

DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ART  
**“2-4” Report Response.**

Contents:

1. Summary of Student Responses to the Questionnaire
2. Town Hall Meeting
3. Faculty/Department Responses
4. Conclusion

**1. Summary of Student Responses to the Questionnaire:**

The student responses to the ‘2-4 Questionnaire’ provided an opportunity for general reflections on the status and quality of the program and a chance for students and faculty to propose possible improvements. Overall the student responses reflected warmly and positively on the Dept, offering only constructive criticism and helpful suggestions for improvement. The curriculum, intellectual quality, mentoring offered by the faculty and the administrative daily running of the Graduate Program by the Graduate Registrar, were offered an overall strong endorsement. The interaction with Yale Museums was singled out for particular approbation. The procedures and regulations laid out in the annually-updated “Red Book” were considered fair and adequate.

There were some specific issues about the program raised in one or more graduate student responses:

- More mentorship about Grant Applications and strategies needed
- Possible Research Methods seminar for those beginning dissertations (ie year 4)
- Possible Writing Workshop
- Possible Job-Market Workshop
- Need for greater focus on research and writing skills in coursework
- Problems with the Library (short loan periods, high fines, short opening hours on Fri & Sat)
- Lack of cross listings with Women, Gender and Sexuality

No students felt that there were structural hindrances to the timely completion of a degree within six years, and none singled out the years 2-4 as problematic. The Graduate School’s interest in the question of timely completion of degrees emerged as a common area of concern. There was particular anxiety about rigid standardization of timetable for years 2-4 especially regarding students who need to develop language or other skills in order to undertake research while preparing the prospectus. Several students also noted with concern that they felt increasing pressure to finish in exactly 6 years, where the need to conduct extensive fieldwork or the need for language acquisition may make this impossible. There was a marked concern that in the future the use of sanctions such as the cutting off of healthcare and library privileges in 7<sup>th</sup> year would result in pressure on students into submitting the dissertation prematurely.

## **2. Town Hall Meeting:**

A “Town Hall” meeting open to all graduate students, with the Chair, DGS and Graduate Registrar was held in January 2007 to review the issues raised by the report and to explore ways in which the department’s graduate program could be modified and improved. The meeting was conducted in a warm and positive spirit and many useful suggestions were made, viz:

### **TRAINING/WORKSHOPS PROPOSED/REQUESTED:**

- [1] Writing grant applications (done in 2006-7, and should be done every year)
- [2] Orals and Prospectus preparation workshop (done in 2005-6 and should be done every year)
- [3] Research methods/archives (possibly for students at the beginning of 4th year, or during prospectus-writing phase)
- [4] Seminar on professional strategy (what to publish and when; how to prepare articles for publication)

### **CAREER DEVELOPMENT/PROFESSIONALISATION ISSUES:**

- [5] A Department newsletter or listserv was mooted, keeping current students in touch with graduates of the program
- [6] It was suggested that recipients of fellowships could be named on the Department website
- [7] An annual Careers Workshop with recent graduates of the program was requested
- [8] Counselling/workshops on CV writing, cover-letter writing, interviews, job talks, campus visits were suggested

### **TEACHING:**

- [9] There was a call for the department to sponsor more graduate-student taught classes
- [10] Workshop on preparation of class outlines/syllabi was requested
- [11] There was a call for more systematic monitoring of graduate student teaching by faculty

### **LIBRARY:**

[12] While there was much appreciation for the services provided by the Arts Library, through a difficult period of site transition, there was strong dissatisfaction expressed about the loans policy and the opening hours of the library.

### **3. Faculty/Department Responses:**

The Department welcomed this positive and constructive input from the graduate students. These were discussed by the Chair and DGS and presented for discussion at a Faculty Meeting in February 2007. Department responses are listed here following the numerical order as above.

#### **TRAINING/WORKSHOPS:**

[1] Writing grant applications workshop.

This is now an annual event run by the DGS. In 2007 two meetings were held, the first with faculty and curators who had served on CASVA and Getty panels advising on application strategy. The second was a workshop (open to all graduate students) in which two senior faculty worked to refine pre-circulated grant application texts written by the students.

