

**REPORT OF THE REVIEW TEAM
CONCERNING THE APPLICATION FROM
THE INSTITUTE FOR DOCTORAL STUDIES IN THE VISUAL ARTS
TO OFFER THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE ARTS**

**June 21, 2012
Bangor, Maine**

Dr. Lynne Coy-Ogan, Chair
Provost
Husson University
Bangor, ME

Dr. Kathy Yardley
Associate Provost and Dean of Education
University of Maine at Farmington
Farmington, ME

Dr. Dorothy Martin*
Observer
Maine State Board of Education

Harry W. Osgood*
Observer
Higher Education Specialist
Maine Department of Education

* Non-Voting Participants

BACKGROUND

The Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts (“ISDVA” or “Institute”) is based at 130 Neal Street in Portland, Maine. It was established and later authorized as a degree-granting institution in 2006 by an act of the Legislature. At that time the Institute was authorized to confer a doctoral degree in the visual arts. Clarification and reaffirmation of the specific degree designation was established through action taken by the Maine State Board of Education during its June 13, 2012 meeting. At that time it was made clear that the doctoral degree to be conferred by the Institute would be known as a Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy in the Visual Arts). This clarification had impact upon the Institute’s current application in that it set in place the additional degree, for which authority is being sought, would be known as a M.Phil. (Master of Philosophy in the Visual Arts with a focus on philosophy, aesthetics, and art theory.)

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 additional degree-granting authority, the Maine State Board of Education established a visiting Team to evaluate the Institute’s application and to report its findings.

The visiting Team met on the Husson University campus in Bangor, Maine on June 21, 2012. The Team was accompanied by Dr. Dorothy Martin, State Board of Education Observer and by Harry Osgood, Higher Education Specialist for the Maine Department of Education. The visiting team was comprised of Chair, Dr. Lynne Coy-Ogan, Provost, Husson University and Dr. Kathy Yardley, Associate Provost and Dean of the College of Education, University of Maine at Farmington.

The Team met with Margot Anne Kelley, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Critical Theory, the Director of the School, and as such is the academic officer who would oversee the added masters degree program. Team members examined the application with Dr. Kelley at the per-standard level and pursued in depth questions concerning the Institute’s current progress toward achieving accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC); the formation, structure and advisement for student cohorts; student benchmarks of progress; faculty curriculum vitae and interactivity; and details concerning the residency program segments that are conducted at the Castello di Spannocchia in Tuscany, Italy and in New York City, as well as the seminar sites in Venice, Paris and Berlin.

The Team also sought clarifications regarding the following statements in the application: “This degree is intended as an option for students whose educational plans change after they have successfully completed the first two years of their coursework in the doctoral program; therefore, it will be noted as an alternative on the website, described in the Policies and Procedures Handbook, and recognized publically upon conferral of degrees. At this time, however, we do not anticipate recruiting students into the program specifically in order to pursue the Masters degree, and thus we do not anticipate making a targeted marketing effort”. Being somewhat puzzled by these statements the Team encouraged the Institute to reconsider this position of

offering the masters as a stand-alone program could positively expand the Institute's overall program options and impact upon the arts profession.

It is clear that the Institute has developed well beyond the conceptual levels provided when it was created in 2006 by an act of the Legislature. At that time the Institute was authorized to confer the Doctor of Philosophy in the Visual Arts. The Institute has been offering a hybrid mode of instruction which has included the use of "virtual" library and instructional resources as well as 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 uses electronic means for student access to research resources and to communicate with instructors.

Like the Ph.D. that IDSVVA already offers, the M.Phil. is designed to "provide graduates with a credential that acknowledges their advanced training as artist-philosophers and enhances their professional opportunities". It is to be implemented following a course of study that is fully aligned with that of the Ph.D. program and it will serve as an option for students in good standing who need to leave the doctoral program – for family, financial, or other reasons – an opportunity to do so with a degree.

