, and responsive to contemporary art and design education and the art and design community at large. Strategic Plan 2022-2025 (Draft) includes a revisiting of our Core Values, Mission, and Vision and a refresh of the AAC brand.

AAC has a single location for our programs. We do not offer online, dual credit, or distance education programs. COVID-19 forced us to become more educated in online learning and we now acknowledge that, in certain courses, online learning may be beneficial. We have begun a Rationale for Online Learning. Currently, most courses are taught in classrooms and studios at the 1212 Jackson Street location, while we are residually offering a few courses online. Students may earn credit towards graduation through other programs such as the Greater Cincinnati Collegiate Connection (GC3) via which students from member institutions may take courses toward their degrees, not offered in their own college, from other institutions.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, AAC is one of few schools in Cincinnati that can continue with in-person learning. The CTF, in consultation with regional and national health organizations, developed a COVID-19 Success and Wellness Plan that allowed AAC faculty, staff, and students to socially distance in our 110,000-square-foot building. We required masks and temperature checks, limited class sizes, and removed furniture to discourage student gatherings. We offered the option to work remotely, resulting in about 20% of our students choosing this option in the fall and approximately 30% in the spring. The hybrid classroom did present great logistical challenges to faculty. We held several technology training sessions and town halls to discuss strategies. We also offered every faculty member the option to have a Teaching or Technology Assistant.

In 2019, AAC became an official member of the Kentucky Institute for International Studies (KIIS), which allows our students to study abroad and compete for study abroad scholarships and our faculty to teach in these programs. Our Academic Dean is an alumnus of the program and submitted the KIIS Request for Consideration in 2019 and presented it to their BOT in September of 2019. The Board voted unanimously in favor of an official partnership with AAC, and our ADPD and

Academic Dean also sit on the KIIS BOT. The partnership is outlined in the KIIS Membership Agreement.

AICAD is a consortium of 39 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 the educational experience that students receive off-campus in the Internship Experience Packet. Upon hiring our first ADPD the program was updated and now the students also complete a Pre-Internship Application Packet. Students explore meaningful experiential learning in which current skills are strengthened and new skills are obtained. 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.

Sources

- Academic Catalog 2020-2021
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 7)
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 8)
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 14)
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 67)
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 80)
- AH304 Doing It in the Dark
- AH304 Doing It in the Dark
- COVID-19 Success and Wellnes Plan
- Curriculum Faculty SWOC 2018
- Definitions of Course Levels BFA DOLA and Studio 2021
- Educational Objectives for the Majors
- Fall 2021 New Syllabus Template
- Fall 2021 New Syllabus Template
- First Year Experience Final 2019
- First Year Experience Revised 2020
- FYE Course Descriptions and SLOs 2019
- FYE Drawing Courses 2020 – 2021
- FYE Rebuild Draft
- HLC Art Academy of Cincinnati Final Report
- HU101 Artist as Writer Workshop
- HU102 Artist as Reader Workshop
- HU201 Aesthetics
- HU210 Intro to Philosophy
- Incoming Writing Diagnostic and Procedure FALL 2019
- Internship Experience Packet
- KIIS Membership Agreement - Art Academy Cincinnati- 9-23-19
- KIIS Request for Consideration

- MAAE Course Syllabi
- NASAD Final Report
- Pre-Internship Application Packet
- Quality Assurance Map
- Quality Assurance Plan Program Review Statement
- Quality Assurance Program
- Rationale for Online Learning
- Senior Thesis Resource Book 2020-21
- Senior Thesis Review Form 2021
- Senior Winter EXPO Outside Review
- Strategic Plan 2022-2025 (Draft)
- The Role of Drawing at the AAC
- Writing Standards Form 2019
- Writing Standards Form Conversion
- Writing Standards Form Rubrics

3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.
2. 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. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.
4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

Argument

3. B - Core Component 3. B

The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

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

The general education curriculum at AAC consists of multi-faceted educational offerings that demonstrate its Mission and Vision while preparing students for both personal and professional success. This is accomplished by ensuring that all students acquire a viable foundation through required courses and electives that are tracked on each student's BFA Degree Audit. Irrespective of a student's declared major or discipline, the general education course offerings are required of each degree-seeking student, while the required electives allow students to choose, according to their specific paths of inquiry and individual interests, from a variety of course offerings.

All students take the same selection of FYE studio courses, which provide a foundation for all majors: FY101 Communication, FY102 Ideation, FY105 Digital Literacy, and FY106 Discovery and Voice. Additionally, they must select a drawing course from CR207 Writing as Drawing and the Other Way Around, DR203 Digital Form and Space, DR204 Drawing as Representation, and DR205 Expanded Drawing. First-year students also take one 200-level studio course. Every course has clearly stated and measurable SLOs presented in the course syllabi that align with AAC's Universal Educational Objectives, Mission, and Vision.

AAC general education courses are offered through the Department of Liberal Arts whose Statement of Philosophy (AAC Catalog, pg. 5) fully supports and is integrated into the Mission of the college. AAC's general education required course offerings are composed of Artist as Writer Workshop, Artist as Reader Workshop, and Art History in the first year. A critical thinking experience, a professional development course, and courses in the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences, as well as additional courses in Art History and Senior Thesis round out the 42 liberal arts credits required.

The course HU101 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 course HU102 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 are AH105 Issues and Ideas in Modern and Contemporary Art Histories and AH104 Global Art Histories. The former explores issues and ideas employed by artists and designers in the 20th and 21st centuries. Race, class, gender, sexuality, and socio-political trends are some of the concepts investigated. AH104 Global Art Histories surveys histories of art from antiquity through the 19th century across the globe. Major developments in the arts and visual cultures of the African, American, Asian, Australian, and European continents are considered in terms of their social contexts. Functions and definitions of patronage, gender, politics, religion, and ethnicity are considered. The critical thinking experience is satisfied by taking one of the following: HU201 Aesthetics, AH304 Doing it in the Dark, HU210 Introduction to Philosophy.

Each student completes 33 credits in their/his/her major. Students can choose among Creative Writing, Design, Digital Arts Animation, Illustration, Painting and Drawing, Photography, Print Media, and Sculpture. Each major has a variety of courses from which to select based on the essential competency requirements. All courses and majors have clearly defined learning objectives and course goals. The complete list of majors, minors and the courses offered in respective areas can be found in the Academic Catalog.

The Senior Experience courses are team-taught, multi-purpose courses that connect a student's undergraduate experience to life beyond AAC as a graduate student and/or as a practicing professional. These courses are designed to initiate students in both conceptual and practical aspects of articulating a life as a practicing professional. Additionally, the courses cover such topics as goal-setting, the business of art, professional presentations, resume-building, and portfolio development.

AAC provides the CLS, where the Associate Director of Academic Success works with the Director of Student Services, the faculty, the Registrar, the Retention Committee, and student tutors to identify the learning support needs of students. Tutors provide learning support for both Liberal Arts and Studio courses. Free tutoring is available by appointment via Teams or in-person for support with writing, study skills, technical skills, idea generation, and time management.

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.

AAC articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general

education requirements in a variety of ways including the Mission, and Vision Statements, its clearly stated Core Values, its AAC Educational Goal, and AAC Educational Objectives, (AAC Catalog, pg. 7) and specific SLOs as stated on every course syllabus. These statements explicitly state the skills and knowledge one is expected to have acquired in each course.

All statements of purpose, content, philosophy, goals, and learning outcomes are disseminated thoroughly and variously. AAC's website is available to both the students and the public and includes an annually updated Academic Catalog.

Faculty create and distribute syllabi for each course at the beginning of each semester. The syllabus template is standardized in its expression of AAC's statements of Core Values, Mission, and Vision across disciplines, departments, and courses to demonstrate consistency and clarity of goals. However, each course syllabus is unique in that it articulates specific Course Goals and SLOs for that class. This standardization of syllabus design allows students to readily access the specific expectations, supplies, and requirements for each of their classes.

The Department of Liberal Arts seeks to provide challenging, provocative, and compelling courses that emphasize Art History, Critical Thinking, Natural Science, Social Science, and Humanities. Such courses help expand the possibilities for applying creative problem-solving in visionary ways. To this end, the Department of Liberal Arts has created a Department of Liberal Arts Statement of Philosophy (AAC Catalog, pg. 5) to guide the teaching and learning in the general education courses. All Liberal Arts Syllabi must state specific Course Goals and SLOs so that students understand faculty expectations and course requirements. Liberal Arts courses at AAC are not offered in addition to a student's study of art and design; they are integral to it. The Liberal Arts are arts, after all. As such, our courses are tailor-made for the artists we educate.

Courses such as SS317 Apocalyptic Imagination, AH222 15 Artists/15 Weeks/15,000 Years, HU315 Dueling Literary Avant Gardes, and HU324 Zen and the Creative Process are geared to our students' needs, rather than simply fulfill a requirement on the way to a student's 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.

The FYE was recently reassessed and reorganized to reflect contemporary students' needs. Following inspiration from the analysis of the World Economic Forum 4C's (4Cs FYE Planning), AAC faculty identified four competencies crucial to 21st-century job candidates: Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration, and Communication. The new curriculum was articulated around these "4 C's." Each competency plays a significant role in the new FYE. For example, while the course FY102 Ideation touches on all four competencies, it was specifically designed to provide students opportunities to collaborate. The course FY101 Communication focuses on developing tools to convey ideas both verbally and visually.

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.

AAC employs recognizable and consistent strategies for mastering modes of inquiry. These principles move across and between every major area. They are also integrated sequentially from the FYE curriculum through to the senior experience and thesis presentation requiring ever-increasing proficiency.

AAC and its faculty use various strategies to ensure student proficiency and to help them develop finesse in their critical thinking ability. For example, some professors use Academic Visual Analysis methods such as Feldman's Method. Professors examine ways to decolonize the curriculum and provide alternative ways of thinking beyond our traditional references as well as incorporating new ones. Students are required to reflect on their own creative process and contextual awareness regularly. At the end of each year, students are expected to participate in an End-of-Year Review and write a self-evaluation. Programs are built to empower students to recognize their own growth and progress both technically and intellectually.

The Creative Writing Major (AAC Catalog, pg. 20) provides students with the opportunity to engage with language as a fundamental artistic medium, one which is not only relevant *in* multiple contexts, but *is* multiple contexts, as seen in the Creative Writing Major Syllabi. Through poetry, short stories, creative non-fiction, and hybrid/interdisciplinary forms, students explore not only the narrative possibilities of the written and spoken word, but expressive and formal ones as well. Through active reading, critical writing, and research in relation to the artistic process, students hone their craft and learn to undermine preconceptions and rules in favor of generative unpredictable outcomes.

The Design Major (AAC Catalog, pg. 25) integrates studio practices and liberal arts inquiry with contemporary design education. As stated on the Design Major 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. Design students graduate to work at design studios or in related fields such as architecture, exhibit and display, marketing, film, and the entertainment industry.

The new Digital Arts Animation Major invites students to study the compositional elements associated with time-based imagery, understand the language of moving images, and explore how these specific principles are manifested in 2D, 3D, and 4D compositions. Digital Arts Animation students choose from a variety of courses that allow them to focus on or broadly experiment with narrative or more graphical aspects of motion media. All courses are designed with the idea that the application of contemporary digital media is meant to fluidly evolve and use a variety of creative methods in conjunction to create new imagery and more complex illusions.

The Illustration Major (AAC Catalog, pg. 31) as evidenced 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 bodies of work that reference the contemporary illustration community and that reflect their personal visions. Graduates in Illustration are well-qualified to pursue work in such industries as book and magazine publishing, video games, packaging, corporate branding, retail merchandising, animation, advertising, social advocacy, and entertainment.

The Painting and Drawing Major (AAC Catalog, pg. 36), as evidenced in the Painting and Drawing Major Syllabi, engages students in research, problem-solving, and personal expression to develop their 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 in this major are a dynamic addition to the contemporary dialogue in an ever-changing art world and are prepared to begin their careers as exhibiting artists or to attend graduate school.

The Photography Major's (AAC Catalog, pg. 41) 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 Major (AAC Catalog, pg. 45) provides students with opportunities to explore both traditional and contemporary printmaking techniques, while developing a distinct voice, as evidenced in the Print Media Major Syllabi. The Print Media track emphasizes traditional approaches invigorated by innovative technologies supported by a large, well-equipped facility. Students are introduced to a full range of processes that includes monoprint, relief, lithography, intaglio, screen printing, letterpress, and book arts. Graduates pursue a variety of career paths, including working at a cooperative press, as a master printer in a professional workshop, founding an independent press, screen printing at a professional design firm, and/or completing a graduate degree and teaching at the college level.

The Sculpture Major (AAC Catalog, pg. 50) provides a solid foundation in traditional and contemporary 3D processes. Majors, as seen in the Sculpture Major Syllabi, fuse old and new media and strategies into their process. Many recent graduates are exhibiting at 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.

AAC offers three minor tracks: Film/Video, Animation, and Art History and any major field can also be pursued as a minor. (AAC Catalog, pg. 56)

AAC offers a low-residency MAAE Program (AAC Catalog, pg. 80) that can be completed over 3-5 summers and is unique among graduate-level art education programs due to 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.

As a field of study and practice, art and design potentially extend into every social and cultural area and can respond to every aspect of human experience. AAC recognizes the power of art as a means of personal and social transformation and strives to concretely manifest in all aspects of its curriculum the many ways art reflects and influences the cultural diversity of the world. The increasingly diverse student body, faculty, and staff develop a variety of initiatives that arise from every area of our institution and broaden the experience of everyone involved with AAC.

As stated in The AAC's Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (AAC Catalog, pg. 7), our institution "stands for justice, truth, empathy, and the belief that life should be honored and respected." The text also states that the AAC acknowledges "that structural, systemic, historical, and intersecting forms of oppression require our ongoing attention, action, innovation, and leadership for positive change." Our faculty and staff are dedicated to looking at tangible steps toward a more equitable system.

To increase equity initiatives, AAC hired a part-time Associate Director of Diversity, which evolved into a full-time Director of DEIB that supports the implementation of a comprehensive plan which will encompass decolonizing the curriculum, faculty and staff training, and additional resources for all constituents. The Director of Diversity's position includes researching the history of the Institution utilizing available resources to develop a digital publication addressing AAC and its history from the lens of institutional privilege, developing a Diversity Action Plan, and serving as a mentor for the Student Social Justice Club. The Director of Diversity works closely with the President, the Dean, and the faculty and acts as AAC's Diversity Officer, leading the institution in its endeavor to promote accessibility, representation, and diversity as it connects and is embedded in contemporary discourse on art, design, writing and socially engaged art.

