

REVIEW TEAM REPORT

INITIAL PROGRAM APPROVAL VISIT TO:

MAINE COLLEGE OF ART

Teacher Certification Programs

Portland, Maine

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I. Introduction:

This report is based upon a review of an initial self-study submitted by the Maine College of Art, as well as the data gathered by the visiting team during its on-site visit to the campus on June 25, 2008. Interviews with faculty, administrators, program graduates, and cooperating teachers and administrators were conducted. Also, facilities, instructional materials, program descriptions and other artifacts submitted by the Maine Art School were reviewed.

The Maine College of Art (MECA) is a private, non-profit, degree-granting professional art colleges located in downtown Portland. Currently, the student body is composed of approximately 400 BFA and MFA degree students. It currently awards the Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) degree in twelve studio majors: Art History and Curatorial Practice, Ceramics, Graphic Design, Illustration, Metalsmithing and Jewelry Design, New Media, Painting, Photography, Printmaking, Sculpture, Self-Designed Studies and Woodworking & Furniture Design.

MECA also currently has a low-residency Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degree program which combines on-campus summer intensives with off-campus supervised studio work. When it was launched in 1998, it was the first program of its kind in the country.

The Art Education program at the Maine College of Art was implemented two years ago as a ten-month Post-Baccalaureate Certificate Program.

I. Summary of Findings for Each Standard

Standard One: Initial Teacher Candidate Performance

Candidates preparing to work in schools as teachers or other professional school personnel know and demonstrate the content, pedagogical, and professional knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to help all students learn. Assessments indicate that candidates meet professional, state, and institutional standards.

Level: Initial

Findings: The Post-Baccalaureate Certificate Program at the Maine College of Art provides students with a broad overview and immersion experiences in the area of art education. The team found that the program provides students with the ability to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how to incorporate central concepts and create meaningful learning experiences. The evidence of Maine’s Ten Initial Teacher Certification Standards was primarily based in the interviews with students, faculty, and cooperating teachers. The team does note the program’s forward progress during its first years, as well as the changes that have been implemented based on self-assessment and student feedback.

The Post-Baccalaureate Certificate Program is a rigorous academic platform of 33 credits earned within in a period of 10 months. This structure facilitates an intensive learning experience, which includes 21 weeks of field experience in student teaching at all levels including elementary, middle, and high school. While no official timeline exists for inclusion of the Praxis exams, students and faculty noted its placement in the curriculum. As the program grows, faculty may want to consider implementing a timeline that clearly incorporates passing scores on the Praxis I exam prior to student teaching and the requirement passing the Praxis II exam in order for students to receive certification from the Department of Education.

The program incorporates sound educational theory and practice, whereby students develop professional competencies guided by a set of thirteen principles and practices that align with Maine’s Ten Initial Teacher Certification Standards, NASAD Standards for Degree Programs in Art Education, the Standards for Art Teacher Preparation of the National Art Education Association, and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

The program is encouraged to streamline the thirteen principles and practices from the Art Education Handbook to more closely align with Maine’s Ten Initial Teacher Certification Standards to demonstrate the importance of these standards to all students. While the self study and interviews with students and faculty clearly indicate evidence and awareness of Maine’s Ten Initial Teacher Certification Standards, it is further encouraged that they be more specifically referenced in the syllabi for each course as well as embedded in the student assessments.

Although this was not evidenced in the syllabi, through interviews, the team noted that students are required to integrate technology into their sample syllabi, curriculum assignments and their professional portfolios. The use of technology as both a teaching and management tool should be evidenced throughout the program elements including syllabi.

The same is true for classroom management practices, which appear to be largely taught and learned during the field experiences, hence relying on the cooperating faculty to ensure that this is covered. The theory and techniques should also be reinforced in coursework as part of the instructional program.

In order for the program to be ready for expansion and future growth, the team believes that further development of protocols, procedures, and policies for documentation will help accommodate positive growth in the future.

The recommendations contained within this report are offered to help a well conceived and executed initial program to continue to improve over time.

