INTRODUCTION

The School of the Museum of Fine Arts’ self-study process grew out of the analysis, writing, and presentation of the 2012 strategic plan. That process involved over 90 stakeholders including faculty, students, staff, trustees and governors, and alumni. Coincidentally and not intentionally, the organization of the strategic planning working groups corresponds to New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) standard categories.

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Since the completion of the plan, SMFA has been working towards achieving regional accreditation, one of the eight principal goals.

President Christopher Bratton appointed Mary Roetzel, Associate Vice-President for Operations and Research, to chair the self-study steering committee. The entire committee was made up of six staff and two faculty. The staff are also on the President’s Cabinet. The President, while not an official member of the committee, also participated in editing several sections, consolidating projections, and writing Standard Eleven. Each member of the steering committee attended NEASC’s annual Self-Study Workshop in 2012 or 2013. The workshops provided guidance and direction to the process, to the philosophy behind self-studies (data, candor, etc.), and to the importance of student success.

Each steering committee member was responsible for the data and writing of one or more of the chapter standards. Because the context and basis of each of these was driven heavily from the strategic plan and because of SMFA’s scale, the self study process was able to be shortened.

We requested feedback from SMFA constituents in several ways. The most significant and important example is the strategic plan itself. This process was lengthy, inclusive, and covered most
aspects of the self-study, and included several town hall meetings where we encouraged feedback and questions. Second, while applying for degree licensure in Massachusetts and for affiliation with NEASC, students and faculty participated in focused feedback sessions regarding SMFA’s progression towards licensure and accreditation. Third, the Faculty Senate and members of the Board of Trustees and the Board of Governors previewed the self-study before it was submitted. Finally, in spring 2014, prior to the required public comment period we hosted a special community meeting and forum to gain further feedback.

The goal of the self study is to help SMFA establish a comprehensive action plan to move from candidacy to full accreditation. The key questions are:

- What investments are needed, in terms of time, human and dollar resources?
- What priorities should SMFA focus on?
- Who needs to continue to participate and weigh in on decisions involving the process towards full accreditation?
- Once fully accredited, what are the most important next steps towards strategic enrollment growth?
INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

HISTORY AND CONTEXT

On January 2, 1877, The School of Drawing and Painting, precursor to the School of the Museum of Fine Arts (SMFA or School), held its first classes in basement rooms in the Museum of Fine Arts’ Copley Square building. Initially there were 80 students and six faculty members. SMFA awarded its first credential, the Diploma, eight years later in 1885. The School was conceived at the same time as the Museum of Fine Arts (Museum)\(^1\) and formally incorporated in 1876, as the crucial second part of its mission to educate through the arts. SMFA was intended to be a school of art; not simply a technical institute, but a school of the most rigorous ideas and concepts. Thomas Appleton commented less than a year after its founding, that the School transformed the Museum itself into a vital, living institution through its faculty and students, whose “words of instruction” echoed through the collection as did their “enthusiasm [as] artists and scholars.”

In the 1940s, the School began its relationship with Tufts University by offering a Bachelor of Science in Education. In 1956, the School and Tufts began offering a joint Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, and in 1960, a Master of Fine Arts degree. SMFA established its independent Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in 1995.

When the Museum moved to Huntington Avenue in 1909, the School moved into a separate, temporary structure to the west of the main building. The School’s permanent building, designed by Guy Lowell, the architect of the Museum of Fine Arts, was completed in 1927. A main building addition, designed by Graham Gund and completed in 1987, increased the size of the School to 100,000 square feet. In 2004, the SMFA purchased a building at 160 St. Alphonsus Street for graduate studios and classrooms, which were updated and expanded to add an additional 40,000 square feet to the campus.

Since its founding, SMFA has educated some of the world’s most influential artists and creative leaders. As an institution, SMFA fostered one important artistic movement after another, including American Impressionism, the Boston School, and Boston Expressionism. SMFA was home to many notable teachers, including Edmund Tarbell, Frank Benson, Karl Zerbe, and European modernists Max Beckmann, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Gyorgy Kepes, and Oskar Kokoschka. The School’s continues the tradition of hiring working and exhibiting artists, many of whom are recognized globally, as studio faculty. Alumni include such significant figures as Loïs Mailou Jones, Allan Rohan

\(^1\) The founders also conceived of the library at the same time. No museum in the United States had placed such a large initial investment in its library resources.

Since 1877, the School’s faculty, administration, and curriculum have been dynamically engaged in questions of education, particularly an education through the arts. At its founding, the School created a program that blended the academic rigor of the French Ecole des Beaux Arts, a classical program of observational drawing, anatomy, perspective and the study of European art history, with the pragmatism of the English Arts and Crafts movement, especially as it came to be expressed in the South Kensington School with its emphasis on a practical address to a changing world. Over the next decades the School’s programs took a decidedly more modernist turn with the introduction of Bauhaus ideas, including a 1930s consideration of industrial processes. In the 1960s, the School radically altered its structure to better address the relationship of art and ideas, apart from specific media and techniques, and embraced new technologies and materials such as photography and film. At all times, the School emphasized the development of individual creativity through sustained, self-directed study in both the studio and the classroom.

Enrollments for the Studio Diploma program, the first and at one point the largest program at the School, have steadily declined since the mid-1990s. This is consistent with the national trend away from non-degree programs and toward accredited degree programs. To succeed, SMFA is working to identify new users and degrees or certificates that lead to growth and sustainability. Over the last 20 years, the schools in the SMFA’s sector that grew and stabilized their enrollments did so by offering freestanding degree programs.

In the case of SMFA, based on the depth of existing resources the most immediate opportunities are the BFA and MFA degree programs, currently awarded by Tufts. SMFA’s non-affiliated degrees would be qualitatively different from those offered in partnership with Tufts. The close coordination of studio and academic classes would emphasize the integral relationship between theory and practice, or to put it another way, making and thinking. Likewise, these degrees will leverage the unique resources of the Museum: faculty who hold professional appointments at the MFA as curators, conservators, and administrators; student access to the collections, libraries, and archives; and opportunities for students to exhibit in the Museum. These degrees will also offer a different integration of academic courses more closely tied to a student’s studio practice, and will help us differentiate ourselves in the marketplace.

Accreditation

The questions of state degree licensure and regional accreditation for the School of the Museum of Fine Arts have recurred since the late 1940s. In 1944, the SMFA was one of the founding members of the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD). SMFA maintains that accreditation for each of its degrees and certificates. Tufts University is accredited and awards degrees. In 1954, the School began to seek degree-granting status from regional and state accreditors, but failed to pursue because of the absence of state licensure in the first case, and the
lack of an adequate library in the second. Also in 1954, the federal government authorized certain education associations to regulate standards in their respective fields. NASAD became an accreditor and in turn accredited the SMFA. NASAD accreditation has allowed SMFA to award federal financial aid (now Title IV) in the absence of regional accreditation. The national accreditation through NASAD and the continued partnership with Tufts have provisionally solved the issue of regional accreditation for SMFA for decades. However, the issue of independent accreditation reemerged with increasing regularity over the subsequent decades, particularly as the School sought to grow to a sustainable scale. As further background, of 34 independent colleges of art and design in the United States, only SMFA is unaccredited.

In 2010, with the inauguration of comprehensive institutional planning, the topic of independent accreditation formed the foundation for the School’s strategic plan. The first step was to transition SMFA from the Massachusetts Division of Proprietary Schools, where it was exempt from licensure, to become officially licensed through the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education. In March 2012, SMFA submitted an application to the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (DHE) requesting state licensure to independently award two degrees: the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio Art and the Master of Fine Arts in Studio Art, as well as an Honorary Doctorate in Fine Arts. After reviewing the application for completion, the DHE selected a visiting committee to visit the School. This team visited in November 2012 and produced a report the following month. In February 2013, SMFA responded to those recommendations. SMFA was granted licensure to award these degrees by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education on April 23, 2013.

The new degrees awarded by the SMFA are nearly identical to the current degrees awarded by Tufts in terms of credit and purpose. (See Standard Four for more detail.) Most of the curriculum is in place, since all studio courses are taught at the SMFA by SMFA faculty. Additionally, English and Art History courses are also taught on SMFA’s campus. The only courses the School needs to develop are those that fulfill the remainder of the general education requirements.

The transition is significant enough, however, to trigger the need to apply for approval for a substantive change from NASAD. SMFA submitted this application in spring 2013; in June the NASAD Commission approved SMFA’s application.

The next step was to seek a formal affiliation with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). In June 2013, SMFA submitted its Report of Eligibility, which addressed 19 specific questions. A visiting team evaluated SMFA’s compliance with NEASC’s requirements of eligibility and presented a confidential recommendation to the NEASC Commission. In September, 2013, the Commission voted favorably to approve SMFA’s application for affiliation.

This self study is the result of SMFA’s final step in the regional accreditation process, as SMFA seeks to achieve Candidacy for Accreditation.

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2 SMFA is a member of the Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design (AICAD).
3 This division has changed its name to The Office of Proprietary School Education.
After achieving Candidacy Status from NEASC, SMFA will begin a four-year phase out of the affiliated BFA and MFA degrees conferred by Tufts and, at the same time, will begin offering its own independent BFA and MFA degrees. SMFA /Tufts partnership will continue in two forms: the Master of Arts in Teaching and the Dual Degree programs; a new reciprocity agreement gives students at both institutions the ability to cross-register.

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The transition from school to college is well articulated in SMFA’s Strategic Plan. The self-study itself provided a practical methodology that resulted in a more reflective and comprehensive planning framework. Both the Self Study and strategic planning processes have been inclusive and incorporated the work of the School’s multiple constituencies.

The primary goal of the SMFA’s Strategic Plan is to stabilize and grow enrollment through accreditation. As we move from a planning to an implementation phase, the near term challenge is to maintain financial equilibrium in the budget as initiatives aligned to improve enrollment and enhance the curriculum and student experience are rolled out.

While the School’s planning capacity has been historically strong, the use of data and regular assessment needs to be consistently applied. While SMFA’s continued strength is the teaching of art, the work ahead involves the development and/or refinement of degree and learning outcomes at all levels, including the expansion of the faculty and curriculum with general education offerings. This, along with many other related projects (improvements to advising, expansion of the writing center to a learning center, creation of a student success plan/assessment) is currently being planned or is underway.

The transformation of the School to a college is a complex management and planning process. The SMFA will need to build on the strong systems in place for analysis and assessment, and simultaneously develop new methods for comprehensive and systemic evaluation that strengthens the Schools financial position and results in the long-term improvement of the School’s academic programs.
STANDARD ONE: MISSION AND PURPOSE

DESCRIPTION

The mission of the School of the Museum of Fine Arts was adopted by the Board of Governors and affirmed by the faculty in 2003 in conjunction with the 10-year re-accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Art and Design.

The mission of the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston is to provide an education in the fine arts—for undergraduate and graduate artists—that is interdisciplinary and self-directed. This education values cultural, artistic and intellectual diversity; it embraces a wide range of media; it stresses the development of individual vision and its relation to culture in general; it values equally the knowledge gained by thinking and doing; it is deeply engaged with the world as a whole. If the mission is constant, its practice is always transforming.

As implied in the mission, SMFA’s degrees and certificates do not have prescribed majors or concentration requirements. Each are each designed so that students can progress through their studio coursework and develop an individual and unique vision. A range of studio elective courses allows students to tailor their studies and art practice. This curriculum also provides conceptual, professional, and technical support suited to individual development. As students progress, they assume greater independence and freedom, gain competence, and prepare for creative careers and/or advanced study.

The fundamental principles of an SMFA education include an emphasis on practice and critique. These are reflected in specific courses dedicated to those principles as well as more traditional seminars and lectures. When students are asked their intentions, or to reflect on decisions they made in relationship to a work, they are being asked to make a choice. It is in the process of exchange—a dialogue between students and teachers, and students and students—that their own line of reasoning develops. At the heart of a student’s education at SMFA is the formal expression of dialogue in the curriculum. This exchange is the point where individual experience, intention, and the more general understanding of culture meet. The negotiation between these worlds is a central organizing principle of the experience at SMFA. Likewise, the curriculum emphasizes the relationship of art to ideas, which is reflected in the close coordination of studio and academic courses across a student’s course of study.

SMFA’s goal is for each student to develop skills that will prepare him or her to make informed and effective career choices. These include: a broad cultural competence; an ability to think critically in order to assess and understand the changing nature of global culture; the ability to represent ideas effectively and persuasively, whether in artwork, writing, or other means of presentation; and an ability to participate in and to meaningfully shape significant dialogues. The final skill is the
development of a competitive edge and confidence in their ability to sustain forms of creative work as educators, cultural producers, artists, and leaders in a wide range of fields.

In 2011 and 2012, the SMFA community (students, faculty, alumni, staff, administration, governors, and trustees) participated in the development of a strategic plan. (See Standard Two for more detail.) This plan continues to represent a collective reassessment of the School’s mission and vision. During the planning process, there was a conscious decision to leave the mission unchanged and to let it assist in the planning process. The plan states, “[The] mission continues to guide the School’s effort to provide the highest quality education in the fine arts for the new century, and has been paramount in establishing an educational foundation with many strengths. These defining characteristics, critical to the continued success of the School, include an open curriculum that emphasizes student choice; a teaching faculty of professional artists; small class sizes; a reputation for innovation and excellence; global visibility and connectivity, a unique partnership with Tufts University and one of the world’s great encyclopedic museums, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; and alumni success in a diversity of fields”. The plan outlines areas for growth as well as sustainability, including achieving regional accreditation and establishing new degree programs. The plan will be discussed throughout the self study, as it and the mission, have guided much of the change that SMFA is now pursuing.

Of great relevance is the mission of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. In addition to statements regarding the collection of art, exhibitions, and public service, it has a section on education via the teaching of art, which states “The Museum educates artists of the future through its School. The creative efforts of the students and faculty provide the Museum and its public with insights into emerging art and art forms.”

SMFA does not have a current institutional vision or values statement.

**APPRAISAL**

SMFA is effective at achieving and making decisions based on its mission, which specifies the students the School seeks to serve. The flexible model and absence of required concentrations or majors in each certificate and degree means students progress through their course of study based on their own direction and path. Graduating students consistently positively rate the interdisciplinary nature of the School in exit surveys.

The mission is on SMFA’s website and is referred to in admissions materials. It is not, however, currently published in its entirety in admissions materials, student, faculty, or trustee handbooks, or the continuing education catalogue. Even though it is not in these publications, there is a sense that students, faculty and staff generally understand the mission, especially as it pertains to SMFA as a school of art.
The mission remains constant even as students and media change. For example, in the past 10 years there has been a transition in practice and in student demand from analog to digital processes, especially in photography. SMFA has designed curriculum and spaces around this change and has de-commissioned a color darkroom. This curriculum continues to stress the “development of the individual vision” of each student enrolled.

SMFA’s mission guides institutional decisions and short-term and strategic planning. In the shorter term, the School hires new faculty based on their interdisciplinary approach, experience, and artistic background. Also, curricular and policy decisions are measured in part by the relevance to the mission. For example, design and media curricula and individual classes, including film, digital, and animation, are shaped with a distinct experimental approach. This differs greatly from practice-based industrial or fashion design. SMFA does not require majors, rather we encourage unique courses of study.

The School’s mission is the centerpiece of the strategic plan. One goal is to “develop an innovative, adaptable curriculum that integrates art education with a broad range of disciplines.” This entails developing and refining course delivery methodologies, reviewing existing programs, and integrating academic and studio coursework into a single curriculum for both graduate and undergraduate students.

Capital planning is also mission based. For example, SMFA is currently planning for revisions to its space and related space requirements, including developing flexible teaching and learning spaces, so that the spaces will be able to accommodate that change as media and curricula change. (See Standard Eight)

Even though the mission is widely understood and supported by the community, it needs a more frequent review and reaffirmation. SMFA plans to institute a mission reaffirmation with students, staff, faculty, and board governance at least every five years to ensure continued support.

**Projection**

Faculty, student, and trustee handbooks, as well as all admissions publications will include the mission statement in its entirety in the next editions.

SMFA, overseen by the President’s Cabinet, will formally review and reaffirm its mission at regular and planned intervals. This most recently took place during the strategic planning process in 2012. The next review will take place in 2017. During that review, the SMFA community will also discuss the possible expansion of its mission. This will be especially important in light of planned growth, a potential name change (from School to College, see Standard Two), and development of new programs and degrees in the coming years, all of which are outlined in the 2012 strategic plan.
As SMFA proceeds with the NASAD reaccreditation in the next fiscal year (2014-15), the School will gather data regarding the knowledge of and effectiveness of achieving the mission. This data gathering will include surveys, along with integrating formal governance groups and specially convened focus groups.

**Institutional Effectiveness**

Typically, the School reviews and analyzes its mission during NASAD self studies and strategic planning processes. This includes formal acknowledgment by the Board of Trustees and faculty. This will continue with NEASC candidacy and accreditation. Additionally, the strategic planning process highlighted the importance of the mission to the future of the School.
STANDARD TWO: PLANNING AND EVALUATION

DESCRIPTION

Planning

Strategic Planning

SMFA has a long history of strategic planning. In 1998, the School created a plan that covered a period of 10-15 years. Individuals within and outside of the organization contributed to themes, ideas, and data; every member of the SMFA community was invited to comment on a wide range of issues within the plan.

In 2005, the School wrote a short update to the 1998 plan. The update, entitled Vision 2008, enumerated specific initiatives to bring to fruition the goals and vision articulated in the plan. It also listed selected accomplishments since the development of the 1998 plan. Senior management created Vision 2008, and faculty, staff, and governance discussed, vetted and informally approved the plan.

In 2011, shortly after the arrival of President Chris Bratton, the School implemented a new strategic planning process.

A steering group designed the framework and established eight working groups of staff, faculty, students, governors and trustees of SMFA (and the Museum): curriculum; faculty affairs; student success; marketing and communications; partnerships; space and technology; finance and development; and alumni affairs. A member of the steering group chaired each group, which were charged with focusing on different primary areas of the School’s structure. The more than 90 participants met numerous times in small group sessions and daylong retreats over a 14-month period.

The strategic plan is the result of contributions of these working groups and represents a collective reaffirmation of the School’s mission and vision. In addition to the mission, the groups identified several defining characteristics that are critical success factors to SMFA: an open curriculum that emphasizes student choice; a teaching faculty of professional artists; small class sizes; a reputation for innovation and excellence; global visibility and connectivity; unique partnerships, especially with the Museum of Fine Arts; and alumni success in a diversity of fields.

The overarching goal of the 2012 strategic plan is to incrementally increase graduate and undergraduate enrollment through new curricula, new programs, and new forms of educational
experience. Like its peer institutions of the Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design (AICAD), SMFA continues to face a future of new challenges and increasing competition. In the School’s case, however, the path toward success is predicated on a fundamental first step, the gaining of independent regional accreditation. As the only AICAD institution without regional accreditation, this step is essential to both the excellence of the School and its long-term financial sustainability.

Action steps to support the goal of incrementally increasing enrollment include:

- creating a recruitment plan to build a highly competitive and diverse student community
- developing a curriculum that emphasizes the relationship between art, studio, ideas, and academic/general education coursework
- recruiting and retaining an internationally recognized teaching faculty
- developing and maintaining a flexible and sustainable business plan and financial model

There are eight principal goals for implementing the strategic plan through FY 2022.

1. Develop and offer a diverse portfolio of accredited undergraduate and graduate programs.
2. Partner with domestic and global institutions to create new growth opportunities.
3. Develop an innovative, adaptable curriculum that integrates art education with a broad range of disciplines.
4. Increase enrollment through improved retention and recruitment.
5. Hire and retain internationally recognized faculty and develop administrative staff for future leadership.
6. Strengthen alumni and donor networks to be more extensive, visible, involved and more financially supportive of the School.
7. Improve and extend the campus locally and globally.
8. Secure a sustainable financial structure and business model.

Two important related plans are embedded in the strategic plan. First, a financial plan and analysis compared the steady-state scenario to plan implementation. The steady state assumed conservative increases in tuition, other revenues, and expenses, and showed increasing deficits beginning in FY2015. The plan implementation scenario assumed enrollment growth, mostly as a result of new programs. This scenario had projected growth in expenses related to new initiatives but it showed surpluses throughout. The financial plan is updated every year when the budget is approved and when timing or scale of certain initiatives change.

Second, a management plan detailing specific tasks and action steps related to strategic plan initiatives was developed. It lists board committees responsible for monitoring progress in each major initiative, and people, positions, and timelines for each action step.
Other planning

There are several other examples of institutional or departmental planning at SMFA.

The decennial NASAD reaccreditation process gives SMFA the opportunity to formally articulate short- and long-term plans. The 2004 self-study contained a series of recommendations related to staff, faculty, operations, curriculum, and program. Similar to NEASC, NASAD requires a five-year progress report on those matters, as well as those specifically requested by the commission.

As part of both annual and multi-year planning processes, the Development and Alumni Affairs offices engage in planning and evaluation and create road maps to achieve stated goals. For the capital campaign, we have priorities that can be matched to donor interests. We assess our capacity to raise funds to determine when we can undertake larger projects that depend on new revenue or philanthropy. SMFA is in the midst of a capital campaign; while there is not a formal written plan, these road maps and priorities feed the philanthropy related to the campaign.

There are many examples of departmental or other thematic plans. These typically focus on short-term goals, yet are often offshoots of larger strategic initiatives. Many are associated with Faculty Senate sub-committees. The Exhibitions, Curriculum and Library committees frequently plan more than a year in advance. Ad-hoc committees or workgroups are often established to make changes or plans leading to longer term solutions. For example, an ad-hoc fabrication committee is investigating the coordination of several fabrication based areas (sculpture, ceramics, and small metals/jewelry), and planning to install a new 3-D printer and provide related services.

There are also examples where SMFA is in the early stages of gathering data in preparation for producing a more in-depth plan and implementation schedule. SMFA recently underwent a space use and utilization study. (See Standard Eight for more detail.) This study produced a series of recommendations that can be rolled out over several years as part of a large-scale interior space plan. Most of these recommendations entail interior renovations and classroom and studio relocations.

Evaluation

SMFA has several long-standing methods for periodic review of plans. The broadest is the NASAD self-study, reaccreditation process, and five-year update. This provides SMFA with the opportunity to review its progress towards large institutional goals.

In 2004, the NASAD visiting team evaluated 12 areas, which touched on most aspects of SMFA:

1. Mission/goals/objectives
2. Size and scope
3. Finance
4. Governance and administration
5. Faculty and staff
6. Facilities
7. Library
8. Students
9. Published materials
10. Community/articulation with other schools
11. Academic and studio curricula and programs
12. Planning and evaluation

The report expressed general compliance with all of NASAD’s standards, and supported SMFA in its projections. The report enumerated SMFA’s strengths and recommendations for short and long-term improvements. NASAD also found that SMFA’s independent certificates and Tufts-affiliated degrees met its standards. We addressed many of these issues through Vision 2008.

The NASAD report and the 1998 strategic plan provided a basis for Vision 2008 and the 2010 progress report.

The most recent progress report (from 2010) updated NASAD on SMFA’s progress toward renovating and updating the Mission Hill Building, other facilities planning, retention efforts, improved advising, improved customer service efforts for staff, and building a community for students. This reporting process provided SMFA with a synopsis of progress on several key initiatives over the previous five years.

The internal Vision 2008 document listed 11 selected accomplishments that were goals or projections from the 1998 strategic plan. This gave SMFA the opportunity to assess its accomplishments, but also provided a springboard for future initiatives.

We review the 2012 strategic plan at least once a year and update it with progress, names, new or expanded action plans, and dates.

**Appraisal**

Historically, SMFA’s organizational and strategic planning and implementation have been strong. We involve a wide variety of stakeholders and provide multiple opportunities for feedback. We also communicate with the community about the plans and host meetings for faculty, students, and staff to ask questions and raise concerns.

Communication regarding revisions to the plan, however, has been less broad. For example, in the 2012 strategic plan, SMFA projected recruitment of the first students for stand-alone degrees in fall 2014 and enrollment in fall 2015 (with recruitment beginning in the fall of 2014). This is delayed one
year and we are notifying only select constituents, such as the Faculty Senate, the Boards of Trustees and Governors, and SMFA administrative department heads.

A direct result of the 2012 strategic planning process is the implementation and planning of several initiatives. They include:

- Annual renewal and replacement allocation to address smaller scale building improvements and deferred maintenance
- Space study consultants
- Curriculum specialist to plan for expansion of general education curriculum
- Capital campaign

Short-term, smaller scale planning is most often coordinated by an existing department or committee; and ad-hoc workgroups address specific problems or questions. For example, the Policies and Procedures Group updates the student handbook each year, and an ad-hoc faculty workgroup wrote bylaws and created a structure for the new Faculty Senate. (See Standard Three and Standard Six for more detail.) In this type of planning, SMFA is small enough so that the appropriate individuals or constituencies can be involved or learn about progress. Most faculty committees have student representation\(^4\) and there are processes in place to regularly communicate with a variety of constituencies, such as email, faculty meetings, and student forums.