Standard A - Organization and Governance

The Institute 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 is operating as a 5019(c)(3). The Articles of Incorporation and bylaws were approved and adopted by Board of the Directors in July, 2006. The bylaws clearly define the Corporation's structure and reflect the 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 meets at least four times 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 supervises all employees and contracted services. The President is an ex-officio member of every faculty and governing board, as well as of every committee of the faculty, administration, and corporation except for Audit, Compensation, and Trusteeship. The President may discharge the duties and exercise the powers of any officer of the teaching or administrative staff who may be absent or

unable to act, or appoint temporary officials to discharge such duties and exercise such powers. The President presents to the Board of Trustees recommendations from the faculties and other units of the Institute which require the approval of the Board. The President prepares and submits for approval to the Board at its May meeting a proposed operating budget and a proposed capital budget for the ensuing fiscal year. Final budgets are adopted each year by the Board of Trustees prior to June 30.

The Director of the School, as Chief Academic Officer, is responsible for the development implementation and operation of the academic curriculum and is also responsible for the academic budget, academic personnel, and academic policies. The Director oversees the library and serves as chief administrator of the Institute's operational staff. The Director also serves as the Director of Independent Studies and in that capacity is responsible for appointing and overseeing faculty for the purpose of Independent Studies. The Director works with the President to recruit full-time, part-time, and visiting Faculty. The Director works with the Personnel and Curriculum Committees to ensure the quality of academic development and educational experience. The Director reports to the President and is a member of the Faculty. Additional staff include: a Vice President who, serving as the Institute's Chief Operating Officer, is responsible for budget creation, tracking scheduling and supervises an Accountant who is responsible for bookkeeping, student billing and payroll; Director of Admissions who is responsible for managing the student inquiry and application processes as well as and outreach related to admissions; Registrar who records grades, issues transcripts, and tracks student progress toward degree completion; and a Director of Financial Aid who is responsible for assessing financial aid eligibility and connecting students to that servicer as well as overseeing all regulatory requirements involved in participation in the Federal Title IV program. The financial aid processing is done by a third party servicer. The Institute's financials are audited by the firm of Macdonald Page & Co, LLC, located in Portland, Maine. The Institute has an organizational chart which clearly provides the lines of authority and supervision.

This Standard is Met.

Standard B - Institutional Objectives

The Maine 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 additional degree-granting authority to offer the Master of Philosophy in the Visual Arts clearly identifies both a mission and purpose for the Institute. The mission of the Institute is: "to operate a school of graduate studies providing education in philosophy, aesthetics, art theory and similar disciplines related to the visual arts, including the provision of doctoral studies to holders of MFAs, the conferring of doctoral degrees and M.Phil. degrees, and otherwise providing education and training related to the arts".

Further, the application states that: "there is a strong sense among today's artists and educators that training beyond the MFA would benefit many artists, especially those who grapple with issues surrounding contemporary media and culture. As it has been with the Ph.D. in the Visual

Arts the purpose for offering the M.Phil. in the Visual Arts will be “to provide 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.” Through the offering of both degrees 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.”

This Standard is Met.

Standard C - Degree Requirements

The institution awards a degree only upon the successful completion of IDSVA courses and its program of study. Because of the unique design of the program, credit is not given for experience or graduate credit earned elsewhere. Students must successfully complete forty semester hours of academic credit in order to complete the proposed Master’s of Philosophy degree, which is well beyond the 30 semester hours required of a program awarding a Master’s degree. IDSVA defines one credit hour as 15 contact hours and 30 individual hours in outside preparation. This information, as well as a listing of the required courses and contact hours calculated for each course, is available in the Student Handbook.

In order to progress through the program, students must maintain a minimum of a “B” average, as no grade lower than a “B” is considered to be satisfactory.

Graduation takes place once students are cleared academically and financially. The Director of the School and the Registrar ensure that all academic requirements have been met, and the bursar ensures that all financial accounts are paid in full. If there is an academic deficiency or a financial obligation, a hold is placed on the student’s graduation until all matters are settled.

