

**REPORT OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE
CONCERNING THE APPLICATION FROM THE
INSTITUTE FOR DOCTORAL STUDIES IN THE VISUAL ARTS
TO OFFER THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF VISUAL ARTS**

**September 7, 2003
Portland, Maine**

Signed, the Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts Review
Committee,

Dr. Joyce Hedlund (Chair)
President
Eastern Maine Community College

Dr. Daniel Sheridan
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Saint Joseph's College

Dr. Jacque Carter
Interim VP for Academic Affairs
University of New England

Dr. Mark B. Lapping
Distinguished Professor
Muskie School of Public Service

Michael Shaughnessy
Professor of Art and Chair
Department of Art
University of Southern Maine

BACKGROUND

The Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts (“ISDVA” or “Institute”) is seeking authority to grant a Doctor of Philosophy in Visual Arts with a focus on philosophy, aesthetics, and art theory. The target student is the person who holds a Master in Fine Arts Degree, which serves as a terminal degree for studio artists.

In accordance with State of Maine Education Statute Title 20A, and state policies 05-071-149 and 05-071-170 setting forth Maine State Board of Education procedures and standards relating to an application for degree-granting authority, the Maine State Board of Education established a visiting team to evaluate the Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts application and report its findings. The visiting team met in Portland, Maine with applicant administrators and board members on September 7, 2006. The team was accompanied by Harry W. Osgood, Higher Education Specialist for the Maine Department of Education.

The visiting team was comprised of Chair, Dr. Joyce B. Hedlund, President, Eastern Maine Community College; Dr. Jacque Carter, Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs, University of New England; Dr. Mark B. Lapping, Distinguished Professor, Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine; Dr. Daniel Sheridan, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Saint Joseph’s College; Mr. Michael Shaughnessey, Professor of Art and Chair of the Department of Art, University of Southern Maine.

The team met with the applicant, as well as members of the Institute’s Board of Trustees from 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on September 7, 2006 in Portland. The Institute President had made provisions to have various faculty and additional board and advisory members available by telephone. In addition to the application, team members examined the following documentation: Articles of Incorporation, Credit Line, Faculty Curriculum Vitae, and details concerning the study residency program segments to be conducted at the Castello di Spannocchia in Tuscany, Italy and in New York City.

The Institute is in its infancy; well beyond conceptualization but short of implementation at the time of the visit. The visiting team reviewed the Board and Administration plan for establishing and managing the Institute from financial, administrative and educational perspectives. The team found that this was not the typical college setting, as outlined in the previously mentioned state statute and policies. The analysis of the potential for success was somewhat challenging as the team worked with policy statements that assumed a traditional environment and method for delivering a degree. For example, the Institute proposes to offer a hybrid type of instruction which will include use of “virtual” library and instructional resources and live courses (in various international and national art centers) taught by well established and recognized artists and scholars (also residing in various locations) serving as adjunct faculty. The Institute also proposes to use electronic means for student access to research resources and to communicate with instructors. The current State Board of Education standards do not address this style of delivery or method of instruction. For example, on-line instruction requires an “on-line library.” The standards ask the team to verify the existence of a physical library. While

this led to lively discussion in team meetings, it was somewhat difficult to measure this innovative institute against the standards as outlined in current state policies and procedures.

Standard A - Organization and Governance

The Institute for Doctoral Studies in Visual Arts Corporation is governed by a Board of Trustees comprised of six members, five of whom are voting members. The President of the Institute is ex officio. The Corporation exists as a nonprofit, public benefit corporation and will be operated as a 5019(c)(3). The Articles of Incorporation and bylaws were approved and adopted by Board of the Directors on July 26, 2006. The bylaws define the Corporation's structure and reflect standards found in most bylaws: identity; purposes, roles, responsibilities, and terms of the Board of Trustees; role, responsibilities and expectations of the President of the Institute; committee structure and responsibilities; meetings; personnel procedures; and a conflict of interest statement. The Trustees elect their own successors.

The Board will meet at least four times during each year and may be called to special meetings by the President. The Board serves as the financial steward and is responsible for appointing the President and ensuring that the Institute is meeting its mission. The bylaws identify three standing committees and define their roles for the Board – Executive, Finance and Development, and Scholarship Committees. In addition, the Chair has the authority to appoint Special Committees to carry out the purposes of the Institute.