However, this planning does not happen in every department or academic area and SMFA needs to provide guidance and tools to enable more of this kind of planning.

Regarding evaluation, SMFA has data on many of its graduates. In the 2012-2013 academic year, SMFA participated in the annual Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP), a national survey of arts alumni conducted by Indiana University. Nearly 600SMFA alumni participated. 87% of respondents rated their experience at SMFA as “excellent” or “good.” As expected, they also indicated that the faculty had a major and positive influence on their careers. 75% of respondents currently or previously have worked as a professional artist. SMFA plans to participate in the SNAAP survey every 5-10 years\(^5\). In addition to this study, SMFA needs a shorter and more frequent survey of alumni and their employment and participation in the arts.

In addition to grades and course success rates, SMFA has some data on student progress. Review boards provide an individualized assessment of each student’s body of artwork each semester. (See Standard Four for more detail.) Two faculty and two students critique the student’s work, draw connections between different courses, and make recommendations about further study or coursework. SMFA does not review or assess review boards on a regular basis.

\(^4\) All except Faculty Affairs and some ad-hoc work groups, which do not have students involved by design.

\(^5\) Due to the length of the survey and potential burden on alumni/ae, SMFA does not intend a more frequent participation. SMFA’s overall response rate for the SNAAP survey was 19%.
**PROJECTION**

SMFA will review and update the management plan at two-year intervals over the ten-year life of the Strategic Plan. This will ensure that the goals are met and aid in the development of the next strategic plan. The President’s Office will coordinate this update, with assistance from the board and the cabinet.

SMFA will provide a structure so that departments can develop and share short-term plans. If appropriate, these plans can be included in the management plan, which will ensure continued integrated planning. More importantly, this structure will eliminate redundancies in the progress and completion of the plan.

SMFA is researching survey options to gather data regarding recent alumni employment and arts involvement. We expect to roll out this annual survey in the fall of 2015, surveying completers from the previous two years.

SMFA will assess review boards through analysis of transcripts, student interviews, review board folder analysis, and surveys. This will also include a comparative analysis of like institutions that do or do not use semester summary critiques.

**INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

SMFA engages in a significant amount of analysis to aid in self evaluation, measuring achievement of goals, and short-term and strategic decision making and planning. This numerical and qualitative analysis includes year-over-year comparisons, admissions funnel analyses, geo-demographic analysis and projections, benchmarking against AICAD competitors, and frequent budget-to-actual analysis and forecasting. The administration shares analyses with on an ongoing basis, which aids in institutional planning and decision making and planning.
STANDARD THREE: ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE

DESCRIPTION

Boards of Trustees and Governors

The School of the Museum of Fine Arts operates under the 501(c)(3) designation of the Museum of Fine Arts. This structure was part of the original act of incorporation in 1870 and all subsequent restated articles of amendment, which include the mission to “afford instruction in the fine arts.” The corporate articles specify that SMFA is the degree-granting arm of the organization, in addition to specifically referencing the degrees and certificates that SMFA awards or would like to award.

While SMFA is a division of the Museum, it has its own governance structure, finances, buildings, endowment funds, and other resources. To clarify this structure, in 2011 the School and the Museum revised their bylaws, further formalizing SMFA’s autonomy within the organization.

The SMFA governing board is its own designated Board of Trustees. The Museum bylaws specifically state that the SMFA Board of Trustees is the body responsible for “overseeing the management of the School.”

The School’s bylaws define the legal authority of the trustees and include several provisions:

- SMFA trustee authority and power:
  - “Entire charge, control, and management of the SMFA…”
  - Determination of SMFA policies in academic affairs, student affairs, alumni affairs, financial affairs, and administrative affairs and setting the guidelines for granting certificates and degrees
  - Authority to confer recognized degrees and certificates
  - Fiduciary responsibility for SMFA
  - Oversight over the Chief Executive Officer (President) including in hiring, supervising, and the setting of compensation

- Traditional provisions such as:
  - Rules for membership, term of office, responsibilities of trustees, including a requirement that trustees of the School are also trustees of the Museum
  - Rules on conflict of interest and financial dealings between trustees and the School

6 Certificates include the Diploma in Studio Art and the Post-Baccalaureate Certificate. Degrees include the BFA in Studio Art and the MFA in Studio Art, both of which are currently awarded by Tufts University. Once SMFA is a candidate for accreditation, SMFA will begin enrolling students in these stand-alone degrees and subsequently conferring those degrees.
Provisions for appointment of the President and other School officers by the Board of Trustees. The President formally reports to the School’s Board of Trustees

Provisions for faculty participation in the School's governance through, for example, service on such bodies as a faculty senate and institutional policy-making committees

SMFA also has a Board of Governors, which has been in existence since 1992, and therefore precedes the SMFA’s Board of Trustees by 19 years. The bylaws state the official powers and duties of the Board of Governors:

The Board of Governors shall be advisory and shall assist the Board of Trustees of the SMFA in overseeing the management of the SMFA, provide advice and counsel to the President of the SMFA, assist the Board of Trustees of the SMFA in the development of policies concerning the SMFA and its relationship to the Museum and perform such other duties as the Board of Trustees of the SMFA may from time to time determine. Governors may be appointed to standing or ad hoc committees of the SMFA Board of Trustees as determined by the SMFA Board of Trustees.

In practice, the Board of Governors has functioned like a Board of Trustees since it was created. This includes overseeing matters such as SMFA’s mission, educational philosophy, operating budgets, officer appointments, long-range planning, and tuition. The head of the School, however, did not report directly to the governors (note that SMFA’s President reports to the SMFA Board of Trustees) until 2010. Since 2011, when the Board of Trustees was officially formed, members of the Board of Governors have continued to participate in committees and in most executive sessions. SMFA staff and the Chair of the Board of Trustees ensure that a quorum of the Board of Trustees is in place before any official vote.

The Boards of Trustees and Governors meet three times each year. The meetings last one and a half days: day one is devoted to board committees and day two is devoted to the full board. The meetings include formal agendas and minutes—for the committees and for the full board. Committee chairs report to the full board during the full board meeting and all board members have the opportunity to question committee chairs during those reports.

SMFA bylaws formally detail board committees. In fact, most committees were in place as part of the Board of Governors before the creation of the Board of Trustees in 2011. Current committees include: Academic Affairs; Student Affairs; Enrollment Strategy; Budget & Finance; Institutional Advancement; Alumni Affairs; Nominating; and Governance. Additionally, there are two sub-committees: Marketing and Communications, as well as ad hoc advancement committees for fundraising events and special projects.

The School and Museum share a common process for appointing trustees to their respective boards. Either the Nominating Committee of the School or the Nominating Committee of the Museum propose a candidate and identify the individual as a potential trustee. Each trustee of the School is
also an appointed or elected Museum trustee. Under Massachusetts state law, this is necessary to avoid improper delegation of board powers to non-board members.

The Chairperson of SMFA Board of Trustees can be elected from among the Board of Governors. By virtue of election, the Chair becomes a Museum trustee for the duration of his or her term(s).

**Independence from the Museum of Fine Arts**

The Articles of the Museum, specifically Article Two, as amended by the Museum Overseers, specifies SMFA’s degree-granting authority. It states:

> The purposes for which the Corporation is formed are as follows: Erecting a museum for the preservation and exhibition of works of art, of making, maintaining and exhibiting collections of such works, and of affording instruction in the fine arts, including granting the degrees of Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio Art, Bachelor of Arts in Visual and Critical Studies, Master of Fine Arts in Studio Art, Master of Arts in Museum and Exhibition Studies, Master of Science in Art Conservation, Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts, and granting the certificates of Diploma in Studio Art, and Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Studio Art by the School of the Museum of Fine Arts; with all the powers and privileges, and subject to all the duties, liabilities, and restrictions set forth in chapter sixty-eight of the General Statutes, and acts in addition thereto.

Furthermore, the bylaws of the Museum clearly indicate that the SMFA Board of Trustees is the body responsible for “overseeing the management of the School.” The MFA and SMFA trustees have a set of operating guidelines that establish and delineate the power of SMFA trustees.

The School and the Museum have long-established practices that ensure separation of finances and other operations. Many of these items are described in more detail in other standards.

- SMFA raises philanthropic funds independently from the Museum of Fine Arts.
- The School prepares its own annual budget covering all areas of its operations.
- The School’s endowment consists of approximately 133 individual donor-restricted endowment funds and funds designated by its Board of Trustees to function as endowments. Although School and Museum endowment assets are combined in a single pool of funds, all School funds are accounted for and tracked separately.
- The School’s reserves are retained exclusively for its purposes. Surplus operating revenues are tracked and segregated from those of the Museum. The proposed use of designated reserve funds requires the review and approval by the School’s Budget and Finance Committee and its Board of Trustees.
The President and Administration

Between 1993 and 2010, the SMFA was led by Deborah H Dluhy, the Dean of the School, who reported to the Director of the Museum, but was also accountable to SMFA’s Board of Governors.

The current President, Christopher Bratton, joined the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in July 2010 after more than six years as President and Chief Executive Officer of the San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI). Prior to leading SFAI, Bratton spent 11 years at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where he was promoted to full professor and became the college’s first Dean of Undergraduate Studies.

As president, Bratton is responsible for the leadership, strategic direction, and overall administration of the School. He officially reports to the SMFA Board of Trustees, which annually assesses his performance and sets yearly goals.

Senior staff reporting to the president include the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the School, the Vice President for Institutional Advancement and External Relations, the Vice President for Admissions and Enrollment, the Vice President for Financial Operations, the Vice President for Budget and Planning, the Associate Vice President for Operations and Research, and the Director of Marketing and Communications. These staff members comprise the President’s Cabinet, which meets regularly to discuss management issues. Each of these staff members also sit on or chair at least one board committee.

Sarah McKinnon, the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the School, joined the School in fall 2012. She oversees all matters related to the curriculum and teaching and advising of students, as well as other curricular matters such as instructional technology, exhibitions, the libraries, continuing and community education, and career services.

The Dean chairs a Dean’s Advisory Committee, which advises her and provides a forum for communications between the departments within the division. The team consists of: the Associate Vice President for Academic Administration; the Associate Vice President for Non-Degree Programs; the Associate Deans of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies; the Registrar; and the Director of Library Services and Visual Resources. In addition to discussing regular operations (advising, scheduling, faculty concerns and committee activities, curriculum and curriculum support, etc), they discuss and review changes to programs and how these affect other areas and divisions in the School, including non-degree and continuing education programs. The committee also reviews policy proposals in other areas of the SMFA and provides specific input from an academic affairs perspective. Any recommendation regarding establishing or changing policy is forwarded to the President’s Cabinet or other relevant staff or faculty committee.
Faculty

In 2010, the faculty approved the most recent version of the faculty handbook. It outlines matters related to faculty affairs, including organization and governance. It also specifies faculty committees, rules regarding regular faculty meetings, and roles in senior governance. However, many policy and organization details outlined in the handbook no longer apply or are out of date. A major revision to the handbook should be in draft form by the time the visiting team is on campus (see Standard Five).

In fall 2012 in response to feedback from faculty and NEASC, the Dean created a working group of faculty to establish bylaws for a formal Faculty Senate. In February 2013, the faculty approved the proposed bylaws and the creation of the senate. The following May the Boards of Trustees and Governors approved them. The faculty elected its first slate of senators that same month.

The Faculty Senate assumes broad responsibility for fostering high academic standards at SMFA. It guides the administration on academic affairs, faculty, student affairs, programs, curriculum and its development, and faculty contract progression. Members of the Faculty Senate are regular faculty and continuing part-time faculty. The Chair of the Faculty Senate is a voting member of the Board of Governors, ex officio.

The senate has oversight over three key faculty committees (curriculum, graduate steering, and faculty affairs) as well as five standing advisory committees (budget, library, admissions, exhibitions, and technology).

In addition, each studio and academic area has a faculty representative responsible for administrative matters such as coordinating curriculum, overseeing faculty searches, submitting and monitoring area budgets, and providing general oversight.

Staff

Vice Presidents oversee four institutional divisions: Academic Affairs (Senior VP for Academic Affairs and Dean of the School); Finance and Budget (VP for Financial Operations; VP for Budget and Planning); Institutional Advancement (Vice President for Institutional Advancement); and Enrollment and Student Affairs (VP and Dean of Enrollment). As already noted, two other areas report directly to the president: institutional research and marketing and communications.

There are several notable interdivisional staff teams at SMFA8. They include the student care team, which discusses students at risk; the policies and procedures task force, which evaluates and enacts student related policies; and facilities interface, which discusses facilities and security related issues and plans. The enrollment management committee, comprised of staff who report to the Vice

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7 SMFA does not have a formal tenure system. Descriptions of faculty types can be found in Standard Five.
8 Please refer to Standards Six and Eight for more detail on these committees.
President of Admissions and Enrollment plus the Registrar, also meets regularly to discuss regular operations between departments.

Students

SMFA students are encouraged to participate directly in SMFA governance and engage with the administration. Elected student representatives serve on the Curriculum committee, Faculty Senate, exhibitions committee, information technology committee, and the library committee.

The School is developing a formal student government. (See Standard Six) Students and staff are collaborating to create a useful and sustainable leadership system. SMFA anticipates a change in the Board bylaws to allow for graduate and undergraduate student representation (ex officio) on the Board of Governors.

Appraisal

Much of the compliance with this standard is outlined in the bylaws of the School’s Board of Trustees, including hiring, reviewing and delegating to the president, ensuring fiduciary responsibility, attending to mission, ensuring no conflict of interest (financial or otherwise), and specifying the Board of Trustees as the legal body responsible for the institution.

SMFA’s governance and leadership structure is clearly described in its bylaws, organizational structure, and faculty, board, and staff committee purpose. There are also written guidelines that govern the operational interpretation of the bylaws. The bylaws of the institution indicate that the trustees are the legal entity responsible for the entire charge, control and management of the SMFA. Similarly, the bylaws of the Museum specify that the School’s trustees oversee the management of the School as set for in its bylaws. With the exception of the President, who is an employee of the SMFA, members of the School’s Boards of Trustees and Governors have no financial interest in the institution. In practice, the Board of Governors have significant advising authority.

Although the Boards of Trustees and Governors do not have a formal process for assessing their own effectiveness, there is evidence to support that they are effective. The committee structure ensures proper allocation of the talents of specific board members. The regular committee reports to the full board ensure information sharing. Committees also monitor SMFA’s progress towards strategic plan metrics. Likewise, the Budget and Finance committee is clearly critical to the fiduciary responsibility of the Board of Trustees. Its role is to monitor the budget progress throughout the year and review and approve tuition increases, tuition discounts, and any allocation of reserve funds.

SMFA continually reviews and assesses governance, leadership, and structure. For example, there have been minor changes to the School’s bylaws since they were initially approved and enacted in 2011. These revisions include adding a new committee (Enrollment Strategy) and splitting a large
committee into two (Student and Academic Affairs became Student Affairs and Academic Affairs); naming the chair of the Faculty Senate as an ex officio, voting member of the Board of Governors; and clearing up language to specify that the Chair of the Board of Trustees could be recruited from the Board of Governors.

Operationally and organizationally, the School changes titles and reporting structure to improve efficiency. Recently, the Registrar’s office stopped reporting to the Vice President of Admissions and Enrollment and started report to the Dean of the School. We made this change for two primary reasons: to allow for greater focus on direct enrollment related matters (financial aid, admissions and student affairs); and to allow for more streamlined communication between the Academic Affairs and the Registrar’s offices, especially regarding course schedules and auditing student class schedules and degrees.

The NEASC visiting team to evaluate SMFA’s eligibility analyzed SMFA’s governance structure and independence, and had questions regarding SMFA’s independence from the Museum. We provided the team with substantial evidence supporting the School’s autonomy within the organization, including formal recognition through bylaws and other corporate articles, historical processes and policies through the Board of Governors, and informal practices.

Bylaws for the Faculty Senate were written in consultation with a faculty committee and several members of the SMFA Board of Trustees. Since it is new, the senate is still establishing its own informal operating guidelines and processes, which the dean and president will assess in the coming years.

Even though SMFA does not yet currently have a formal student government, students have several options for participating in SMFA governance. Sixteen students serve as representatives on key committees, including the Faculty Senate, Curriculum Committee, and the Student Affairs Advisory Board. (See Standard Six for more detail). Before the current academic year, these were appointed positions. This year, we held an election in response to informal student feedback. Students manage, approve, and support a budget of $27K, which is funded from the student activities fee.

**Projection**

By fall 2015, SMFA plans to establish a formal plan and process for regular governance assessment. On the board level, this will be coordinated by the existing Governance committee. The Faculty Senate will develop a similar measure and will also receive feedback from the faculty at large.

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9 “Interviews also indicated that although the SMFA Board of Governors (prior to creation of the current Board of Trustees) was not a separate legal entity, “it behaved as such” historically in terms of its autonomy and independence from the MFA Board.”
In spring 2013, SMFA established an online forum for the Boards of Trustees and Governors to communicate with each other and post minutes, agendas, and other important documents. The President’s Cabinet will review its effectiveness in the next twelve months.

In the 2014-2015 academic year, SMFA will establish a formal student government with bylaws, and will hold an election for its leaders. The Director of Student Affairs will coordinate the process. We expect that the process will be in place by the time the visiting team is on campus, though the student leaders will not be formally in place.

**Institutional Effectiveness**

Through ongoing assessment, we are able to make governance and organizational changes at any time, as a result of a recognized need for improvement. The existence of SMFA’s Board of Trustees is an example of organizational institutional effectiveness. Once we determined that state licensure and regional accreditation required SMFA to have a Board of Trustees, governance at the School and Museum worked together to change both sets of bylaws.
STANDARD FOUR: THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

OVERVIEW

The School of the Museum of Fine Arts currently offers eight degrees or certificates. Information about these programs is published on SMFA’s website (http://www.smfa.edu/programs-of-study) and in the School’s admissions viewbooks.

State Licensed Degrees (not offered until in candidacy)

- Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in Studio Art (4 years)
- Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Studio Art (2 years)

Certificates

- Studio Diploma (2 years of full-time study including summer)
- Post-Baccalaureate Certificate (1 year of full-time study)
- Graphic Design Certificate (1.5 years of part-time study)
- Illustration Certificate (1.5 years of part-time study)

Affiliated Degrees

- Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) through Tufts University (4 years)
- Dual Degree through Tufts University (BA/BS and Tufts BFA) (5 years)
- Master of Fine Arts (MFA) through Tufts University (2 years)
- Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) through Tufts University (1 year)

Continuing Education

- Part-Time general interest courses
- Studio at Tufts
- Tufts students enrolled for elective credit at SMFA

Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) students currently enrolled in the Tufts affiliated degree remit their tuition directly to SMFA and, if eligible, receive Title IV federal and state financial aid via SMFA. The BFA is awarded by Tufts University, but students earn English, art history, and studio art credits and instruction (78% of their credits) at SMFA. The Master in Fine Arts (MFA) program is similar; students pay and receive their degree from Tufts, but earn all studio art credits and instruction (over 70% of the program) at SMFA. SMFA also awards merit aid for MFA students (government aid is currently processed at Tufts). Certificate students take 100% of their courses on the SMFA campus.
The National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) accredited each of SMFA’s degrees and certificates. NASAD reviewed and approved the new degrees for substantive changes in spring 2013. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts licensed SMFA’s degrees and certificate programs (April 30, 2013). The affiliated degree programs are accredited.

SMFA’s offers classes in 12 studio areas: Ceramics; Drawing; Film & Animation; Graphic Arts; Painting; Performance; Photography; Print & Paper; Sculpture; Small Metals/Jewelry; Sound; and Video. SMFA offers classes in two academic areas, English and Visual and Critical Studies. Courses start at the introductory level (1000 course designation) go to the advanced level (3000). This progression of courses allows students to follow a path of study emphasizing a particular medium. SMFA’s curricular matrix is also designed to highlight horizontal course relationships, to allow students to construct an interdisciplinary path of study that combines courses from different areas. The interdisciplinary path allows for hybrid forms—moving image, sound, text, and performance etc.—to articulate more fully complex ideas and ways of working.

Presently, 50% of the Tufts-affiliated BFA general education and liberal studies courses, including English, are offered on the SMFA campus. Faculty teaching these courses will transition to become SMFA faculty starting in fall 2014. (See Standard Five for more information.) Notably, SMFA developed and implemented the courses taught by these faculty members (English and Visual and Critical Studies), including writing the curriculum.

SMFA is also developing a larger liberal and general studies curriculum, which will be phased in with the first cohort of SMFA degree students. General education will become a new academic area and SMFA will develop and assess these courses with the mission and the artist in mind. Students may continue to take classes at Tufts and Northeastern University through formal reciprocity agreements.

MFA students currently take academic coursework on the Tufts University campus. In the future, the graduate academic courses will be offered at SMFA and phased in when the SMFA offers an MFA.

The SMFA studio and Visual and Critical Studies curriculum was developed over many years. The Curriculum committee reviews all curricular proposals and changes for recommendation to the Faculty Senate and to the Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs. When assessing programs and curricula, the Curriculum Committee considers a number of factors including: the balance of beginning, intermediate, and advanced courses offered within an area; a balance of practice, seminar, lecture, and critique courses; and how the content of an area’s curriculum addresses historical and contemporary discourse as well as varying cultural perspectives.

The current Tufts-affiliated BFA and MFA degrees are core to the School’s mission. They are degrees in the fine arts and are interdisciplinary in nature. SMFA degrees will be more closely aligned with the School’s mission than the Tufts-affiliated degrees.
**DESCRIPTION**

Undergraduate Programs

*Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio Art*

The SMFA’s BFA is a four-year, 128-credit degree program (76 studio credits; 20 credits of visual critical studies; 32 general education and elective credits). It is defined by its broad interdisciplinary approach to an education through the arts and by its faculty of professional artists and scholars. Students learn within a culture of personal attention and close dialogue.

BFA freshmen are assigned a faculty advisor. A faculty member’s advisee load is correlated to the number of contract hours taught. Throughout the semester, faculty meet with their advisees during regular office hours, to advise students regarding their course of study, professional practices, and answer questions about the School as a whole.

Both the Tufts-affiliated BFA and SMFA’s forthcoming stand-alone BFA clearly have general education courses as part of the requirements and curriculum. The SMFA’s general education classes that will be developed will provide students with a wide-ranging, transnational understanding of literature, writing, science, culture, and the history of art. Specific requirements are: five art history courses (Visual and Critical Studies); English I; English II; humanities; social science; science and technology; and three electives. The Visual and Critical Studies and English courses are already taught on the SMFA campus as part of the affiliated BFA.

A required program in the first semester for all incoming BFA freshmen and recommended for most transfer students is SMFA’s First Year Program (FYP), Making Art, Making Meaning: The History and Future of the Image. This course provides an opportunity for burgeoning artists to enrich their own art practice by engaging new and different perspectives on creativity, through reading, discussion, lectures, writing, and trips to local art sites. With the aim of helping students to develop a wider critical-philosophical vocabulary for thinking about art and their own work, the FYP introduces a set of culturally canonical ideas and thematically organized texts relevant to art-making today. This introduction also provides a broad basis for a liberal arts education; texts are drawn from the fields of philosophy, critical theory, and literature, as well as from the visual arts.

Working in tandem with academic advisors, this course also introduces students to the resources available throughout their academic careers at the School, including a rotating group of featured studio faculty members, the Writing Studio, and staff and other individuals who help with issues involving health, housing, and finances.
First Year Program Learning Outcomes:

- **Personal Artistic Growth** Facilitating students’ enriching of their own art practice by engaging new and different perspectives on art and creativity, through reading, discussion, lectures, writing, and trips to local art sites.

- **Intellectual Development** Helping students develop a wider critical-philosophical vocabulary for thinking about their own work by introducing a set of culturally canonical ideas and thematically organized texts relevant to art making today.

- **Critical Thinking, Reading, Writing Skill Building** Introducing students to the intellectual work of reading and responding to demanding texts and ideas at a college level, both in discussion and in writing, and introducing additional SMFA or Tufts resources to support these continued endeavors.

- **Self-Direction** Helping students become proactively involved in defining their own interests and designing their own course of study at the SMFA by helping with registration and linking with an advising program that addresses academic and studio curricular issues.

- **Cohort-Group Formation** Encouraging students to develop a group of peers who know one another well and with whom they can navigate the first-year experience and beyond through the regular meeting of small discussion sections.

- **Additional Student Support** Helping link students with advisors and Student Affairs, specifically concerning issues that impact students' educational experience, such as those surrounding health, finances, and housing.

The English program is also part of the student’s first year. This area currently offers courses in writing composition and rhetoric that fulfill the year-long college writing requirement and function simultaneously to address the roles of literature and writing in a visually-oriented culture. Most courses currently offered are designed to meet the needs of first-year students, and one course each year also addresses the particular needs of international students for whom English is an additional language.

Writing is taught through the practices of ongoing revision and individualized faculty feedback and consultation. Through added focus on research skills in the second semester, students also learn to develop strategies for thinking critically about information seeking and information resources and for reflecting on the research process. At every stage, all courses provide students with ongoing opportunities to master basic writing mechanics: proper syntax, punctuation, and grammar.