The curriculum at AAC has been undergoing many shifts, such as new Art History and Studio Arts courses that consider the history of the cultural diversity of the world as well as contemporary issues such as race and identity in relation to visual representation. New courses in Art History have been developed to explore human and cultural diversity including AH104 Global Art Histories, HU301 The Personal is Political, AH 222 15 Artists/15 Weeks/15,000 Years, and AH223 Gender and Art in Visual Culture. New studio courses continue to be developed to answer the growing demand from our students and faculty to examine their artistic practice in relation to contemporary contexts. Courses like CR203 Social Practice in the Arts and The Social Practice section of SA491 Senior Pathway 1 and SA492 Senior Pathway 2 have continued to attract and engage students. Professor Momohara taught an interdisciplinary course called FA331 Shifting the Gaze of Race + Identity in Visual Art, in which students investigate visual representation and the gaze from alternative lenses of under-represented contemporary artists. Every professor is expected to reflect on the curriculum of their/his/her classes and implement decolonizing approaches.

Students are also a force for change. The experience of education is not limited to the classroom, as many other diverse initiatives are taking place. The Black Student Union (BSU), as well as Queerspace, have many examples of student-led projects. The exhibition Seeing/Self was entirely organized by BIPOC students and showcased works by students and faculty of color. The BSU and Queerspace have organized many community events such as round tables and artist talks. In November 2020, the BSU invited actor and choreographer Darnell Benjamin as a guest speaker.

Our faculty—practicing artists, and engaged members of the community—participate directly in social conversations. In 2018, Associate Professor Momohara curated Ohio Artists for Freedoms. The exhibition was part of the For Freedoms 50 State Initiative—a non-partisan, nationwide campaign to use art as a means of inspiring broad civic participation. More recently, AAC, in partnership with the Cincinnati Art Museum, presented works by the artist and activist Hank Willis Thomas. His billboard "All Li es Matter" was hung on the side of the building. He gave a virtual talk where students could ask questions. Linnea Gartin, a former adjunct, specializes in Social Practice Arts and is a member of the collective Art Hags and the former Director of Community Impact at ArtWorks, a Cincinnati-based non-profit arts organization specializing in youth and artist workforce development through public art. Linnea Garten has since been hired as the full-time Director of Community Education and Engagement.

AAC is an integral part of the community and takes a public stand. In spring 2020, President Girandola published a statement condemning violence against people of color, especially women. Illustration faculty David Butler created a mural to be permanently installed on the side of the building in solidarity with the suffering of the community. In 2021, AAC released an AAPI Statement of Support for those who have been increasingly targeted with violence in the United

States. AAC continuously attempts to support its community through public statements and resources such as the Anti-Racism + BLM Support Resources.

AAC provides opportunities for students and faculty to broaden their experience and has recently become an official partner of KIIS. AAC students can now apply to global summer programs, and faculty can develop courses to be taught in almost any location. Professor Everhart is scheduled to teach European Art, 1700 - 1848, and Art and Landscape in Paris, France in the summer of 2022.

AAC is a member of the AICAD which aspires to create a climate that recognizes and values diversity as central to excellence in art and design education. They have international affiliates in Israel, Ireland, and Japan.

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.

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.

In accordance with the Faculty Handbook and the Faculty Self-evaluation Guidelines, all Full-Time Faculty must submit to the Dean a self-evaluation which assesses the yearly contribution of each faculty member to the Mission through services to AAC, academic research, and professional activities. Our faculty are professionally engaged through a variety of avenues that include serving on various committees and boards, publishing in academic journals, presenting at national and international conferences, serving as board members for diverse organizations, exhibiting work, creating public works of art, leading workshops, and teaching abroad. Each Full-Time Faculty member must demonstrate substantial engagement with their/his/her professional fields as evidenced in the 2021 Full-time Faculty CVs.

At the end of each year, Full-Time Faculty members are required to attend a Faculty Workshop. Recent workshops focused on updating the FYE and Senior Experience and the Education and Curriculum portion of the Strategic Plan. In spring 2020, the Full-Time Faculty developed strategies for online teaching to utilize during COVID-19.

Each Full-Time Faculty member can apply for up to $500 of Professional Development monies. The funds can be used for a variety of purposes including attending conferences, art supplies, travel, and research. Part-time faculty can also apply for the annual Adjunct Faculty Practice Grant which awards up to $1000 for professional projects. Since 2019, eligible Full-Time Faculty can apply for a six-month sabbatical to complete a professional project. At the end of the sabbatical, the work created during that time is presented publicly. We have created a Course Release Request Form that will allow Full-Time Faculty members to request a course release to pursue Professional Development initiatives that will benefit AAC and our students.

Students are supported in professional growth and engagement through a variety of means. Students are expected to participate in End-of-the-Year-Reviews where they must reflect on their artistic and academic growth throughout the academic year. Professors review their work and their ability to write about it and provide feedback. Students are eligible for scholarships, but the main objective of these yearly reviews is to prepare students for their Senior Thesis in which students are expected to write about their work, their process, and their influences.

AAC prepares students to be citizens and professionals. All students are required to take Going Big: Professionalism Workshop as well as a 300-level professional development course from a list of options, one of which is an internship. Many of our students obtain opportunities to engage professionally directly from our school. Our students have been involved in many art projects funded by local organizations such as Artworks, BLINK, and FotoFocus. Students are hired as student workers and teaching assistants, which provide significant professional responsibility.

AAC is well-regarded in the community and recognized as a thriving artistic institution. Our students are established in the local art community and our faculty are present in every facet of the cultural life of the city and beyond. The AAC galleries and affiliated events host exhibitions where students and world-famous artists and writers can network. As a result, our students are remarkably successful at securing positions as creative professionals as evidenced by the 2021 Alumni Survey Report and the AAC Career Services at Glance graphic.

Sources

- 2021 Alumni Survey Report
- 2021 Full-time Faculty CVs
- 4Cs FYE Planning
- AAC Career Services at a Glance
- AAPI Statement of Support
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 5)
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 7)
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- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 56)
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 80)
- Adjunct Faculty Practice Grant
- AH104 Global Art Histories
- AH105 20th and 21st Century Art and Design History Issues and Ideas
- AH222 15 Artists 15 weeks 15000 Years
- AH223 Gender in Art and Visual Culture F20 Everhart (1)
- AH304 Doing It in the Dark
- All Li es Matter
- Anti-Racism + BLM Support Resources
- ART HAGS
- ArtWorks
- Associate Director of Diversity
- BFA Degree Audit
- BLINK

- CR203 Social Practice in the Arts
- Creative Writing Major Syllabi
- Design Major Syllabi
- DR203 Digital Form and Space
- DR204 Representational Drawing
- DR205 Expanded Drawing
- End of the Year Reviews
- FA331 Shifting the Gaze + Identity in Visual Art (1)
- Faculty Self-evaluation Guidelines
- FotoFocus
- FY101 Communication
- FY102 Ideation
- FY103 Discovery Syllabus
- FY105 DigitalLiteracy Syllabus
- FY106 Discovery and Voice
- HU101 Artist as Writer Workshop
- HU102 Artist as Reader Workshop
- HU201 Aesthetics
- HU210 Intro to Philosophy
- HU301 The Personal is Political
- HU315 Dueling Literary Avant-Gardes
- HU324 Zen and Creative Process
- Illustration Major Syllabi
- Liberal Arts Syllabi
- MAAE Course Syllabi
- Ohio Artists for Freedoms
- Painting and Drawing Major Syllabi
- Photography Major Syllabi
- Print Major Syllabi
- Quality Assurance Map
- SA482 Senior Seminar
- SA491 Senior Pathway I
- SA492 Senior Pathways 2
- Sculpture Major Syllabi
- SS317 Apocalyptic Imagination

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 strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.
2. 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, assessment of student learning, and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.
3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.
4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
5. 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.
6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
7. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and cocurricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.

Argument

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

Argument

1. The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

AAC's Enrollment Profile 2018-2020 and Enrollment Profile 2019-2021 show that our student demographic has changed significantly over the past four years. Our Enrollment Management Team made a concerted effort to recruit more students of color to align with the diversity of the City of Cincinnati and our Over- the-Rhine neighborhood. In 2018, our percentage of students of color was approximately 23%; in 2021, 33% of our students were people of color. In 2018, 10% of our Full-Time Faculty were people of color; and in 2021, 20%. Overall, approximately 20% of AAC's Full-Time Faculty, full-time staff, and adjunct faculty are people of color (Faculty Staff Student Demographic). Admissions created two full-ride scholarships for students from Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) and broadened their high school initiatives. In addition to the full-ride scholarships, AAC is an official college partner of CPS offering college programming and we are authorized to offer credits through College Credit Plus. College Credit Plus is Ohio's dual enrollment program that

provides students in grades 7-12 the opportunity to earn college and high school credits simultaneously by taking courses from Ohio colleges or universities to enhance students' career readiness and postsecondary success, while providing a wide variety of options to college-ready students, at no or limited cost to students and families.

The Enrollment team partnered with Devonshire Diversity & Education Solutions for targeted recruiting in the tri-state area, and we have reevaluated our admissions process to become test-blind, for requiring ACT/SAT scores more adversely affects students of color. We have added additional portfolio workshops to help students of color who are in schools without strong art programs, and we have added Infinite Scholars to the list of admissions events we attend. The mission of the Infinite Scholars Program is to provide all students, especially low-income, and first-generation high school students of diversity, with access to the resources, guidance, and funding necessary to successfully further their education at accredited institutions of higher education. Our marketing team created materials that more accurately portray our increasingly diverse student body.

Representation matters and to align our faculty demographic with our student demographic we realized we must re-examine our hiring processes. In 2018, when we were seeking an Assistant Professor of Illustration, the Dean searched websites for BIPOC illustrators and reached out directly to qualified individuals asking them to apply. This resulted in our first full-time Black faculty member. Of 10 Full-Time Faculty, currently, two (20%) are BIPOC. The Director of DEIB is helping AAC to establish means to ensure a more diverse hiring pool of adjunct faculty and staff. We understand that diversity must be a priority and that to increase diversity we cannot simply rely on previous strategies.

In 2020, AAC hired a part-time Associate Director of Diversity. We now have a full-time Director of DEIB who is charged with addressing the needs of all faculty and staff and who helps the institution ensure that hiring processes are inclusive and are poised to attract the most diverse applicant pool possible. The Director of DEIB is currently serving on the Search Committee for an Assistant or Associate Professor of Design and served on the Search Committee for a part-time Professional Development Assistant. In December 2021, AAC welcomed Nytaya Babbitt, the college's 2020 Valedictorian to this role.

The Strategic Plan 2022-2025 (Draft) includes a section on DEIB, and it is addressed throughout the document. The DEIB Objective is to cultivate an artistic community that views cultural competence and empathy as integral to artistic development, practice, and personhood; to support an institutional culture shift at AAC where education, policies, and operations are DEIB driven; to cultivate an environment where all voices are valued and sought, and to provide opportunities and access to contribute to the betterment of the college. Goals include diversity training for all faculty and staff, creating a Diversity Council that will craft the AAC diversity statement and DEIB action plan, and fostering student engagement and active participation in AAC's DEIB conversation.

2. 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.

AAC employs extremely qualified faculty as evidenced in 2021 Full-Time Faculty CVs. AAC faculty members maintain rigorous professional lives and a strong presence in the community through their professional work. There are 35-40 Adjunct Faculty teaching an average of 6 credits per semester. Full-Time Faculty teach half of the courses offered per semester, and Adjunct Faculty teach the other

half. We employ a faculty of practicing professionals with terminal degrees and/or equivalent professional experience in accordance with the 2020-2021 NASAD Handbook.

AAC maintains a low student-to-faculty ratio of 9:1. There are currently 11 Full-Time Faculty, and some administrators teach. The Academic Dean carries a 6-credit-per-year teaching load; the Associate Dean carries a 12-credit-per-year teaching load; two Department Chairs each carry a 12-credit-per-year teaching load. Another faculty member with a 12-credit-per-year teaching load serves as the Website Administrator and Digital Content Specialist. The remaining eight Full-Time Faculty carry 18-credit-per-year teaching loads. Because of increased enrollment, improved budgeting procedures, and the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan, we have added one Full-Time Faculty member per year for the last three years: Illustration, Design, and a new coordinator for the MAAE program who also teaches in the BFA program. In 2018 we hired a full-time Film/Video and Animation faculty member who will oversee our new NASAD-approved Digital Arts Animation Major.

AAC maintains a 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. Three Full-Time Faculty have taught at AAC for 25-30 years, four for 10-15 years, one for 5-10 years, and three for 1-5 years. Five adjunct professors have taught at AAC for 10-15 years, four for 5-10 years, and the remaining have taught at AAC for 1-4 years.

Due to the strategic planning process, we have increased our Full-Time Faculty base. However, Adjunct Faculty still teach 50% of AAC courses. The Retention Committee identified increasing adjunct faculty initiatives as a priority in the 2020-2021 Academic Year. Full-Time Faculty are still faced with expanded duties, including recruitment, retention, increased advising loads, review presence, and committee work. Full-Time Faculty advise 15-28 students each.

In response to the reduction of Full-time Faculty in 2013, we formed AMT 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, except for technology and exhibitions which include 2-3 Full-Time Faculty. Scholarship judging and end-of-year student reviews are organized by the Studio Arts Chair and the Associate Dean. Recently, there has been an increase in the number of committees; the COVID-19 Task Force, Facilities Committee, and the Retention Committee have been added. Many of the same faculty and staff are tapped to serve on these committees. We plan to conduct an audit to avoid redundancy and burnout.

We continue to utilize AMT to conduct the business of formerly separate committees and to make decisions collectively. It provides assessment capabilities in an efficient manner and has proven successful in bringing faculty and staff together, thus increasing transparency and communication. In 2019, as we began increasing the number of Full-Time Faculty members and identifying curricular changes, we decided to focus more time on Curriculum and Academics. We now schedule one AMT meeting per month and three Full-Time Faculty meetings. These meetings occur on Wednesdays during the Common Hour. Oversight of student success has shifted primarily to the Retention Committee, formed in fall 2019. We previously conducted retention business during AMT meetings, but the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan highlighted the importance of increasing Retention Initiatives and Support, especially for students of color and first-generation college students. The faculty continue to oversee the curriculum and expectations for student performance. The Full-Time Faculty have launched curriculum discussion sessions to brainstorm and analyze current practices and programs. The faculty determine curricular initiatives that enforce our Mission, align with our Strategic Plan, and have allocated resources and act on them in accordance with the Faculty Handbook (pg. 4). All new courses and curricular changes must be approved by the Full-Time Faculty.

In addition to their role in the classroom, faculty participate in the assessment of student learning outside of their courses. As outlined in the End of the Year Reviews 2020-2021 and 2020-2021 Faculty Reviewer Information, every student is reviewed by a panel of full-time and adjunct faculty at the completion of every academic year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we opted to make end-of-year reviews optional for students in spring 2021. All Full-Time Faculty and approximately 10 Adjunct Faculty participated. Both full-time and adjunct faculty participate in Senior Thesis Reviews as part of the Senior Capstone Experience.