The President is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Institute and, at this time, supervises all employees and contracted services. The President is ex officio of every faculty and governing board, as well of every committee of the faculty, administration, and corporation. Currently, the President serves in the role of chief academic officer; however, a full time Dean will be appointed for the 2008-09 Academic Year. A Program Coordinator has been hired to provide student support service functions such as Registrar, Admissions and Financial Aid. For the short term, this person will also oversee the Accountant responsible for the integrity of the Institutes financial resources. In time, additional staff will be hired to manage some of these functions.

The Institute has an organizational chart which outlines its current and future organization. It clearly provides the lines of authority and supervision. A Faculty Senate will provide academic policy direction for the Institute.

This standard is met.

Standard B - Institutional Objectives

The Maine State Department of Education standards require that an institution seeking approval have a defined educational mission that contains the goals, purpose and educational philosophy “as may be inherent in the proposed degree offerings.” The application from the Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts identifies both a mission and purpose for the Institute. It is the intent of the Institute to provide “education in philosophy, aesthetics, art theory and similar disciplines related to the visual arts” to holders of the Masters of Fine Arts and will confer doctoral degrees on those who successfully complete the degree requirements.

Further, the application states that “The Ph.D. in Visual Arts provides the training and credentials necessary to bring art practitioners into the center of the current and extremely important debates around the meaning and function of art in today’s world.” It is the intent of the Institute to “change the way we think about art inside the academy and beyond” by engaging students in “the larger questions of philosophy and theory pressing on the status of art today.” Interviews of the President and staff members reflected an understanding of and obvious commitment to the mission and purposes.

This standard is met.

Standard C - Financial Resources

The IDSVA has presented a financial plan and a six year budget proforma in support of an academic program leading to a Ph.D. in the Visual Arts. The Institute has provided an audited financial statement and documentation in support of long-range financial planning. Balance sheets of The Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts have been presented for the years ending May 31, 2007 through May 31, 2011, and the related statements of income, retained earnings, and cash flows for the years then ended. This plan envisions tuition revenue from approximately fifteen candidates per year; totaling forty-five students when fully subscribed, in addition to those working beyond the third year to complete the dissertation. As a distance education program, the instructional, administrative and capital expenses are kept relatively low through the use of part-time faculty, outsourcing of marketing and similar operations, and use of out-of-state leased residence sites. The financial plan anticipates a net profit by the second year with assets in place to support launching the program in year one and covering unexpected shortfalls over the six-year proforma.

Current estimates of certain expenses are based on quotes from outsourcing companies and historical operations at other institutions with similar programs. However, it is not uncommon for new programs to underestimate support and maintenance costs of on-line distance-delivered programs. Over time, additional budget support for certain operations such as website development and hosting, marketing and advertising, library services and

student support services in general may be required. The team noted that a reasonable financial cushion is available in the proforma through net profit funds should expenses begin to exceed estimates over time.

The Institute may want to include a modest budget line for overhead where there is presently none, and give some consideration to a future plan for endowment building overtime relative to building capacity to provide more student financial aid and scholarship support, particularly in a competitive distance education market.

This standard is met.

Standard D - Admissions Requirements

The Institute is in its developmental stage and, as a result, publications were not available for review at the time of the visit. The Admissions standards were well outlined in the application.

The (IDSVA) has a clearly written statement of policy defining requirements for admission and for acceptance at the doctoral level. Applicants must hold a Masters in Fine Arts degree from an accredited institution of higher learning. Both undergraduate and graduate credentials must be submitted. Additional information required includes an essay of purpose; documentation of a “working knowledge of art history, critical theory, and philosophy; a curriculum vitae; and letters of recommendation. IDSVA will not accept transfer credit from previous graduate level work or grant credit for experience.

IDSVA has a clearly written statement detailing its policy and procedure for refund of tuition and fees. The refund period and percentage of refund are clearly identified along with the procedures students must follow in order to withdraw or receive a refund.

This standard is met.

Standard E - Academic Programs

The academic program for the Institute has been reviewed; and it reflects the philosophy, purposes and objectives of the institution. As it is a fairly unique program, direct comparisons to other programs are not easily made. It is, however, well thought out, offering an engaging curriculum intertwined with specific academic studies and experiences of original works consistent with doctoral level study. Specific syllabi were presented, and course content has been clearly outlined. Discussions with participants in this evaluation made clear that the curriculum was not a static entity and could adapt to

both individual student directions and the changing conditions of contemporary art as well as to provide a strong philosophical foundation in aesthetics. The curricular content and goals are consistent with the objectives of academic study in visual art theory and philosophy.

The procedures for evaluation of student performance are well articulated. This entails grading on individual projects and exams based on written expectations. The grading and evaluation along with minimum performance standards and conditions for probation and dismissal are appropriate for this program.