Each semester the English program also provides students with many hours of individualized consultation with faculty members and a trained advanced student tutor through the Writing Center. It helps students with any stage in their writing process for any course. This ranges from brainstorming of ideas to correcting grammar to planning for larger research papers.
Central to the BFA student’s education is the goal of advancing towards an increasingly self-defined course of study. Students choose from a wide range of academic and studio courses, which address such issues as design and technology; writing; visual and critical studies; advanced theoretical and technical skills; and professional practice.

An extensive academic advising and studio mentoring system tracks, supports, and assesses all individual student progress. Faculty mentoring guides students toward long term goals, while academic advising assures students are on track with degree requirements. Additionally, review boards make recommendations about future courses, and assess a student’s individual initiative and advancement toward greater autonomy.

Each BFA student has the opportunity to apply to present a senior thesis. The senior thesis program supports selected fourth-year students in developing a capstone project as artists. With structured faculty and peer support, students progress toward defining and executing a concluding thesis project. This project represents the full arc of their production as students, with the unity and coherence of a consistent set of ideas. It emerges from classroom dialogues, faculty advice, and the review board process. Also, it is refined in the many exhibition opportunities available to students at all levels and presented in its final form in the student’s senior year during a special exhibition.

**General Education**

Currently, SMFA BFA students take their general education requirements through Tufts. Approximately half of these courses (Visual and Critical Studies and English) are taught on the SMFA campus. The Visual and Critical Studies sequence, in particular, was developed by the SMFA with the particular goal of educating through the arts and culture in general. Its classes emphasize a broad approach to learning through interdisciplinary enquiry, including history and art history; cultural and post-colonial studies; philosophy, political and critical theory.

Students are travel to Tufts for other courses in the humanities, social sciences, and science/math. Frequently, students have difficulties with scheduling appropriate classes around their studio requirements and select academic courses for their convenient time rather than their content. In the SMFA BFA, we will be able to coordinate our curriculum to provide general education requirements that are suited to BFA students and their interests. The objective is to bridge academic and studio learning.

**Studio Diploma**

Since its inception, the Diploma has been one of SMFA’s key programs. It has been structured as a four-year, 96-credit studio art certificate, without required foundation program, majors, or academic coursework. Decades ago, Diploma students were non-traditional students, rather than college-aged students. Enrollment in this program has steeply declined over the past 10 years. This is partially due to the increased importance of a degree as a credential; and SMFA hypothesizes that the length of the program deterred many potential nontraditional students.
In 2013, SMFA restructured the Studio Diploma with the particular needs of the nontraditional student in mind. This was a substantive change and was approved by NASAD that spring.

The revised Studio Diploma is a 68-credit all-studio certificate that draws from the general undergraduate studio curriculum of the SMFA. Students attending full-time can complete the program in five semesters (including summer). The certificate includes a required seminar and provides students with the opportunity to build relationships with other students, and work with professional artist mentors and advisors. The curriculum prepares students for life outside of school; they learn how to navigate the professional art world, and manage the business aspects of an independent art practice.

The Diploma Program seminar, required in both fall and spring semesters students serves as the center of the program. The course includes material in areas of art practice not covered by general curriculum courses. It provides intensive individual guidance, mentoring, and critique. This special seminar enables students to work together and provides cohort building, further helping students progress toward their individual goals. The learning outcomes of the seminar include the development of practical presentation skills, research, planning and self-assessment strategies that encourage growth of the student’s art practice, and development of integrated work from studio courses across media to enhance overall practice.

The program also requires a special independent project, conceived, planned, and arranged individually in consultation with faculty. The project may be carried out on or off campus.

**Graduate Programs**

**Master of Fine Arts in Studio Art**

The SMFA’s MFA in Studio Art is a two-year, 60-credit degree program defined by an interdisciplinary approach to advanced education through the arts. As with the BFA, the curriculum is designed and executed by a faculty of professional artists and scholars.

Master’s level graduate study at SMFA fosters advanced professional competencies in the visual arts, including the understanding of issues both current and historical; the relationship of those issues to the broader world of ideas; the development of a body of art work in relationship to ideas and theory; and the realization of that work in a final thesis. There is also an emphasis on professional practice, meaning the skills necessary to develop and sustain a career.

Students are required to take a Contemporary Art Practice seminar and graduate group critiques. These classes contextualize a student’s developing practice in relationship to both contemporary art and culture. Throughout each, students develop the ability to present, discuss, and refine their research and projects.
Students also are required to refine their theoretical and technical abilities by taking studio courses at the upper (3000) or graduate level and three elective, studio-based graduate-level seminars. As with the BFA, review boards provide opportunities for individual assessment and further advising. Unlike the BFA, each MFA student’s faculty studio advisor participates in their review board.

Students are required to take visual critical studies and art history classes from a broad range of advanced topics. (Currently, students in the soon-to-be-phased-out Tufts-affiliated MFA take their art history courses on the Tufts campus). These classes emphasize in-depth understanding of a subject and advanced research and writing skills. Finally, students are required to attend and participate in graduate colloquia, which cover a broad range of topics related to contemporary art and culture.

The program concludes with an MFA thesis exhibition from each student. This includes an exhibition, a written component, and a final review and examination by a three-member thesis committee, which includes faculty and visiting jurors.

Beyond coursework and colloquia, the MFA offers opportunities for graduate students to serve as teaching assistants and collaborate with faculty members on class content and teaching; propose colloquia; develop entrepreneurial projects for funding through an institutional loan program; and propose classes to be approved by departments for immediate post-graduate teaching. The combination of coursework and final thesis exhibition, with opportunities to teach, work with professionals outside the School through participation in colloquia, and to propose and fund entrepreneurial projects emphasizes the SMFA’s focus on preparing graduates for a diverse and competitive job market.

**Post-Baccalaureate Certificate**

The Post-Baccalaureate Certificate is a one-year, 32-credit certificate program that offers an intensive year of studio art study and practice; students are closely advised and supported by SMFA faculty. The program requires that students hold a bachelor's degree. The Post-Baccalaureate Certificate provides preparation for graduate degree study in art or for professional practice as an artist. The program attracts applicants from a wide range of backgrounds. Some students are recent college graduates seeking a year of intensive studio education before beginning independent work as artists. Others come to initiate professional art practice after working in a different field. Still others are working artists who seek to expand their skills or explore new media. Completion of the Post-Baccalaureate Certificate prepares students for a variety of paths and many go on to graduate degree programs, such as a Master in Fine Arts. Many also participate as fellows in professional artists' residencies.

Post-Baccalaureate students register for 14 credits of studio art coursework each semester of the program, chosen from across the SMFA curriculum. All Post-Baccalaureate students take one 4-credit course in art history, either in the spring or fall semester.
The Post-Baccalaureate seminar is a mandatory core component of the curriculum during both fall and spring semesters. The seminar includes professional presentations, student presentations, directed group discussions and writing projects, critiques of work, and visits to museums, galleries, collections, and other sites.

**Continuing Education, Pre-College, and Part-Time Certificate Programs**

SMFA’s Continuing Education program enrolls artists of all ages and backgrounds—high school students, second-career students, art teachers seeking professional development opportunities, other advanced students, and beginners. Continuing Education instructors are all professional practicing artists or designers. Course schedules are designed so students can maintain their school, work and/or family schedules; most courses are offered in the evenings or on weekends. The program offers both full semester 2-credit courses and shorter non-credit workshops.

SMFA offers two certificates as part of its Continuing Education program, intended for students with limited formal training in art and design, as well as those with a fine arts background or experience. However, the focus of the certificates is vocational. For each certificate, students take four required and four elective courses. They may be completed in two years of part-time study or one year of full-time study. Both are accredited by NASAD. Students are not eligible for financial aid.

**Graphic Design Certificate** The certificate in graphic design provides the practical and theoretical skills of a design professional. Students are taught design fundamentals, history, and current print, web, and interactive design applications.

**Illustration Certificate** The certificate in illustration provides a foundation in the basic practical and theoretical skills of illustration. Students may choose to focus on a particular aspect of illustration—commercial illustration, computer illustration, animation, or book illustration—or may acquire general skills to be used in a wide variety of activities within the field.

**Pre-College**

The Pre-College Summer Studio program is for high school students interested in the visual arts. The interdisciplinary curriculum combines studio work, critique and discussion, building a solid foundation of artistry, conceptualization, and technical skills. Coursework mirrors that of other SMFA programs. Students do not focus on one medium, rather they receive broad exposure to two-dimensional, three-dimensional, and digital courses, tools, and studios. Students from around the world spend four weeks on SMFA's campus, using the studios, working with faculty and graduate mentors, visiting the Museum of Fine Arts, and exploring Boston’s cultural and historic landmarks. Graduates of the program can earn up to four college credits. The Pre-College curriculum encompasses basic skills, experimentation, conceptual thinking, collaboration, problem solving techniques, critique, and discussion. The program also includes artist presentations, resources, and
one-on-one guidance regarding portfolio building, career paths in the arts, and the college application process.

**Other Aspects of the SMFA Curriculum**

*Career Development Curriculum*

SMFA offers students semester-long undergraduate courses in professional practices, providing opportunities for project-based, hands-on learning that helps build practical skills in basic financial literacy, including financial modeling, budgeting, and accounting; building a business, including creating a business plan, the fundamentals of management, seeking investment, and marketing. Guest speakers discuss the complex terrain of the creative economy with case studies and offer professional advice.

*Internship Program*

SMFA’s internship program, for which students earn up to four credits, gives undergraduate students the opportunity to gain real-world experience in addition to their art practice. With hands-on training in professional work environments, students exercise their creative skills and gain important knowledge and experience that informs their developing career path. SMFA staff monitor student progress, conduct site visits, conduct on-campus interviews, and evaluated and assess both supervisors and students. Students register for internships and staff help them identify and secure positions.

*The Office of Career Services*

The SMFA Office of Career Services (OCS) helps students identify and apply their broad range of skills—creative, technical, research, collaborative, entrepreneurial, and leadership—and make tangible connections to a wide range of art and non-art professional opportunities. The office conducts targeted outreach to students appropriate to all stages of their education. The office staff also collaborate with SMFA faculty to deliver content in classrooms, especially when course content is career-focused. OCS presently partners with faculty teaching senior thesis, Post-Baccalaureate, and other instructional areas by request.

*Exhibitions and Visiting Artists/Scholars Program*

The SMFA’s exhibition and visiting artists/scholars program complements both the graduate and undergraduate curricula by giving students direct experience with those artists and thinkers whose ideas are shaping contemporary art. The School typically hosts more than twenty visiting artists each semester. These artists, scholars and thinkers from around the world participate in lectures, events, and residencies. The SMFA’s Grossman Gallery also features two major international exhibitions each year.
There are numerous opportunities for students to exhibit on campus, including the annual Museum School Art Sale, curated student exhibitions throughout the School, and a student-run gallery at the Mission Hill building. Each year, the School hosts the Graduating Student Exhibition for graduating BFA, Diploma, and Post-Baccalaureate students, a special exhibition for senior thesis students, and off-campus MFA thesis exhibitions. Finally, select alumni have the opportunity to exhibit at the Museum of Fine Arts though our prestigious Traveling Scholars Fellowship program. Additionally, pedagogically important area shows are organized to bring student work out of the classroom and give it school and community wide visibility.

**Curriculum Development**

As part of the accreditation process, SMFA created a plan to assess and develop the curriculum. The first stage of this plan included formalizing the role of a faculty Curriculum Committee under the Faculty Senate. Program areas propose new curricula to the committee, materials are reviewed, and recommendations are made to the full Faculty Senate. The Senate then makes recommendations to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the School.

In the next year, all academic areas will review their curricula and refine program objectives. Common curricular content will emphasize context, global perspectives, and the broad interdisciplinary nature of the arts. Outcomes will emphasize both making and thinking, meaning both conceptual and technical competence. Likewise, SMFA also plans to expand the number of classes that have both studio and academic components. Finally, the discussion of individual areas will also include a formal proposal to combine smaller areas into larger divisions in an effort to create greater curricular coherence and foster even greater interdisciplinary work. These initiatives, too, will be reviewed by the Curriculum Committee and the Faculty Senate, approved by the Dean of the School, and be published in the School’s catalogue and on the website.

Learning objectives in general education and art history courses will include competencies in writing, as well as qualitative and quantitative analysis. Courses currently offered and expected to continue in English and Visual and Critical Studies cover a wide range of subjects, including non-western art history and culture and more traditional survey or creative writing courses. These course offerings will be expanded with new social science and humanities courses. Science and mathematics courses will be created with the artist in mind, with topics ranging from applied mathematical reasoning to materials and methods of art conservation. Additionally, SMFA participates in a consortium of Boston-area arts colleges—including music and theater schools—offering additional courses at partner campuses.

**Integrity in the Awarding of Academic Credit/Transfer Credit**

SMFA is committed to guaranteeing the integrity of its degrees and certificates. First, SMFA maintains national accreditation through the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD). NASAD establishes standards on the knowledge and skills necessary for each degree in
the arts, evaluates and accredits schools and programs in terms of quality and outcomes, and assures the public that programs and degrees provide competent instructors, adequate equipment and facilities, and sound curricula.

Reflecting common practice in higher education and to insure integrity of academic credit, course descriptions and degree and program requirements are posted on the online and printed versions of the catalogue. The term length is 15 weeks. Studio courses are either three hours or six hours per week and are worth two or four credits. Academic courses are three hours per week and are worth four credits each. Studio credits are taken in 2-credit increments that amount to three hours of in-class instruction and at least six expected hours outside of class per week. This is noted on the back of the transcript.

In academic courses, four semester hours of credit equals three hours of class instruction and at least six expected hours of outside work per week. This is currently noted on the back of transcripts from Tufts University. When SMFA is in candidacy and officially begins offering degrees that are not affiliated with Tufts, the SMFA transcript will include language regarding academic course credit.

Faculty include criteria for credit and attendance policies on course syllabi. They are posted online beginning at the time of the registration process so that students have appropriate information as they select courses each term. SMFA offers directed study courses as part of the undergraduate program: these require a formal written proposal and faculty signatures before registration can be approved.

**Transfer Credit**

SMFA accepts undergraduate transfer credit as appropriate from comparable institutions. The BFA handbook (soon to be consolidated into the student handbook) spells out this policy. Studio credits earned prior to admission to SMFA are transferred on a course-by-course basis and the transfer process must be completed prior to the beginning of the semester of entry. Students may transfer a maximum of 38 studio credits and a maximum of 7 academic courses.

At the moment, credits in the Tufts-affiliated BFA transfer to most art colleges and to many other colleges and universities. Some colleges and universities, however, do not currently accept SMFA’s credits, because SMFA is not regionally accredited. When SMFA offers the BFA and has achieved the status of candidacy for accreditation, course transferability will be widely accepted by peer institutions.

In the MFA program, no studio courses may be transferred from other institutions, as is common with the degree. Tufts restricts the number of academic courses eligible for transfer to one graduate level course; SMFA intends to retain this policy with its non-affiliated MFA.

The student handbook explains policies related to plagiarism and the misrepresentation of works. It states “any work [written or art-work] that has not been personally completed should not be
presented as one’s own.” Academic courses include training about plagiarism and proper citation of sources. SMFA’s writing center assists students in writing and helps them express themselves without using the words or ideas of others.

Assessment of Student Learning

Student Assessment and Evaluation

Enrolled students are evaluated on a credit/no credit basis in studio courses and by letter grades in academic courses. Faculty members state their evaluation criteria in each course in the syllabus (including attendance, technique, theory, class participation, writing essays/papers, etc). When relevant, this may vary by the student’s level or intended degree. Students received their studio credit during review boards until spring 2011.

Academic Assessment

For each academic course, the syllabus specifies learning objectives, such as developing discursive writing skills, understanding the complex relationships between art and other disciplines, and successfully presenting informed opinions on evolving ideas. Means for assessing a student’s comprehension of course concepts and content and if he or she has achieved the learning objectives include class presentations and participation, final and mid-term examinations, and essays and papers. Over the course of the semester, instructors meet with students to discuss progress and make suggestions for improvement when necessary. Each year, the Curriculum Committee audits all classes, reviews samples of student work, and reads student course assessments to determine how courses meet their stated learning objectives.

Studio Art Assessment

At the individual class level, faculty set criteria for successful completion of the course. Courses typically combine three critical course types: critique, seminar, and practice, and tend to emphasize one objective over another. Beginning level practice courses focus on learning technology and developing skills. This is easily assessed through course criteria stating expectations for acquisition of specific skills. Intermediate level practice courses focus on more complex skills applied to the production of assignment-driven work. In addition to the assessment of the application and appropriate use of tools/technology, faculty work with the student to develop both a conceptual and practical hands-on approach to working with various media and to help them articulate intentions and goals.

Seminars focus on research, writing, and presentation, which are quantifiable and measurable. Critique courses focus on students’ ability to speak to their own work, willingness to listen to and assimilate feedback, and the ability to talk about other students’ work. Historical and conceptual context and the discursive field with which the work engages form a platform of understanding and is a basis for assessing development.
The Review Board

BFA and MFA students enrolled in six or more credits of studio art classes in a semester have a review board at the end of each semester. Students meet with a team of faculty and students (two faculty and two students for BFA; three faculty and two graduate students for MFA). The faculty and student reviewers critique and assess the student’s body of work produced over the semester.

Review boards often provide the basis for a student's revision of his or her own artistic aims. The process gives students and faculty the opportunity to think about the art as the effect of integrated creative research, rather than as a set of isolated pieces created in different classes. By seeing the semester's work as a whole, faculty and students at the review board are able to recognize the explicit and implicit relationships between the works. This ability to understand the work, where the context is determined by the artist, allows the review board participants to draw out the artist's organizing questions, ideas, and aims that might not have been readily apparent. This experience also provides an opportunity for students to articulate and better understand the integration their studio projects and related academic work.

This individualized assessment is predicated in part on the philosophy that a student’s progress comes from the aggregate work, rather than specific work in individual classes.

The review board’s mission serves both assessment and pedagogical functions. On the assessment level, the review board evaluates student's progress in all courses against a set of benchmarks each semester. On the pedagogical level, the review board fosters and encourages independent practice that builds on course work. Independent work, as it develops and progresses, is a clear indication of a developing independent competence that may culminate in the senior thesis, and offers students the skills for working independently after graduation. Therefore, the review board has an important advising role, making recommendations about courses to take, faculty members to work with, articles or books to read, and other areas to research.

No credit is given during the review board, but review boards become more rigorous as the student matures.

First-semester MFA students must have their graduate studio advisor as one of their review board members. Each semester thereafter, one reviewer from the previous semester’s board must participate in the review board. The review board also approves MFA students for their thesis during the first semester of the second year.

Students are expected to speak and write coherently about their own work, and to demonstrate a growing understanding of the context in which their work is developing. The work of fellow students is a significant part of that discursive field and as such engaging with the ideas of others as a reviewer on the review boards of peers is critical to a student’s development.
Program and Area Review

Area and Program Assessment

Ongoing area and program assessment occurs at three levels in the institution.

First, students have the opportunity to evaluate each course at the end of each semester. Evaluations assess faculty performance and course content as it relates to expectations set in the course syllabus. Faculty members are expected to read and be prepared to discuss the evaluations with the Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs to make curricular or other adjustments as necessary. Evaluations are also used to create each semester’s course schedule and in individual faculty reviews.

Second, academic and studio areas assess curriculum annually. Revisions and additions are presented to the Curriculum Committee and then to the Faculty Senate for approval. These reviews include an examination of student course evaluations, the department or area’s own stated goals for its curriculum, the depth of courses offered within a studio or academic area, and a broader evaluation of the relationship between the curriculum and the evolving issues affecting education in the arts and the discipline. The Academic Affairs office assesses all area and program recommendations prior to completing each semester’s course schedule.

Finally, administrators and committees of the Boards of Trustees and Governors assess programs. Each year they review metrics such as enrollment, retention, yield, and rate of acceptance. They also discuss qualitative elements such as faculty and student outside exhibitions, prominence of visiting artists, and positive expansion of the SMFA name or alumni.

APPRAISAL

Undergraduate Programs

Under the leadership of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, the faculty recently began a comprehensive review of the BFA degree structure and corresponding curriculum in preparation for independent degree-granting status and accreditation. A committee of Visual and Critical Studies faculty is redesigning their academic offerings. SMFA hired a dedicated curriculum developer/consultant to assist faculty in this work. Studio faculty are working to re-sequence courses in their areas with an eye to improving transparency of learning levels for students as they plan their degree progression. The purpose of this work is to strengthen SMFA’s attention to outcome-based learning driven by program and degree level expectations for students.

The new Diploma to be introduced in 2014-2015 is a revised program, with fewer credits and a shorter timeline than the existing Diploma. It will require the introduction of a more robust summer school (starting summer 2015) and new required seminar courses. SMFA will need to review the
success of the program after its first year to insure that it meets its objectives of providing an experience that assists students in establishing and sustaining an independent studio practice.

Graduate Programs

Under the leadership of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, the graduate faculty has begun a comprehensive review of the existing MFA structure and curriculum in preparation for independent degree-granting accreditation. The graduate steering committee will work together with a small committee of Visual and Critical Studies faculty to design and implement the academic curriculum for the SMFA MFA, with assistance from the curriculum developer/consultant. The goal is to better integrate all courses into a re-envisioned MFA that clearly reflects outcome-based learning. The committee will work to bring closer together the objectives of studio and non-studio work and to assess the new curriculum design.

The Post-Baccalaureate program has functioned with steady enrollments in recent years and is, according to surveys, well received by students and faculty. However, SMFA does not track alumni enrollment in graduate programs through the National Student Clearinghouse. Using this available data would help SMFA understand its graduates and aid in program assessment.

Continuing Education, Pre-College, and Part-Time Certificate Programs

SMFA Pre-College program was suspended for summer 2014 due to construction on campus (see Standard Eight), and will be reinstated in summer 2015. It has been successful for many years with consistent enrollments, but will undergo a full curricular review before reinstatement.

Some Continuing Education courses currently hold seats for SMFA matriculated students and for Tufts students taking elective credits. This programming needs to be reorganized as non-credit; and not open for matriculated students working toward either the BFA or the Studio Diploma.

Enrollment in certificate programs has been stable for the past three years; we project that enrollment will increase with the introduction of a formal application process. We are reviewing certificate programs and introducing new courses to ensure that curriculum is current, especially in regards to technology and software.

Other Aspects of the Curriculum and Curriculum Development

SMFA’s curriculum is enhanced by opportunities provided by the Office of Career Services, internships, visiting artists, and exhibition opportunities. These activities contribute to the professional and personal development of students and enhance their engagement with the institution and their education.

The current general education offerings are designed to be sequential. The First Year Program, while currently classified as a studio course, requires analytical and writing skills that are emphasized in the
English classes taken in the first year. Students study Visual and Critical Studies in each of the three upper years, building from the general-themed courses to those addressing specific periods or movements.

Humanities, social science, and math/technology courses will be developed under the direction of the Dean and by full and part time faculty who will be hired over the next three years (including a chair for general education). These courses will be tailored to coordinate and link to studio courses to address natural connections with the visual arts (e.g., a biology or anatomy course designed specifically for artists). The development of the general education program will be phased in, as courses are needed in the three upper years of the BFA. Currently, we are forming a faculty committee tasked with visioning the BFA degree experience.

Studio and academic areas have reviewed their curricula in 2013-14 to develop learning levels and to re-sequence their courses to assist students in following an appropriate path of study for undergraduate work. In 2013-14, areas will begin to conduct modified reviews of individual areas to strengthen their learning objectives.

Likewise, learning outcomes development for the new general education requirements will be a priority as these courses are developed. Both the new curriculum consultant and the new faculty hired in 2014-15 will be tasked with curriculum analysis and mapping. The new general education courses will support the overall learning outcomes of the BFA degree as a whole.

**Transfer Credit/Credit Integrity**

SMFA has policies and practices to insure the integrity of credits at the School or those accepted from elsewhere. SMFA course credits are standard as in other higher education institutions. The Academic Affairs and the Registrar’s offices monitor transfer credits as well as student progress. Faculty members maintain assessment standards in classes and review boards.

NASAD accreditation provides for a review process that insures the quality of SMFA programs. NASAD standards include:

- Minimum number of credits per degree
- Essential competencies, experiences, and opportunities regarding art making
- Credit distribution between studio, art history, and general education
- Purpose of each degree
- Means of instruction, including studio, academic coursework, and exhibition opportunities
- For the BFA, specific competencies in general education, including the ability to think, speak, and write clearly.
- For the MFA, advanced professional competence and a breadth of understanding in art.

NASAD accreditation ensures that SMFA’s degrees are appropriate and will prepare students for professional practice, advanced study, and meaningful careers.
Learning, Area, and Program Assessment

The awarding of credit by faculty at the end of the semester is based on course goals and assignments and is important to evaluating a student's progress. The review board is a valued part of every student’s assessment at the end of each semester. However, this process is undergoing faculty review, now that review boards do not award course credit. Faculty are discussing ways to further assess student performance so that outstanding performance is rewarded. Since the review board is an important aspect of student advising, faculty are also considering how best to structure the review team, paying special attention to the first-year experience.