Recommendations: The Conceptual Framework should include and reference Maine's Ten Initial Teacher Certification Standards and the Maine Learning Results. These should be clearly evidenced in the curriculum, individual course syllabi, and student assessments. Candidates must be able to clearly identify these standards and proficiencies and understand their importance to the teacher education program. The Conceptual Framework should serve as the guide for continued program growth as well as the development of all course syllabi and program developments.

Review Team Decision: Standard One is met.

Standard Two: Assessment System and Unit Evaluation

The unit has an assessment system that collects and analyzes data on the qualifications of applicants, the performance of candidates and graduates, and on unit operations to evaluate and improve the unit and its programs.

Level: Initial

Findings: The unit has an assessment system that collects and analyzes data regarding the qualifications of applicants, the performance of candidates and graduates, and unit operations. This system is designed to evaluate and improve the unit and its programs.

Assessment data are collected by the Art Education Department to monitor program efficacy through multiple venues. Informally, students and faculty discuss the degree to which the program components are successfully working. The self-study indicates that “Honest reflective discussions allow changes to be continually instituted. Formally, students evaluate courses through written forms submitted to the Dean’s office to preserve anonymity.”

Examination of assessment documents from cooperating teachers, faculty, and candidates clearly indicates that a great deal of assessment information is collected at each step of the candidate’s process toward achieving certification.

The unit has reviewed its assessment procedures, which have undergone considerable modifications since the first year’s program. The self-study notes a number of these commendable changes.

The unit:

- a. Established performance indicators for cooperating teachers to observe during student teaching
- b. Revised student teacher self-evaluation
- c. Revised cooperating teacher evaluation of student teacher
- d. Revised faculty supervisor evaluation of student teacher
- e. Developed a process for the coordinator of the program to provide feedback to student teachers relative to the four professional practice and content qualifiers of teacher candidacy.

Examination of the assessment forms relative to Maine’s Ten Initial Teaching Standards indicated that varied factors were assessed using different criteria depending on the form used. In addition, Standard Ten was often missing from the assessment forms that identified the Ten Initial Teaching Standards.

A separate issue is that candidates are not required to pass the Praxis exams as part of their MECA teacher certification program. While this is an acceptable option, the students should be fully informed of the consequences of receiving a non-passing score

on the exam. Both faculty and students verified that they had opportunities to learn the areas of knowledge and skills necessary to pass the Praxis II exam.

Recommendations: Clarify key assessment goals to distinguish between Guiding Principle goals and Maine’s Ten Initial Teaching Standards. Students must demonstrate mastery of the Maine standards to be eligible for certification.

Review Team Decision: Standard Two is met.

Standard Three: Field Experiences and Clinical Practice

The unit and its school partners design, implement, and evaluate field experiences and clinical practice so that teacher candidates and other school personnel develop and demonstrate the knowledge and skills, necessary to help all students learn.

Level: Initial

Findings: The unit and its school partners design, implement, and evaluate field experiences and clinical practice so that candidates, cooperating teachers, and other school personnel develop and demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to help all students connect theory to practice.

The review of documents and the team’s conversations with the Program Coordinator, MECA faculty, candidates, and cooperating teachers verify that the fieldwork for the MECA program is unique with its intense and varied placements occurring very early in the program. Another benefit results from the combined experience of the same faculty member lending direct supervision in AE 511: Elementary Art Curriculum and Assessment and AE 512: Secondary Art Curriculum and Assessment, as this model provides strong connections from coursework to the classroom.

Students participate in field experiences within a variety of settings. These settings include students with exceptionalities and students from diverse ethnic, racial, gender, and socioeconomic groups.

Conversations with cooperating teachers indicate that close and consistent communication with program faculty and candidates occurs through face-to-face meetings, e-mails, and phone calls.

A full-time faculty member and the Program Coordinator supervise the student teaching experiences. Students benefit from 21 weeks of student teaching: 7 weeks each at the high school level, middle school level, and elementary school level to ensure they have experience at all of the levels provided for in K-12 certification.