We have made great progress in accordance with our Strategic Plan and have added four Full-Time Faculty in the last three years. Unfortunately, the most recent Design hire resigned after the initial drafts for this argument were completed. We need more dedicated Full-Time faculty. We are addressing this in our updated Strategic Plan. The compensation of faculty is still regretfully behind that of our cohorts. Full-Time Faculty are stretched but remain focused on serving the Mission and Vision for the institution and our students. Both adjunct and full-time faculty are absolutely dedicated to passionately pursuing their own professional goals and providing the highest quality education.

3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortia programs.

All faculty have terminal degrees or the equivalent of professional experience in their fields as documented in full-time faculty transcripts and adjunct transcripts and curriculum vitae which are collected by the Office of Human Resources. The Faculty Handbook (pg. 11) outlines the Faculty Hiring and Equivalent Experience Policy.

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

There is a formal process for faculty evaluation as stated in the Faculty Handbook (pg. 22). All faculty administer student course evaluations at midterm and at the conclusion of the semester using the AAC Final Course Evaluation Form and the AAC Midterm Course Evaluation Form. The Chairs and the Academic Dean review all student course evaluations and follow up with individual faculty as needed. Full-time faculty complete a yearly Faculty Self-evaluation and are reviewed by the Academic Dean. The Academic Dean makes recommendations, and the faculty member sets goals for the following year, to continually increase performance and professional engagement.

5. 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.

AAC provides resources for faculty effectiveness. Additional funds could increase the amount of training, conferences, and professional development available to faculty. An increase in professional development resources would demonstrate institutional support of the faculty's passion for their work and teaching. We recently budgeted $1000 annually to award one or two Adjunct Faculty an Adjunct Faculty Practice Grant. This is a competitive grant for which adjuncts are invited to apply by filling out the Adjunct Faculty Practice Grant Application Form. Past budgetary restrictions resulted in the elimination of sabbaticals in 2011. Due to improved finances, AAC reinstated sabbaticals in 2019, and three Full-Time Faculty have taken sabbaticals since then.

Full-Time Faculty professional development funding is inadequate. It covers a small portion of a conference with the remainder being paid out of pocket by the faculty member. We need increased funding if we expect faculty to remain current in their fields. AAC can occasionally afford to send

Full-Time Faculty to conferences such as AICAD, NASAD, HLC, MACAA, and the Associate Writing Program Training Conferences. Campus Café training, Diversity training, Teams training, and technical support are provided to all faculty. The Dean proposed raising the Full-Time Faculty professional development funds to $1000 by Fall 2022.

6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.

Faculty are available to students during published office hours and by appointment. Meetings occur in person and on Teams. Classes 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 advisors 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 one of the first points of contact when student issues arise. Students at risk are discussed regularly at Faculty and Retention meetings, and we have recently instituted a Retention Flow Chart that is utilized by faculty during advising and Student Services to ensure that students are aware of how to access support services. The COVID-19 shutdown forced all courses online for a brief time in spring 2020. AAC was able to safely return to a combination of in-person and online learning in fall 2020.

AAC faculty provide exceptional student support and comprehensive encouragement. Faculty communicate with students through our official modes of school email and Microsoft Teams. Students communicate with faculty utilizing Teams and AAC email. Faculty work in conjunction with the Collaborative Learning Studio and the Associate Director of Academic Success to catch up on missed assignments due to illness or serious personal matters. Occasionally a faculty member assigns a grade of Incomplete and works with the student past the end of the semester. We recently approved a Medical Leave of Absence Policy in response to the overwhelming mental and physical health issues that have arisen due to COVID-19. Faculty offices are located throughout our building, which increases access and availability. COVID-19 caused a decrease in in-person office hours for all faculty and staff. Throughout the pandemic, faculty and staff were available on Teams for informal questions as well as by appointment.

7. 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.

We have increased our Student Services support team by three full-time hires. This has allowed for more focus on student support and additional training. New full-time hires include an ADPD, an in-house Mental Health Counselor, a Community Residence Coordinator, and an Associate Director for Academic Success. Additional staff members providing student support include the Registrar, Director of Financial Aid, Financial Aid Counselor, Wood Shop Technician, and Media Services Manager.

The Director of Student Services has participated in three Civil Rights Investigator and Title IX Coordinator Training conferences with the Association of Title IX Administrators (ATIXA) and earned Civil Rights Investigator Level II Certification. She attends Title IX training annually as well as workshops on Mental Health, Safety, Informal Resolution and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

AAC's full-time Mental Health Counselor holds a License of Professional Counseling (LPC), has completed all required Continuing Education credits to date, and has a special interest in marginalized college student populations. Additional training, webinars, and workshops include topics addressing Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, Grief, Autism Spectrum, LGBTQ Youth,

Counseling Ethics, Personality Disorders, Trauma, Multiculturalism, Eating Disorders, Suicide Prevention, and numerous Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion workshops.

The ADPD has a distinguished record of teaching, directing, producing, and creating a 501(c)(3). This experience of leading, training, and advocating for artists of the future has provided the experience to build AAC's Office of Professional Development by implementing a robust Internship Program, Mentorship Program, and making connections among AAC creatives, Alumni, and the world. In December 2021, a Professional Development Assistant, the 2021 AAC Valedictorian joined the staff.

Our Associate Director of Academic Success has 15 years of teaching, tutoring, and writing experience and has expertise in working with vastly different student populations including illiterate, ESL, Autism Spectrum, First Generation, and other marginalized populations. She is a published professional writer with experience in grant writing. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts and a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing.

[Encore Technologies](#) provides AAC's information technology services. One of Encore's Lead Systems Engineers works full-time on-site. If the Help Desk technician is unable to resolve the issue remotely, they will dispatch the Lead Systems Engineer to the campus location where direct assistance is needed. The Help Desk is available 24/7. COVID-19 added a greater strain on technical support services. Due to the ever-increasing reliance on technology and our new Digital Arts Animation Major, the [Strategic Plan 2022-2025 (Draft)](#) includes increased technical support and a student technology tutor as part of the CLS.

The Director of Financial Aid has 10 years of Financial Aid experience and four and a half years as Director at AAC. Her National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators Certifications include Application Process, Cost of Attendance, Need Analysis, Packaging and Aid Notification, Return of Title IV Funds, Cash Management, and Professional Judgement. Our Registrar has received Campus Café training. The Wood Shop Technician has a BFA Degree in Sculpture and CPR and Traumatic Casualty Emergency Medical Response Training. Our Community Residence Coordinator has a background in teaching and facilitating workshops on a variety of topics including safety, woodshop, and the business of art. Our Media Services Center Manager has an MFA in Electronic Art and a Bachelor's degree in Electronic Media Broadcasting.

Sources

- 2020-2021 Faculty Reviewer Information Year end reviews
- 2021 Full-time Faculty CVs
- AAC FINAL Course Evaluation Form + SLO Ratings
- AAC MIDTERM Course Evaluation Form TEMPLATE
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021
- Adjunct Faculty Practice Grant
- Adjuncts Transcripts.pdf
- Assistant or Associate Professor of Design
- Encore Technologies
- End of Year Reviews 2020-2021
- Enrollment Profile.2018-2020

- Enrollment Profile.2019-2021
- Faculty Handbook
- Faculty Handbook (page number 4)
- Faculty Handbook (page number 11)
- Faculty Handbook (page number 22)
- Faculty Handbook (1)
- Faculty Self-evaluation
- Faculty Staff Student Demographic
- Full-Time Faculty Transcripts.pdf
- Medical Leave of Absence Policy
- Retention Flow Chart
- Strategic Plan 2022-2025 (Draft)

3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and resources for 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 offerings 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 and museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

Argument

3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching

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

Academic, social, and emotional support opportunities are available to every student to ensure their growth and success in the college environment. The Enrollment Management Team supports newly admitted students. The Department of Student Services consists of the Director of Student Services, who oversees the ADPD, Mental Health Counselor, Community Residence Coordinator, and Associate Director of Academic Success. These offices provide a structure for customized support in areas such as Residence Life, Community Engagement, Learning Assistance, Career Services, Internships, Study Abroad, Student Conduct, Counseling, Orientation, Alumni Engagement, Peer and Professional Tutoring, Student/Alumni Mentorship, and Student Advocacy as elaborated in the Student Services Report 2021. The Information Technology and Facilities Departments are likewise essential to serving student needs.

Student support efforts are centralized under the purview of the Academic Dean and the Retention Committee. The Retention Committee identifies challenges to student success, recommends solutions to relevant departments and staff or faculty, and implements policies and practices relevant to student persistence and retention. It includes the VP of Marketing and Enrollment; Director of Admissions; Academic Dean; Executive Assistant for Academic Affairs; Director of Registration; Director of Financial Aid; Director of Student Services; ADPD; Associate Director of Academic Success; Mental Health Counselor; DEIB Director; Associate Director of Marketing, an admissions counselor, and a rotating Full-Time Faculty member. Subcommittees include Teaching, Curriculum, Admissions, Financial Aid, Health and Safety, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. In its first two years, the committee implemented a broad range of initiatives related to these subcommittee agendas, including those outlined in the Retention Committee Report 2019-2020 and Retention Committee Report 2020-

2021.

AMT meets once monthly to ensure communications between faculty and staff engaged in the academic functions of the college and Full-Time Faculty meet the other three weeks of the month to ensure students are receiving necessary support services in the classroom. (AMT Meeting Minutes, Faculty Meeting Minutes) The Enrollment Management Team completes a weekly New Student Review (NSR) that includes representatives from Admissions, Financial Aid, Business, Student Services, Dean's Office, and Registration (New Student Review Meeting Notes). During this meeting, each incoming student is audited to ensure they have completed the enrollment requirements prior to New Student Orientation. Each department reports where the student stands. The student is then moved to the next step of the process and/or identified for additional contact.

AAC offers a student orientation before the start of each semester. 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. In addition, orientation programming includes community building, social activities, and engagement with the local community off-campus. Due to COVID-19 health and safety protocols, a virtual orientation was offered in the Orientation Schedule Fall 2020.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, AAC provides students with documented chronic medical, physical, or learning disabilities a range of services and resources through the Director of Student Services who works individually with students and families to provide appropriate accommodations. The Request for Accommodations Form is submitted by students with documentation of known challenges. At the start of each semester, an Accommodations Letter outlining appropriate and specific accommodations is subsequently circulated to the student's faculty. The form also served students needing to work remotely during the 2020-2021 academic year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The ADPD and the Professional Development Assistant provide career services to students and alumni. The office coordinates internships through the Internship Experience Packet and Student Employment Application for the Federal Work-Study Program, organizes the AICAD Career Fair, Life Skills Workshops, Life After Art School Panel, and the Connect with Creatives professional events. These career-advancing opportunities and arts-related jobs and programs are advertised in the AAC ArtBeat Newsletter. During the 2020-2021 academic year, the ADPD held a virtual AICAD Career Fair, Art and Money series, and ABCert Workshops.

The ABCert program is the professional certification in Arts Business, in which students complete the ABCert Application and begin to earn points for completing professional tasks such as writing resumes, organizing gallery exhibitions, and writing press releases. This certification is noted on the transcript and is announced at Commencement. Students who participate in the ABCert Program develop their professional practice and grow their confidence in pursuing career opportunities.

AAC partners with ABI and KIIS for internship and study abroad opportunities. ABI is an 8-or-12-week internship in one of several international cities. KIIS offers affordable study abroad experiences in over 20 countries in any semester. The AAC/KIIS partnership is defined in the KIIS Membership Agreement. Information about these programs is available on the Academic Opportunities page of the AAC website.

Co-curricular, social, recreational, intramural, and community-focused student life is an essential component of the AAC experience. Examples of student activities include an annual trip to New

York, smART Talk Lunch Series, Intramural Sports, Final Friday Exhibition Openings, student sales, and the Student Ambassador program. Student Services coordinates Lunch with the Dean, clothing swaps, student club monthly meetings, social meetups (movie nights, game nights), Friendsgiving dinner, Valentine's Day pancake breakfast, Black History Month film screenings, poetry readings, and open mics, and participation in the Blink and Pride Parades. Life Skills Cooking Demos build community and teach students basic cooking skills and nutrition information. 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 student experience. The Director of Student Services is also charged with organizing commencement events each year. With COVID-19 health and safety procedures in place, Student Services shifted to virtual programs and meetings.

Student associations and organizations that support the students' experience at the AAC include the Student Communication Council, WAAC Lit Mag, First Gen Group, Black Student Union, QueerSpace, Fellowship of Christian Artists, The Nontraditionals, Social Impact, BIPOC, and Student Ambassadors. The COVID-19 restrictions put the AAC QueerSpace and Poems While You Wait clubs and events on pause for the 2020-2021 academic year. Through these organizations, students gain experience managing and organizing diverse groups, mounting exhibits, and hosting events.

Counseling services are provided to students both in-person and remotely (Counseling Summer Services 2021 Flyer). Students must arrange appointments independently but may be referred to by faculty or Student Services staff. In addition, the counseling office hosts programs throughout the year and assesses the mental health needs of students and staff (AAC 2020 Mental Health Services Board Meeting Report). The Office of the Registrar supports students and the faculty and staff who serve them by maintaining the integrity of academic policies, FERPA, and the Student Information System.

The ADPD launched a faceted Mentorship Program in fall 2021. Before arriving at AAC, incoming first-year students are automatically enrolled in the AAC Peer Mentorship Program. Students are grouped into pods, each led by two Peer Mentors (sophomores, juniors, seniors) who meet with their Mentee pods weekly through the end of the year. These meetings can be considered openly structured "study halls" where Peer Mentors may choose a monthly theme to discuss and explore. Peer Mentors will also be able to offer support to pods and individual Mentees for key freshman courses and connect Mentees to other AAC resources. Peer Mentorship offers leadership opportunities for students and supports student development.

Peer Mentor positions are distinctions that are designed to be integrated into the currently existing AAC Ambassador and Peer Tutor roles. Peer Mentors are selected from AAC Ambassadors and Tutors and are paid student worker positions. For 2021-2022 we hired 8 Tutors/Ambassadors with the Peer Mentorship distinction. These Peer Mentors operate in pairs to encourage confidence, teamwork, flexibility, and accountability. Each pair leads a pod of approximately 25 mentees.