The process for area and program assessment at SMFA is in its formative stages. As there are no majors or departments, the focus of the current review has to this point been directed to small areas within the curriculum. The intention in the 2014-2015 academic year is to conduct a faculty-wide discussion about degree-level expectations for the new BFA (topic has already been introduced at faculty development day) and then to restructure the small areas into larger curricular and administrative units that then can be evaluated. This will take place at the committee level, during faculty meetings, and on faculty development day.

Projections

Curriculum and Curriculum Support

In spring 2014, SMFA will hire a curriculum consultant/faculty developer to assist with training and to advise faculty on best practices in higher education. This will entail working with the Academic Affairs office and faculty in degree development, including developing and refining specific learning outcomes for each degree and certificate.

SMFA will also hire a faculty chair for general education area; the search for the chair will take place in the 2014-2015 academic years. This faculty member will work with Academic Affairs and Visual and Critical faculty to develop a full liberal arts curriculum for the BFA, including humanities, STEM and social science courses that are designed for the visual artist.

In the next three years, SMFA will also complete and communicate a curricular pathways project with faculty areas (sequencing of studio curriculum). This is currently in development. Once developed, the Dean will work with faculty and the Curriculum committee to regularly assess these pathways.

In fall of 2015, the Dean, the Director of the MFA Program, the Graduate Steering committee, and the Visual and Critical Studies faculty will also develop and refine sequencing of new Visual and Critical Studies curriculum for the MFA degree.
Over the next five years, SMFA will increase support for the writing center and for ELL curriculum initiatives. This will be in conjunction with the additional staffing in general education and curriculum development, as well as library plans.

Improve library staffing and holdings to support new curriculum, as detailed in Standard Seven.

Over the next five years, the Academic Affairs office will research and integrate summer curricular offerings and research distance-learning offerings and possibilities.

In 2014-15, the Dean and the Associate Vice President for Non Degree Programs will restructure Continuing Education programs, to distinguish clearly between credit and non-credit programming. This will include an assessment of the Pre-College program, and a comprehensive assessment of curricula in Graphic Design and Illustration certificate programs with a particular emphasis on new technologies and changes to professional practice. This will also include articulating the relationship of the new degree programs to Continuing Education and the School’s ongoing partnership with Tufts University. The market and institutional capacity for new Continuing Education offerings, including professional development workshops and non-credit travel opportunities, will also be assessed.

Over the next three years, the Office of Career Services will develop more comprehensive internship opportunities in career areas. Early targets are software development and design and film and game production.

The Dean will work with faculty and the Curator to revamp visiting artists program to improve planning and communication of events so that they provide greater availability and relevance to students, faculty, and the curriculum as well as for outreach for community participation and partnerships. This is an ongoing initiative.

**Assessment Of Student Progress/Success**

In the next three years, the Academic Affairs office will increase outreach and provision of academic advising resources.

The Dean will continue to work with the faculty to insure regular assessment of student learning outcomes. This is an ongoing initiative.

The Dean will work with the Faculty Senate to establish assessment tools so that its degree and certificate programs can be assessed against learning outcomes and goals. This planning will begin once the learning objectives are formally articulated.
INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The faculty at SMFA are committed to maintaining and improving the quality of undergraduate and graduate programs. At present, we are reviewing and sequencing all studio curricula by area and building out the general education and Visual and Critical Studies curriculum for the new degree programs. The purpose is to continue to align the academic program with our mission and with the quality required of NASAD accreditation. SMFA is also reviewing and updating academic policies and procedures and the venues where these policies and procedures are published (print and web versions of faculty and student handbooks). The Curriculum Committee and the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs are collaborating to oversee these procedures. We are beginning to write a comprehensive assessment plan that will layout and quantify the assessment of student learning at all levels. By increasing our use of data, we will be able to enhance our academic effectiveness.
STANDARD FIVE: FACULTY

DESCRIPTION

SMFA’s 146 faculty members teach full and part-time, academics and studio art, and in degree and certificate programs as well as Continuing Education. There are also a small number of faculty members who teach studio art classes to Tufts University students on the Tufts campus.

Through the end of the 2013-14 academic year, SMFA faculty taught studio courses at SMFA and Tufts faculty taught academic courses (visual and critical studies and English) at SMFA. As part of the transition from Tufts-affiliated degrees to SMFA stand-alone degrees, the academic faculty will transition to become SMFA employees beginning in fall 2014. Most of the faculty making this transition will become regular faculty (described below), with all the associated rights and responsibilities. In the future, we will hire both regular and visiting academic faculty.

SMFA intentionally does not have a formal tenure system with traditional university categories. Faculty categories and definition of full and part-time categories are clearly articulated in the faculty handbook. Faculty categories include: regular faculty; continuing part-time faculty; visiting faculty; and graduate and post-graduate teaching fellows.

The table is a high-level summary of faculty in fall 2013. More detail is available in the data first forms. For clarity academic faculty, continuing education faculty, and Tufts University studio program faculty are listed separately.

<table>
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<th>Degree Certificate</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*faculty in more than one category are only counted once.

Regular faculty

Regular faculty members are the only category of faculty on multi-year contracts. The School hires new regular faculty members for a one-year fixed term contract, and renew the contracts through

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10 Six will be regular; six will be visiting part-time.
three levels of review over five years\textsuperscript{11}. Those with successful reviews are granted five-year rolling contracts. They remain on five-year rolling contracts until retirement, resignation, or curriculum change. Regular faculty can be full or part-time.

Continuing part-time faculty

Continuing part-time faculty have renewable one-year contracts and can be rehired each year. Normally, these are appointments for three or fewer teaching periods per semester, with a maximum of seven periods per academic year. Continuing part-time faculty are eligible to apply for regular positions or for full-time visiting positions when available. Continuing part-time faculty have full voting rights and are eligible to serve on the Faculty Senate. SMFA does not intend to hire any new continuing part-time faculty; it is a long-standing category that is being phased out through attrition and retirement.

Visiting faculty

Visiting faculty, both full and part-time, have one-year contracts. However, a visiting faculty member may not be employed for more than three consecutive academic years, except in unusual circumstances as determined by the President of the School or the Dean. SMFA believes that these faculty members are an important aspect of the faculty because they can contribute new ideas and methods to the areas, which is critical to being current in contemporary art-making practices. Turnover in this faculty category is expected. Visiting faculty may attend all faculty meetings and can serve on committees in some circumstances, but do not have voting rights.

Graduate and post-graduate teaching fellows

SMFA also hires graduate and post-graduate teaching fellows. The former are current MFA students; the latter are alumni who have graduated from the SMFA with a Master of Fine Arts within one year of hire. These are faculty teaching positions, not graduate assistantship positions. Post-graduate teaching fellows are part-time faculty who teach one or two courses per year. Teaching fellows may attend all faculty meetings, but also do not have any voting rights. Not only do these faculty help SMFA fill out its roster, the positions serve as teaching experience for those that want to pursue an academic or teaching career.

Continuing Education faculty

Continuing Education faculty receive a contract, known as a letter of appointment, from the Continuing Education office. Typical Continuing Education faculty categories: continuing part-time; part-time visiting; graduate teaching fellow and post-graduate teaching fellow. Visiting faculty in the

\textsuperscript{11} The first of these is an less-formal interim review in the second semester of the first year of teaching.
Continuing Education department are not restricted to a maximum of three years. The Associate Vice President for Non Degree Programs hires this faculty with input from current faculty and staff.

SMFA’s student-faculty ratio for degree and certificate programs is 8:1. This is lower than the average of all AICAD schools and on par with AICAD schools of similar size. SMFA’s percentage of full-time faculty headcount is 34%, which is higher than other AICAD schools.

Faculty salaries are in line or slightly higher compared to faculty at other AICAD schools in the same size quartile. AICAD faculty salaries are loosely correlated to size; larger schools have higher average salaries. SMFA full-time visiting faculty salaries are also competitive.

Seventy percent of SMFA’s faculty have a terminal degree in their field. The faculty handbook has an articulated goal that 67% of faculty have a terminal degree. SMFA’s percentage of faculty with a terminal masters degree or PhD is greater than its AICAD competitors. In fall 2012, 79% of SMFA’s faculty had either an MFA or a PhD; in comparison, only 69% of faculty in SMFA’s size cohort had a terminal degree. A terminal degree is not a requirement for hiring new faculty members; those without terminal degrees must demonstrate extraordinary professional achievement.

The faculty handbook was approved in August 2010, and revision is currently underway to update the handbook with current practices. A significant example of a needed revision is the Faculty Senate, which was created in 2013 and therefore not included in the current edition of the handbook. Policies and procedures described in the handbook intentionally do not refer to Continuing Education faculty. Therefore, policy descriptions below do not include those faculty.

In addition to full descriptions of the categories above, the faculty handbook outlines rights, responsibilities, and benefits specific to faculty members. This includes sabbatical and leave of absence policies, contract progression and renewal, voting and service on committees, a statement on academic freedom, and the availability and eligibility of travel and enrichment grants. These benefits are available to regular and continuing part-time faculty, and not available to visiting faculty.

The Museum of Fine Arts employee handbook outlines traditional benefit categories such as health and dental insurance, retirement annuity contributions, disability insurance, etc. The employee handbook also includes guidelines for professional and ethical practice, as well as other human resources policies.

**Searches and Reviews**

The faculty handbook outlines search processes and policies for all faculty. The decision to post for regular positions is made by the President and the Dean after receiving faculty input. Using course enrollments, current area structure and load, and other curricular needs, they identify areas where

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12 For fall 2013. For the visual arts, the terminal degree is the Master in Fine Arts. For all other fields, the terminal degree is the PhD.
there is a demonstrated need for permanent faculty. Criteria to search for a visiting faculty member includes the need to supplement in a specific area or media and /or sabbatical replacement.

All searches include review of academic and professional record and contact with references. Communications about all faculty positions states that SMFA actively encourages and seeks a diverse academic, cultural, and ethnic community and seeks applications from underrepresented groups. Search committees are comprised of students and faculty within and outside of the desired areas. Members of the administration are not part of the committees. When the search committee finds a suitable candidate, they submit a recommendation to the Dean and President, who negotiate salary and contract specifics such as load, review board commitment, and release time. Regular faculty searches are national or international in scope; visiting faculty searches are usually regional. In the past several years, new faculty positions have been designed to emphasize the importance of multi- or inter-disciplinary work.

Written contracts outline for all faculty the teaching, service, advising and review board expectations for the upcoming year or semester.

Graduate fellowship teaching positions are posted and supervised by the area representative. Graduate and post-graduate students are eligible to apply for posted positions. Fellows are chosen based on criteria in the position description, and are considered faculty members.

The faculty handbook describes performance reviews for regular and continuing part-time faculty. The handbook articulates review criteria, including value to students, artistic development, value to the area (department), and school-wide contributions:

- Effective teaching and continued growth as a teacher
- Effective advising, serving as a role model or mentor for students
- Fostering a community climate
- Actively participating in one’s field, by development as an artist
- Competence in a discipline or disciplines taught within an area’s curriculum
- Commitment to the artistic and intellectual life of the SMFA, i.e. exhibitions, symposia, faculty lectures, SMFA governance, etc.

There are three formal reviews by the faculty affairs committee (a senate committee) for regular faculty who progressing towards, but not yet on five-year rolling contracts. They are also regularly informally reviewed by their area and the Dean. Faculty members submit letters of reference and evidence supporting the criteria above. The faculty affairs committee also reviews regular faculty members who are already on five-year rolling contracts, at intervals of five to eight years (post rolling contract reviews). This review is for developmental purposes for the faculty being reviewed, and can also lead to a special merit salary increase.

The faculty affairs committee reviews continuing part-time faculty members every five to eight years. The review criteria include teaching, art-making, and a professional career. Service to the areas and
to the school significantly benefit the evaluation, but are not a specific review requirement. The purpose of the review is to improve and support performance. A successful review can result in a merit raise.

Area representatives conduct informal and unstructured annual reviews of visiting faculty members. The review criteria include student evaluations and conversations with other faculty members. The representative discusses any concerns with the faculty member. A successful informal review does not necessarily lead to a new appointment.

SMFA has a process in place for students to evaluate their courses and faculty. Through the end of FY 2013, students reviewed course and faculty with paper evaluations; these yielded a high response rate, but were not useful for efficient analysis. Beginning fall 2014, SMFA uses online course evaluations, enabling the Academic Affairs office to analyze courses across divisions and areas.

In the Continuing Education division, students evaluate all faculty members using a paper form during the final class session. The Associate Vice President of Non-Degree Programs reviews each evaluation and meets with faculty members to discuss issues and make necessary adjustments.

Regular faculty members in the area, assess and coach graduate and post-graduate teaching fellows throughout the semester. Other than the end-of-semester reviews, there is no formal process for reviewing these faculty members (please note that most are part-time visiting faculty).

**Governance**

In spring 2013, SMFA faculty formally created a Faculty Senate. Prior to the creation of the senate, the faculty conducted business via a number of standing and ad-hoc committees. Chairs of these committees participated in an informal group within the Dean's advisory committee, to share information across committees. This group had no other formal power.

The charge of the Senate is to “… assume broad responsibilities for fostering high academic standards and for participating in decisions and addressing concerns involving the quality of education at SMFA, and the morale and well-being of its faculty and students.”

Creating the senate required approving bylaws and voting in members. The School’s Boards of Trustees and Governors also voted to approve the senate bylaws. The chair of the senate is an ex officio, voting member of the Board of Governors.

The bylaws outline current senate practice:

- Standing committees and advisory committees
  - Curriculum
  - Graduate steering

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13 Due to the creation of the Senate, the Dean's advisory committee no longer exists.
• Voting rules, specifying that faculty vote for members of the senate only in their own category or rank
• Terms of service for three years
• Meetings held five times per academic year, plus ad hoc meetings as needed
• Student representation of one graduate and one undergraduate student
• Appoint non-senate faculty to committees

Apart from the senate, each studio and academic area has a faculty representative (area representative) responsible for administrative matters, including: coordinating curriculum, overseeing faculty searches, submitting and monitoring area budgets, and general oversight. Area representatives meet as a group three times each semester.

Minutes for faculty senate meetings, area representative meetings, and faculty meetings are posted on mySMFA (see Standard Eight for explanation of mySMFA). The Curriculum committee posts working documents or agendas to mySMFA as appropriate.

**Teaching and other responsibilities**

The faculty handbook enumerates teaching and service load requirements for SMFA faculty in each faculty category and will be updated to include the new academic faculty. The School’s teaching and service load requirement for studio and academic faculty is on par with other AICAD schools for studio courses. For academic courses, the requirement for the faculty transitioning from Tufts to SMFA will increase from 2-2 to 3-2 in the 2014-15 academic year to be more compatible with AICAD schools and to be more internally equitable.

Faculty responsibilities include requirements for committee service, advising, and participation in the review board. Release periods include election to the Faculty Senate, appointment as area representative or faculty program manager, or graduate advising.

The faculty handbook also outlines a formal grievance process. A faculty member may initiate a grievance if he or she believes his or her academic freedom, professional standing, or economic position have been adversely affected by the School or another faculty member.

**Teaching and Advising**

**Undergraduate advising**
Both faculty and staff advise undergraduate students. Admissions officers advise first semester undergraduates (BFA and diploma students) regarding course selection, since these staff members are most knowledgeable about new students’ portfolios. In addition to their studio course load, all first-year students take the First Year Program\textsuperscript{14} course as well as one academic course (preferably English).

After enrollment, all students work with academic advisors (staff) and faculty advisors, whom they are required to see each semester. The academic advisors advise students about degree completion matters, courses that count toward their degree requirements (especially general education), and courses with available space. SMFA does not plan to change this structure once achieving the status of candidacy.

Entering students (including transfer students) are also assigned a faculty advisor and mentor. Full-time regular faculty members typically act as advisors and mentors and the School attempts to assign an equal number of advisees to each faculty member. For tracking purposes, this relationship is technically only in place for two semesters, but faculty members can continue to mentor these students once a relationship is built. In practice, faculty advisors meet with students at the beginning of their first semester to discuss curricular interests, course selection, orientation, and registration. They schedule a follow-up meeting later in that semester in order to review progress, discuss and answer questions concerning review boards, and address registration for the next semester. The faculty advisor is available to the student for the full year, but they are not required to meet during the second semester.

Because this structure and process serves Tufts BFA students for both academic and studio advising, SMFA does not anticipate needing to significantly expand the advising program when it offers its own stand-alone degrees.

**Graduate advising**

Each MFA student has a faculty advisor. These faculty work with MFA students to advise them on path of study and on their thesis, and are assigned based on the students’ interests and portfolios. Every attempt is made to ensure the advisor is proficient in similar media. These advisors are required to be part of the final critique in a student’s thesis exhibition.

The faculty program chair advises post-baccalaureate students. For the first semester, advising is based on student interest and their portfolio. For the second semester, it is closely tied to critiques and feedback from the first semester. The program chair has regular interactions with students in the classroom and in their studios, to provide immediate guidance regarding the students’ art work and development.

**Review Boards**

\textsuperscript{14} Students who transfer from another independent art college are often able to waive the FYP requirement.
Part of SMFA’s method of student evaluation and assessment is the review board. Each semester, a review board of peers and faculty members individually critique students on their semester’s entire body of work.

Review boards are as an essential part of the curriculum. They provide a qualitative evaluation of each student’s artistic development and studio practice. Recent policy changes to require class attendance and award credit on a per class basis underscores accountability on a course by course basis.

This individualized assessment is an in-depth discussion and evaluation of the students’ artistic progress, technically, conceptually, and critically. The review draws connections between classes, gives students the opportunity to present emerging independent work, and provides an evaluation of a student’s development across and between semesters. The reviews also help faculty identify future courses to aid in a student’s development. Since students serve on review boards as reviewers, they also provide students with experience and practice with in-depth critiques.

Scholarship, Research, and Creative Activity

Scholarship

All of SMFA’s studio art faculty members are practicing artists. In preparation for the NEASC site visit, all faculty submitted updated vitae. They are also required to record their artistic activity as part of the contract review process. And on a regular basis, we encourage faculty members to work with the Academic Affairs office and the Communications Office to keep their professional information on the SMFA website current. Since SMFA has not yet reviewed the academic faculty, the only available data is from self-reporting and the most recent vitae submission.

Each year, SMFA awards a small number of competitive grants (travel and/or enrichment) to faculty to pursue their creative interests. On average, four faculty receive enrichment grants of $1800; nine faculty receive travel grants of $800.

Regular faculty members are eligible to apply for sabbaticals. The purpose of sabbaticals is to give the faculty the “…opportunity to pursue his or her own interests in ways that nourish and support development as an artist, [scholar], or teacher.” As is the practice at most institutions, SMFA faculty on one-semester sabbaticals receive their full salary; faculty on two-semester sabbaticals are paid two-thirds of their salary. Continuing part-time faculty are also eligible for sabbaticals.

Academic Freedom

The School supports and protects academic freedom for all faculty, regardless of formal status. The faculty handbook and student handbook both specify that students have similar freedom in the
classroom and studio. For the faculty, academic freedom includes teaching, creation of art, research and publication. The faculty handbook states:

Academic freedom is essential to the purpose of the SMFA. All faculty members, regardless of their contract status, shall have the same academic freedom. Faculty members and students are entitled to freedom in teaching, creating, doing research, and publishing. Faculty members and students are entitled to freedom in the classroom and in the studio. The SMFA recognizes and endorses that a wide range of subject matter may be introduced in the studio or classroom, and that difference of opinion is a normal aspect of free academic inquiry and teaching. Although it is proper to incorporate both the knowledge and the beliefs of the faculty member into that which is taught, the freedom to teach must be joined by a constant effort to distinguish between knowledge and belief.

The rights of faculty members to academic freedom carry with them duties and responsibilities. Faculty members are citizens and representatives of the SMFA. When a faculty member speaks or writes as a citizen, she or he is free from institutional censorship or discipline, but she or he should also make every effort to indicate that she or he is not an institutional spokesperson. In working with students, faculty members are expected to recognize that students are also free to discuss pertinent subject matter in the classroom.

**APPRAISAL**

The faculty handbook was written in 2009 and revised in 2010. Many items are out of date or in need of revision. While an annual revision is not necessary, there is need for a more consistent update schedule to reflect changes in policy or process, as well as other institutional changes.

The faculty handbook and faculty contracts clearly define SMFA’s faculty categories, which we acknowledge may be considered unusual. The lack of a tenure system is not unusual: only 11 of the 43 AICAD colleges have a formal tenure system.

The faculty is adequate in size and composition for current operations. The percentage of full-time faculty, the percentage with a terminal degree, and the raw numbers are all above NEASC and NASAD standards and requirements, and in comparison to our competitors. This implies that SMFA does not put undue pressure or reliance on part-time faculty. Continuing part-time faculty are integrated into the areas, as is evidenced by participation in committees and curricular planning. SMFA compares favorably to other AICAD schools in terms of salary and benefits.

The number of academic faculty members is adequate for current operations. However, the academic faculty will need to grow when SMFA offers stand-alone degrees (once receiving candidacy status with NEASC), specifically in the areas of STEM, humanities, and social science.
The faculty handbook explains SMFA’s system of promotion/contract progression and reviews, which is well understood. However, several factors place a high burden on members of the faculty affairs committee: The committee cannot easily plan its workload, because regular faculty eligible for post-rolling contract reviews can be reviewed over a range of years at their discretion (five to eight, for example) which has led to a backlog of reviews; and the requirement of three formal reviews for faculty progressing towards five-year rolling contracts is excessive. The 2014 update to the faculty handbook will reflect changes to this schedule and policy.

Currently, each faculty member being reviewed chooses external reviewers, who write letters in support of the faculty member. A more formal structure with guidelines, specific questions to be addressed in the recommendation, and requirements for reviews from outside sources would help SMFA better assess the faculty members.

As stated above, faculty report on their own scholarship, exhibition, and studio activity. This information is often submitted in inconsistent formats or to different administrative departments. The result is that SMFA is not able to accurately analyze or assess scholarship throughout a faculty member’s tenure or make comparisons within areas or divisions. Better collection, storage, and analysis of this data is needed.

Until FY 2014, nearly all faculty members who requested sabbatical were granted it and they could request sabbaticals over a range of years. The replacement and sabbatical costs were difficult to budget and this sometimes led to unpredictable absences in areas or in service responsibilities. Beginning this fiscal year, the faculty affairs committee will review sabbatical requests and make a recommendation to the Dean. Additionally, the new policy requires that faculty members present or display the scholarship or creative activity they engaged in during the sabbatical. The 2014 edition of the faculty handbook will include this new policy.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that faculty members have a mixed understanding of assessment of learning outcomes (which are a required element in course syllabi). The faculty affairs office has documentation about learning outcomes, and they were discussed in detail at the most recent faculty development day\textsuperscript{15}. This is an area where SMFA has made strides in the past several years (when syllabi were not even required) and which will benefit from continual training.

The School has also made significant improvements over the past several years in the area of student advising. First-year undergraduates are now required to see an academic advisor each semester and there are articulated review board guidelines for both students and faculty. The in-progress improvement of the Jenzabar advising module promises to significantly help staff with the degree audit. The goal is to implement an online tool for students so they can more easily monitor their own progress towards degree completion.

\textsuperscript{15} Faculty development day is an annual in-service day in the spring semester for all faculty.
SMFA does not put undue dependence on teaching fellows as a faculty category. In practice each area handles mentoring, training and evaluation of teaching fellows. Each area also oversees the application process for available positions, and the Dean makes the final hiring (as with any faculty member).

Continuing Education faculty members use the standard Museum employee handbook but do not have a formal faculty handbook. These faculty are mostly continuing part-time or part-time visiting faculty. The latter group presents SMFA with some unresolved issues. Even though their courses are reviewed, there is no procedure in place for a formal performance review and they are exempt from the three-year maximum hire policy.

Continuing Education faculty members who also teach degree students are covered under the faculty handbook. These faculty members sign two contracts, one for each division. The School needs to develop a formal policy regarding the pay, status, review process for these faculty members.

**Projection**

As was mentioned, the faculty handbook is currently being revised. Examples of expected changes include: reflecting the transition of the Tufts faculty to SMFA; updating the intellectual property section; and updating sabbatical policies. SMFA expects to present the handbook to faculty for comments and approval in the 2014-2015 academic year. This will be followed by a review from the Board of Trustees Academic Affairs committee.

The Academic Affairs office and the Faculty Affairs committee will revise the faculty review process. The key changes will be to enact a more exact timeline for reviews, to make the workload more predictable, and to add additional reviews and/or letters of recommendation from arm’s length external sources. The goal is to include these changes in the current update to the faculty handbook, though implementation of the changes may happen over several years.