Recommendations: The unit should work to develop a common format for recording field observations. This will facilitate communication between the various professionals who work with the candidates and ensure more consistent feedback to students. A consistent format will also allow for stronger connections to be made from one observation to the next in the field work.

Review Team Decision: Standard Three is met.

Standard Four: Diversity

The unit designs, implements, and evaluates curriculum and experiences for candidates to acquire and apply the knowledge and skills necessary to help all students learn. These experiences include working with diverse higher education and school faculty, diverse candidates, and diverse students in P-12 schools.

Level: Initial

Findings: MECA's Post-Baccalaureate Program in Art Education implements a curriculum that is specifically geared toward the holistic encouragement of a variety of artistic styles and approaches. Not only does the curriculum include content from both traditional and contemporary artists and styles around the world and locally, but also from artists with diverse life backgrounds and experiences, including gender, race, disability and sexual orientation differences. As one instructor stated, "Art is differentiation." The very heart of art and, by extension, art education, is the recognition of the creative spirit that is both individual and communal, contained by tradition yet sometimes open to radical change. The curriculum of this art education program at MECA embeds diversity through numerous strands.

Furthermore, due to the location of the college within the heart of the most diverse city in Maine, the student teachers can be placed into local classroom settings that represent a wide range of diverse students, not only ethnically and racially, but also in terms of religion, learning styles, learning challenges and strengths, physical impairments, and other forms of diversity. The instructors explained how students were placed into three distinct placements, in part to balance and to broaden the range of individual student and "school culture" differences.

Recruitment of students to the program occurs through various means, including print and electronic materials, off-campus events, college fairs, high school visits, and on-campus tours, among other methods. Although the student body in this program has, thus far, been homogenous in terms of race and region (85% from New England), the students do represent a wide range of backgrounds and life experience. Most students arrive as practicing artists in a wide range of disciplines, while others are career changers or parents beginning a career. The candidates possess a wide range of unique skills and talents.

Students are encouraged to build accommodations, modifications, and differentiated instruction into their lesson planning throughout the year, and the artifacts from students revealed a wide range of meeting that expectation. Although some students could articulate ways in which to adapt lessons appropriately for various needs and strengths, others simply stated that they would do so, without specific clarifying details. However, all students must complete the Special Education course that focuses on the mainstreaming of all students, and all instructors discussed ways in which they explicitly build this awareness into their curriculum. For example, itinerant teachers for the blind and visually-impaired came to present to students, and one host teacher spoke of her high number of children on the autism spectrum. Students work in classrooms at three different educational levels (elementary, middle, and high school) and in three different school settings. Through local community outreach, they also work with both racially and socio-economically diverse children and youths. The MECA students are clearly exposed to children with diverse needs and strengths and are encouraged and expected to meet individualized needs in their field work.

Recommendations: The unit should work to develop a common format for recording field observations. This will facilitate communication between the various professionals who work with the candidates and ensure more consistent feedback to students. A consistent format will also allow for stronger connections to be made from one observation to the next in the field work.

Commendations: MECA's Art Education program is to be commended for its development of unique and hands-on learning experiences, including community outreach, to increase greater awareness and understanding of diverse needs and strengths.

Review Team Decision: Standard Four is met.

Standard Five: Faculty Qualifications, Performance, and Development

Faculty are qualified and model best professional practices in scholarship, service, and teaching, including the assessment of their own effectiveness as related to candidate performance; they also collaborate with colleagues in the disciplines and schools. The unit systematically evaluates faculty performance and facilitates professional development.

Level: Initial

Findings: The faculty of the Post-Baccalaureate Certificate Program at the Maine College of Art is highly qualified and dedicated to the mission of the program, its growth and development, and the success of their students.

Faculty Selection and Qualifications: The program currently has one full-time faculty member with a doctoral degree in Interdisciplinary Studies in Art & Education, who is also the Program Coordinator. Two full-time Assistant Professors from the MECA undergraduate programs instruct in the program, in addition to three adjunct instructors. Faculty members are qualified in their fields of expertise and most hold a terminal degree. The program has developed strong relationships with cooperating faculty in area schools which host the field experiences.