The Alumni Mentorship Program is open to AAC upper-class students. Rising juniors are invited to enroll and are matched with an Alumni Mentor who acts as their mentor through graduation. Alumni Mentors must commit to mentoring and meeting with their mentee at least once monthly through the end of the mentee's senior year. Alumni Mentorship offers opportunities for alumni to stay connected and engaged with AAC while providing support, knowledge, and a professional network for students as they prepare to transition to life beyond the AAC. MAAE and Associate of Science students are also eligible to participate in Alumni Mentorship.

Office of the Registrar includes academic policies; interpretation, and enforcement of FERPA compliance; class schedules; student registration; drop/add, grading and academic record maintenance; commencement processing; degree audits; degree applications and diplomas; academic honors and Dean's Lists; the consortium; transcription services; credit transfer; advising; and evaluation; VA benefits and certification; enrollment and degree verifications; Campus Café maintenance and permissions; course descriptions; student data and statistical analysis; academic calendar; online registration forms; Assignment of Credits Policy; and monitoring Satisfactory Academic Progress.

AAC students utilize Campus Café, 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 can communicate directly with their students and advisees through this platform.

The BFA, MAAE, and AS program curricula, policies, and procedures 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.

2. The institution provides 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.

All entering students are required to enroll in the same Department of Liberal Arts and Studio Department First-Year Experience (FYE) courses. The Registrar is responsible for registering students in courses once they have deposited, completed their FAFSA, and signed their award letter. In 2019, the Retention Committee distributed an Incoming Student Survey to identify appropriate services for incoming students and connect those students with staff and programming.

The Director of Student Services works in coordination with the Associate Director of Academic Success to identify the learning support needs of students. Faculty noticing a struggling student are encouraged to submit an Early Alert Form to the Director of Student Services and/or encourage students to contact the tutors directly via the Tutoring Appointment Form. The CLS occupies a highly visible space on the second floor of the building and advertises services through the Tutoring Center Flyer, Microsoft Teams, social media, and faculty. Tutors provide learning support for both Liberal Arts and Studio courses. They are available by appointment, virtually or in person, for learning support with writing, study skills, technical skills, idea generation, and time management. The CLS implements academic support strategies including interventions for improving accountability, peer-and faculty-led supplemental instruction for common DFWI courses, and a peer-study-partner program as outlined in the 2020-21Tutoring Report.

AAC has a Teaching Assistant Program for studio and liberal arts classes. These paid assistants are recent AAC graduates placed in their areas of competence through a Teaching Assistant Application process. They assist faculty and interact with students, offering feedback and informed, critical insight on student work.

Annual reviews are essential to direct students in their course of study. Every student is individually reviewed at the end of every year by full-time and selected adjunct faculty who complete the Student

Year-End Review Form. Each student chooses several pieces of work completed throughout the year and presents them for a critique and discussion of progress. Students must also write a reflective statement according to the Student Self-Evaluation Guidelines. This process serves as a regular progress check-in, both with faculty and students' own self-reflections, and assists students in tracking personal progress throughout all four years of their AAC experience. In 2020 and 2021, year-end reviews were conducted remotely due to COVID-19. Students submitted digital portfolios to Microsoft Teams, and these were reviewed by faculty according to the Year-End Reviews Faculty Review Assignments 2021.

Student worker positions, internship resources, ABCert, and professional courses required in the second and third year demonstrate AAC's dedication to preparing students for professional careers. Students apply for student worker positions using the Student Employment Application. Students employed in the Federal Work-Study program monitor studio arts labs and the Liberal Arts Studio. In the Marketing Department, they assist in creating social media content, recording podcasts, making photographs, and designing promotional materials. In the Business Office, Registrar's Office, Admissions, and Marketing, they complete clerical tasks and assist with events. In Community Education, students teach summer camp and assist in office tasks. The ABI internship and ABCert programs described above are professional preparation, as is the Internship course in which students and a mentor complete the Internship Experience Packet for degree credit. The required course, PC201 Going Big: Professionalism Workshop (PC201 Syllabus) was developed to prepare students for professional careers through goal setting, resume writing, interview techniques, and networking strategies.

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

Each incoming student is assigned a faculty advisor. Each Full-Time Faculty member is assigned 15-25 advisees with whom they meet at least twice yearly. Advisors work with students to set academic goals, chart a course toward achieving them, connect them with student services, and make sound academic decisions overall. Faculty Advisors, whose responsibilities are published in the Faculty Handbook (pg. 16), play a key role in helping students navigate college life. The advisor is available during office hours and by appointment. 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, often utilizing the Advising Flowchart.

The Registrar provides Advisors with a paper or digital Advising Folder Sample for each of their advisees. Advisors are responsible for updating them as repositories of important student records. Folders provide advisors with the necessary information to help guide and advise students. The advising folder may include admissions documents, review forms, grades, ABCert documentation, degree audits, advising notes, notifications from the Registrar, the Academic Dean, and related offices. Advisors also assist students in developing the Senior Thesis Statement, counsel them on their studio work, and advise them on the direction of their Thesis Capstone Project.

If a student demonstrates inconsistent attendance or performance in a class, faculty members collaborate with the student's Advisor and the Retention Committee to develop a resolution plan for the student. They initiate their efforts with an Early Alert Form. The resolution plan may include guidance from the advisor, tutor, or counselor. Faculty, staff, and the Retention Committee track the student's progress.

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).

Facilities, labs, technology support, and media services resources (AAC Catalog, pg. 89) are accessible to faculty, staff, and students. The college provides 24-hour access to over 100 student studio spaces (AAC Catalog, pg. 92), instructional studios, and updated campus facilities. AAC was awarded numerous awards for the development, design, and construction of its facility and achieved LEED Certification by the US Green Building Council in 2008. Liberal Arts classrooms, the Lecture Hall, and conference rooms are outfitted with presentation technologies. A clean cube space is available for the exhibition of visual art or performance art. Facilities may be reserved by students, faculty, and staff via the online Room Reservations system.

The AAC Lighting Studio is outfitted with a 20-foot Green Screen, and in the fall of 2020, we acquired a color-position-and motion-tracking system that elevates the degree of professional LED lighting and postproduction control and output options. All students have access to the Derrick Dankwa Memorial Sound Studio, a recording studio that includes an insulated sound booth and video editing suite fitted with professional recording, relay, and sonic output equipment. AAC provides each student with an integrative subscription to a free Adobe Creative Suite. The college also provides access to multiple labs fitted with computers equipped with panels of professional animation, video, sound, motion graphics, and illustration software applications that are updated regularly to maintain professional relevancy. One of our labs is fitted with brand-new Wacom Cintiq tablets. Tablets and computers are also available to check out from our Media Services Center, as are many peripheral devices. The Lecture Hall was updated recently for optimum screenings, talks by artists and professionals, and in-house and remote broadcasting.

Encore Technologies is contracted to provide information technology for the students, faculty, and staff. The electronic environment includes the use of computers, digital printing, computer networks, electronic communication, the Internet, telecommunications, and voice mail systems. In fall 2017, the AAC implemented a Laptop Initiative, requiring laptops of all students while the AAC provides the necessary software. This effort continues to be supported through the Laptop Partnership (AAC Catalog, pg. 12). In the spring of 2020, Microsoft Teams became the official means of internal communication and classroom management outside of Microsoft Outlook email accounts.

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

Much of the students' development happens in their studios. All AAC juniors and seniors are provided with 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.

AAC is fully committed to the Safety & Security of its students and faculty. We employ two full-time security guards and contract several others through Merchants Security. AAC's main facility is a secure building. All students, faculty, and staff must scan a magnetic security card to gain entry. The

building has only one entrance, which is continuously staffed by security personnel. Our security maintains a working relationship with the Cincinnati Police Department, meeting with them and other local organizations and businesses monthly to discuss recent crime and safety statistics compiled from neighborhood reports. AAC complies with the federal regulations outlined in the Title IX, the Clery Act, and the Violence Against Women Act as reported in the annual 2020 Safety & Security Report. Relevant policies, procedures, and certifications are accessible through the comprehensive Title IX Hub on the AAC website.

Several courses provide students with exhibition opportunities and expose them to works by professional artists. The Pearlman and Constance McClure 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. Recent exhibitions are cataloged in the Exhibitions Archive.

Since 2005, AAC and the Cincinnati and Hamilton County Public Library have maintained the CHCPL Partnership Agreement through which the Public Library provides comprehensive, exemplary library services and programming to students, staff, and faculty. The Main Library is only three blocks from campus and is a nationally acclaimed library system.

The Liberal Arts Studio (LAS) is an on-campus collaborative research and workspace for exploring ideas related to students' practice and/or courses. Many of the AAC course texts are among the noncirculating LAS holdings. The LAS catalog is accessible online. The school also hosts a DVD collection of more than 100 experimental films and animation donated by video artist Charlie Woodman, who is a retired professor from the University of Cincinnati and a member of the renowned Woodman family.

AAC offers class trips to local museums, including Taft Museum of Art, Cincinnati Art Museum, Contemporary Arts Center, and 21C Museum & Hotel. These museums provide free admission to AAC students. Additionally, the faculty introduce students to local galleries such as Clay Street Press, Solway Gallery, Manifest Gallery, Weston Gallery, and Wave Pool Gallery. These art resources earned the college a place in the top 10 Art History programs among Midwestern colleges as ranked by College Magazine in 2017.

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

The administration and BOT support Academic Freedom in Artistic Expression in alignment with the American Association of American Colleges and Universities and the American Association of University Professors (AAC Catalog, pg. 86).

AAC 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. The Academic Honesty Policy is referenced on all course syllabi and is published in the Catalog (AAC Catalog, pg. 86). Faculty members who suspect academic dishonesty have a concrete process with the Academic Dean and Department Chair to address malfeasance (AAC Catalog, pg. 103).

Studio Arts First-Year Experience courses emphasize training in creative research according to the FYE Course Descriptions and Alignment. 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. FY105 Digital Literacy was established in 2019 and provides foundational knowledge in the management of informational resources for creative research.

Through the CHPL Partnership Agreement, students may apply for borrowing privileges and use the library for out-of-class research. During the new student orientation and in various first-year courses, a librarian conducts a presentation on best research 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. Students in first-year courses are introduced to research techniques in the library catalog and online databases through activities and field trips conducted by library staff. In the MAAE program, students are instructed in academic research methods in the required art history courses AH5123 Artistic Practice in the Contemporary World Syllabus and AH5150 Individual Investigations in Art History Syllabus.

Many courses offered by the Department of Liberal Arts contain academic research instruction, including the assessment of potential bias and reliability of web sources. The overview of the Research Resources Handout is distributed in multiple Liberal Arts courses. Research and effective use of MLA standards is a component of the Student Year-End Review Form 2021 completed for each student as part of the review process. The MLA Guidelines for research practices and citations are taught at every level of study, and students are required to demonstrate their knowledge of it in their Senior Thesis, as stated in the 2020-2021 Senior Thesis Resource Book.

Sources

- 2020 Safety and Security Report
- 2020-2021 Senior Thesis Resource Book
- 2020-21 Tutoring Report
- AAC 2020 Mental Health Services Board Meeting Report
- AAC ArtBeat Newsletter
- ABCert-Application
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 12)
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 86)
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 89)
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 92)
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 103)
- Academic Opportunities
- Advising Flow Chart
- Advising Folder Sample
- AH5123 Artistic Practice in the Contemporary World Syllabus
- AH5150 Individual Investigations in Art History Syllabus (1)
- Alumni Mentorship Program
- AMT Meeting Minutes
- CHPL Partnership Agreement
- College Magazine

- Counseling Summer Services 2021 Flyer
- Early Alert Form
- Exhibitions Archive
- Faculty Handbook
- Faculty Handbook (page number 16)
- Faculty Meeting Minutes
- First-Gen Group
- FY105 DigitalLiteracy Syllabus
- FYE Course Descriptions and Alignment with 4 Cs
- Internship Experience Packet
- KIIS Membership Agreement
- LAS Catalog
- Medical Leave of Absence Policy
- Mentorship Program
- New Student Review meeting notes
- Orientation Schedule Fall 2020
- PC201 Syllabus
- QueerSpace
- Request for Accommodations Form
- Research Resources
- Retention Committee Report 2020-2021
- Retention Committee Report 2019-2020
- Safety and Security
- Student Employment Application
- Student Self Evaluation Guidelines
- Student Services Report 2021
- Student Year End Review Form
- Teaching Assistant Application
- Title IX HUB
- Tutoring Appointment Form
- Tutoring Center Flyer 2021
- WAAC Lit Mag
- Year End Reviews Faculty Assignments 2021

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Summary

AAC continually updates its programs, curricula, and courses to ensure relevance to 21st-century art and design education. AAC's Mission and Vision states 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.

AAC offers three degree programs: BFA with majors in Creative Writing; Design; Digital Arts Animation; Illustration; Painting and Drawing; Photography; Print Media; and Sculpture; the MAAE; and the AS. Each degree program has Universal Educational Objectives that provide the groundwork necessary for building and maintaining curricular focus, consistency, and relevance. 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 Core Values, Mission, and Vision across disciplines, departments, and classes to demonstrate consistency and clarity of goals.

The ambitious standards set by the 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 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.

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.

AAC employs an extremely qualified faculty, who maintain rigorous professional lives with a strong presence in the community through participation and professional work. AAC maintains a low student-to-faculty ratio at a current rate of 9:1.

AAC 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 administration, ensuring the institution integrates student opinion into the decision-making process. AAC is committed and has invested in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion measures with financial resources, through our new Strategic Plan, new hires, and ongoing training for employees. As enrollment continues to increase, we look forward to a brighter future for the institution and our AAC graduates.

Sources

- Quality Assurance Map
- Quality Assurance Program

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 ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.
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 ensure 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 ensures 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 ensures that the credentials 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.

Argument

4.A.1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.

AAC's Academic Affairs Quality Assurance Program (QAP) outlines the process by which program review occurs at every level in the institution. The program, demonstrated by the Quality Assurance Map, ensures that review occurs in accordance with the college's Core Values, Mission, and Vision 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, design, and creative writing.

An advantage of being a small college is that program review is strategic, ongoing, and always focused on improving both teaching and learning. Since 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. In the 2017 HLC Art Academy of

Cincinnati Final Report (p.35) reaccreditation review, site visitors remarked that "Rather than a once in five-year program review, AAC conducts what could be called a weekly program review." AMT meets once monthly to discuss student engagement, academic affairs business, and program review. On weeks when AMT does not meet, the full-time faculty meet. In both the AMT and Faculty meetings, items for discussion include enrollment management (recruitment, retention, persistence); student progress, needs, and issues; program and curriculum development, technology needs and developments, etc. Meeting agendas are set by members of the AMT or full-time faculty depending on which body is meeting that week. The Associate Dean presides over AMT meetings, and the Academic Dean presides over faculty meetings. The AMT and Full-Time Faculty vote 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 QAP. The Executive Assistant to the Academic Dean records and distributes minutes for team approval. AMT Meeting Minutes, Faculty Meeting Minutes.