[2] Orals and Prospectus preparation seminar.

This is now an annual event run by the DGS.

[3] Research methods seminar

This will begin in Spring 2008. It will consist of a digital and online research methods seminar co-ordinated with Hannah Bennett of the Arts Library and Jennifer Pollock of the Yale Center for British Art Library. Subjects will include: Arts & Humanities Database Refresher, Refworks Workshop and Digital Image Collections and Presentation Tools.

[4] Seminar on professional strategy (what to publish and when; how to prepare articles for publication). This will be held in Spring 2008.

#### **CAREER DEVELOPMENT/PROFESSIONALISATION ISSUES:**

[5] In lieu of a Department newsletter the new History of Art Department website is regularly updated with news of events.

[6] The DGS has established a practice of sending out an email announcing the nominees for each national fellowship award.

[7 and 8] A workshop entitled "How to Get a Job in Art History" to discuss issues such as CV writing, cover-letter writing, interviews, job talks, and campus visits will be held in December 2007. It will include members of senior faculty who have served on many searches and junior faculty who have relatively recently been through the process.

Depending on graduate student response to this, the workshop might be expanded in future years.

### **TEACHING:**

[9] There was a call for the department to sponsor more graduate-student taught classes. This was discussed at a faculty meeting and the Chair agreed to pursue the question Prize Teaching Fellowships with the Provost's office.

[10] Beginning in 2007, the Department inaugurated a series of workshops on Teaching The History of Art. The three sessions covered: "Teaching in the Gallery Setting;" "Teaching Sections: the Question of Theory;" and "Teaching and Planning Seminars". These classes were devised and co-led by the DGS and William Rando, Dean's Advisor on Teaching and Learning and Director, McDougal Graduate Teaching Center.

[11] Call for more systematic monitoring of graduate student teaching by faculty. This issue was discussed at a Faculty Meeting. Individual faculty agreed to spend greater time monitoring the work of their Teaching Assistants, though concerns were raised that regular "inspections" might seem unduly intrusive.

### **LIBRARY:**

[12] The DGS immediately contacted the acting head of the Arts Library, Christine de Vallet, who made clear that any changes would be difficult to achieve and would have to take place once a permanent Arts Librarian was appointed. A further meeting with Hannah Bennett, the excellent area Librarian for the History of Art and graduate students to discuss issues concerning elevator construction and noise problems, and was held during the summer.

Following the appointment of the new Director of the Research Library Allen Townshend discussions were resumed betokening a warm collaboration between students, faculty and the library. A reception was held on 25 August 2007 by the Arts Library for incoming and returning students and Hannah Bennett has established excellent relations with the graduate students and proposed a series of workshops for them, listed above.

Library and A/V issues have been discussed at a number of Faculty Meetings attended by HSAR faculty meeting to which people from all over the arts area came including the Robert Carlucci - the new VRC head, Karen Kupiac, the head Manager, Web, Workstation, and Digital Consulting, me, Meg Bellinger, the Associate University Librarian, Integrated Library Systems and Technical Services , Katherine Haskins.

Many transitional problems will be solved with the opening of the new Arts Library in the summer of 2008.

### **MENTORING:**

This issue has been discussed at faculty meetings and two proposals are under consideration:

-- List of responsibilities of advisors (to be included in Red Book or circulated to all students and faculty).

-- Possible future role for a member of faculty designated as a PDO (Professional Development Officer). It was suggested that this could be a junior faculty position -- effectively an assistant DGS so that some functions could be shared.

#### **4. Conclusion:**

Neither students nor faculty see any need for changes to our program with regard to the progress of students in years 2-4. Nonetheless, the Report offered the opportunity for a more general reassessment of the program and its provisions.

We see this report as an interim document and as part of an ongoing process. The Department has adopted the policy that the Chair and DGS will hold termly Town Hall meetings with all Graduate Students to review these issues, leading to a continuing dialogue. Another such meeting will be held in December 2007.

Tim Barringer (DGS)

David Joselit (Chair)

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