Faculty Performance: The review team noted that faculty members provide a broad perspective of the many ways to be an effective teacher. Students expressed appreciation and satisfaction with the individualized outcome they receive. The program's small size allows for faculty to take a more holistic approach and individually diagnose each student's needs. Students complete a range of evaluations for each course, including evaluations for the course itself, the faculty, and an evaluation of their field experience. The interviews revealed that many positive changes to the program have resulted from student feedback.

The program is encouraged to establish consistent meetings, documented with minutes, to discuss and review the needs of the program as it continues to develop, creating a structure to identify benchmarks and evaluate needs. The program and its faculty should use these meetings to construct a more cohesive conceptual framework that guides the development of the curriculum and syllabi to clearly demonstrate the integration and importance of Maine's Learning Results and Maine's Ten Initial Teacher Certification Standards.

Faculty Work Load and Faculty Development: During meetings, the team noted that since the Post-Baccalaureate Certificate Program is new, the true costs of the program, including administration, have not yet been determined by MECA. There is currently no formal system in place by which faculty may request funds for professional development. A small grant was awarded to the Program Coordinator for the first year;

however, no funds have been distributed to faculty members since that time. It was noted that the program could be enhanced by the addition of an administrative assistant to help coordinate educational issues and maintain documentation of the program so it may be better assessed to accommodate and facilitate positive growth.

Recommendations:

Supporting faculty professional development needs and providing additional administrative assistance will help ensure the unit can sustain a positive level of growth in the program.

Review Team Decision: This Standard is met.

Standard Six: Unit Governance and Resources

The unit has the leadership, authority, budget, personnel, facilities, and resources, including information technology resources, for the preparation of candidates to meet professional, state, and institutional standards.

Level: Initial

Findings: According to the self-study document, MECA is one of 34 private, non-profit, degree-granting professional art colleges in the country, and one of only 18 such colleges not affiliated with a larger academic or arts institution. The College awards the Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) degree in twelve studio majors and also offers a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degree. The student body is comprised of approximately 400 BFA and MFA students, with full and part-time BFA faculty numbering 65. The College also provides continuing education opportunities for area residents and teachers, as well as programs for children.

The newly established ten-month Post-Baccalaureate Certificate Program in Art Education was added in 2006. There is some discussion within the wider MECA college community to explore the option of a Master's in Art Education sometime in the future.

The leadership of this Certificate Program rests with the program directorship, a position that involves multiple responsibilities. The current decision being reviewed on campus, as noted in interviews with administration, is whether the college can provide support through an administrative assistant dedicated specifically to the Certificate Program.

Currently, the program director has leadership, teaching, organizational and administrative duties.

The Dean's Office oversees the Art Education Department and provides some administrative assistance through shared resources. The Coordinator is responsible for the day-to-day operations and reports to the Dean, who reports to the College President. Communication among all levels and programs is frequent and noted to be productive.

Many of the expenditures associated with the Certificate Program are fixed costs that reoccur on a regular basis and are built into the College budget. Mentor teachers (host teachers for the students) receive a stipend of \$300 for 7 weeks, for a total of \$900 in stipend costs per student per year in the program. This competitive stipend illustrates the College's support for the program. Faculty salaries are also generous and further demonstrate the College's commitment. The campus library has purchased a vast collection of excellent material to support the new Certificate Program. As noted above, funding for an administrative assistant would be valuable, as would a facility or provision for career counseling. Professional development is another area necessary for maintaining and enhancing strong skills, knowledge, and professional investment of the faculty.

Other aspects of the interconnections between the Certificate Program and the wider MECA community demonstrate a strong interest in maintaining and strengthening communication, access, and operational coherence. For example, Certificate students have access to the MECA classrooms, although often accessible only during off-hours; they are given their own keys to the studio spaces; and undergraduates may take several of the graduate level courses. Although the program has been housed in a separate building for the past two years, vigorous renovation of the Porteous building is allowing for a much stronger integration of the program within the MECA environment. The mission statement of the program also aligns well with that of the wider College.