Recent program review by the AMT and Faculty, in conjunction with AAC's Strategic Plan, and our 2018 NASAD Final Report led to discussions about students' preparation for the world of business, students' academic success, the state of DEIB, and students' mental health needs. The result was four new support staff hires who assist students with everything from career preparation and internships, academic tutoring and time management skills, mental health services (including on-site counseling), and DEI sensitivity training, community outreach, and partnering opportunities.

Additionally, ongoing program review resulted in two reasoned and deliberate initiatives in the Department of Liberal Arts: 1) The addition of a Creative Writing Major and 2) Three new Art History courses, emphasizing non-western perspectives and critical approaches, along with a more robust diversity in terms of AAC's ongoing process of decolonizing the curriculum and including more BIPOC and LGBTQ+ artists in the curriculum.

Writing across the Curriculum and Creative Writing, including poetry, fiction, and cross-genre work, have long been front and center in AAC courses, and the Creative Writing Minor established in 2010 has been among AAC's most popular minors. As a result, Creative Writing courses have been a mainstay in the curriculum with many students requesting to major in Creative Writing. In the spring of 2017, Matt Hart, the Liberal Arts Chair and Head of Creative Writing, prepared a Creative Writing Major Proposal which was approved by the Faculty, BOT, and HLC. As the demand for opportunities in more non-traditional visual arts media has increased, AAC has broadened the scope of its curricular and co-curricular offerings to accommodate students' instinctive inclinations toward radical approaches to creative processes, including those in which language is an artistic medium and a fundamental conceptual framework within which critical insight and creative pursuit intersect. The openness and fluidity of AAC's curriculum means that most Creative Writing classes are not only filled with Creative Writing Majors and Minors but students from many other disciplines.

In response to the NASAD Final Report (pg. 12) in 2019, which noted that "While it appears that art history courses touch upon non-Western content, it is unclear to the site visitors that the opportunities for student engagement with these subjects are sufficient to meet the applicable standard," the Chair of Liberal Arts appointed Dr. Emily Everhart, head of Art History, to undertake a reevaluation of AAC's Art History courses, to find ways to build in more non-Western perspectives and critical approaches. Two new courses were added to the curriculum. A new freshman course AH104 Global Art Histories has taken the place of AH110 20th and 21st Century Art and Design History: Media, and AH223 Gender in the Arts and Visual Culture replaced AH317 Women in the Arts. AH223 emphasizes the shifting and fluid nature of gender and the critical approaches that artists, including

AAC students, are not only increasingly dealing with in their art, but in their lived experience. Additionally, the course AH222 15 Artists, 15 Weeks, 15,000 Years was added to include a more focused study on non-western and BIPOC/LGBTQ+ artists.

Recent Studio Department changes resulting from ongoing program review have included a complete overhaul of both the FYE courses (FYE Course Descriptions and Alignment with 4 Cs) and The Senior Capstone courses (4th-Year Experience Redesign). This review, begun in 2019, sought to address and reimagine a first-year curriculum that was outdated against the backdrop of AAC's current Mission and Vision and problematic in terms of retention and persistence. The Senior Capstone courses were redesigned to give students more choice and autonomy in terms of the possibilities for designing their Senior Capstone Presentation, but also with an eye toward giving students more professional preparation and development opportunities and prospects.

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 Catalog, pg.126. 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. The Studio and Liberal Arts Chairs complete a Transfer Credit Evaluation 2021-22 (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. This plan details the projected degree completion time based on the number of transfer credits awarded and the courses the student must complete.

AAC has five current Articulation Agreements with, Vincennes University, the University of Cincinnati Blue Ash College, the University of New Mexico in Taos, NM, Chatfield College, located just a few blocks from AAC, and Sinclair College in Dayton, OH.

Agreements with UCBA and Sinclair have been recently updated; Chatfield is in progress. UNMT and Vincennes have requested that we postpone updates due to in-progress curricular changes on their end. AAC would like to increase the number of Articulation Agreements to provide more pathways for transfer students. The Dean has two new Articulation Agreements in progress with Ivy Tech Community College, located in Indiana, and Delaware College of Art and Design (DCAD). DCAD is the only 2-year, private independent college of art and design, with five majors in art and design.

Life and other forms of Experiential credit (which are not part of AAC's Internship program) 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 credit in accordance with the guidelines and policies defined in the Internship Experience Packet documents.

3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.

Students wishing to transfer from another college or university must submit all college or university transcripts. 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 BFA curriculum, as determined by the Departmental Chairs upon completion of the TCE. For credits to be accepted 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 department chair and the Academic Dean. Students must complete the final 30 credits required for their degree programs in residence at AAC. Graduate credits are not accepted for transfer into the MAAE program.

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 ensures 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.

In 2017, AAC created the Definition of Course Levels BFA DOLA and Studio. The Chairs created this documentation at the request of the Academic Dean and presented it to Full-Time Faculty for amendments and adoption. This document lays out a philosophy for course-level definitions and prerequisites in their respective departments and then defines course levels in terms of the assumptions and expectations for both teaching and student learning at each level. They 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 learning are reviewed by AMT and managed by the Director of Student Services, the Facilities Manager, and the IT Department, which is contracted through Encore Technologies. Students can access four computer labs, a media services lab, a photo lab, a sound lab, shops for metal, plaster, and wood, spray painting booths, painting, drawing, print media, sculpture, illustration studios; one clean cube, the Chidlaw Gallery, and a Liberal Arts Studio, which supplements the Library and Learning Resources agreement with the Cincinnati and Hamilton County Public Library (CHPL) (see below). Additionally, seniors have access to the McClure, Chidlaw, and Pearlman Galleries for their Senior Capstone Projects. 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 studio tutors, and as mentioned above, a Collaborative Learning Studio, staffed and managed by the Associate Director of Academic Success, as well as free mental health counseling through the school Counselor.

Through a CHPL Partnership Agreement, students have access to one of the finest libraries in the country. Only three blocks from campus, CHPL serves as a primary resource for AAC students. 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. In our 2018 NASAD site visit, the outside reviewers remarked that "AAC's students, artists, and scholars have more than sufficient access to library and learning resources for the size and scope of programs. The CHPL develops and maintains these resources and establishes policies that govern their administration, collections, services, access, facilities, and finances, all of which appear to be

more than sufficient for the size and scope of AAC programs." (NASAD Final Report)

Standards for faculty qualifications are outlined in detail in the Faculty Handbook (pg. 11). One of the most important qualifications for AAC faculty is their dedication to helping AAC students understand the creative process through the primary discipline they teach. Students focus on using creative thinking to investigate subjects in ways that relate to their own artistic development—which is 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. 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 the Department of Liberal Arts Philosophy (AAC Catalog, pg. 5) with an emphasis on the arts. This document helps establish the notion that Liberal Arts courses at AAC are not in addition to a student's creative work, but an avenue integral to creative pursuit. This approach incites active learning, creative and critical thinking, collaboration, and classroom discussions that go well beyond the traditional tiered delivery of academic content. 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 AAC apart from its peer institutions. The success of the implementation of this philosophy is assessed and revised via syllabus review, course evaluations, and occasional classroom visits by the Chairs or the Academic Dean.

AAC does not offer any Dual-Credit courses.

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

AAC has specialized accreditation through NASAD of which it is a charter member. The NASAD reaccreditation process parallels the HLC process and typically happens every 10 years. It promotes 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 NASAD self-study and review will occur in 2027. AAC is also a charter member of AICAD, a consortium of 39 professional colleges of art and design, dedicated to the exchange of information and programs beneficial to students, faculty, and staff.

6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials 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.

As a not-for-profit, non-proprietary college of art and design, 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. We revere the talented artists of the past for the ways they established the rules, not for the way they followed the rules. This is the core of innovation. At AAC, visual arts innovation is the bedrock of a Liberal Arts education. Creative thinking broadens any experience and is valuable in any context, whether painting or rocket ship design.

While some form of Professional Development occurs organically in most classes, in 2019, AAC hired an ADPD to work with both current students and alumni to ensure that our students leave AAC prepared to be creative professionals in the world beyond college. Additionally, in 2020 an Alumni Coordinator was hired specifically to oversee alumni connection and outreach efforts. The Alumni

Coordinator's role is to update the Alumni Database with our alumni's new job histories, social media platforms, artist websites, contact information, and more. This database is then used in outreach to AAC Alumni with whom we engage via programming via the Alumni Association.

Sources

- 4th Year Experience redesign
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 5)
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 126)
- AH104 Global Art Histories
- AH222 15 Artists 15 weeks 15000 Years
- AH223 Gender in the Arts and Visual Culture
- AMT Meeting Minutes
- CHCPL Partnership Agreement
- Creative Writing Major Proposal spring 2017
- Definitions of Course Levels BFA DOLA and Studio 2021
- Delaware College of Art and Design (DCAD)
- Faculty Handbook (1)
- Faculty Handbook (1) (page number 11)
- Faculty Meeting Minutes
- FYE Course Descriptions and Alignment with 4 Cs
- HLC Art Academy of Cincinnati Final Report
- HLC Art Academy of Cincinnati Final Report (page number 35)
- Internship Experience Packet
- Ivy Tech
- NASAD Final Report
- NASAD Final Report (page number 12)
- Quality Assurance Map
- Quality Assurance Plan Program Review Statement
- Quality Assurance Program
- Transfer Credit Evaluation 2021-22

4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.
2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
3. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.

Argument

4. B - Core Component 4. B

The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.

As a college of art and design, AAC engages in the daily assessment of student learning through critical observation of work produced. At some level, students' art, design, and written work must "make a substantial difference in all the lives they touch." 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 critique does not mirror the typical college experience of self-enclosed learning and private examination. At AAC, student learning is not self-enclosed, but interactive and in plain sight. AAC's Academic Affairs Quality Assurance Program is comprised of five interdependent pillars: Purpose, People, Process, Logistics and Analytics, Data and Evidence. Each interrelated pillar is vital for assuring quality in learning and teaching. Student Learning and Experience, along with Mission, Vision and Core Values, Diversity Equity and Inclusion, Community Engagement and Impact and Curriculum, drives and is informed by all the other support pillars. Student work is the culmination and ongoing physical evidence that growth and learning are flourishing.

Assessment of student learning begins with the application process. Applicants must demonstrate through the presentation of creative work, and transcripts via the Admissions Application Process that they can succeed as creatives at AAC. To provide more accessibility, the Admissions Department has begun offering remote digital portfolio reviews. Admissions counselors evaluate applicants' portfolios using rubrics derived from the Student Year-End Review Form, thereby aligning the incoming assessment with our Educational Objectives.

Advising Folders are created for all incoming students, which contain all relevant academic

application materials, including incoming student Housing Preferences Questionnaire, an Incoming Student Survey completed during the first week, and other relevant information. The Advising Folders provide pertinent information useful in helping students navigate the rigors of college life and an AAC education.

Student learning flows from the Mission which establishes our collective purpose and dictates all decisions concerning learning, teaching, curricular design, and resource allocation. The AAC Educational Objectives (AAC Catalog, pg. 8) derive from the Core Values, the foundation of the Mission. The Educational Objectives for the Majors, and the MAAE program (AAC Catalog, pg. 80), were developed directly from the AAC Educational Objectives. SLOs 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 various 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 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 AAC's 1:2:1 curriculum model (AAC Catalog, pg. 16).

Following two in-depth external evaluations (HLC Art Academy of Cincinnati Final Report, NASAD Final Report) the Full-time Faculty embarked on an assessment and revision of our 1st and 4th-year experiences, both of which were implemented in our fall 2019 curricular offerings. Our Quality Assurance Program was updated to outline our recent and future program review philosophy and assessment.

End-of-year reviews for first-year students, 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 work is reviewed at the end of every year using the Student Year-End Review Form. Each student chooses a portfolio of creative work and completes a written self-evaluation according to the Student Self-Evaluation Guidelines to best represent their progress throughout the current academic year. This work is presented to a team of instructors for feedback. This annual process serves as a systematic analysis of student progress through the first year, second year, and third-year review forms and assists students and advisors in tracking progress throughout their AAC experience. Department Chairs compile all year-end review data in a Year-End Review Scores spreadsheet to identify any potentially negative trends occurring across the curriculum by year.

The Senior Winter EXPO is a public exhibition featuring works from all current seniors every February. This experience not only reflects our educational objectives but has created another touchpoint for external review (Senior Winter Expo Outside Review) from select members of our local arts community who provide feedback on the student work. Students use this experience to gain public feedback and better prepare for their Thesis Capstone Projects.

The culmination of student learning in the BFA program is confirmed through the Thesis Capstone Project and Thesis Statement (Senior Thesis Resource Book 2020-21). The student's Thesis Committee evaluates the work using the Senior Thesis Review Form to determine if the student has achieved AAC's objectives and is thereby eligible for the awarding of the BFA degree. Department

Chairs also compile these Thesis Capstone Review form data in a [Thesis Capstone Review Scores](#) spreadsheet to provide an assessment of seniors by major.

2. **The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.**

The [Quality Assurance Program](#) was developed to generate 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, 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 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 advantage of having administration in the studio and classroom (and by default, faculty in administration) is that administrators who teach gain firsthand knowledge of student learning on a regular basis, resulting in more effective decision-making. As the college begins to emerge from tight budget constraints, the hiring of more Full-Time Faculty members will help with the distribution of assessment responsibilities.

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

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 Arts Chair, the Chair of Liberal Arts, and the Associate Dean are tasked with analyzing assessment data from the [Year-End Review Scores](#) and bringing those results to the Full-Time Faculty and AMT for discussion and action.

From our experience in art and design education, data analysis 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.

Beyond simply assessing student work, we also identify and intervene with any students struggling academically as early as possible. Faculty fill out an [Early Alert Form](#) which prompts faculty and the Retention Committee to recommend student support initiatives. The Associate Director of Academic Success compiled a [Tutoring Stats Spring 2021](#) document that outlines academic progress in our spring semester with students who sought tutoring. Students who attended tutoring throughout the spring semester of 2021 (and remained enrolled) averaged a 2.156 GPA for the spring semester, compared to an average of .976 GPA from the fall semester of 2020. While this reflects a small sample size, this academic assistance creates a large impact due to the scale of our student body. These efforts prove that academic assessment happens in a variety of manners and delivers statistical improvement to student learning as quickly as possible.

Liberal Arts Chair, Matt Hart, drafted a [Creative Writing Major Proposal](#) in the spring of 2017 after noting that we had 23 Creative Writing minors, along with the enthusiastic attendance and participation of our AAC poetry readings. This document created the plan for a new major that was

already supported but not officially running in the BFA program.