Similarly, the faculty sabbatical policy is in the midst of a formal review and revision. Many of these revisions are already in place in practice. Changes to the written policy will be incorporated into the revised faculty handbook. SMFA will formalize a process for requesting sabbaticals which will include a formal application, a review by the Faculty Affairs committee, and recommendations to the Dean. Faculty will also be required to report on their sabbatical, via an exhibition, lecture, etc. In the 2014-2015 academic year, the Academic Affairs office will establish a faculty update form. This form will allow staff to track, analyze and promote faculty scholarship and related exhibition or creative activity.

The Associate Dean of Undergraduate programs will implement online degree audit capabilities on mySMFA for undergraduate BFA students in the 2014-2015 academic year. This will be expanded to all other degrees and certificates by spring 2016.
SMFA will institute a more comprehensive method of mentoring and evaluating graduate and postgraduate teaching fellows. This, along with the corresponding learning outcomes and curricular goals, will be developed over the next three years by the graduate program’s office in cooperation with area reps and the dean’s office.

The School will create and refine a plan to hire academic faculty to teach the other courses in the general education curriculum. The hiring process will be phased and will depend in part on the results of analysis and discussions led by the general education faculty chair (search to take place in 2014-2015) and the curriculum developer (slated to be hired spring 2014). The plan includes specifying the distribution of these faculty members (full-time or part-time, regular or visiting).

SMFA will increase support for faculty and staff to more consistently articulate course and program learning outcomes and objectives. The curriculum developer will work with faculty and staff to map and assess the objectives.

**Institutional Effectiveness**

SMFA uses several tools to assess the qualifications and effectiveness of faculty members. One tool is surveys of alumni and graduating students. These have indicated that faculty have a positive influence on students at SMFA, who consistently give the faculty high ratings. Another tool is benchmarking SMFA against other AICAD colleges, using measures such as salary, load, years of service, and more.

SMFA meets NASAD’s standards for faculty and faculty support. However, the Academic Affairs office works to improve the structures that support faculty members. Recent examples of improvements include the creation of the Faculty Senate and the revision process and forthcoming revision of the faculty handbook.
STANDARD SIX: STUDENTS

SMFA approaches our work with students as one of personal relationship, support, and guidance. This approach enables the staff and faculty to understand student needs and challenges in a real-world way and apply this awareness to our daily work. Our students continue to display the characteristics of an interdisciplinary approach to art-making and self-direction in their work that are hallmarks of the School’s mission.

DESCRIPTION

Admissions

SMFA works to enroll into the undergraduate and graduate students who will thrive artistically, academically, and personally and who will contribute positively to the high standards of the student body. Our efforts align with the institution’s mission, the Statement of Principles and Good Practices of the National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC), and standards of the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD). Admissions policies and procedures are disclosed to prospective students via the SMFA website and printed recruitment materials.

During our recruitment season, admissions staff travel to locations in the United States and around the world to give approximately 240 presentations on the School's offerings to audiences such as high school art classes, high school guidance offices, community college transfer events, and secondary school teacher events. Admissions representatives attend 85 college fairs and portfolio days and host 10 events each year.

The Admissions department reviews the application, portfolio, artist’s statement essay, transcripts, and two letters of recommendation from each applicant. The School does not require SAT or ACT scores, however applicants are encouraged to submit them if they have taken the tests. Additional requirements include the TOEFL score for applicants whose primary language is not English and a GED score from applicants who are home-schooled.

Successful applicants to the undergraduate programs demonstrate a passion for their art making, basic achieved skill levels, a high degree of potential for growth, and a commitment and ability to be successful in an academic environment. Successful applicants to graduate programs demonstrate an advanced view of the world of contemporary art, advanced technical skill, a cohesive body of work, conceptual thought and skill, and the ability to be successful in an academic environment.
Student Affairs and Retention

The Student Affairs mission is to help students grow in their artistic practice and provide opportunities for varied exploration and engagement as part of a total educational experience. In order to fulfill this mission, resources and programs proactively and reactively address a variety of areas related to the student condition.

Processes for measuring and monitoring all aspects of student success are in place to help support the institution’s and the department’s missions. Retention and graduation rates are organized and analyzed by program to evaluate student success in each area of the School. The Student Affairs office also gathers qualitative information from student exit interviews regarding all areas of the student experience, compiling relevant student information such as degree program, financial aid information, age, home address, etc.

SMFA also analyzes retention and graduation data from AICAD competitor schools. This benchmarking helps inform school administration on the effectiveness of SMFA’s programs and support services.

Further, graduating students complete an exit survey to share satisfaction with their specific experience at SMFA. Those survey results help SMFA assess and evaluate programs, areas, processes, and department within the School.

The School’s Chief Retention Officer, the Director of Student Affairs, manages all data related to student satisfaction, retention, and graduation, and communicates regularly with the Vice President of Enrollment Management.

For fall 2014, SMFA has secured longer-termed leases for increased dormitory space. It will consist of two brownstones within a mile of the SMFA campus; Beacon House and Fenway House. Beacon House is located in the Audubon Circle neighborhood of Brookline at 1047 Beacon Street and Fenway House is located in the Fenway neighborhood of Boston at 54 The Fenway.

This increased inventory will provide 38 more beds, for a total of 89 spaces for first-year students. Four resident assistants will staff these two buildings, leaving 85 available beds for incoming freshmen. This additional inventory means that for the first time, SMFA can require first time freshmen to live in on-campus housing.

Having full control over these spaces also gives SMFA the opportunity to program events and activities designed for its students. In addition to their safety-related responsibilities, resident assistants will be required to schedule at least two events in each brownstone per month. This not only increases SMFA’s student support system, but it also provides the opportunity to expand on-campus residential life from a programmatic standpoint. Specifically, it provides an opportunity for increased faculty presence in the residence halls and creates the opportunity for a systematic wellness based residential programming philosophy.
Recognizing that locating and securing off-campus housing options can be incredibly challenging for full-time students, SMFA provides resources and services to support students as they look for housing. The Assistant Director of Residence Life coordinates all support activities related to off-campus housing and maintains lists of real estate agents, online information, and other resources in to assist students with locating housing and/or roommates. Students are also encouraged to take advantage of the Pro Arts Consortium network. SMFA is a member of this organization, and students can use the consortium housing page to locate roommates from other consortium schools.

The School’s Café des Arts offers dining services to students, for purchase via cash or credit card. For fall 2014, the School will implement a meal plan for residential students with Chartwells, the dining service for local Fenway colleges. Other students may sign up for a declining balance meal plan, to purchase means with a pre-paid meal card.

In addition to residential life, SMFA offers other services in aid student success, most of them managed by the Student Affairs office. This includes health and wellness services and programs, disability services, study abroad programs, international student advising, and student activities.

SMFA provides health services for both residential and non-residential students through a partnership with the Simmons College Health Center, which is a 10-minute walk from SMFA. This is available to all students who receive health insurance through SMFA’s plan. That plan does not require co-payments or deductibles. Simmons Health Center is also available for students with other insurance providers. The health center provides primary medical care on site and refers students who require specialty care to providers at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.

Counseling and Mental Health Services at SMFA provides free, on-site counseling services to SMFA students. Counselors work with students on personal problems, psychological or emotional distress, and academic and work difficulties. Students may be seen for six to ten sessions per academic year. If there is available space, more sessions may be available. When more extensive counseling is required, students may be referred to qualified community resources for ongoing or specialized care; however, referrals are subject to coverage offered by the student’s personal health insurance.

SMFA is committed to understanding and supporting the particular needs and rights of students with disabilities. The Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies serves as the School’s disabilities officer and handles requests for special accommodations on an individual basis. Reasonable accommodations are provided, assuming they do not impose undue hardship on the operation of the School or alter an essential part of the academic program. Students with disabilities provide clinical documentation before receiving accommodations. The School requires that such evaluations are current and performed by a professional, such as a licensed psychologist, education specialist, or
physician. Students who disagree with a determination made by the School regarding a disability may use the institution’s grievance procedures.

SMFA seeks to imbue all artists, both domestic and international, with global awareness and appreciation for multiculturalism. This includes supports for international matriculated students and study abroad and exchanges. SMFA has a thriving international student population (16%). The Assistant Director of Student Life serves as the coordinator for all international student support, orientation, and programs. The Assistant Director is responsible for advising all international students on visa requirements and assisting students with changes of status, including program extensions, reinstatements, and applications for optional practical training.

Recognizing that artists who engage in international study benefit from being immersed in a new culture and geographic region, SMFA offers a variety of opportunities for both domestic and international exchange. SMFA pre-approved credits earned in these institutions to count towards SMFA degrees (including the current Tufts-affiliated BFA and MFA). The Assistant Director of Student Life is responsible for coordinating and implementing all exchange programs, in addition to the support and resources that these programs require. As of spring 2014, SMFA offers a direct exchange for undergraduates with the following international institutions:

- ArtEZ Institute of the Arts, Enschede, The Netherlands
- Bezalel Academy of Arts & Design, Jerusalem, Israel
- École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, France
- Haute École des Arts du Rhin, Strasbourg, France
- Edinburgh College of Art, Edinburgh, Scotland
- F+F Schule für Kunst und Mediendesign, Zurich, Switzerland
- Karel de Grote-Hogeschool: Sint Lucas Antwerpen, Antwerp, Belgium
- Koç University, Istanbul, Turkey
- National College of Art & Design, Dublin, Ireland
- University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa (anticipated spring 2015)

As another means for SMFA students to expand both their practice and understanding of their surroundings, SMFA offers exchange opportunities with 34 art institutions in the United States and Canada. These exchanges are made possible via SMFA’s membership in the Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design (AICAD).

Each SMFA student is required to attend a pre-departure orientation which includes discussions on living and traveling abroad; medical and travel insurance; general travel safety; culture shock and reverse culture shock; and the return home. Incoming exchange students to SMFA attend a session

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16 Documentation requirements are based on such factors as the nature of the disability, the extent of prior testing, and considerations of medical necessity. The medical reports provided should contain specific academic recommendations.
at the new student orientation dedicated to the same topics, addressing their time in the United States and adjusting to SMFA. These programs ensure that all students that participate in any exchange opportunity have the most support possible, and increase the likelihood of student success. Over the last 4 years, SMFA has hosted a total of 34 exchange students and has sent a total of 34 of our students overseas to study with partners.

SMFA also has opportunities for students to be involved in planning, committees, and governance. Elected student representatives participate in many committees (Curriculum committee, Faculty Senate, exhibitions committee, information technology committee, and library committee). This provides student with the opportunity to serve in leadership roles and directly engage with school administration. Students who are able to complete a full year of service are eligible to run for election, which is held in April of each year. This will be refined as SMFA moves forward with the student government (see Standard Three and projections below).

These elected committee student representatives are required to attend monthly forums that are open to the entire SMFA community. These forums are sponsored by the office of Student Affairs and serve as an outlet for students to voice their concerns and opinions on any topic related to their experience at SMFA.

Other student-only committees organize events and advocate for the student experience. SMFA’s student programming organization is Student Body Incorporated. The objective of Student Body Incorporated (SBinc) is to support the student body through organizing events and activities that improve the student experience. Advised by the Assistant Director of Student Life, SBinc manages and approves spending of the student activities fee and provides all students with the ability to request funding for student driven events, clubs, and initiatives. SBinc meetings are open to the entire student body.

The Student Affairs advisory board is a tool for facilitating dialogue between the student body and the Director of Student Affairs. Feedback from the advisory board provides critical insight on all facets of the student condition and affects the direction of the Student Affairs Division. The board is comprised of six elected students, three graduate and three undergraduate.

SMFA students are expected to be aware of their rights and responsibilities. Through judicial policies published in the student handbook, the School strives to create an environment that is conducive to the core mission. Inherent in the mission is the need to foster a community that is welcoming and respectful of cultural, artistic, and individual differences. Each person is expected to focus on the development of his or her own creative process and to respect diverse points of view and every individual’s right to self-expression. The learning process thrives on mutual consideration and is vastly diminished without mutual respect. All members of the SMFA community have both a right to benefit from the School’s programs and facilities and the responsibility to respect the rights of others. Goodwill and cooperation are important in our diverse community and neighborhood and should be exercised at all times.
SMFA is committed to providing students with the following opportunities:

- The pursuit of artistic studies free from undue disturbance or interference from others;
- The chance to voice one’s opinions and objections where appropriate; and
- Participation in school committees and meetings where appropriate.

In order to safeguard these opportunities and provide a safe environment that is conducive to learning, individuals are expected to exhibit good judgment and to adhere to the policies outlined in the student handbook. The Director of Student Affairs is the institution’s Chief Judicial Officer and implements and oversees all aspects of SMFA’s judicial process. Any student complaint regarding judicial decisions is dealt with using SMFA’s grievance procedures, which are clearly stated in the student handbook.

In addition to SMFA policies and procedures, all students that take part in Tufts-affiliated programs are also responsible for being aware of Tufts University disciplinary procedures. Any violations of the Tufts University student conduct code that occur on, or have an impact on, the Tufts campus may also be addressed through Tufts University policies and procedures, in addition to the procedures outlined in the SMFA student handbook.

**Financial Aid**

SMFA is approved by the United States Department of Education to participate in student financial assistance programs authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965. The School currently awards federal and state financial aid for the Bachelor of Fine Arts, Studio Diploma and Post Baccalaureate programs. Federal aid for the Master of Fine Arts, Master of Arts in Teaching and the Five Year Dual Degree program are awarded by Tufts University. Additionally, SMFA funds two institutional aid programs. The SMFA scholarship is a merit-based scholarship program that is awarded to students who demonstrate artistic and/or academic excellence in the admissions application and show potential for success in the program to which they are applying. Second, the SMFA grant is a need-based program that offers additional aid to students who demonstrate need on financial aid applications. In anticipation of the launch of new degree programs, the Director of Financial Aid will work with the Department of Education to include any future new programs in the school’s Eligibility and Certification Approval Report (ECAR).

The Financial Aid office is comprised of the Director of Financial Aid, two Assistant Directors of Financial Aid and a part-time Financial Aid Assistant. The Director is responsible for ensuring that all aid is awarded in compliance with federal and state law and regulations and is in alignment with the mission of the school. The Assistant Directors work closely with both students and families counseling on type of aid available, educating on loan debt and potential repayment at graduation. Each incoming new student is offered a 30-minute planning session with the office staff to cover all of this information in detail. These planning sessions continue each spring semester for continuing students to assist in planning for the upcoming academic year. Additionally, each award letter produced for subsequent years outlines the cumulative amount of loans the student has incurred and
what future repayment would look like. The department is committed to assisting students with comprehensive financial planning providing clear and consistent information on debt management throughout their path of study.

In the 2012/2013 academic year, 74% of students enrolled in SMFA aided programs were awarded some type of federal or state financial aid. Additionally, 97% of students enrolled in those same programs received some form of SMFA institutional aid. The average institutional aid award was $9,917. SMFA also awards institutional aid for the Master of Fine Arts program. In 2012/2013, the average MFA award was $10,756. The college’s default rate stood at 4.1% for FY 2011, the most recent data available. The Financial Aid office also coordinates student employment programs that include Federal Work Study and college student employment. In the fall of 2013, 210 students were employed on-campus in these programs.

**APPRAISAL**

**Admissions**

SMFA has seen fluctuation in enrollment over the last 10 years that stabilized in Fall 2011. Since 2011, graduate enrollments have exceeded budgeted goals and are expected to continue to increase slightly. In fall 2011 and fall 2012 undergraduate enrollments increased from the previous period. In fall 2013, graduate enrollment continued to increase but undergraduate first-time freshman enrollment declined. Undergraduate enrollments are expected to increase slightly due to stabilized application numbers, increased marketing efforts, and increased housing inventory for freshman. Below is a recap of new student enrollment from the last four years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 2010</th>
<th>Fall 2011</th>
<th>Fall 2012</th>
<th>Fall 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As demonstrated in the chart above, overall new student enrollment has been inconsistent over the last 4 years. After low enrollment in fall 2010, the following two years showed strong numbers of new students exceeding budgeted goals each year, under direction of new leadership in the offices of Admissions and Financial Aid. Increases were due to a comprehensive restructuring of the admissions and financial aid processes, increased staff training, and targeted recruitment and financial aid strategies that produced healthy increases in the admit-to-enrolled yield. In fall 2013, overall new student numbers declined again due to lower than budgeted enrollments from
undergraduate first-time freshman. SMFA hypothesizes that this was mainly due to unexpected uncertainty in the residential life program.

Graduate program enrollment has been strong over the last four years in both the Master of Fine Arts program and the Post Baccalaureate program. The graduate class entering in fall 2013 was the largest new graduate student class in SMFA’s history. Additionally, admit-to-enrolled yield rates continue to be strong for graduate programs, averaging 41% of the last three years.

Undergraduate program enrollment has been inconsistent over this same period. This is mainly due to declining enrollment in the Studio Diploma program. BFA enrollment reached its highest new student number in fall 2011 when compared to the previous five years. BFA transfer enrollment has also been strong over the prior three years with a high of 42 transfer students enrolling in 2011.

Enrollment in the Studio Diploma program has declined each year since 2008. The primary factor identified is a shrinking market for non-degree programs and the four-year length of the program. To address this, SMFA is relaunching the program in fall 2014 as a two and one half year academic program with components specifically targeted at enrolling non-traditional students (see Standard Four for more detail).

Admissions and marketing have identified three primary enrollment challenges to address: increasing and broadening the scope of the international student population, stabilizing enrollment from New England and the New York/New Jersey/Connecticut tri-state area, and increasing applications in key markets in portions of the south, southwest, midwest and west.

International student enrollment has been strong over the last three years. However, SMFA believes there is opportunity for continued growth and has launched new international recruiting initiatives have already been launched in regions new to SMFA: India, Turkey and South America. Additionally, SMFA will continue to focus recruiting efforts on areas of traditional enrollment strength such as Korea and China.

A second challenge is stabilizing enrollments from states across New England and the New York/New Jersey/Connecticut tri-state area. We have seen inconsistent application and enrollment numbers from key states like Connecticut and New Hampshire. At the same time, applications from Massachusetts have declined over the last three years as we continue to see strong competition on cost from our primary competitor, the Massachusetts College of Art and Design. In the 2013-2014 academic year, SMFA increased and adjusted recruitment activity in New England markets, including staff visits, alumni engagement, and digital and online marketing initiatives. Also in the 2013-2014 academic year, SMFA became the Massachusetts affiliate for the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, which is the largest art and writing competition for students in the commonwealth in grades 7-12. With over 5,000 art students participating each year, this has increased traffic to SMFA’s website and increased general visibility.
The third enrollment challenge is to increase enrollments from states outside our region with high growth potential. SMFA targets students in states projected to have increases in the number of college age freshmen in the next decade. This includes states where SMFA has traditionally seen strong enrollments, such as Florida and California. We also launched new efforts in Texas, Illinois, Ohio Indiana, and the Washington, DC region.

**Student Affairs and Retention**

Over the previous five years, SMFA retention and completion rates are consistent with our cohort of AICAD schools. The creation of the student care team brought a new level of detailed work to student tracking, early identification of at-risk students, and the ability of the staff and faculty to properly and quickly deploy institutional resources to assist students. The School has progressed quickly in developing key components of a full residential life program, but additional work remains.

While the institution effectively gathers data, interviews students requesting leaves or withdrawals, surveys graduating students, and discusses individuals’ situations in the student care team, this information has not yet been used to create a school-wide Student Success Plan, applicable to both graduate and undergraduate students. It is anticipated that a formal Student Success Plan would help SMFA better target prospective students likely to succeed, identify students at risk, and formulate action plans for increased support for individual students and cohorts.

The student handbook describes most services available to students. The specific degree handbooks, the Bachelor of Fine Arts Handbook and the Master of Fine Arts Handbook, contain additional information about services. Collectively, the three handbooks provide a detailed description of School policies and student expectations. However, the handbooks contain duplicate information and it is not always clear which handbook is appropriate for certain circumstances or audiences.

The new student orientation program addresses descriptions of student services, student life, and academic expectations. This includes information about public safety, residence life policies, counseling and mental health overview, general policies overview, academic and studio overview, and the library. All incoming graduate and undergraduate students are required to attend the orientation. The orientation also provides students with information about social programs to help students acclimate to life in Boston and to SMFA.

In line with SMFA’s efforts to provide leadership opportunities for students, orientation leaders are an integral aspect of the new student orientation. Orientation leaders assist in programming a variety of social events for new students, help ease the transition into SMFA, serve as student liaisons, and help guide new students with questions related to school policy and student experience. The Assistant Director of Student Life manages all aspects of the orientation leader program, including hiring, training, and supervising all orientation leaders.

Many resources available to help students succeed are described in more detail in other sections of this document. (See Standard Four for information about career services, the writing center, and
projections for a full learning center. See Standard Five for details about advising services for graduates and undergraduates.)

There has also been a realization that there is a greater need for personal counseling for undergraduate and graduate students. With this increased, SMFA has determined that it can hire a dedicated counselor to help build the School’s counseling program, replacing outside contractors.

In addition to student driven programming initiatives through Student Body Incorporated, the office of Student Affairs organizes and implements a variety of events for the student body throughout the year. These events are meant to provide students with opportunities to grow and develop both artistically and socially. Artistic programs that are implemented through Student Affairs include bus trips to New York City and MASS MOCA, the annual sidewalk sale, and the New Student Salon Show. Non-artistic programs include the annual Thanksgiving all-school lunch, monthly movie nights, the Halloween costume contest, the wellness fair, and review board stress relief programs held each semester. All programming initiatives allow students to bond with their classmates outside of the classroom as well as enhancing their academic experience inside the classroom.

SMFA’s housing options for incoming freshmen have posed significant challenges for the institution from a recruitment and retention standpoint. On-campus housing has only been available for a small number of students. This has forced students to deal with the often-challenging real estate market in Boston and deprived many freshmen of the traditional residential life support system that is critical for the first year. SMFA’s move to require housing for first time freshmen is a positive step. SMFA will need to monitor and assess the success of these students over the next four years.

Collectively, all committees provide opportunities for open discussion and examination of issues relevant to SMFA’s philosophy, goals, curriculum development, and policies. Student representation on key campus committees has long been an important and effective part of student participation and representation in the school community. Student representatives on these committees are charged with bringing the student prospective and concerns to these conversations. Additionally, Student Body Incorporated (SBInc) is an effective forum to promote student-initiated programming and activities on campus. This format is true to two important and long-held ideals of the SMFA student—self-direction and independence. While these two key pieces of student representation have functioned well, there is still a need for a formal student government.

The SMFA campus is relatively small and judicial infractions are rare. The judicial and grievance procedures are published in the student handbook, but there is a lack of enforcement structure. The procedures would benefit from updates and restructuring in line with best practices. Further, our relationship with Tufts University and overlapping processes has the increased challenge regarding creating and maintaining comprehensive judicial and grievance policies.
**PROJECTION**

**Admissions**

The Director of Admissions and Admissions Representatives plans to increase the number of recruitment events in new key international markets, increase partnership opportunities with colleges from these regions, and partner with SMFA alumni efforts to leverage SMFA graduates living in these regions. This model was implemented in US markets with success and aligns with initiatives addressed in the School’s strategic plan.

In summer 2014 and summer 2015, SMFA will analyze recent changes to New England marketing and recruiting to assess its efficacy. Additionally, over the next five years SMFA will continue to collect and analyze data from the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards to determine if it leads directly or indirectly to increases in applications and/or enrollments.

SMFA will also continue to enhance recruitment to the other regions referenced above. In addition to travel, SMFA will engage a network of SMFA graduates working in these markets, implement new forms of web and digital marketing, and create new mail and email pieces directed specifically to high school art teachers and guidance counselors. Other projections and improvements to SMFA, such as the continued development of the SMFA residential life program, are expected to improve SMFA’s marketability. In the 2014/2015 academic year, SMFA will require that students who are first-time college freshman live in school housing. The clear and consistent availability of housing for this population aligns the college with standard best practice seen at our competitors and enhances recruitment of first-time freshman.

**Student Affairs and Retention**

In the Fall of 2015, an Assistant Director of Counseling Services will be hired by the Director of Student Affairs with the assistance of a search committee in order to bring counseling in-house. This position will be responsible for coordinating all aspects of counseling services at SMFA and will increase the visibility and oversight of the program. This individual would assist faculty and staff on student issues and would bring experience in counseling policies and procedures, thus enhancing and bettering our existing program.

There are several projections related to student services and student affairs. By spring 2015, the Vice President of Enrollment, the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Director of Student Affairs, and the SMFA care team will prepare an institutional student success plan. This will include specific goals for retention and completion, methods of assessment for curricular and social student programming, and as well as continuing to improve the identification of students at risk.
Also by spring 2015, the Director of Student Affairs will work with the Student Affairs staff, student committee representatives, and SBInc to hold elections for SMFA student government. The student government will have bylaws, as in other official areas of SMFA governance.

As part of the annual revision process, all student related handbooks will be consolidated into one student handbook by fall 2014.