The College supplies adequate facilities for course work and demonstrates that excellent art studio and classroom spaces are available to the teacher candidates. Aspects of MECA which students utilize regularly include computer labs, a library that received rave reviews from faculty, and smart rooms (in the building process). Extended library hours would enhance access for the students in the Certificate Program.

A few areas for further program improvement are particularly noteworthy. Because meetings of Post-Baccalaureate program faculty are informal and often held off-campus, agenda notes do not exist in a clear and formal format. It will be important, especially as the program grows, to build and maintain a record-keeping system that includes agenda minutes. Similarly, it would be valuable for the program to develop a strategic plan that is explicitly articulated in documented form.

MECA is in a unique position to provide transformational change agents in the way that art is developed in the local school systems. Given the shifting political and ideological agenda nationally, a proactive and clearly-articulated philosophical stance for teaching art in K-12 schools would benefit both MECA and the local school systems.

Commendations: It is clear to the review team that the wider MECA community supports this new Certificate Program and that communication among all stakeholders is open and fruitful. Wide support is also evidenced through the shared availability of College facilities and resources.

Review Team Decision: Standard six is met.

III. Recommendation to the State Board of Education

The review team recommends that the Maine State Board of Education approve the request from the Maine College of Art to award a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Art Education K-12.

IV. List of Individuals Interviewed and Sources of Evidence

Individuals Interviewed:

James Baker, President
Sharon Portelance, Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs/Dean of the College
Beth Elicker, Executive Vice President
Michelle Zelkowitz, Program Coordinator
Bob Jenkins, Art Education Faculty
Kelly McConnell, Art Education Faculty
Marquerite Lawler-Rohner, Art Education Faculty
Kim Farr, Art Education Student
Jonathan Rice, Art Education Student
David Whiting, Art Education Student
Mary Jane Johnston, ES Portland, Cooperating Teacher
Jennie Driscoll, HS Brunswick, Cooperating Teacher
Wes Franklin, HS Greely, Cooperating Teacher

Sources of Evidence:

Documents and Exhibits:

- 1. Unit Standard One: Initial Teacher Candidate Performance**
 - a. Student transcripts from June 2007 and July 2008
 - b. Performance of graduates: results of PRAXIS examinations and job placement data
 - c. Student handbook
 - d. Admissions policies and procedures, criteria, student records, correspondence, and application
 - e. Samples of student work
 - f. Student evaluations
 - g. Record of performance assessments
- 2. Unit Standard Two: Assessment System and Unit Evaluation**
 - a. Assessment plans and samples
 - b. Admission policies
 - c. Assessment data
 - d. Course syllabi
 - e. Student portfolios
 - f. PRAXIS exam information
- 3. Unit Standard Three: Field Experiences and Clinical Practices**
 - a. Documentation of collaboration with sites
 - b. Student teacher observations/evaluations
 - c. Policies and procedures related to field experiences and student teaching
 - d. Art education handbook

- e. Descriptions of pre-practicum experiences
- f. Description of sites for field-based experiences
- 4. Unit Standard Four: Diversity**
 - a. Geographic area served by the College/program
 - b. Recruitment and retention of a diverse student body
 - c. Diversity of candidates in initial teacher preparation
 - d. Discussion of design, implementation, and evaluation of curriculum and experiences aimed at ensuring all students learn
 - e. Course syllabi that demonstrate infusion of diversity in teaching and learning
- 5. Unit Standard Five: Faculty**
 - a. Qualifications, performance, and development
 - b. Faculty curricula vitae
 - c. Faculty professional development plans
 - d. Teaching assignments
 - e. Qualifications of cooperating teachers
 - f. Faculty handbook
 - g. Samples of faculty publications
- 6. Unit Standard Six: Unit Governance and Resources**
 - a. Mission statements
 - b. Organizational charts
 - c. Governance and operations of the unit
 - d. Fiscal records
 - e. Planning documents
 - f. Faculty handbook
 - g. Library resources