We defined an educational objective in our [2019-2022 Strategic Plan](#) to "Design and cultivate an innovative student learning experience that is aligned to ever-changing cultural, commercial, and aesthetic landscapes and that graduates creative professionals who ignite imaginative, valuable, and constructive change in the fields and communities in which they work." Our action item was to implement an innovative first-year curriculum to exceed the expectations of today's students and to improve short-term retention from freshman to sophomore year.

In December of 2018, the faculty assessed the [First Year Experience Rationale](#) via a SWOC curriculum exercise and created a First-Year Experience Rebuild Draft that eventually transformed into the [First Year Experience Final 2019](#). The FYE curriculum focuses on the development of a set of 21st-century essential literacies and competencies that future thought leaders will need to innovate and to effect change. These include creative thinking, critical thinking, problem-solving, design thinking, communication, collaboration, and integrative literacies in verbal, visual, cultural, civic, and digital practices.

Upon the conclusion of the spring 2020 semester, the Full-Time Faculty assessed student and faculty course evaluations to determine that Discovery and Voice should be combined into one course, [FY106 Discovery and Voice](#). The [First-Year Experience Revised 2020](#) assessment also prompted us to renew a singular Drawing requirement in the FYE for the 2020-2021 academic year.

Upon the creation of our Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Statement, we began to decolonize the curriculum. The effort was initially led by Emily Momohara, and one of our first steps was Emily Everhart's founding of a new FYE course: [AH104 Global Art Histories](#). This new course shifts focus from the western canon of Art History and offers an alternative to the conventional AH110 20th- and 21st-Century Art and Design History: Media. This is a modest first step that has ushered in a larger conversation about our curriculum content. We have recently authored a [Strategic Plan 2022-2025 (Draft)](#) that outlines clearer goals to achieve this objective of decolonizing our curriculum.

Our final addition to the FYE was the creation of [FY105 Digital Literacy](#). After assessing our grading, and end-of-year student reviews, the faculty determined that we needed to generate a checklist of all digital skills that we could guarantee all first-year students would learn as a baseline for the next three years of their education. The Full-Time Faculty compiled a list based on recommendations from the faculty to use as the metric for skills to be taught in this course. This course provides basic user skills in art and design software, as well as common best practices for file handling and other essential digital life skills.

Based on [student course evaluations](#), student discussions, and faculty feedback from SA482 Senior Thesis, we changed the language from the Senior Thesis Exhibition to the Senior Thesis Creative Project. This change transpired in the fall of 2020 and is published in the [Senior Thesis Resource Book 2020-21](#). Reworking the thesis studio component of the capstone experience has allowed us to diversify acceptable outcomes that do not rely solely on exhibiting physical work in an onsite gallery space. Students may create digital work, published works, social practice, etc. offsite or virtually, and still meet the requirements for the creative project portion of the Senior Thesis. This change was directed at accommodating designers, illustrators, and writers to expand their options for presenting their creative projects.

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

members.

AAC subscribes to the principal tenets of the groundbreaking 1966 AAUP Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities, widely accepted as a cornerstone of the concept of shared governance. 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 the protection of its integrity against improper intrusions." To this end, AAC's curriculum has been developed through a transparent process with complete participation from Full-Time Faculty. Guided by the conditions for membership in the NASAD Handbook, the curriculum continues to meet or exceed all NASAD standards and has established methods for assessment, which member institutions have adopted. 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, curricular management structure at AAC, providing streamlined practices for maximum efficiencies.

Sources

- 2019-2022 Strategic Plan (1)
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 7)
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 8)
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 16)
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 20)
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 61)
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021 (page number 80)
- Admissions Application Process
- Advising Folder Sample
- AH104 Global Art Histories (1)
- AH105-01 20thand21stCenturyArtandDesignHistory_IssuesandIdeas F20 Hersko
- Creative Writing Major Proposal spring 2017
- Early Alert Form
- Educational Objectives for the Majors
- First Year Experience Final 2019
- First Year Experience Rationale (1)
- First Year Experience Revised 2020 (1)
- FY105 DigitalLiteracy Syllabus
- FY106 Discovery and Voice
- HLC Art Academy of Cincinnati Final Report
- Housing Preferences Questionnaire
- Incoming Student Survey
- NASAD Final Report
- Quality Assurance Program
- Senior Thesis Resource Book 2020-21
- Senior Thesis Resource Book 2020-21(2)

- Senior Thesis Review Form 2021
- Senior Winter EXPO Outside Review
- Strategic Plan 2022-2025 (Draft)
- Student Course Evaluations
- Student Self Evaluation Guidelines 2020-2021
- Student Year End Review Form
- Thesis Capstone Review Scores 2021
- Tutoring Stats Spring 2021
- Year End Review Scores 2021

4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve 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, 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

4. C. The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate program.

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 Strategic Plan 2022-2025 (Draft) identifies precise goals about student retention and degree completion. To achieve these goals, the Retention Committee is working diligently to curb attrition and to support and retain students.

The Retention Committee was created as an entity separate from AMT in 2019. It is a robust committee that meets weekly. The Committee sets a series of goals around five major areas: teaching, curriculum, admissions, financial aid, and health and safety. (Retention Committee Report 2019-2020, Retention Committee Report 2020-2021) DEIB has been made an additional separate category, now that there is a full-time Director. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, most Retention Committee goals were achieved. (See 4.C.3). It will take several years to determine which aspects of the plan appear to be the most effective as the COVID-19 pandemic has created abnormal circumstances. To address many of the residual mental health issues that have arisen, the Academic Dean and Director of DEIB are planning Trauma-Informed Teaching Workshops in January 2022. The AICAD Enrollment Snapshot 2021 shows that the AAC was one of two Tier-I AICAD schools to show an increase in enrollment.

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

AAC has tracked retention, persistence, and graduation rates using the following: Early Alert Form, Incoming Student Survey, Student Year-End Review Form, Exit Interview Form, Faculty Course Assessment Form, Midterm Course Evaluation Form, Retention and Graduation Rates and daily attendance through the first four weeks of the semester (AAC Facutly Course Assessments). Most of this tracking has shifted from AMT to the weekly Retention Committee meetings. The Retention Committee created a resource chart called Retention Flow Chart Jan 2021 for easy navigation to track both students and faculty. As AMT and the Full-Time Faculty meet 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 AAC's team-based approach to academic management as a viable model. 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.

NSR meets weekly to discuss new, incoming students on a case-by-case basis and they are tracked throughout the application process through registration. Like the Early Alert Process and Retention Committee Discussions, at NSR, committee members identify students who might need assistance in admissions processes such as completing the FAFSA or making a housing deposit.

Upon looking at other programs and gathering information from students, AAC found gaps in our curriculum to reach Students of Color and LGBTQ Students. The foundation of the BFA curriculum is based on colonial norms, which favor White, CIS middle-class, or wealthy people. In the spring of 2021, Associate Professor Emily Hanako Momohara was awarded a course release to perform research on decolonizing the curriculum, and she presented a series of workshops for faculty in the fall of 2021. These workshops augment the work the Director of DEIB is doing to educate AAC students, staff, and faculty.

Beginning in the fall of 2016 and looking back to 2011, the Registrar compiled the DFWI rates for first-year courses in English in the DFWI Artist as Writer-Reader 2012-2021 report and Art History in the DFWI AH 2012-2021 report to discover which courses were consistent "gateway" courses to the sophomore year. As anticipated, we identified Art History and English courses as significant areas where we might improve our efforts in relation to student success.

Parallel to this effort, Enrollment Management analyzed the incoming first-year students' high school GPAs, AAC portfolio scores, 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 contact by instructors, advisors, and Student Services.

In fall semester 2020, series of surveys were distributed to students, staff, and faculty. Casey Riordan, LPC, the AAC Mental Health Counselor created and distributed a Satisfaction Survey to all students actively receiving counseling services. A climate survey called 1N5 ART ACADEMY Needs Assessment was created and launched in partnership with 1N5 and Student Services.

In addition to collecting and analyzing our own data, AAC participates in the collection of retention, persistence, and graduation rates using the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, methodology, and tools available through AICAD (IPEDSDFR2020_201061). With these reports, AAC has been able to track its progress toward its enrollment goals and compare its enrollment outlook to those of other institutions. The reports show that AAC has remained stable with its enrollments, while enrollments have declined at peer institutions. That said, growing our enrollment in the current environment has proven to be a challenge AICAD Enrollment Snapshot 2020, AICAD Enrollment Snapshot 2021.

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

AAC has taken significant measures to increase retention, persistence, and degree-completion rates. Those measures include First-Year Surveys, a digital, Early Alert follow-up, the expansion of on-campus Student Counseling Services to a full-time counselor, an updated and viable Advising Plan, and core curriculum changes. These changes can be viewed in the Student Services Report 2021, First Year Experience Revised 2020, and the 4th Year Experience Redesign. See Criterion 4A for a discussion of these changes.

Each semester, the Registrar provides Advising Procedures to the faculty (Memo for SP21 Advising (Fall 2021 Classes)) as a critical part of retention. This document promotes faculty-student engagement and community-building and is a core component of productive retention efforts. The Advising Plan outlines the roles of advisors, policies, procedures, and effective ways to acquaint students with resources for academic success.

In 2020, AAC established a remunerated Adjunct Faculty Liaison position to create more connections and better avenues for communication with adjunct faculty. The Adjunct Faculty Liaison is present at both Faculty and AMT meetings and provides a standing report on adjunct achievements, concerns, and issues. The Retention Committee created an adjunct-centered newsletter titled The Voice of the Adjunct, which highlights AAC Adjunct Faculty members and their artistic and academic achievements.

It has been a goal of the Financial Aid Office to create a Retention Scholarship for AAC students in need. However, until the Retention Committee was formed, the FA Office did not have the means to put a plan in motion. The Retention Committee continues to make this effort a priority, along with the acquisition of other financial resources, which can support students in need or who are experiencing financial distress.

Under the leadership of President Girandola, AAC mobilized a call for donors to support our community of students in the immediacy following the government shutdown in March of 2020. AAC generated and awarded $18,000 in emergency S.A.F.E. funds to students within 20 days following the shutdown. Following the passage of the CARES Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Funding bill, the S.A.F.E. Fund was replenished as directed and continues to be utilized for supporting students. Since the government shutdown, AAC has disbursed over $450,000 to students in need of assistance.

Because AAC was in good standing, we were able to access Coronavirus Response and Supplement Appropriations Act (CRSAA) funds appropriated through the American Rescue Plan.

As stated on the COVID-19 Resource Page on the AAC website, the CRSAA Funds are available on a limited basis to currently enrolled students. These funds are available on a first-come-first-served basis to students in need due to any circumstances surrounding COVID-19. The dollars are intended to help provide resources and assist with items related to housing, food, concern for personal and emotional well-being, unexpected early departures from campus, storage or shipping of belongings, technology to support remote learning, and any other essentials to help students stay safe and creative.

AAC has been active in developing, scheduling, and hosting programming to foster student well-being and to develop crucial skills for life and work as artists beyond their college experience. These

efforts have included creating Art & Money, a four-part series on finances for artists, a Life Skills Self-Compassion Workshop, and a Workshop on Networking/Career Building during COVID. These programs can be viewed in the Student Services Report 2021.

In 2019, AAC hired a full-time Mental Health Counselor to replace the part-time agreement we had with Xavier University. This allowed for more consistency in staffing, as well as regular on-campus mental health services and program direction.

The Mental Health Counselor uses data from the Counseling Student Satisfaction Survey and Culture Surveys to help guide mental health endeavors and programming at AAC. Because of the mental health challenges facing college students today, the data collected from these surveys are extremely useful in understanding which services are necessary to support AAC students. These data were used to create a 2021 mental health roadmap, which is detailed in the AAC 2020 Mental Health Services Board Meeting Report.

In 2021, AAC also hired a full-time Associate Director of Academic Success (ADAS), who built the CLS. The ADAS, along with several trained student tutors, is available to assist with course work, reading comprehension, paper editing, time management, neuro-atypical learning, and other student-specific needs related to academic and studio success. The ADAS created a 2020-21 Tutoring Report, outlining the services commonly used by students, ways to improve the CLS, and future considerations.

As discussed earlier in Criteria 3 and 4, recent curricular changes include changes in Art History, the addition of a Creative Writing Major, the Digital Arts Animation (DAA) Major, and a re-design of both the First-Year Experience and the Senior Capstone Experience.

Details on the DAA can be found in the NASAD Proposal for the Digital Arts Animation Major. The proposal was approved in the NASAD Digital Arts Animation Acceptance Letter. In response to ongoing assessment and data collection, the faculty are dedicated to continually making the curriculum more relevant, responsive, dynamic, and inclusive.

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 AAC Registrar's office collects, analyzes, and archives data on student retention, persistence, and program completion rates. The Registrar is an integral part of the Retention Committee which allows him, in accordance with FERPA, to share relative data that impacts student retention, persistence, and completion rates. An AAC student who withdraws must complete a Leave of Absence/Withdrawal Form, which documents the reason for withdrawal, delineates near-term plans, and confirms that the student has consulted with the Director of Financial Aid and understands the effect of withdrawal on the student's education and finances. The Retention Committee analyzes Exit Interview data for trends and works to create best practices to minimize student issues arising in relation to financial aid, or a student's need to withdraw or take a Leave of Absence. Though AAC maintains one of the lowest costs of attendance in our peer group, the most prevalent reason for withdrawal is still financial. Through Retention Committee initiatives, the committee has determined that financial well-being affects all other areas including academic success, mental health, attendance, and persistence. The committee has determined that Financial Stability must be moved to

the top of our list in order to support our students, hence retaining them.

In 2021, AAC hired CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA), an accounting firm with non-profit experience in managing higher education institutions, to take over the Business Office functions. Recently, Leslie Anderson, a BizOps Controller for CLA, has joined the team of advisors at AAC. She is assisting in Student Billing and Financial Aid and creating an organized workflow that provides our students with increased financial literacy. She is joining NSR and the Retention Committee in creating impactful resources for our students.

Sources

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- 2020-21 Tutoring Report (2)
- 4th Year Experience redesign
- AAC 2020 Mental Health Services Board Meeting Report
- AAC Faculty Course Assessments
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021
- AICAD Enrollment Snapshot 2020
- AICAD Enrollment Snapshot 2021
- COVID-19 Resource Page
- DFWI AH 2012-2021
- DFWI Artist As Writer-Reader 2012-2019
- Early Alert Form
- Exit Interview
- Faculty Course Assessment Form
- First Year Experience Revised 2020 (1)
- Incoming Student Survey
- IPEDSDFR2020_201061
- Leave of Absence Withdraw Form
- Memo for SP21 Advising (Fall 2021 Classes) (1)
- Midterm Course Evaluation Form 2021
- NASAD Digital Arts and Animation Acceptance Letter
- NASAD Proposal for Digital Arts Animation Major
- Retention and Graduation Rates 2010-2020
- Retention Committee Report 2020-2021
- Retention Committee Report 2019 to 2020 to FT Faculty
- Retention Flow Chart Jan 2021 (1)
- SAFE Funds
- Satifaction Survey Results
- Strategic Plan 2022-2025 (Draft)
- Student Counseling Services
- Student Services Report 2021
- Student Year End Review Form
- The Voice of the Adjunct Archive

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

AAC takes responsibility for the quality of its educational programs and the Quality Assurance Program outlines the process by which 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 Core Values, Mission and Vision in the interest of student learning, dynamic teaching, and a non-static, flexible, inclusive, 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 Academic Catalog, pg. 126. These include limits on the number of credits that can be transferred, procedures for awarding life credit, and scores necessary for receiving incoming credit.