SMFA is also in the process of revising judicial and grievance procedures to align with best practices and our institutional mission, including a more comprehensive description of standard procedures and creation of an all-campus judicial board consisting of student, faculty, and staff representatives. Appointments to this board will be made annually by the Director of Student Affairs and all board members would be required to participate in an extensive training around judicial procedures and School policies. We plan to have this in place by Fall 2015.

SMFA will continue to analyze the data regarding all projections and changes, especially the new requirement that all freshmen live in campus housing.

**Institutional Effectiveness**

The School consistently assesses institutional effectiveness for the development of creative skills, academic progress, and personal growth. This is done by the President’s Cabinet, the Enrollment Management leadership team, the Dean’s advisory committee, and twice a year at faculty development days. To measure effectiveness in admissions and retention efforts, SMFA staff analyzes statistics, data, student interviews, review board reports, and benchmarks from our cohort schools in AICAD and NASAD. The student care team is responsible for the consistent monitoring and assessment of individual student success. In this effort the group uses academic advising staff and faculty advisors, monitors the success of accommodations for students who self-identify with learning disabilities, and provides referrals to the writing center and other available tutoring and counseling services.
STANDARD SEVEN: LIBRARY AND OTHER INFORMATION RESOURCES

DESCRIPTION

Resources and Access

The W. Van Alan Clark, Jr. Library (SMFA library) at SMFA is one of ten departmental libraries within the Museum of Fine Arts. It is the only circulating library within the MFA campus and maintains a direct working relationship with the William Morris Hunt Memorial Library, which is the main library for the Museum. The SMFA library primarily serves SMFA and MFA patrons, and is also open to the public.

The SMFA and MFA libraries are members of the Fenway Libraries Online (FLO) consortium, which includes nine other academic libraries and access to over 900,000 books. FLO is a member of the Virtual Catalog consortium (soon to be known as the Commonwealth Catalog), an initiative of the Massachusetts Library Board, through which FLO patrons have borrowing privileges with an additional 300 lending libraries throughout the state.

The combined holdings of the SMFA and MFA libraries include over 380,000 titles.

Additionally, the SMFA and MFA libraries subscribe to more than 109,000 e-books through FLO. The current physical holdings of the SMFA library include 26,000 titles. Patrons may also access the holdings of the MFA department libraries by requesting titles to use in the reading room of the main MFA library.

Services

Students use the library to access resources, get reference assistance, and to make broader connections to inform their academic and studio practice. Students can access a range of electronic resources remotely or from within the library. The library periodically offers programming designed to broaden and deepen students’ areas of study (reading, studio practice, artists’ books, performance art, sound art, etc.) and designed to emphasize ways in which professional artists engage in scholarly research.

The library offers user instruction to all patrons on an ongoing basis. Library staff also offer instructional classes to all incoming first-year students, English students, senior thesis students, MFA candidates, and to any class on faculty request. Library instruction classes can focus on general library use and bibliographic instruction or be curriculum specific on request. The Director of
SMFA Library Services and Visual Resources works with the Dean to keep faculty informed of library services, resources, policies, and procedures.

The librarian and library director invites all students to schedule one-on-one reference consultations (20-60 minutes), to discover their individual informational requirements as they evolve during their academic career. Library staff also offers ready reference to students, including basic database instruction, simple reference instruction, and interlibrary loan requests. Students have access to the library’s special collections, which include rare books, artists’ books, a significant portion of the SMFA’s archives, and the library’s zine collection.

**Budget and Human Resources**

Until FY 2014, the SMFA library budget was managed by the Museum’s Director of Libraries and Archives and the Head Librarian at the MFA, as part of the Museum’s curatorial division. The School’s decision to shift control of the SMFA library budget from the MFA to SMFA was a significant step to meet the requirements of self-accreditation. Discussions regarding the library’s role in the Strategic Plan and the resulting future budget requirements, including staffing, print and electronic resources, books, and serials, for the SMFA library are underway.

In September 2012, the School transferred management of the Visual Resources Department to the newly appointed Director of SMFA Library Services and Visual Resources. In October the library hired a professional librarian to replace the Visual Resources Coordinator. These changes were made to better manage access to library resources for students, faculty, and staff, allowing for more individualized services for patrons and a more collaborative and unified library staff.

The SMFA library is open seven days a week for a total of 62 hours of operation. Staff members include three full-time positions—the Director of SMFA Library Services and Visual Resources, the SMFA Librarian, and the Library Associate, and 10-15 part-time work-study students who work as library assistants.

The library subscribes to electronic databases through joint subscriptions with the MFA, the FLO consortium, and the AICAD consortium. These databases are accessible on-site, and remotely by EZ Proxy, to all undergraduate, post-baccalaureate, and graduate students; faculty; and SMFA and MFA staff. The library currently subscribes to 58 databases and manages these subscriptions as curricula require. The library manages access to these resources through online subject guides, which are also accessible remotely. Contracts limit access to these resources; continuing education students and alumni do not have remote access to subscription databases but are welcome to use them on campus.

SMFA library electronic resources are remotely available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for students in the diploma, undergraduate, post-baccalaureate, and graduate programs, faculty, staff, and curators with a library account in good standing. Patrons access the databases through an
The EZProxy server hosted by the Fenway Libraries Online, located on the Wentworth Institute of Technology campus.

The SMFA and MFA guarantee access to their libraries and information resources to SMFA patrons and the general public, as stated in the MFA’s Acts of Incorporation.

Platforms in use for resource sharing at the SMFA include mySMFA and the SMFA’s Google Docs site.

**Information and Technological Literacy**

The most serious and committed students engage the library staff, as well as other appropriate staff members within the institution, learn about and access needed resources. Prerequisites play an important role in defining advancement in the field for many technical classes, such as film, video, animation, photography, and sound art. Review boards, studio critiques, and academic requirements serve as advancement milestones in the curriculum. The School needs to integrate the information and visual literacy guidelines established by the Association of College Research Libraries into its overall curriculum development plans. The SMFA can place increasingly more complicated information literacy requirements on its students through review boards, testing, or one-on-one reference interviews.

**APPRAISAL**

**Library Resources and Access**

The interdisciplinary use of instructional technologies is directly tied to the academic mission of the school. The school offers instruction in the use of all technologies with the goal of aiding each student in a self-directed practice of discovery. Individual needs of the students are addressed through review boards, studio visits, critiques, one-on-one meetings with staff and faculty, user instruction courses, and reference consultations. Improvements can always be made in this area by better tracking of student progress and student needs.

The SMFA has relied heavily on our partnership with Tufts for access to general education resources and is aware that we will need to allocate resources for new areas of study as we develop new curricula. The library director is contacting vendors for estimated costs of electronic resources that may be required for particular programs, such as science, math, and English. The senior administration is aware that significant investments will be required to meet these goals. The costs of providing access to library electronic resources have been shared with the MFA. The SMFA library does not have a consortia partnership with the Tufts library though BFA, post-baccalaureate, and MFA students have had full access to the Tufts library and its resources. As part of the SMFA’s
regional accreditation process, the institution will have to budget for subscription costs, which will likely include many databases that Tufts provided in the past. There is potential to qualify for FLO and AICAD consortia group-wide discount subscriptions for databases we may require.

Art libraries will for the foreseeable future rely heavily on print resources. The SMFA library’s special collections will require increased storage space as the collections grow. The SMFA needs to invest in storage for the most valuable of these collections. The library’s print holdings increase at a rate of 80 to 250 linear shelf feet per year. Space requirements for print collections are critical. The library inventoried its collection in 2008. During 2008-2010 and 2010-2013, the library identified and systematically removed duplicate, unused, and out of date titles. Future curricular changes may require further weeding of the collection. (See Standard Eight.)

Library staff work with the Development department to accept large art book donations and disperse them by subject to departmental libraries or sell them to generate revenue for the library. The library lacks space to properly transport and process large donations.

The costs for print resources (books, serials, exhibition catalogs, etc.) have increased since 2008 due to publishing demands and the economy. It is estimated that prices will continue to increase at a modest rate. The administration is aware of these concerns and intends to increase spending for collections in the next 3-5 years.

The SMFA library benefits from its relationship with the Department of Contemporary Art (DCA) in the MFA’s Curatorial Division; DCA gives the SMFA library books it receives free from galleries and artists around the world. These books supplement the library’s contemporary art subject area holdings considerably, providing it with monographs and exhibition catalogs it might not normally be able to afford and saving money by eliminating the need to purchase some essential titles.

In recent years, SMFA senior administration addressed many library staffing issues by professionalizing the SMFA librarian positions, making the Library Associate full-time, adding the Visual Resources Department to the SMFA library, and replacing the Visual Resources Coordinator position with a professional librarian.

Senior administration is currently addressing the library’s overreliance on student library assistants who staff the circulation desk. The library’s director submitted a proposal for the FY 2015 budget to create a full-time position and several part-time positions to provide sufficient staff support for access services, especially during the evenings and weekends. The director will continue to evaluate job descriptions and responsibilities and make changes when appropriate.

One of the remaining challenges the director and senior administration need to address is direct link of staff duties and responsibilities at the MFA and SMFA libraries. As the SMFA becomes an accredited college, library staffing requirements will have to meet the needs of the School first and the Museum second. For instance, the SMFA Library Associate conducts interlibrary loan (ILL) services for the MFA; in exchange, MFA pays for many of the SMFA library’s electronic resources.
The School will have to pay a larger percentage for these resources as the MFA library assumes more of its own interlibrary loan responsibilities. The SMFA library conducts all ILL for the MFA but does not supply the same ILL services for SMFA patrons due to cost, which the SMFA will have to rectify. Additional understaffing that directly affects the SMFA include the lack of a Serials Librarian, Electronic Resources Librarian, and a Systems Librarian.

The library currently uses SubjectsPlus as an access portal to e-resources but will switch to LibGuides by September 2014. LibGuides allows a finer granularity of resource sharing, so that library staff can create customized clusters of information for classes based on syllabi provided by faculty.

LibGuides and other future subject guides technology will enable library staff to more effectively gather associated information resources for students. Working closely with faculty, library staff should be able to anticipate the fundamental needs of students and faculty and develop appropriate subject guides before each semester begins.

The library offers students, faculty, and staff library, user, and bibliographic training through many patrons do not take advantage of it. Most of the staff and faculty would benefit from library instructional training, to better assist students using library resources. Training sessions should be integrated into staff and faculty development sessions. Area representatives can serve as library liaisons to their departments.

The library staff assess the appropriateness of resource training events such as customized large user instruction classes or one-on-one reference consultations. The library would benefit from more surveys regarding patron satisfaction.

Unifying the Visual Resources Department with the SMFA library increases the efficiency of both departments. By professionalizing the position formerly held by the Visual Resources Coordinator, hiring a skilled Librarian to oversee the day-to-day visual resources workflow, and subscribing to Shared Shelf we increased digital image production and student access to the image database by approximately 2,000%. The librarian overseeing visual resources spends 60% of each week digitizing and cataloging images. The remaining 40% of the time, the librarian teaches user instruction classes, answers reference questions, serves on Fenway Libraries Online committees, and works on other library related responsibilities.

Overall, the SMFA library receives positive feedback. Students graduating in 2013 completed a survey rating their level of satisfaction with SMFA resources; the library was the most highly rated service at the School. At the 2013 commencement ceremony, the Director of SMFA Library Services and Visual Resources was granted the Russell T. Smith Award, an honor awarded by staff and faculty each year to recognize outstanding service. Additionally, students, faculty, and staff express satisfaction and gratitude to library staff for services provided.
Information and Technological Literacy

The library does not have a clear working relationship with information technology, at the Museum or the School. Library staff (Director, Librarian, Library Associate, and library assistants) use computers on the MFA staff network, managed by the MFA IT department. Library patrons use public access computers on the SMFA student network, managed by the SMFA IT department. A formal working relationship would help to clarify the expectations of how to manage both networks, work on with different computers and software products, and streamline and integrate services.

Space constraints are the primary cause of the limitation of instructional and informational technology resources. Library staff offer library instruction to students and faculty. Typically, academic faculty schedule instructional sessions for their students; in the past two year, some faculty for studio classes are arranging instructional sessions, too.

Projection

The School will establish a standing library planning committee to evaluate staffing, collection development, technology, and information and visual literacy requirements. The committee will meet monthly and provide senior leadership and the board Budget and Finance committee with a yearly comprehensive analysis and recommendations to inform institutional strategic planning and budgets relating to library, information, and technological literacy resources. The library planning committee will develop surveys to gather information about user satisfaction, statistical analysis of services, library use, and programming.

The Director of SMFA Library Services and the IT manager will join the curriculum committee to develop a plan to ensure library and information technology assignments are appropriately integrated into program curriculum. The director will develop a systematic approach to training students, faculty, and staff. The committee will meet monthly to develop the plan. Thereafter, they will meet quarterly to assess the effectiveness of the plan and make decisions and necessary adjustments.

As the School develops new curricula, library and IT staff will work to ensure the resources, space, and technology are in place for student success. Collection development, subscription resources, staffing, and technology will be budgeted two years in advance to meet the curricular needs. Expenditures for each department’s library requirements will be reviewed continually to maintain a balanced budget.

The SMFA library’s relationship with the MFA library will require continued work. The library will need to reinforce its relationship with the Department of Contemporary Art to develop the library’s collection with a keen focus on contemporary art. The SMFA library’s interdependence with the MFA library will require a transparent understanding of resource sharing and budgetary allocations.
The library will need to maintain and evaluate use metrics for each electronic database subscription to determine appropriate budgetary allocations.

The School’s IT department’s relationship with the MFA IT department will require reevaluation. Investment in independent IT resources for the SMFA will be necessary to fulfill the SMFA’s mission and to meet proposed curricular requirements. Staffing, data storage, hardware, and software costs will require constant evaluation based on curricular and access requirements.

As addressed in the strategic plan, library staffing will require continued evaluation to meet the future goals of an independently accredited curriculum. It will be necessary to increase the number of professional and paraprofessional library staff to provide adequate user, library, bibliographic instruction sessions, and reference consultations.

Space planning will play a central role in the future of the library: the print and electronic collections, number of staff, and number of students, faculty, and staff using the library are expected to increase. Ideally, the library will be able to work with a library consultant with art school library experience to advise the SMFA regarding proposed space changes and help the maximize use of space in the coming years.

**Institutional Effectiveness**

The SMFA library is effective in fulfilling the educational and scholarly goals of the institution’s mission. The services, resources, and facilities provided support student success.
STANDARD EIGHT: PHYSICAL AND TECHNICAL RESOURCES

DESCRIPTION

Physical Resources

Classrooms and studios

The School’s facilities include two buildings with studios and classrooms and off-campus dormitories, all located within close proximity to the Museum of Fine Arts.

The School’s 100,000 square-foot primary facility (the main building) is located at 230 The Fenway. This building houses most undergraduate activity and classrooms requiring special equipment or services for all students. It is divided into two wings (A and B) with a connecting 3-story atrium.

The older half of the main building (A) was designed by noted architect Guy Lowell and completed in 1927. It includes studio and instructional spaces; technical facilities, including those for printmaking, small metals, ceramics, sculpture, welding and casting; and offices for Admissions, Student Affairs, and the Registrar.

Graham Gund designed a 4-story addition (B) and connecting atrium, completed in 1985. It includes large, well-lit painting and drawing studios, and new media, photography and performance classrooms and facilities. The addition also includes a 40-seat academic lecture classroom, the School’s main gallery, the library, an auditorium, and administrative offices. The atrium houses a café, student lounge, and an art supply store.

The SMFA’s second facility is located at 160 St Alphonsus Street in Boston’s Mission Hill neighborhood. It is a former industrial building, with two stories and approximately 40,000 square feet. The majority of the building is dedicated to graduate semi-private studios (including those pursing the post-baccalaureate certificate). Non-studio facilities in this building include a student gallery, general-use classrooms, a writing center, graduate community space, a woodshop, a photo-shoot room, and digital labs.

Both buildings are open for students 24 hours a day during the academic year and always have a guard on duty.

17 Buildings are closed to all on major holidays. Undergraduates must receive permission prior to staying in any SMFA facility overnight.
Residential Life and Dormitories

Since 2002, SMFA has rented dormitory space from nearby institutions. While this provided some housing for freshmen, it was not optimal. SMFA students were not part of the residential community, since programming in these dorms was typically for students who attended those nearby institutions. The number of rooms was limited and SMFA therefore was not able to guarantee housing for first-time freshmen. Also, the pricing from the specific neighboring colleges was often greater than what they charged their own students, resulting in an inflated cost of attendance for SMFA students. Since there is a demand for more housing, SMFA is beginning to transition to full-building leases.

In fall 2013, 51 students, including three resident advisors, lived in campus housing—representing 49% of incoming students (80% of freshmen). This housing consists of two brownstones within a mile of campus: Beacon House and Fenway House. Beacon House is located in the Audubon Circle neighborhood of Brookline at 1047 Beacon Street. Fenway House is located in the Fenway neighborhood of Boston at 54 The Fenway and is leased through the Boston Conservatory.

For fall 2014, SMFA has secured additional space for the incoming class by leasing an entire building through Boston Conservatory. This increased inventory provides 38 more beds, yielding a total of 89 spaces. Four resident advisors will staff these two buildings, leaving 85 beds for incoming freshmen. This additional inventory means that for fall 2014, SMFA can require first time freshmen to live in on-campus housing for the first time. (See Standard Six for more information.)

Staff

In June 2013, SMFA created a new position of Director of Campus Facilities to solely oversee the campus. Prior to this hire, facilities staff at the Museum managed SMFA facilities. They were able to participate in annual budget planning, help coordinate deferred and annual maintenance projects, and respond to problems, but they did not have the time to make recommendations for improved or streamlined operations.

The director is responsible for all aspects of the physical campus. This includes leadership, long range planning and budgeting, and facilities management, including asset control and resource utilization. The director also is responsible for coordinating renovations, access, safety, capital projects, and deferred and preventative maintenance and managing outside contractors and consultants.

SMFA also has two HVAC engineers and a general facilities supervisor, and contracts with a services company for cleaners.

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18 These dorms operated on a direct cost break-even basis, assuming a minimal (less than 5%) vacancy rate.
Capital Planning, Activity and Deferred Maintenance

Prior to FY 2011, the School concentrated its investments in financial aid and initiatives to enhance curriculum and instructional support, and chose to defer the maintenance of its physical plant. Over the past three fiscal years, SMFA has begun to systematically address the needs of its campus facilities by budgeting $110,000 per year for specific renewal and replacement (R & R) projects. The project planning process addressed physical and technological resources including infrastructure, equipment, and space needs and involved faculty, administrative staff, and facilities staff.

As part of that process, the Director of Campus Facilities, School management, and the Museum’s facilities staff prepared a comprehensive five-year plan. The plan tracks deferred maintenance and new initiatives in categories including health and safety, infrastructure, instructional areas, administrative areas, and public and community spaces. It also provides a consolidated view of short-term and long-term projects, which allows SMFA to integrate long-range or large-scale facilities planning into the annual budget and align it with plans for operations, strategic initiatives, and fundraising. The School budgets for safety systems and code compliance items in a separate category.

There is also an opportunity for department heads and area representatives (faculty) to make requests for capital improvements. They submit capital and R&R budget proposals, which are reviewed and approved by the President’s Cabinet. Final budget recommendations are presented to two board committees for approval—Facilities and Budget and Finance. Note that the chair of the Facilities committee presents the budget to the Museum’s Buildings committee, of which the chair is an ex-officio member.

Recent capital improvements include:

- Updated the HVAC systems at Mission Hill building (FY 2011–FY 2012)
- Renovated a bathrooms in the main building (FY 2012)
- Rebalanced basement ventilation in main building (FY 2012–FY 2013)
- Upgraded graduate computer/digital lab in the Mission Hill building (FY 2013)
- Created new office space for financial aid student employment staff (FY 2014)

The most significant capital building project, in terms of dollars and effort, is currently underway. The main building is currently undergoing a $7.5 million renovation of the building envelope. The project involves a set of interrelated deferred-maintenance issues including: comprehensive reroofing; repair of crumbling walls and masonry; replacement of deteriorating skylights; and new, efficient building heating mechanical and ventilation systems. Beyond the obvious improvement to the overall integrity of the buildings, this project represents a significant step towards further improvement to the quality of campus life for students, staff, and faculty. The project is in the pre-construction and design phase; project construction is scheduled to commence in May 2014 and conclude in fall 2014.
Space Use and Utilization Planning

The President’s cabinet and the Director of Campus Facilities recognize that the current space is inefficient and not conducive to the stated mission or to growth as detailed in the strategic plan. Programming and class scheduling, layout, organization, and ownership of space by specific departments or areas contribute to this assumption. Therefore, in fall 2013 SMFA hired consultants to study space use and utilization.

The campus use and utilization study took as its departure point the SMFA strategic plan, in particular the need to realign existing facilities with new initiatives and programs. Improving the campus both locally and globally is one of the eight initiatives in the plan and a space use study is specifically mentioned as an important action step. The consultants interviewed faculty, staff, and administrators, and conducted a multiyear analysis of enrollment patterns by area, benchmarking to similar programs and schools. They analyzed classroom, studio, community, and office spaces based on square footage, the presence of specialized art-making tools (such as presses, darkrooms, and kilns), historical area enrollments, and SMFA strategic planning.

The study will be completed in late April 2014. It recommends a plan, tied directly to the strategic plan, to comprehensively realign campus facilities to more efficiently use existing space, and to support the new curriculum by creating new area adjacencies through a series of phased moves over several years.

The study further recommends creating hubs of unassigned flexible space to link analog and digital production processes. The study also emphasizes creating more central student spaces, including social space, a gallery, a learning center, and other support services; and to centralize administrative and student support areas to create a one-stop-shopping experience for students. Finally, the study proposes a relocation and expansion of the library to create a comprehensive learning center and increase access and expand use.

Safety

Establishing a safe environment at SMFA is a high priority. This requires effective testing of spaces and timely response to complaints or concerns. Annual monitoring of SMFA systems includes air testing in every classroom and administrative space, mold testing in damp environments, and regular equipment inspections.

In 2005, SMFA published the Art Safety & Hazardous Materials Plan. This plan articulates basic roles and responsibilities related to safety in the making and teaching of art. It includes descriptions of the proper handling and storing of equipment and chemicals, training, and standard operating procedures for each of SMFA’s studio areas. Each area has basic guidelines, material safety data sheets and a list of its hazardous chemicals, and hazardous waste disposal procedures.
The Museum’s Department of Protective Services (DPS) is responsible for all aspects of SMFA’s formal security program. DPS manages access to all buildings, tracks access via an electronic access card system, and works closely with SMFA facilities department to identify conditions that threaten occupants of School buildings and grounds.

In addition to the rules and regulations of SMFA, students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors are subject to all local, state, and federal laws. The DPS staff is responsible for enforcing those laws and, although they have no formal written memoranda of understanding, they maintain a cooperative working relationship with local, state, and federal police agencies. Local police agencies also provide assistance to the campus if required.

**Administrative and Instructional Technology**

The School’s technology infrastructure is composed of three separate but interrelated parts: administrative, infrastructure, and instructional technology. Administrative technology is the technology foundation on which the School conducts its business. Instructional technology is the hardware and software in place to support students as they learn, study, and create art.

SMFA has policies for students, faculty, and staff regarding the use of technology, email, the Internet and networks. These are detailed in the student and faculty handbooks.

**Administrative Technology**

The information technology department at the Museum supports SMFA staff. This support includes computers, printers, networking, phone systems, Internet, intranet, firewalls, servers, backups, and standard software. Virtual local area networks (VLAN) are in place to maximize the efficiency of the network. Data for all systems is backed up nightly to tapes; daily snapshots occur three times each day. In addition to the regular backups, all servers are protected by two Cisco firewalls (active and passive for redundancy) with intrusion detection. These firewalls protect all data, files, and systems.

SMFA uses Jenzabar for its student information system. Specific modules include: registration, financial aid with Powerfaids, business office (accounts receivable), student life, and advising. The system is running on a virtualized Microsoft SQL Server 2008. Budget, alumni, development, and other financial software systems are used in partnership with the Museum.

In fall 2010, SMFA upgraded its online student information and registration system to include a more robust learning management system called mySMFA. This system allows students to register online, access course documents and syllabi, download forms, interact with classmates, and view exhibition schedules. It also gives students access to their unofficial transcript and billing information. They can also use mySMFA to view or download all handbooks and policy documentation, staff contact information, and calendars. Faculty have access to the faculty handbook, senate and committee minutes, many administrative and curricular forms, and other administrative documents. MySMFA also functions as a learning management system, which allows
for tasks such as online grading and attendance tracking, and the posting of course documents and readings.

Institutional research is fairly decentralized. The Associate Vice President for Operations and Research conducts most of the student-related institutional research projects. Research related to finance, development, and alumni are handled by those specific administrative departments. And most surveys are administered and analyzed by the surveying department, rather than through a central institutional research office.

**Instructional Technology and Resources**

Instructional technology resources support students and faculty with digital tools to support in-class and out-of-class learning and digital and analog art-making. These resources are important to helping SMFA fulfill its mission as a college of art.