Curricular and program evaluations will occur upon completion of each course and independent studies and will be submitted through the registrar. A process is described for the review of both specific courses and the general curriculum. These are well thought out and consistent with expectations for such programs.

The institutions programs of study are the crux of the program. They are deemed rich and unique. There is strong attention to sequential experiences beginning with in-depth and common fundamental understandings and then proceeding to more independent projects and the dissertation. Experiences include a range of exposure to art at both American museums and those in Europe as well as international biennials. While there is a perceived western focus to both the readings and the experiences, the committee was assured that this need not be the case, and that there is flexibility for greater inclusiveness built into both the programs and the curriculum in general.

This standard is met.

Standard F - Library and Learning Resources

The Institute has provided written objectives for the library that are in agreement with the mission, nature of the academic program, and projected enrollment. The general purpose of the library collection is to support the curriculum and research requirements of the students and faculty.

As a virtual, online, distance-delivered program, library resources and services are to be provided through a virtual electronic format which upholds the Guidelines for Distance Learning Library Services, as approved and published by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL). The Institute established a Digital Library in 2006 with a mission to provide online access to the resources and literature pertinent to doctoral studies in the visual arts. Emphasis is placed on providing full text access to journals, books, online indices, and consortia library catalogs. Library resources will be made accessible online to all students and faculty of the Institute.

The Institute is encouraged to explore increasing staffing related to technical support to ensure that faculty and staff will have ready and unfettered access to teaching and

research documents. While there is no doubt that modern digital libraries contain sufficient holdings to support a Ph.D. program in the visual arts, it is likely that both faculty and students will benefit from additional library staffing or technical resource support once the full program is underway. Currently a part-time library staff position is budgeted to cover this need. However given the size of the program, and the extent to which teaching, research and learning outcomes are entirely dependent on online resources and consortia libraries, it is prudent to anticipate and plan for greater investment in this critical area.

The standard is met.

Standard G - Degree Requirements

IDSVA will only award its degrees upon successful completion of its course of study. Degree requirements are specified in writing. In addition to the MFA as an entrance requirement, IDSVA requires a minimum of 60 hours of academic coursework and the successful completion of a written dissertation for its doctoral degree.

The Institute application identifies the method by which the institution will determine credits for the hybrid nature of its courses including residency, online/telephone contact hours, and expected preparation time. The credit basis is a semester hour for each 15 hours of study in class, whether on-line or live, and 30 hours of preparation time.

This standard is met.

Standard H - Faculty

Faculty members possess all the necessary qualifications respective of their positions and assignments. As is evident in the faculty vitas, there is a wide range of academic backgrounds and interests that will suffice in offering a depth and breadth of perspective to the curriculum. All hold degrees consistent with the requirements of this program. While there is an expected base of adjunct faculty, IDSVA intends to hire full-time faculty in the future as enrollment grows. Plans for the conduct of faculty searches and evaluations were evident.

Discussions with personnel verified the role of faculty in the development of the proposed curriculum and curriculum evaluation and development over time.

Although there is a limited number of adjunct faculty at the current time, they are of high quality. "Faculty include internationally recognized scholars from Europe, the United

Kingdom, South Africa, and the United States.”(Report, p.25) Faculty governance is outlined. All faculty members will be part of the Faculty Senate and will participate in both curriculum and the personnel committees.

This standard is met.

Standard I - Physical Facilities

Because of the on-line and distance nature of the instruction programming, IDSVA does not have any physical facilities and does not, for the short term, foresee the need for any. Currently, the home of the President is serving as the base for the development of the Institute. Residency accommodation is being established in Italy and New York, with other locations to be added. For example, Castello di Spannocchia in Tuscany, Italy has been identified as an instructional base for segments of the program and will be placed under contract when degree-granting authorization has been approved.

The standard is met.

Standard J - Student Services

The Institute is in the process of developing publications in the form of a website and an on-line catalog. A Program Coordinator has been hired to address admissions, registration and financial aid needs. Faculty will be expected to serve as mentors and advisors referring the students to various types of services, including professional counseling if needed.

The nature of an on-line institution requires a different range of student services from a traditional college environment. The President stated that he is committed to developing these over time as the Institute develops and grows.

This standard is met.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

All standards have been met.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE MAINE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION:

Having engaged in a thorough review of materials and discussion of the standards for Degree-Granting Institutions with regard to the Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts, the visiting team recommends that the State Board of Education accept the team report and forward the Institute's request for subsequent legislative authorization.