A Transfer Credit Evaluation 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 any credit to be transferred from other programs.

AAC has created a comprehensive database of AAC graduates, and is in the process, via the Alumni Coordinator and the ADPD, of reinvigorating the AAC Alumni Association with the objective of maintaining robust alliances with our graduates. This is certainly one area in which improvements have needed to be made, and we are now actively in the process of connecting with our graduates and using the data we are collecting to advance the Mission of the college.

AAC has established Course Level and Prerequisite definitions for both 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 define appropriate measures for evaluating and assessing teaching and learning at each level and provide guidelines for assigning prerequisites.

Sources

- Academic-Catalog-2020-2021.pdf
- Academic-Catalog-2020-2021.pdf (page number 126)

- Quality Assurance Map
- Quality Assurance Plan Program Review Statement
- Quality Assurance Program

5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.
2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.
3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

Argument

5. A 1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.

In 2018, Interim President Grote developed a strategic planning process that was collaborative and included a core group of administrators, faculty, and staff. This team drafted a [Strategic Plan Process Philosophy](), which served as the foundation for creating the [2019-2022 Strategic Plan]().

This plan defined a process for AAC's vision, which included one-on-one interviews with the President and all staff and Full-Time Faculty. This series of interviews generated valuable perspectives on visioning near- and long-term opportunities and challenges. External interviews with key community stakeholders were conducted to understand their vision for AAC, and a visioning exercise with the Alumni Council provided important insight. BLDG, a branding and marketing firm facilitated listening exercises with the internal and external communities to provide third-party perspectives on AAC's current position, a potential future, and a strategic planning process called Objectives, Goals, Strategies, Measures (OGSM). Planning addressed critical elements of advancement over three years, including financials, infrastructure, curriculum, student life, organizational development, and resource management.

When AAC began its Presidential search, the institution had viable institutional operational plans in place. In 2019, Mr. Grote returned to the Board as a member of the Executive Committee and mentored the new President. Under President Girandola's leadership, students, alumni, employees, and trustees have had direct, ongoing involvement and have been integral to the development of the Strategic Plan 2022-2025 (Draft).

The level of engagement of the BOT with the internal operations of the institution is reflected by the investment of several trustees in the preparation of this Assurance Argument and in the continued shaping of Board initiatives toward the good of the college.

The structure of the BOT is formulated in accordance with the AAC Code of Regulations which establishes several standing committees. The Executive Committee consists of the elected Officers of the Corporation, Committee Chairs, and other appointed Trustees Board Committee Assignments.

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.

Each month this Committee reviews a Consolidated Balance Statement. Annually, it reviews and approves the Annual Financial Statement, the Investment Policy, and the budget (Approved Budget 2020-2021), recommending formal adoption by the BOT. Other board committees include the Facilities Committee, Committee on Instruction, Governance Committee, Development Committee, Marketing Committee, and Enrollment Committee.

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.

Since 2019, President Girandola has established diverse development strategies that have enabled AAC to exceed development goals, including programmatic collaborations and a robust Annual Appeal.

As the global pandemic shutdown was approaching, Mr. Girandola formed the COVID Task Force which included key staff, faculty, and an in-house nurse. AAC also developed fundraising strategies to assist students by forming a Student-Assistance-Fund-for-Emergencies (S.A.F.E. Fund) committee to raise and distribute emergency funds to students.

The current framework for strategic planning calls for an annual review of progress toward the three-year plan's goals and objectives and with the Board approval of the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan, the review will happen quarterly. Given existing economic margins and AAC's dependence upon tuition revenue, this review has proven invaluable in managing the institution's fiscal profile.

2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.

Trustee Anna Dowell, former AAC CFO, has been instrumental in creating accurate records and

providing actionable data which guides the AAC Board Finance Committee in effective budgeting and fiscal management. Recently, the Business Office has endured high turnover rates due to the regional job market for skilled accounting positions. AAC recently contracted CliftonLarsonAllan LLP (CLA) a firm retained to oversee CFO functions and professional accountancy for the college. The CLA team has a proven track record in collaborating with non-profit private institutions of higher education.

Outsourcing many essential business office functions to a reputable and established firm such as CLA enables AAC to continue operations without a break in service if a business office employee were to take vacation or sick leave or depart for other employment. The team assigned to AAC includes David Robydek, Molly Williams, Kaitlin Hughes, and Susan Grafton, among other industry professionals. AAC Business Office Manager Rose Emory serves as in-house liaison to CLA. CLA is now immersed in AAC's daily operations and has effectively solidified its business management and financial reporting structure within the organization such that this critical partnership is a sustainable pathway for the future.

Data collection is used throughout the college to initiate meaningful change. Data on the COVID-19 Resource Page of the website cites real-time current, pending, and past COVID-19 cases. This allows the COVID-19 task force to make decisions for the safety of our community. Chairs and Deans track data that lead to curricular change through the research of trends, employment statistics, and peer institutions as well as through internal assessment processes such as Course Evaluations, End of Year Reviews, and the Faculty Course Assessment Form.

Student Services, Professional Development, the Retention Committee, and the Collaborative Learning Studio create actionable data reports that are discussed, implemented, and monitored. The Associate Director of Academic Success utilizes DFWI data provided by the Registrar, and the Retention Committee follows up with students that the Registrar and Director of Student Services include on their internal spreadsheets. Other reports include Student Services Report, Retention Committee Report, 2020-21 Tutoring Report, Mental Health Action Plan, Retention and Graduation Rates, Student Satisfaction Surveys (Student Satisfaction Survey 2018-2019, Student Satisfaction Survey 2019-2020, Student Satisfaction Survey 2020-2021), and the Student Services Report, among others.

Enrollment and Marketing monitor Share of Voice, Funnel Reports (December 2021 Funnel Report), and AAC Predictive Modeling. DEI is utilizing the status of Faculty Staff and Student Demographics to increase the representation of our student population. IPEDS (IPEDSDFR202_201061) and Heads Data Surveys are utilized throughout the institution.

These documents and many others provide data action items and are instrumental in providing validation to the Leadership Team when determining a hierarchy of needs for the college through the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan.

3.The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

Curricular structures at AAC are developed in a collaborative manner and are determined primarily by the Full-Time Faculty, which includes the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Academic Dean, the Associate Dean, Liberal Arts Chair, Studio Arts Chair, and the Heads of the Majors. The BCOI collaborates with the Full-Time Faculty on determining curricular structures, while providing critical

oversight and guidance. Full-Time Faculty and the AMT facilitate curriculum review on an ongoing basis for the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree and the Master of Arts in Art Education degree, and the BCOI provides guidance to AMT as the institution develops creative and sustainable ways to recruit, retain, support, educate, and graduate students (Quality Assurance Program, Quality Assurance Map).

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 BOT includes a student representative. Board involvement is one of many opportunities for students to engage with administration, influence policy formation, and change throughout the curriculum.

Twice each semester, the Academic Dean hosts a "Lunch with the Dean," an open forum where students share their concerns and suggestions about the curriculum, facilities, policies, engagement, communication, and other topics. The Dean enumerates these concerns and brings them to AMT for discussion, analysis, and implementation.

Sources

- 2019-2022 Strategic Plan
- 2020-21 Tutoring Report
- AAC Code of Regulations
- AAC Financial Statements
- AAC Predictive Modeling
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021
- AICUO
- Annual Appeal
- Annual Financial Statement
- Approved Budget 2021.2022
- Board Committee Assignments
- CliftonLarsonAllen LLP
- COVID-19 Resource Page
- December 2021 Funnel Report
- Faculty Staff Student Demographic
- Investment Policy
- IPEDSDFR2020_201061
- Mental Health Action Plan
- Quality Assurance Map
- Quality Assurance Program
- Retention and Graduation Rates 2010-2020
- Retention Committee Report 2020-2021
- SAFE Funds
- Strategic Plan 2022-2025 (Draft)
- Strategic Plan Process Philosophy
- Student Satisfaction Survey 2018-2019
- Student Satisfaction Survey 2019-2020
- Student Satisfaction Survey 2020-2021

- Student Services Report 2021

5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.
3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.
4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

Argument

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

1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

The 2019-2022 Strategic Plan focused on improving the overall experience of students. The plan focuses on optimizing enrollment to increase revenue so that AAC can invest in improvements in staffing, facilities, technology, educational offerings and practices, budget office, and financial aid process improvements. The results of this initiative (and subsequent, steady increases in enrollment and revenues) have resulted in AAC's stabilization of cash flow, as the Annual Financial Statement demonstrates. Improvements to the overall student experience have augmented the value AAC offers to its students, thus enhancing our ability to continue to recruit and retain future students. These initiatives have resulted in a stable financial balance sheet and improved long-term financial sustainability (VonLehman Presentation).

In the years prior to this Strategic Plan, AAC remained financially viable through increases in tuition and fees and holding the line on overall staffing, salaries, benefits, and investments in technology and facilities. An important effort of the leadership team was to engage directly with the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design (MIAD). MIAD is similar to AAC and has experienced significant success in improving its ability to meet financial and mission goals. MIAD's president, Jeffrey Morin made it clear that it was important to focus on investing in the college for a better student experience, and their approach was to start with small investments rather than waiting for a large donation or capital campaign to begin. We subsequently implemented small improvements resulting in exponential progress. We began with practical and financially achievable initiatives. We initiated community-building events where staff and faculty painted classroom studios, the Commons, and each floor of the atrium. A Board member donated high-end furniture from his branding firm. The

students returned from summer break and were stunned and invigorated by the transformation.

The key to success at AAC has been the ability to recruit record levels of new students increasing enrollment by 10-15% annually. To reach our goal, we need 100 new students annually. In 2019, we recruited 99 new students, 2020 saw 98 new students, followed by 100 new students in 2021. These successive recruitment achievements have allowed AAC to increase staffing in student services, increase salaries and benefits for staff and faculty, invest in innovative technology for student learning, improve financial aid and business office practices, and upgrade facilities, including a complete makeover of the design floor and adding a new, dedicated dorm in partnership with Urban Sites. Our recruitment success is the result of greater investment in the Admissions office but also a result of having a better overall product to offer new students with recent college improvements (December 2021 Funnel Report).

AAC greatly improved its financial aid and business office practices to provide students with ready, stable access to the support they need. In both cases, increases in staffing and a rearrangement of office locations have increased student engagement. We have also upgraded our online software. The Campus Café student information system is a comprehensive data management platform that provides an integrated solution for all academic and support functions such as student billing.

Under the leadership of our Financial Aid Director, Rebecca Carr, our financial aid process has improved dramatically. Since joining AAC in 2016, Ms. Carr has significantly reduced our findings on the single audit, reduced our processing time for award letters and verification, re-established relationships with our students, and elevated financial literacy among students. During this time, Ms. Carr completed 12 NASFAA Financial Aid Certificates.

AAC has been able to continue to advance the college even while facing COVID-19. According to the AICAD Enrollment Snapshot, AAC was only one of a very few private art and design colleges that managed to increase enrollment during the pandemic, and AAC was able to invest government funds to directly improve the finances of our students and to actualize further investments in technology and facilities. The response to the pandemic allowed AAC to advance its ability to offer online learning by providing better virtual technology including in-home computers for students. We used COVID funds to invest in new safety measures including temperature checks, better ventilation, self-flushing toilets, automatic water bottle fillers, and the addition of a part-time nurse to provide needed support. These measures and the large student-to-square-foot ratio on campus allowed us to successfully weather the pandemic without major COVID outbreaks thus far.

AAC has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure to support its operations and mission. AAC is in a significantly better position today to support its mission than any time in recent history, even in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. More investments in curriculum, staffing, facilities, and technology are being considered in the new strategic plan.

2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.

AAC has a 150-year track record of creating artists, designers, and creative writers. The accomplishments of our alumni are a testament to our success. The advancements made possible by our 2019 strategic plan have only increased our optimism in our ability to develop great creatives and therefore meet the goals outlined in our Mission:

- Our Enrollment Team continues to successfully recruit students at record rates despite the

strain that COVID-19 put on travel, recruiting events, high school shutdowns, and pivoting swiftly to remote recruiting efforts (December 2021 Funnel Report).

- The Retention Committee has been successful in increasing student support. The pandemic has made it difficult to determine the success of these efforts and we anticipate a scrutinization of data once the Retention Committee and the Collaborative Learning Studio have been in place for a succession of years (Retention and Graduation Rates 2010-2020, Retention Report 2019-2020, Retention Report 2020-2021).
- NASAD recently approved our proposal to add a major in Digital Arts Animation. We remain one of the only colleges of Art and Design in the region to offer majors in Illustration and Animation, improving our value and ability to attract new students. We continue to evaluate other recent programs with plans to increase Full-Time Faculty hires. NASAD Digital Arts Animation Proposal
- Our urban location is a significant draw for new students and allows for significant community involvement for our faculty and students. Under the leadership of our new president, we have been more engaged in community events, providing opportunities for students and resulting in greater support from the region. SITE1212 is an 8000-square-foot ground-level space which had remained undeveloped since our move in 2005. With significant grant funding, SITE1212 was created to increase visibility and advance community engagement and social justice. This additional space will also generate revenue as an event space.
- By opening AAC to community involvement, we have seen an uptick in financial support from local foundations and individual givers. Even in the absence of a fully staffed development office, we have seen growth in our donations giving us optimism in further funding support. A full-time position as Director of Development has been included in this year's budget and a search will be underway in the spring of 2022.
- We have added four new Student Services full-time positions in career development, mental health counseling, housing support, and tutoring/collaborative learning. This increases internship opportunities, mentors, employment options, mental health counseling, quality housing, and academic support.
- We have put in place a Four-Year Tuition Promise so families can budget costs in advance, and we have capped tuition increase to 2% or less per year for new students.
- We partnered with Urban Sites to create a new dorm across the street. This nearly doubles the bed capacity and provides up-to-date facilities and a safer environment. We added a dedicated Director of Housing to provide ongoing support for this facility. Further, this dorm will fully fund itself through rental fees and will not create a drain on the college's academic programming.
- We created a Study Abroad Partnership with KIIS to provide study abroad opportunities.