Specifically, SMFA has computers and software used in many of the studio art courses—147 Macintosh computers for student use. Fifty-six of those computers are available for all students in all programs, with industry standard software packages such as the Adobe Creative Cloud and Microsoft Office. In addition to these general access computers, the School’s specialized photography, animation, film, video, sound, and printmaking labs are equipped with 91 Macintosh computers with specialized software such as Final Cut Pro, Avid Media Composer, Avid Pro Tools, Dragonframe, and MAX/MSP. For scanning, there are two Hasselblad large format film scanners, three large format flatbed scanners, and several letter-sized flatbed scanners. Students have access to four large-format printers as well as 10 smaller printers for digital output projects (usually used for photo, design, and printmaking).

Several classrooms are equipped with overhead digital projectors, including four smart classrooms (one in the main building and three in the Mission Hill building). There are also specialized screening facilities in the film, animation, video, and sound areas.

SMFA’s specialized facilities for analog art processes are found in photography, printmaking, ceramics, and fabrication19. There are two analog black and white darkrooms equipped with 25 enlargers, including enlargers for large-format mural printing. In printmaking, there are two NuArc exposure units for silkscreen and for copper and lithography plates, four lithography presses, and two etching presses. In ceramics, there are several small and large kilns that can fire a variety of sizes of work. In fabrication, the School has a large welding shop with several bandsaws, welders and arc cutters. The School also houses a woodshop in each building equipped with band saws, table saws, drill presses, and a variety of hand tools.

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19 This list is not exhaustive. Many would classify large windows and high ceilings as important facilities for painting and drawing.
There is also an extensive equipment inventory available for free use from the SMFA’s media stockroom. Most of this equipment is geared towards new and digital media. For example, there are 22 professional level and 29 mid-level digital cameras, a wide variety of lenses, and 35mm film cameras for different experience levels.

**APPRAISAL**

As SMFA moves forward with its plans to offer stand-alone degrees, it will need additional classroom space for more academic courses. Some of this can be realized through more efficient use of space across the week. Furthermore, the classroom currently used by the MAT program is large and does not use SMFA’s usual course scheduling template: 9:00 am to noon, 2:00-5:00 pm, and 6:30-9:30 pm. Shifting class times in the MAT classroom could create a more efficient use of that space. The increase of shared spaces and decrease of area-specific spaces is recommended in the space use and utilization study to allow for more classroom spaces.

With the building envelope project underway and scheduled for completion in fall 2014, SMFA can move forward with a comprehensive improvement of interior instructional space. This includes scheduling a range of deferred maintenance projects. Classrooms are appropriately equipped to support teaching methods, yet the School lags in providing consistent digital resources throughout all teaching spaces, particularly digital and online playback and display. Some interior projects, such as the repair of rooms with water damage from a leaking roof, have been put on hold until the completion of the envelope project. Other R&R projects on the FY 2014 five-year projection will no longer necessary, since SMFA will be upgrading the mechanical systems.

Regarding regular space planning and maintenance, the five-year R&R plan has been in place since FY 2012. The annual review and revision of this plan has been conducted with safety, general conditions, and the strategic plan in mind. Breaking down projects into four distinct categories—safety and code compliance, infrastructure, instructional space, and public and community space—aids in prioritization. The short-term project list is especially detailed regarding deferred maintenance to meet immediate needs. The long-term project list is a wish list and not necessarily strategic in nature, such as re-grading the parking lot for the Mission Hill building. Even though the budget process makes room for these capital project requests, the process could be more inclusive of curricular and administrative needs. A new model of engagement and training are needed to help department heads and area representatives plan for these kinds of improvements.

SMFA’s move to secure enough housing is an important strategic step regarding space planning. Since the dormitories are leased, the effort to find new space, renew space, and secure the appropriate leases needs to take place every three to five years. SMFA’s next step is to address its long-term housing needs. This has been formally taken up by the Board as a topic of conversation. In the next year, a timeline for developing a solution will be developed.
SMFA has appropriate safety and security processes in place. Biannual testing of all of SMFA’s interior spaces often identifies future R&R projects or immediate needs, such as mold mitigation or filter replacement.

The Art Safety and Hazardous Materials Plan was written in 2005 in consultation with Delta Environmental Consultants. However, SMFA does not have evidence to support or refute that these policies are consistently followed in each area. Also, this manual should be reviewed and updated.

Regarding the building envelope project, the mechanical system engineers, the art and air quality consultant, and the space use and utilization consultants meet regularly to ensure that SMFA’s improved roof mechanical systems are robust enough for the appropriate art processes. The goal is to install a mechanical system that is flexible enough so that certain spaces can be moved in the future in response to curricular needs. Other spaces with more specific mechanical needs (such as ceramics kilns and darkrooms) will have more powerful systems and will likely not move. The project will give SMFA the opportunity to analyze efficiencies in terms of energy use, deferred maintenance, and operations.

The space use and utilization project is a good example of bringing space planning and strategic planning together. Several strategic initiatives are reflected in the space use plan, such as the significant recommendation to move and expand the library. The new space will be in a more central location and allow SMFA to increase the collection, provide library storage, and create an expanded learning center (expanded from the current writing center in the Mission Hill building). Other recommendations include: increasing the number of flexible spaces (classrooms, general studio, and technical classrooms) in place of area specific spaces (drawing, painting, video, film, etc) and relocating spaces and classrooms to encourage synergy between similar spaces and areas.

SMFA’s network and systems are reliable and safe and adhere to technology standards. SMFA also complies with state and federal privacy laws regarding the protection of systems and data. The School and Museum both have policies in place regarding use of technology, including internet and email. They are published in the student and employee handbooks.

The Vice President for Budget and Planning and the Associate Vice President for Operations and Research frequently collaborate in large-scale analyses. These include sensitivity analyses, projections on enrollment and other revenues, and historical and trending analyses. They tailor the presentation of the results of these analyses based on the appropriate audience, utilizing graphs, complex excel tables, broad dashboard indicators, and simple bullet points. These analyses have led to decisions regarding enrollment budgets and have been helpful in understanding historical student behavior. This is helpful for planning, but ideally more time would be dedicated to these analyses.

Jenzabar accurately captures and counts student course history, billing, and financial aid. However, the years of complicated data yielded an ineffective degree audit, which necessitated a paper process to audit progress towards degree completion. In consultation with Jenzabar and with their assistance
during the process, SMFA elected to start from scratch. Internal degree audits for the BFA are slated to begin in fall 2014.

SMFA’s database administrator frequently uploads course data from the Tufts student information system; this data consists of courses taught at Tufts for SMFA degree seeking students and art courses taught at SMFA for Tufts students. This process has been refined and improved over the past six years and will continue at least until SMFA implements its stand-alone degrees.

**Projection**

The President’s Cabinet will begin phasing in space-use project recommendations by the study over the next three to five years. The space consultants (DesignLab) will provide SMFA with a menu of choices and phasing recommendations. SMFA will make decisions about priorities based on the School’s mission, the strategic plan, student needs, and NEASC standards, and will coordinate with fundraising efforts. A key priority is the expansion of the library to include additional space and resources for general education courses and a full learning center (expanded from the current writing center).

Dormitory rentals are a necessary step towards a long-term housing solution. SMFA will continue to renew or find new leases to build and improve its residential life program. The Facilities committee of the Board of Trustees has already committed itself to focusing efforts over the next several years on securing a permanent dormitory facility for the SMFA. The Facilities and Student Affairs committees will strategize and work to form a plan, confirm priorities, and develop a timeline in the next year.

SMFA will continue to create smart classrooms by bringing instructional technology into more classrooms and studios, with the aim of having consistent technology more available. The Manager of Instructional Technology will lead this effort. Classroom technology will be updated on a schedule, as determined by the space use and utilization plan.

The Director of Campus Facilities will work with faculty to update or confirm the SMFA materials safety plan and monitor it through compulsory trainings and updates for faculty, staff and students. This will be completed by FY 2019.

The School will continue to invest in Jenzabar and report writing training for staff and the improvement of the degree audit function, including online viewing for students, additional training, and identification of inefficiencies.
INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

This has been an area of great improvement over the past several years for SMFA. The R&R projections, the allocation of resources for physical and technological improvements, and investment in a space study have all contributed to improved facilities planning which will help SMFA as it moves forward with the implementation of the strategic plan. The board committees and the Facilities Interface Committee will ensure that problems and projects are identified and shared.
STANDARD NINE: FINANCIAL RESOURCES

DESCRIPTION

Operating Budget

As a tuition driven institution, SMFA relies heavily on net student fee income. Over the past three fiscal years operating revenues grew by 6% from $19,782,000 to $20,918,000, while expenses grew by 5% from $19,644,000 to $20,660,000. The year-end surplus in FY 2011 was $138,000 with revenues of $19,782,000. The surplus in FY 2012 was $260,000 with revenues of $20,595,000. In FY 2013, the year-end surplus was $258,000 with revenues of $20,918,000. The operating budget for FY 2014 assumes a $100,000 surplus with revenues of $21,475,000 and expenses of $21,375,000.

Net student fee income, comprised of tuition and fees for degree programs only, accounted for an average of 65% of total revenue over the last three fiscal years. When combined with tuition and fees for non-degree Continuing Education programs, net tuition and fee income averaged 77% of total revenue. For the same period auxiliary income, which consists of dorm fees and income from the School Store, accounted for 6% of revenues. Endowment income accounted for an average of 6% of revenues over the past three years and fundraising from annual gifts and events averaged 9% of revenues. Other income averaged less than 2%, and net assets released from restrictions averaged 1% of total revenue.

The operating revenue of SMFA is substantially dedicated to supporting the School’s academic purposes and programs. Instruction costs averaged 42% of total expenses over the past three years, rising from $8,397,000 in FY 2011 to $8,464,000 in FY 2013. In FY 2014 the budget for instruction is $8,773,000 or 41% of total expenses.

Additional resources allocated to directly support the School’s academic mission are those for academic support and student services. The combined cost for these two operating segments averaged 19% of total expenses over the last three years. The cost for academic support has varied over the same period. The cost for student services held steady in FY 2011 and FY 2012 and increased in FY 2013 to 12% of expenses, due to centralizing the tracking of student employment. The FY 2014 budget for academic support reflects an increase for student advising and the full direct cost for the library, previously a prorated allocation from the Museum. In FY 2014 academic support is budgeted at $1,891,000 and student services at $2,490,000. In the FY 2014 budget the combined cost for academic support and student services accounts for 20% of total expenses.

Institutional support costs averaged 20% of total expenses from FY 2011 to FY 2013. During this period the School’s first president and a director of fundraising were hired; this fundraising role had previously been combined with the duties of provost. Expenditures for operations and maintenance
averaged 12% during a time of increased investments for the renewal and renovation of facilities. The FY 2014 budget includes funds to hire the School’s first director of campus facilities. Auxiliary enterprises, which reflect the costs for the School Store and leased dorms, accounted for an average of 6% of total expenses during the last three years. Tuition related expenses for Continuing Education programs averaged 1% of expenses during the same period.

The revenues and expenses for FY 2015 reflect SMFA’s most recent projections based on estimates from the multi-year planning model updated in spring 2013. The School is currently in the midst of its annual budget process and the budget has not been finalized. The FY 2015 projection does, however, include the planned change for the shift of the cost for faculty in the visual and critical studies, English and writing areas from a remittance paid to Tufts University into a direct cost in the operating budget.

**Planning and Reporting**

SMFA prepares an annual budget covering all aspects of its operations. The budget process includes management’s review of the strategic plan goals and priorities. The final budget is reviewed and approved by the School’s Budget and Finance Committee and the full Board of Trustees.

The budget process runs from late fall to spring of each academic year. It begins with an assessment of enrollment, funds for financial aid, and the review and setting of tuition and fees for the next year. A budget memo provides guidance about the process, calendar, and strategic priorities. The Vice President of Budget and Planning works with staff and faculty to prepare detailed budget plans covering instructional areas, student services, academic support, facilities and operations, and institutional support. The Vice President of Budget and Planning also works in close coordination with the Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs and the President’s Cabinet to review budgets to ensure integration with planning initiatives and to support academic goals. Approved operating and capital budgets are distributed before the start of the next academic year.

The operating budget is reviewed regularly throughout the year by instructional and administrative department heads, finance staff, the President’s Cabinet, the Budget and Finance Committee, and the entire Board of Trustees. The Vice President of Financial Operations and the Vice President of Budget and Planning prepare monthly operating statements comparing actual results to the budget, develop forecasts, perform analytical reviews, and reconcile balance sheet and selected operating accounts. Actual operating results are closely monitored to ensure any corrective measures are taken in a timely manner. Forecasts are updated mid-fiscal year and throughout the spring semester. The President and the President’s Cabinet receive regular reports.

On an ongoing basis, the School revises its multi-year planning financial model to incorporate recent changes and future initiatives and to develop projections to understand their effects on operations. The primary revenue assumptions in the model include enrollment, pricing, financial aid,
fundraising, and endowment projections. The key expense drivers are program and curricular initiatives, salaries and benefits, utilities, marketing, and instructional support.

Financial Aid

The budget for financial aid consists of unfunded operating aid, provided as tuition discounts, and endowed scholarships. Total financial aid awarded has declined over the past three years from $5,287,000 to $4,719,000 due to declining enrollment and reductions in the average discount offered to new students. The average per-student unfunded discount rate during the period averaged 28.3%. As of June, 30 2013 endowed scholarships were supported by $13,443,000 of restricted funds, accounting for 55% of the total endowment.

As part of the annual budget process, the Budget and Finance committee reviews the recommendation for the average discount rate for entering students and projections for the total budget of unfunded financial aid and scholarships.

Capital and Facilities

The annual budget process covers operations and campus facilities, including capital expenditures for equipment and renewal and replacement.

The annual budget process for equipment and facilities was revised in FY 2013. Budget forms were modified to encourage multi-year planning. The forms now cover three fiscal years and include a category for facilities upgrades, infrastructure, and space needs. The School’s new facilities manager collaborates with the Museum’s facilities staff on a regular basis. They develop the comprehensive multi-year renewal and replacement plan. The report tracks both deferred maintenance and new initiatives.

Before FY 2012, the School routinely deferred renewal and replacement; since then the budget has included $110,000 for renewal and replacement. Additionally, discrete projects completed over the past three years, such as renovations to bathrooms and studio and gallery spaces, were funded through donations or the building reserve fund. The School seeks to maintain a consistent budget for depreciation each year. Annually the School reviews capital budget requests and strategically invests in new computers and equipment. The FY 2014 budget for depreciation is $312,000.

Endowment and Investments

The Museum and School have adopted general policies regarding the composition of its investment portfolio, as formulated and implemented by the Investment committee. The composition of the portfolio and the investment policies are subject to change by the Museum Board of Trustees on recommendation of the Investment Committee. This framework allows the School to leverage its relationship with the Museum by capitalizing on the expertise of committee members.
The School’s endowment consists of 134 donor-restricted endowment funds, restricted funds functioning as endowment, and board designated unrestricted bequests. The net assets of these funds are classified and reported based on the existence or absence of donor-imposed restrictions.

SMFA’s endowment provides crucial funding for financial aid, faculty development, academic travel and research, library acquisitions, and general operating support. Although School and Museum endowment assets are combined in a single pool of funds, all School funds are tracked and accounted for separately. As of June 30, 2013 the value of the School’s endowment was $24,214,000; 80% of total funds were restricted and 55% of total funds were for scholarships.

Fundraising

The School conducts fundraising efforts in accordance with ethical practices and standard policies for 501(c) 3 organizations. The School meets the requirement for a non-profit tax-exempt organization through incorporation with the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. However, SMFA conducts fundraising efforts independently from the Museum.

Charitable gifts specifically designated by philanthropists for the School support the general operations, financial aid and scholarships, faculty, student programs, and capital needs of the college. Funds can be current-use or endowment funds and they may be restricted to specific purpose or unrestricted and therefore directed to top priorities of the institution.

Funds are solicited through a variety of means and in each case the charitable intent and philanthropic nature of the effort is made clear. These means include direct mail and e-mail appeals, personal conversations, and a membership program called SMFA Medici that confers benefits in the form of events on donors to this program. Additionally, two major events in the School’s annual calendar yield philanthropic income. These are the SMFA Art Sale, where net proceeds of the Sale, including 50% of the purchase price of works of art by SMFA students, alumni, faculty, and affiliated artists, comes to the School in the form of unrestricted operating revenue. Secondly, net proceeds from the annual SMFA Medal Award Gala Dinner represent charitable support for student scholarships, a significant annual operating expense for the SMFA. In FY 2013, $2,161,000 was raised from all sources in annual support for the School.

Oversight and Management

Under the School’s bylaws, overall responsibility for the effective administration of the financial resources of SMFA rests with the Board of Trustees. The Board exercises its authority for this charge through the Budget and Finance committee and through the offices of the Vice President of Budget and Planning and the Vice President of Financial Operations.

The Budget and Finance committee has responsibility for reviewing and approving the annual operating and capital budgets and recommending their adoption to the School’s Board of Trustees. Once approved by the Board of Trustees, the operating and capital budgets are considered adopted
by the Museum’s Board of Trustees and are incorporated into the institution’s consolidated operating and capital budgets. Quarterly operating statements of the School are provided to the Budget and Finance Committee and to the full Boards of Trustees and Governors and to the Museum’s Board of Trustees. Financial highlights and analysis of the School’s operations are provided to the full Museum Board of Trustees for those months when the Board is in session.

The Vice President of Budget and Planning and the Vice President of Financial Operations provide extensive support to the Budget and Finance committee in fulfillment of their responsibilities. They ensure that the committee has all information and other support necessary to fulfill their fiduciary obligations to the School.

Annual external audits are conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLC to review the Museum’s consolidated financial statements and internal control structure and policies. The financial resources and transactions of the School are audited as part of the consolidated operations of the Museum. SMFA’s federal financial aid programs are also audited as required under the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-133.

During the past three years, the Museum has received unqualified opinions for its financial statements and A-133 programs, affirming sound financial reporting and practices. The annual audit management letter is reviewed by the Museum’s Audit committee, which takes action as appropriate on the auditors’ recommendations.

**APPRAISAL**

**Operating Budget**

The operating revenues of the SMFA are substantially dedicated to supporting the School’s academic purposes and programs. The combined expenses for instruction, academic support, and student services account for 61% of total expenses. The SMFA is an enrollment driven institution. Tuition and fee income from degree programs and continuing education, net of financial aid, is the primary source of revenue accounting for 77% of total operating revenues. With its overriding reliance on net tuition income, the School is susceptible to significant operating constraints due to even small variances in enrollment. In the past three years the School experienced declining enrollment, with variations in actual degree program enrollment compared to budget. Enrollment declined in the undergraduate programs but increased in the graduate programs. Despite these variations in enrollment, the School had a surplus at the end of each of the last three fiscal years. This was achieved through a combination of factors including managing expenses and relying on philanthropy, including unplanned, one-time major gifts. However, the School realized a significant source of expense savings through financial aid. The cost of financial aid, a variable expense, fell during the past three years by 11% from $5,287,000 to $4,719,000 due to several factors including
declining undergraduate enrollment, lowering the budgeted average discount rate for entering students, and realizing an actual average discount rate for returning students that was less than the budget. While this type of savings is not unexpected due to variances in enrollment, it indicates a need to refine financial aid policies going forward.

In 2011 and 2012 the School developed its first strategic plan in over a decade. With the plan completed, the School has begun to incrementally build the capacity of the operating budget to support the major goals in the plan. The primary goal is to stabilize and grow enrollment through accreditation. Looking forward, the budget needs to provide funds for the initiatives aligned to improve enrollment and enhance the curriculum and student experience. For academic support this includes funds for the library, research and technology; for student services it means funds for student life programming. The near term challenge is to maintain financial equilibrium in the budget as initiatives are rolled out to support academic programs, faculty, students, and library.

**Planning and Reporting**

The School’s financial plans are based on multi-year analysis and financial forecasting, and its financial records clearly relate to its educational activities.

The budget and long range planning processes of SMFA have several goals, including the coordination of financial and program planning to assure that budget decisions accurately reflect institutional priorities; preparation of the operating budget in the context of an overall goal of maintaining financial equilibrium; long term preservation of the endowment; and continued attention to the School’s physical plant.

The SMFA’s multi-year financial model was significantly revised during the recent strategic planning process in 2011 and 2012. The prior model was a simple tool reflecting the current financial structure projected over time. The revised model has the ability to isolate and test the impact of multiple individual initiatives in future years. The model provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing revisions in current operations and forecasting the impact of future program changes and scenarios.

The School seeks to develop its multi-year financial plan based on a realistic set of assumptions. The modeling reflects the capacity for identified sources of revenue, primarily net tuition and fees, to ensure furthering educational quality and services for students. The financial planning incorporated into the recent strategic plan included a separate assessment of risks and related mitigation strategies. While the Budget and Finance committee reviewed the annual operating budget and the multi-year planning model regularly, the full governing board only reviewed the multi-year financial plan in the context of the School’s recent strategic planning process.
Financial Aid

Financial aid is used to support admissions goals for SMFA’s different programs. The awarding of aid was greatly simplified in 2012 when the School introduced flat-rate tuition pricing. Prior to then, tuition billing was done a la carte and the financial aid team had to recalculate aid packages as students changed their course loads. Now students have a simplified process for estimating the net cost of tuition and fees. Starting in FY 2013 the budget and administration of student employment was moved into the financial aid office to better coordinate on-campus employment and to align goals for aid packaging with opportunities for work-study and non-work-study jobs.

SMFA’s long-standing national accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Art and Design has enabled SMFA to participate in federal financial aid programs (now Title IV). In fall 2013, SMFA was approved for another 10-year renewal for its participation in the student financial assistants programs authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965. Upon approval for accreditation by NEASC, the Financial Aid Office will work with the Department of Education to add the SMFA’s new degree programs to its Eligibility and Certification Approval Report (ECAR).

With respect to policy and practices, during the budget process the Budget and Finance committee reviews the budget for total aid and the planned discount rate for entering students. This committee does not routinely evaluate the effectiveness of financial aid policies to support the student body and recruitment goals. However, the committee does review the plan for the discount rate in the context of discussions about the cost of attendance and with a desire to lower the cost of access and improve affordability.

Capital and Facilities

The multi-year renewal and replacement plan provides a consolidated view of short- and long-term needs. Since FY 2012 the operating budget has included level funding for renewal and replacement—$110,000. The multi-year report identifies needs, but the School still faces a significant backlog of deferred maintenance, which typically exceeds the funds available in the operating budget. Over time, the School needs to build capacity in the budget for routine replacements and investments to standardize furniture, basic fixtures, and technology. The multi-year report supports the integration of long-range facilities planning into the annual budget process and alignment with plans for instructional and student support. This multi-year plan also allows for coordination with development to identify opportunities for fundraising to support capital projects and investments in facilities.

Endowment and Investments

The endowment investment and spending policies attempt to provide a predictable stream of funding for the purposes supported by the endowment while seeking to maintain the purchase power of endowment assets. Under this policy, the return objective for the endowment assets is to
maximize the return based on the endowment’s target allocation applied to the appropriate individual benchmarks. Over time, the goal is to provide an average annual rate of return that exceeds the School’s spend rate plus inflation within an acceptable range of risk. Actual returns in any given year may vary due to investment decisions and to prevailing market conditions.

The current spending policy is limited to 5.5% of the average market value of the endowment over the preceding twelve quarters, as recorded the last day of March each fiscal year.

At a market value of $24,214,000, the endowment is equivalent to nearly 92% of the operating budget. While the endowment provides crucial resources, particularly for scholarships, the School needs to increase the endowment to provide more funds to support the strategic goal to stabilize and grow enrollment. Gifts for scholarships will increase access, improve affordability, and reduce students’ dependence on loans. Funds for curricular initiatives will support faculty professional development and research. Unrestricted funds will allow SMFA to pursue future initiatives and to capitalize on new opportunities.

**Fundraising**

The SMFA has a strong, if small-scale, fundraising tradition; and indeed has received several significant seven-figure gifts in the recent decades. Currently the SMFA is building a more ambitious, stronger, and more concentrated fundraising effort with a new team of five staff members. A major strength and a harbinger of the potential for philanthropic support is the great good will and affection SMFA alumni have for the School. From an estimated pool of 15,000 living alumni, we are quickly creating a database of “good” addresses—currently over 5,000. Additional potential and proven strength lies beyond the alumni body in the friends of the School who believe in the education of artists and the SMFA’s contribution to the contemporary cultural life of Boston. Buyers at the Sale, attendees of the Medal Award Dinner, and members of the SMFA Medici group extend beyond SMFA-alumni.

There are many areas of the SMFA’s fundraising program that are steadily improving, most notably making contact and building relationships with those alumni who have not been in the habit of giving to the School. Additionally, we are building a foundation of major gifts ($100,000+), and slowly raising the sights of those philanthropists who have the capacity to support the School’s transition to a college. The fundraising database (Enterprise), a shared asset with the MFA, is consistently being refined to serve the needs of the School’s fundraising efforts and more needs to be done in this area. Similarly, the SMFA’s student database (Jenzabar) needs to be updated and to interface with Enterprise and our e-mail communications system (I-contact) more effectively to accurately reflect the experience and affiliations of SMFA students and to maintain a seamless connection as they transition to being alumni.
Oversight and Management

In response to fiscal variability, SMFA has actively developed cost savings measures and devised ways to offer programs and services more creatively and profitably.

Low unrestricted reserves will limit financial flexibility over the planning horizon; however the School has no external long-term debt obligations. Increasing unrestricted reserves to recommended levels must be viewed as a long-term goal.

PROJECTION

Operating Budget

During FY 2017 management will undertake a comprehensive analytical review of its operating budget to assess the impact on operations from enrolling the first classes of students in the independent BFA and MFA programs.

Planning and Reporting

By spring 2015 the Board of Trustees and Governors’ annual review and approval of the operating budget will include reports presenting the next fiscal year budget along with multi-year projections for operations, capital, and renewal and replacement.

By spring 2015 management’s review of the annual operating budget will include an assessment of preliminary budget requests and planning estimates for the next two fiscal years, using the existing budget forms designed to capture these data.

Financial Aid

By winter 2015 we will develop a systematic and in-depth framework for the board to review and evaluate the effectiveness of SMFA’s financial aid policies and practices.

By fall 2016 we will refine financial aid programs to achieve targeted goals and optimum class profile, including diversity.

Capital and Facilities

By winter 2014 we will form a committee to review, develop, and recommend standards for the routine replacement and reinvestment in campus-wide technology, furniture, and fixtures for instruction, student services, and administrative areas.
By spring 2016 management will begin to increase the operating budget for renewal and replacement by 20% annually to provide more funds to maintain the physical plant.

**Fundraising and Endowment**

The SMFA has undertaken a $10,000,000, three-year fundraising campaign focused on priorities of people, programs, and campus and in accordance with the Strategic Plan. Campaign gifts will take the form of current-use gifts, adding to fiscal stability particularly during this transition. Endowment gifts will, over time, relieve the dependence on tuition. Capital gifts will fund one-time bricks-and-mortar projects, renewing our infrastructure and creating a student-focused campus. Planned gifts, particularly irrevocable bequests, will be a specific focus of the SMFA’s fundraising efforts.

**Oversight and Management**

SMFA will strengthen fiscal contingency planning to meet long-term needs and increase reserve balances.

The School notes the importance of identifying efficiencies and developing new revenue streams and will aggressively seek diverse sources of revenue and continually evaluate and implement cost savings measures.

**Institutional Effectiveness**

The SMFA’s finances are evaluated with a focus on the ability of the operating budget to adequately fund the School’s long-term strategic goals and to carry out its mission and support its academic purposes and programs. With the recent completion of a strategic plan, the School is better positioned to analyze current operations and plans for future. The plan provides a framework for the goals and strategies to transform the SMFA. The School is now evolving from a planning phase into the implementation stage, and is refining assumptions and revising the timing and sequencing of new programs, initiatives, and related financial planning estimates.

During the year, management reviews the current fiscal condition and routinely assesses operations. This is done to determine the changes and enhancements necessary to improve the core programs, services, and activities which are structured to meet the evolving needs of the faculty and student body. The Board of Trustees, through its committee structure, has an appropriate level of oversight in place to work with management to review and improve the integrity of the School’s finances. Throughout the strategic planning process and now into the implementation stage, the Board of Trustees has provided the support to make the changes and decisions necessary to keep SMFA moving forward and achieving its mission and goals.
The transformation of the School to a college is a complex management and planning process. The SMFA will need to build on the strong systems in place for analysis and assessment, and simultaneously develop new methods for comprehensive and systemic evaluation that strengthens the School’s financial position and results in the long-term improvement of the School’s academic programs.
STANDARD TEN: PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

The School of the Museum of Fine Arts makes every effort to publicly present itself to many audiences in a manner that is as clear, accurate, and visible as possible. Using both print and online formats, the School routinely publishes information for prospective students, current students, parents, alumni, faculty, staff, and the arts community. With the increasing use of technology to disseminate information, SMFA is developing processes and tools to publish new and necessary content in a timely manner, with the goal of reaching local, national, and international audiences (as is consistent with our strategic plan).

DESCRIPTION

SMFA publishes in both print and online formats pertinent information about getting into, attending, experiencing, financing, and what to do after graduation; with the most detailed information online. The information for prospective students includes how to apply, application deadlines and requirements, and cost of attendance. Information for current students includes details on the academic calendars, academic counseling resources, exhibition opportunities, and registration dates. Information for parents includes tuition and fees, housing, student life, commencement, and employment opportunities for students. Information for the arts community includes dates and details about current and upcoming exhibitions and shows.

The website www.smfa.edu is the public-facing site with information pertaining to all departments, services, calendars, and academic requirements. The site also contains information on management, strategic planning, exhibitions, and faculty and student engagement. As a division of the Museum, the School’s financial statements are in the Museum’s annual report, available on their website at http://www.mfa.org/annual-report-2013/numbers.html.

Another resource for internal audiences is mySMFA, the School’s password-protected intranet. MySMFA is a resource for student registration, community calendars, important academic and procedural forms, and class communication. Content for mySMFA is currently not centrally managed. However, work on the external site, www.smfa.edu, will enable reorganization of content on mySMFA for the 2014-2015 academic year and beyond. (See Standard Eight.)

SMFA publishes a yearly viewbook, or catalog, in print and online, that includes general information about the School, such as history, subject matter taught, degrees and programs offered, teaching and learning, and student life. The viewbook clearly indicates how to contact the School and the appropriate offices to contact for the type of information the general viewbook audience might be seeking.
The current SMFA viewbook clearly presents a picture of the School that is consistent with the mission statement. The inside cover explains the School’s history:

“The School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (SMFA) has been educating artists since its founding in 1876. The School was established at the same time as the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, as the crucial second part of a mission to educate through the arts. SMFA was intended to be a school of art; not simply a technical institute, but a school of the most rigorous ideas and concepts. Since its founding, the School’s faculty, administration, and curriculum have been dynamically engaged in questions of art education, creative expression and innovation.”

The School’s mission statement, as published on www.smfa.edu:

“Mission: The mission of the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston is to provide an education in the fine arts—for undergraduate and graduate artists—that is interdisciplinary and self-directed. This education values cultural, artistic and intellectual diversity; it embraces a wide range of media; it stresses the development of individual vision and its relation to culture in general; it values equally the knowledge gained by thinking and doing; it is deeply engaged with the world as a whole. If the mission is constant, its practice is always transforming.”

The SMFA website, www.smfa.edu, also includes sections such as getting into SMFA, programs, faculty, student life, financial assistance, exhibition opportunities, institutional support, alumni, and about SMFA, which includes SMFA’s mission statement and lists departments and leadership. Each section and area includes contact information for that specific department, as well as a footer with general contact information for the School.

Website visitors can request information by email, phone, or through the submission form on the admissions page.

In reference to admission and attendance, information is posted in various locations on our website, most intuitively in the Admissions section (http://www.smfa.edu/getting-into-smfa) and the About SMFA: Fast Facts section (http://www.smfa.edu/fast-facts). Policy information for students is posted on the student handbook page (http://www.smfa.edu/student-handbook) and on related pages student pages.

Archival print documents are available in the Marketing and Communications office (room B028, 230 The Fenway). Archival web documents are available by request through our online catalog vendor, Zmag.

Currently, only the SMFA website has updates on the accreditation process. Due to the timing of printing, our materials about the 2013-2014 academic year do not include information regarding the NEASC accreditation process. For the 2014-2015 academic year, SMFA will publish information
regarding accreditation and expected timeframes for candidacy, programs, and degrees. Updates on accreditation and/or licensure are published on the SMFA website in the Accreditation page (http://www.smfa.edu/accreditation) and limited information is published on the SMFA: Fast Facts page (http://www.smfa.edu/fast-facts). For the internal community, this information is posted on the intranet, mySMFA.

**APPRAISAL**

The Marketing and Communications office reviews materials biannually, in partnership with Admissions, Financial Aid, the Business Office, School Store, Exhibitions, Academic Affairs, and Student Affairs department directors. As SMFA becomes a college and departments and the institution itself are expanding and evolving at a rapid pace, departments and the institution as a whole frequently request changes to the website. The Marketing and Communications office oversees compiling and publishing web and print materials and has hired two new full-time staff members in the past year to meet demand, a graphic designer and a digital manager.

While there are no official processes for reviewing materials and content, departmentally or institutionally, plans are in place to develop a more structured system. This system will ensure documented audits of all materials, including analytics about the website (internal and external), landing pages, and email communications. Documentation of the review and outcomes will be published internally on mySMFA and archived for future reference. This new system will be fall 2014, and will be managed by the Marketing and Communications office, in collaboration with all relevant departments (mentioned above).

The Marketing and Communications office officially publishes documents for SMFA, after they are reviewed by the requesting department. The goal is for all SMFA materials, including the website and viewbook, to maintain a common brand. SMFA uses an adapted version AP Stylebook. Current brand standards: the color red PMS032, Helvetica Neue Condensed for our sans serif font in light, medium, and bold. The font on much of our older materials is Bulmer, a serif font.

The official SMFA style and brand guide will be revised in summer 2014 and published on mySMFA and www.smfa.edu. An important part of the brand guide will be standardized reporting of School-related year-over-year statistics, such as those in the Fast Facts section of the website.

On the website (www.smfa.edu) SMFA currently publishes information such as the size and characteristics of the student body, the campus setting, and the availability of academic and other support services. This information is also published in supporting print materials about residential life and financial aid. Student body size and characteristics is on the Fast Facts page (http://www.smfa.edu/fast-facts); campus setting is on the Campus page http://www.smfa.edu/campus); total cost of attendance and payment resources, including the net price calculator and contact information, is published on the Tuition and Fees page.
(http://www.smfa.edu/tuition-and-fees). Financial aid and scholarship resources are on the Financial Aid and Scholarships page (http://www.smfa.edu/financial-aid-and-scholarships). We do not currently address the expected amount of student debt in any print or online materials, but this will be addressed in the future.

SMFA’s interactive online course catalog is a new tool for students, staff, and faculty. On mySMFA, the SMFA community can view schedule and courses for the upcoming academic year (2014-2015) and historical course listings starting in spring 2009. All current semester course catalogs are accessible as interactive e-zines and printable PDFs (http://www.smfa.edu/smfa-course-catalog). The e-zines and PDFs are available for two years after they are published, on the internal and external websites. SMFA has no process for determining exact course/curriculum content beyond two semesters, but the offices of the Registrar, Academic Affairs, and Marketing and Communications have been working together since fall 2013 to address this need.

Finally, during the summer 2014, both the external SMFA site and the intranet, will be redesigned and reorganized. The Marketing and Communications office will manage this process in collaboration with representatives of the School’s stakeholders: staff, academic and student service departments, development, the President’s Cabinet, faculty, and students. These new sites will launch in late summer 2014. The goal of the redesign of the external site is to improve availability of online documents, and provide information about curriculum expansion and studio practices. The goal of the redesign of the internal site is to provide information about new procedures for emergency management, student conduct and judicial affairs policy, and an integrated undergraduate and graduate student handbook, covering both academic and behavioral policies.

**Projections**

**Informs and publishes accurate, current information**

The institution plans an overhaul of the www.smfa.edu website within the 2014-2015 academic year to create a user-friendly, thorough, timely, and mission-driven information hub for prospective students, current students, parents, and other audiences. This will include streamlined navigation, clearly categorized into key information areas, including, but not limited to, admissions and enrollment, academic services, student services, financial services, development, career development, and alumni relations. The reorganization and assignment of content for the intranet, mySMFA, is a subset of the overall web enhancement project.

Google Analytics and other data-gathering tools such as AdmissionPros and Jenzabar, will be used monthly to provide information about useful content and audience response.
As part of the overall web enhancement project, SMFA will re-create the Fast Facts section to include information on mission, governance, student body size and characteristics, number and type of programs, and general financial information.

**Policy establishment**

By the beginning of the 2015-2016 academic year, SMFA will have reviewed current or new policies in the following areas, published on the public facing www.smfa.edu and these pages on mySMFA, the School’s intranet:

- Emergency management
- A combined undergraduate and graduate student handbook
- Academic standards, learning outcomes and integrity
- Student conduct as it relates to Judicial affairs

**Content Review**

By the beginning of the 2015-2016 academic year, SMFA will have established a biannual review process for printed and electronic content audit process, both institutionally and per department and area. The content review will also include an analysis of links, online forms, contact information, and calendars. This will be managed by the Digital Manager in the Marketing and Communications office and overseen by the department director.

**Institutional Effectiveness**

The School of the Museum of Fine Arts publishes print and online materials for public consumption frequently throughout the year. Through a systematic review process, SMFA revises primary materials that address institutional goals, programmatic goals, and student-related goals, and provide relevant information for prospective students, parents, and alumni.

With the addition of two new full-time staff members in the office that manages print and online materials, SMFA is strategically positioned to increase access and opportunity for public consumption and participation in School-related materials.
STANDARD ELEVEN: INTEGRITY

DESCRIPTION

SMFA places the highest emphasis on integrity in the conduct of all members of its community, students, faculty, staff, administration, and boards. To ensure that integrity, trustees, governors, and executive leadership strive for openness and transparency in all actions; this includes ongoing attention to the practice of governance with a particular emphasis on including all constituencies in deliberative and decision-making groups. Furthermore, the Offices of the President and the Dean maintain direct communication with the faculty and staff through regular meetings with the Faculty Senate, the faculty as a whole, and staff through various working groups. The faculty, with the support of the Office of Student Affairs, will work directly with students to emphasize the role of integrity in their work and conduct and its relationship to the world beyond the college.

Fairness, to a significant degree, depends on how the policies are formulated. At SMFA, policies are developed with broad community input, to be effective and widely understood, and to reflect the community’s values. Policies are in place in part to help SMFA maintain its institutional integrity. Separate handbooks outline each of SMFA’s internal constituencies: trustees and governors; faculty; students; and Museum of Fine Arts employees.

SMFA trustees and governors are required to comply with the School’s conflict of interest policy as stated in Article VII of the SMFA bylaws. The policy states that trustees and governors must make decisions in the best interest of SMFA and that the School’s “integrity must be protected and advanced at all times.”

The faculty handbook does not have a single introductory statement about institutional integrity, but has specific statements in several sections. These include, “concern for the welfare of students and colleagues” and the “commitment to the academic life of the SMFA community.”

The student handbook outlines Community Standards and Expectations” with an emphasis on respect, mutuality, and honesty, including academic honesty. There is also a discussion of self-expression, which is articulated as the responsibility of each student to broader community, both within and outside the School. The handbook states that it is a responsibility of all to create a “community that is welcoming and respectful of cultural, artistic and individual differences”.

Two publications are binding for School administration, staff, and faculty: the Museum of Fine Arts employee handbook and Staff Guidelines for Professional Practice. The employee handbook details general expectations and rights of all employees. Staff Guidelines for Professional Practice is a set of

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20 Faculty Handbook, section 1.2.1-1.2.4
ethical guidelines which state that “all employees owe their first loyalty to the (corporation) and should conscientiously fulfill (their) responsibilities…with personal commitment to integrity.” It also addresses specific instances of integrity, including conflict of interest, the responsibility of each individual in maintaining the reputation of the organization, and confidentiality.

Each handbook also has statement regarding diversity and equal opportunity. As detailed in the faculty handbook itself, the faculty search process is structured to “make clear that the SMFA actively encourages and seeks a diverse academic, cultural and ethnic community and seeks applicants from underrepresented groups.” (See Standard Five for more information.) The Dean’s office, which oversees faculty hiring, explicitly requires that each search address diversity in its applicant pool.

The employee handbook also outlines the corporation’s Equal Employment Opportunity Policy, which states “Discrimination of any kind, based on factors not relevant to job performance must be eliminated completely.” It also states that the policy applies to “all phases of the personnel process … (including) “recruitment, (...) hiring, (...) promotion,” etc. This handbook also outlines the process for the annual staff performance reviews. The Board of Trustees evaluates the President, with input from the SMFA’s multiple constituencies. This results in a set of annual goals, building on those of the prior year and aligned with the institutional strategic plan.

The student handbook states the importance and value of a diverse academic community. “Inherent in (the School’s) mission is the need to foster a community that is welcoming and respectful of cultural, artistic and individual differences.”21 It also outlines a non-discrimination policy that includes examples of discrimination “based on age, color, race, sex, disabilities, religion, sexual orientation; illness such as AIDS and HIV infection, national origin, and other classifications protected by applicable city, state, and/or federal laws or ordinances.” Any form of abuse, harassment, or intimidation of another person, including sexual harassment, is a violation of the School’s community standards and will be subject to disciplinary action.

Grievance policies are also published in the appropriate handbook. The employee handbook includes a detailed grievance process for staff. The faculty handbook includes additional information for faculty, mostly related to academic freedom. The student handbook outlines the student grievance processes22, used to resolve disputes between student parties and deal with formal complaints to dispute the actions of School departments and/or officials, including disputes of disciplinary actions. The student handbook also includes a section on Title IX/Rehabilitation Act grievance procedures for cases involving discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, illness, religion, sexual orientation, or other classification protected by law.

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21 Student Handbook, Student Rights and Responsibilities, Pg 54.
22 See Standard Six for a projection related to a revised grievance policy. The policy will be well communicated to all internal stakeholders once it is established.
The student handbook also states that faculty have the right to academic freedom, but must maintain a distinction “between knowledge and belief” and “faculty and citizen.” They are expected “to maintain a (classroom that is) supportive of academic freedom, … respect dissent and difference of opinion, … and a wide range of strategies and subject matter.”

The School makes every effort to protect the privacy of students, student records, electronic and otherwise, and complies with all applicable federal laws and regulations, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Massachusetts state law. The faculty handbook includes an appendix with the FERPA guidelines for faculty and staff. It explains student privacy rights as mandated by FERPA and clearly states what information is and is not permissible to disclose without a student’s expressed written consent. Students are informed of these rights in the student handbook and during the new student orientation.

SMFA has also fully complied with reporting requirements necessary to participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. This includes the annual Fiscal Operations Report and Application to Participate (FISAP) and IPEDS surveys. In fall 2013, the SMFA was granted another 10-year renewal of its participation in Title IV programs by the U.S. Department of Education.

Additionally, the corporation’s external auditors conduct an annual review of the School’s financial aid program that includes an assessment of policies and procedures, including random sampling of individual files. The Audit committee formally presents the results of this audit to School leadership.

In addition to the formal handbooks that detail integrity in the various aspects of the student relationship, the School strives to provide regular communications with students about matters concerning them. The Marketing and Communications office coordinates these communications to ensure that they are appropriate and timely. Scheduled communications include a weekly electronic student bulletin from the Office of Student Affairs and regular updates from the Dean and the President. (See Standard Ten for additional details.)

Institutional integrity as it relates to the School’s collective values has been demonstrated consistently: Through institutional strategic planning (2010-2012), which included the participation of over 90 individual community members. Through the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education licensure process (2010-2013) and through NEASC initial conversations, formal affiliation, and progress towards candidacy and accreditation (2010-ongoing). All of these processes involved numerous members of the School community.

Before seeking affiliation with NEASC, the School sought and received licensure for its degrees and certificates from the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (DHE). This process included

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23 Ibid.
24 SMFA’s long-standing national accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Art and Design qualified the SMFA to participate in federal financial aid programs. This has been in place since at least 1973, with participation in the Basic Educational Opportunity Grant Program (now Pell Grant), Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants (SEOG), College Work Study, National Direct Student Loan Program, and Title IV.
an exhaustive review from DHE of all aspects of the institution, including multiple meetings, a self-authored program application for each credential, a comprehensive review by a DHE visiting team, resulting in a report and recommendations, and a formal submission to the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education. The Board approved the SMFA’s application for licensure in April 2013.

Over the same period, the School maintained close contact with NEASC to ensure that the work to meet licensure aligned closely with NEASC’s standards, policies, and procedures. To give an example, there were a series of fundamental changes related to corporate governance that required close communication between the School, the Massachusetts DHE, and NEASC in order to meet the standards and requirements of both bodies.

Once licensure was approved, the School moved immediately to formally seek affiliation with NEASC. After receiving the application and site visit and visiting team recommendations, the Commission approved the SMFA for affiliation in their September 2013 meeting.

**APPRAISAL**

At the board level, integrity is core to the practice of governance and is well articulated and deeply ingrained in board culture. Senior administration is also attentive to the matter of integrity, as is evidenced in the many forms of formal accountability—to the board, faculty, students, and the many external regulatory bodies with which they work. The Boards of Trustees and Governors recognize that there is the need to create a more diverse board and are formally addressing this goal in the nomination, recruitment, and retention of board members.

Over the past year, the Dean of the School worked with faculty to formulate the bylaws for the first Faculty Senate, and then convened the first meeting. Likewise, the Director of Student Affairs worked with students to begin the process of structuring a student government. Over the next period these new bodies will assess and refine formal processes of integrity, including faculty review procedures and student disciplinary procedures. One clear need is to more fully articulate an academic honesty and plagiarism policy with rationale, procedures for adjudicating violations, and appropriate penalties.

The SMFA also has a number of systems and procedures to ensure that integrity that is outlined in the student handbook is achieved. These include the policies and procedures committee where the directors of Admissions, Student Affairs, Registrar, the Business Office, Academic Affairs, and Financial Aid meet biweekly to review policies and procedures. This committee forwards recommendations to the President’s Cabinet, a senior management group that also meets bi-weekly.

Research in the arts requires a keen attention to the broadest possible application of academic freedom. Faculty and students pursue a wide range of scholarly and artistic research. Note that these are not mutually exclusive, nor is scholarly/written research reserved for academic faculty members.
Subject matter is sometimes difficult, even controversial, and includes investigations of many subjects—from questions of politics and history to those of identity and experience. While this results in books and scholarly articles in many colleges, faculty and student research at SMFA typically take many other challenging and unexpected forms, including media-based work, film, animation, programming, installation, writing, and performance. The work is often created through unconventional processes including collaborative interdisciplinary work with other scholars, scientists, and artists. It is the radical diversity and ambition of the work that speaks most dramatically to the School’s practice of academic and artistic freedom. Both the faculty and student handbooks articulate specific policies regarding academic freedom.

These specific instances are still only components of an overarching institutional approach to integrity. The larger challenge is to inaugurate a comprehensive, school-wide understanding of the central place of integrity in the life of the institution.

Many other standards have examples of institutional integrity:

- The School’s recent strategic plan was formulated through a broadly inclusive process involving all SMFA constituencies, including students, faculty, staff, administration, governors, alumni, and trustees. This document remains the shared planning framework for accreditation and all strategic initiatives.
- The Office of Academic Affairs and the Dean work closely with the Curriculum committee of the Faculty Senate to oversee the integrity of each class and the overall curriculum.
- Student advising is highly personalized and takes two forms: academic /studio advising, ensuring that the student is on track to meet their goals; and financial aid advising, helping students and, if appropriate, their families create an achievable financial plan.
- Physical resources, including facilities and technology, are aligned to the needs of the curriculum and the students. The School is currently undergoing a comprehensive use and utilization study of the main Fenway buildings to plan renovations for existing space and creation of new space, consonant with the goals of the strategic plan. The process included interviewing faculty and students and will be completed in late April 2014.
- The SMFA undergoes an annual external financial audit. (See Standard Nine)
- SMFA adheres to non-discriminatory policies outlined by the National Association of College Admissions Counselors.
- Since 1948, the School has been accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design, which requires periodic reporting and a full reaccreditation review every ten years (next scheduled for the 2014-2015 academic year). NASAD reporting and review includes reflection on all policies, including those related to integrity and academic policy, and provides an important opportunity to strengthen the School’s approach to integrity. NASAD, for example, must approve any substantive change to the School’s programs.
**PROJECTIONS**

With the goal of continued integrity in mind, in the 2014-2015 academic year, the Office of the President will create an ad-hoc committee composed of multiple constituencies (students, faculty, and staff) to review all integrity related policies with the aim of creating a single document to further ensure an institutional culture of integrity. This committee will streamline disparate policies and procedures; identify gaps and propose remedies; and develop shared goals and language.

The Committee will also:

- Work with the SMFA Boards of Trustees and Governors to develop a board self-evaluation as already noted in the board bylaws.
- Rewrite shared Museum policies, such as the Staff Guidelines for Professional Practice, to specifically reflect the needs and challenges of a college.
- Consolidate and standardize all policies and publish them online.
- Include a formal judiciary board for review of violations of specific honesty and behavioral policies.
- Develop policies about areas of concern, including diversity, intellectual property of faculty, and the use of subjects in research.
- Provide a schedule for ongoing formal review of individual integrity related policies.

**INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

SMFA has a culture of regular policy review. Annual revisions to the student handbook and the annual review of the handbook of the Boards of Trustees and Governors help ensure continued consistency in policy, public disclosure, and integrity. The faculty and staff handbooks are currently undergoing comprehensive rewriting.