We continually strive to improve, and we strongly believe in our ability to meet our Mission goals with the investments we have made in resources and organization. Notably, we have created a culture of continuous improvement to constantly create a better experience for our students to help them succeed.

3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.

Anna Dowell joined AAC in 2017 as Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and brought a wealth of experience and deep industry knowledge. She inherited a financial system that needed significant improvement. Under her leadership, reconciliation of accounts was achieved, and confidence was restored in all financial statements and accounting. She expanded the Business Office to provide

greater student support, provided students and parents multiple options for payment of tuition and fees, and worked closely with the President and the Board Finance Committee to identify ways to fund needed investments in the college's facilities and human capital. She led the institution through three years of successful audits resulting in an unqualified opinion from Von Lehman CPA & Advisory Firm in 2020. Audited Financial Reports

The CFO instituted a new budgeting process that considered the specific needs of each department. She created a monthly tracking process for departments' budgets. Together with the leadership team and the President, the CFO successfully prioritized the needs of each department relative to each other. While not everyone received everything they requested, the transparency of the process resulted in total buy-in by the leadership team. The success of this budget process helped the Institution make the improvements noted above.

The budgeting process includes a complete review and approval of the proposed budget by the Board Finance Committee. Once approved, the budget is shared with the entire BOT for final approval, thereby providing complete budget transparency with all members of the Board Approved Budget 2020-2021).

Ms. Dowell resigned as CFO in 2020 but remains an active supporter of the institution as a Board member and co-chair of the Board Finance Committee.

The institution has struggled to find an appropriate replacement CFO. An initial search led to the hiring of an individual who was not a good fit, and a subsequent search was unsuccessful. In the summer of 2021, the President, Executive Committee, and the Board Finance Committee recommended that the Business Office functions be outsourced to CliftonLarsonAllen LLP, a firm with non-profit experience in managing higher education institutions.

4. The Institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

AAC has no extracurricular departments, intramural or intercollegiate athletics, research departments, or non-academic divisions that compete for resources allocated toward academic programming. Academy Housing, LLC is AAC's sole subordinate entity established purely for legal and tax purposes. This entity does not receive resources designated for academic programming. The new dorm is eventually expected to fully fund itself with rental income.

The institution's budgeting process ensures that resources flow to where they are most needed, and the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan defines the priorities within the college requiring additional funding. For example, the Strategic Plan identified career services, mental health, and tutoring as areas needing additional, dedicated staff support. Since 2019, four new staff have been hired to advance each of these needs.

The 2019-2022 Strategic Plan included a plan to launch a $5M Capital Campaign to fund investments in facilities and technology and to grow our endowment. The onset of COVID-19 put the Capital Campaign on hold. The administration immediately formed a task force to address the issues that permeated the college, and the Executive Team was occupied with securing much-needed funds for the college and our students to offset the fiscal impact of COVID. The Strategic Plan Metric Fall 2020 indicates which areas we were able to achieve in the three-year window and what still needs to be addressed and rolled into the new Strategic Plan.

The BOT is expected to approve the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan in January 2022, which restates the

need to launch a Capital Campaign. Through strategic partnerships, grants, and contributions, AAC has completed several important facilities needs such as SITE1212 and a new dorm. Therefore, the Capital Campaign will focus on building the endowment to assist in diversifying revenue streams. The new plan considers the stark impacts of both the COVID-19 pandemic and social discord precipitated by the tragic death of George Floyd at the hands of police in 2020.

AAC's Community Education Department (CE) serves the Cincinnati community with essential programming for ages 5 to adult. CE creates goodwill for the institution in our community and helps to recruit new students to the college. CE has been largely self-sufficient, funding itself through fees for its programming and a successful grant process. The pandemic caused a significant decrease in programming for CE, but we have recently seen enrollment grow. AAC has also recently hired a new Director of Community Education and Engagement, and the program will be re-invigorated with a more forward-thinking community engagement platform.

Sources

- 2019-2022 Strategic Plan
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021
- AICAD Enrollment Snapshot 2021
- Annual Financial Statement
- Approved Budget 2021.2022
- Audited Financial Reports
- CliftonLarsonAllen LLP
- December 2021 Funnel Report
- Dorm
- NASAD Proposal for Digital Arts Animation Major
- Retention and Graduation Rates 2010-2020
- Retention Committee Report 2020-2021
- Retention Committee Report 2019-2020
- SITE1212
- Strategic Plan Metric Fall 2020 (1)
- Tuition Promise
- VonLehman Presentation

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.
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, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.
5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

Argument

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes, and affiliated centers.

Providing the resources essential to our academic programs is of paramount importance. AAC continues to bolster its resource base with significant efforts in Institutional Advancement. The President remains abreast of funding opportunities among regional foundations to promote AAC and its Mission. This has led to significant foundation support, most significantly the recent award from Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr. Foundation, a new partner (Haile Foundation Letter, Haile Foundation LOI). The institution's endowment has grown 20% over the past 24 months (AAC Financial Statements) and advances AAC's ability to provide scholarship support to the student population. The college continues to evaluate the ability to establish consortia agreements, including a key agreement with the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Ohio (AICUO). This agreement provides AAC access to over $300,000 annually to procure consortium-based pricing for internet service, telephone service, software, hardware, admissions travel, printing, and forthcoming healthcare plans for our students. Such advantages compel a constant review of programs and resources used to deliver all programs.

Toward this end, AAC has returned to an "in-house" facilities team that has led to significant savings in the past two years. Further, the Director of Facilities determined that AAC should hire our own security personnel rather than contracting their work via an agency. In summer 2021, we welcomed two full-time reception and security professionals who had worked alongside us for years through a security firm. The facilities and security team continues to excel in all campus operations including the recent 8,000-square-foot renovation of a revenue-generating exhibition, educational, and event space: SITE1212, which diversifies our revenue streams with percentages of rental fees supporting scholarships, facilities upgrades, and necessary salary increases.

The plan to transition the Development Director role to an Institutional Development role includes a recent partnership with Grant Focus to enable AAC to apply for a wider set of grants programming. Our recent hire of Director of the Office of Engagement, formerly titled Director of Community Education, will be significant in fundraising for public programming while supporting continuing education and cultivating community partnerships. Grant Focus serves as grant writing support for major institutional development as well as faculty support for funding and furthering their practice.

As we cautiously emerge from COVID-19 and evaluate how the changing of the world has impacted our routine operations, AAC is confident that we are poised to achieve even greater stability in operations, finances, and programming. Strategic Plan 2022-2025 (Draft). The persistent effort to engage all constituents, to communicate needs effectively, and to foster an environment of broad-minded commitment to success has resulted in our community's instinctual, purposeful self-analysis in respect to the coherence of all processes essential to providing the high-quality academic programming that AAC requires.

AAC regularly partners in events and services with 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 Quality Assurance Program and Quality Assurance Map illustrate the top-down, bottom-up, and circular ongoing assessment. The collaborative Strategic Planning Process provides transparency and communication across all our communities. 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 BOT furthers our mission. Employees are evaluated annually. As a result of those evaluations, we refined budgets and operational processes to support anticipated changes. We then implemented numerous adjustments to classifications, compensation, duties, and hours worked.

We consistently receive feedback from solicited survey responses and testimonials that circumstantiate our claims of successfully preparing our students for post-college careers. The work of the Student Services Department, Professional Practice, and Alumni Association are central to discussions regarding academic progress and student placement. Guidance from Academic Affairs, Development, Administration, Operations, and Board committees continually identify internal resources that can support a positive student experience.

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

The Executive Management Team meets weekly throughout the calendar year. Members include the President, the Chair of the BOT, the VP for Academic Affairs, the Director of DEIB, the Director of Community Education and Engagement, and the VP of Marketing and Enrollment. The President also meets with the Co-Chair of the BOT Finance Committee bi-weekly throughout the year. The DEIB Director meets with key operational staff on a weekly basis and attends student group meetings. The Academic Dean meets weekly with faculty and key Academic Affairs staff. This structure affects the timely and efficient management of issues as they emerge.

AAC's commitment to updating its strategic plan biennially enables the institution to pivot as needed in changing times. As COVID-19 has affected all institutions of higher education, the ability for the college to pivot to a hybrid model of instruction within two weeks' time is a testament to the dexterity, commitment, and resolve of the faculty and administration to keep the college on the path to success. The COVID-19 Task Force (CTF) continues to meet weekly to address the needs of the students, faculty, staff, and community. Strategic planning involves all internal constituents (faculty, staff, students, alumni, administration, and the Board) and external constituents (financial institutions, regulatory agencies, community arts entities, other higher education institutions, and philanthropic partners). All constituencies 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, staff, and administration consult the Strategic Plan and 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 occur regarding the programming proposed.

4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.

AAC has made tremendous progress since 2019 in gaining a sophisticated understanding of capacity, which has numerous contexts and definitions. We continue to evaluate the optimal student enrollment figure that would achieve the best use of academic personnel resources while maximizing the use of operational resources. We continue to navigate the effects of COVID-19 on our utilization of space and the needs of our students, faculty, and staff, setting AAC upon a course to optimize resource allocations to position students for increased success.

While we were successful in meeting our Strategic Plan goals for an increase in enrollment in 2019 and 2020, we did not meet our fall 2021 FTE Goal. Numerous studies have pointed to the COVID-19 pandemic as a cause for increased mental health issues for students and attrition for colleges. The AICAD Enrollment Snapshot shows AAC as one of two Tier-1 schools that had an increase in enrollment in the last two years. Overall, this increase provides the institution with a greater critical mass of talented students and provides greater revenue to support an expanded student experience. Our recruitment success is a result of greater investment in the Admissions Office but also a result of having a better overall product to offer new students with recent college improvements (August 2019 Funnel Report, August 2020 Funnel Report, August 2021 Funnel Report, December 2021 Funnel Report, Approved Budget 2021-2022).

AAC continues collaborative communication with other institutions to advance partnerships instead of duplicating services and expanding resources for programs that currently exist in the region. One such collaboration, which has been a significant resource since 2020, is AAC students' ability to access healthcare from Crossroad Health Center located 5 blocks from campus. The partnership has enabled students to access rapid COVID testing and general health appointments on a "walk-in" basis at no cost. The college has also garnered significant regional, state, and federal support for Mental Health, including over $75,000 in funding for student benefit. The CARES ACT and American Rescue Plan funds have further positioned AAC to maintain its commitment to student success during the past 19 months.

Our revenue planning revolves around tuition, but AAC continues to diversify its funding strategies.

Since 2020, heavy reliance upon tuition has decreased by 15%. Over the past two years, AAC has garnered grant support of over $2.5 million beyond its budgeted goal of $1,000,000 for that period. This includes instrumental partnerships with FotoFocus, the Haile Foundation, and other entities.

We are keenly aware of demographic projections as reported in Inside Higher Ed. 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. The capacity for recruitment and retention to advance our purpose and mission drives our planning, communications with constituencies, and engagement of current and prospective constituencies.

Since 2019, state support has greatly improved. The President has weekly conversations with Ohio Governor Mike DeWine and continues to advise state representatives of the essential role AAC plays in the city and the region. In 2019, a meeting with the Governor and Ohio Department of Higher Education Chancellor Randy Gardner resulted in the state's agreement to release to AAC the bulk of the $600,000 award from the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission.

AAC continues to research new avenues for regional, state, and federal funding and recently was awarded an Ohio Department of Higher Education grant to create pathways for students considering higher education to apply for FAFSA funding. As a private college, we are not as 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 control over our destiny in the context of financial support for our school.

5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.

AAC remains apprised of emerging trends such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization. To encourage demographic shifts, our Director of DEIB plays a key role in the overall operations of the college and works with the President's office, Human Resources, and Academics to ensure a more equitable organization. Further, we keep up with other trends that have a broad impact on our academic programs as they relate to emerging technologies to enable better global connectivity and representation. The effects of recent changes to FLSA exempt/non-exempt thresholds exposed 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.

6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

In 2019, the President announced a plan for a strategic plan update and a broader commitment to Community Engagement. Evaluating Core Values, Vision, and Mission as part of the normal cycle of institutional assessment, AAC has committed to a brand refresh and a new website to be unveiled in 2022/2023. We also launched our newly renovated 8,000-square-foot space, SITE 1212. This cornerstone ground floor exhibition, curricular, and event space enables AAC to welcome the community to witness the creative work of our students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

The critical establishment of an Office of Human Resources in 2015 has enabled the institution to establish a formal cycle of annual staff performance reviews and faculty evaluations. These evaluative tools serve primarily as a form of constructive assessment to benefit employees in setting individual

performance goals and in providing means to document these assessments.

While the institution has always utilized some form of annual performance review, without the benefit of administrative oversight of this process, establishing a formal timeline was challenging. 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 student course evaluations, end-of-year student reviews, etc., and the President has a formal 360 review every year performed by the Chair of Board of Trustees and includes direct input from key staff. We have also enabled all staff to perform annual self-evaluations and reviews through our newly contracted payroll service, PayChex.

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 is the sustainability and coherence of both the academic and administrative components of our operations. We maintain a pointed, visionary focus with respect to our curricular programs, and typical distractions imposed by the institutional mission, purpose, resource allocations, and focus on managing these factors simply are not present at AAC, given our scope. Many programs and pursuits contribute to our expanding knowledge, which fuels 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 an astute understanding of prudent and deliberate growth.

Sources

- AAC Financial Statements
- Academic Catalog 2020-2021
- AICAD Enrollment Snapshot 2021
- AICUO
- American Rescue Plan
- Approved Budget 2021.2022
- August 2019 Funnel Report
- August 2020 Funnel Report
- August 2021 Funnel Report
- CARES Act
- December 2021 Funnel Report
- FotoFocus
- Grant Focus
- Haile Foundation Letter
- Haile Foundation LOI
- Ohio Department of HIgher Education
- Paychex
- Quality Assurance Map
- Quality Assurance Plan Program Review Statement

- Quality Assurance Program
- SITE1212
- Strategic Plan 2022-2025 (Draft)

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Summary

The Art Academy of Cincinnati has an ambitious Mission and strategically dedicates resources towards fulfilling that Mission. Because guiding principles and documents are collaboratively created, our daily operations have proven their fidelity in upholding our Core Values, Vision, and Mission. Decisions made at numerous levels within AAC are always made with at least this one consideration: "How will this impact the education of our students in a positive way?" This focus on our students 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 and has overcome those challenges such that we are now at a much-improved point of financial stability. Our stability has allowed us to thoughtfully plan, both tactically and strategically, for our near-and long-term future. We have established protocol, planning strategies, and financial oversight to implement ambitious plans that are directly linked to AAC's Mission.

Sources

There are no sources.