This Standard is Met.

Standard D - Admission Requirements

Admission requirements are clearly outlined on IDSVA’s website. The requirements are the same for students applying to the doctoral program because the Master’s degree is intended for students who have completed two years of study and can no longer, for personal or professional reasons, continue in the program.

The applicant must have earned a MFA, a Master’s of Architecture, or a Master’s in a comparable field, such as Museum Studies. Undergraduate and graduate transcripts from accredited institutions of higher education must be submitted, and the applicant must have earned at least a 3.0 grade point average for each previously earned degree. Transcripts must reflect that applicants have a working knowledge of art history, critical theory, and philosophy. Additional submissions include: a current curriculum vitae, a statement of intent that outlines a particular interest in doctoral studies in the visual arts and questions or problems to be addressed while

working on the degree, a writing sample, and three letters of recommendation. An applicant who holds the MFA must also submit an artist statement of 500 words or less, and a CD of studio work. An admissions interview is scheduled by telephone once the application is complete.

According to interview information obtained during the program review, an applicant participates in two interviews prior to the Admissions Committee reviewing his/her file. One interview takes place with the Admissions director and the other takes place with IDVSA's President. Once approved for review, application materials are examined by the Admissions Committee, which is comprised of the core faculty, the Vice-President for Administration, the President, and the Director of the School. Each member of the team focuses on one area of the application and then shares that information with team members. Each person gets one vote. The candidate acceptance rate is between 85-90%. An accepted applicant can defer admission, although after a one-year deferment, (s)he must reapply; readmission is not guaranteed.

Students are recruited at the annual conference of the College of Art Association, through advertisements in Art News, and through the website. Students come from all over the United States and range in age from 26-72. Fifty percent of the student body are professional artists, who are also academics, and fifty percent are practicing artists and museum curators. There are more women than men in the program.

Due to the uniqueness of the degree, a student is not allowed to transfer previously earned graduate experience into the program. In addition, academic credit is not awarded for experience.

Students can access written policies regarding the refund of tuition and fees in the Student Handbook. Students must submit written notification of withdrawal to the Registrar via postal mail or email. The date that written notification is received determines charges and refunds. According to the Request for Degree Authorization document and the Student Handbook, students who withdraw or are dismissed within the first fourteen days of any given semester shall receive a full semester tuition refund. Students who withdraw or are dismissed after the second week and prior to the fifth week of the semester receive a fifty percent tuition refund. Once the fifth week of the semester begins, no refunds are given. Students receiving financial aid may have their aid adjusted, based on federal guidelines. Students who withdraw or are dismissed are responsible for all financial obligations not covered by the refund policy.

This Standard is Met.

Standard E - Academic Programs

The stated mission of the Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts is to provide education in philosophy, aesthetics, art theory and similar disciplines related to visual arts. The Institute is approved to confer the degree of doctor of visual arts. The M.Phil. degree in philosophy, aesthetics, and art theory is a 40 credit degree program comprised of the coursework students complete during their first two years of course of study at IASVA. The M.Phil. degree is a unique program that has been designed for students who have successfully completed their first two years of coursework with a grade average of B or better who are not planning to seek their

doctorate; therefore no additional courses are needed for this degree program. The course of study combines intense, brief residencies in artistically and culturally significant locations throughout the U.S. and Europe in addition to distance learning opportunities.

The components of the M.Phil. degree program are identical to the first two years of the approved Ph.D. in visual arts program. The assessment and research program components are very traditional in nature in this degree. The procedures for evaluation are clearly outlined and the Institute provides faculty with benchmark assignments from previous student documents to ensure consistency in grading practices. The grading system is outlined in detail in the student handbook and was deemed appropriate for the program. Student evaluations are completed at the end of each course and faculty are required to review the written student feedback regarding their courses each semester.

This Standard is Met.

Standard F - Faculty

The IDSVA faculty includes internationally recognized scholars from Europe, the U.K. and the U.S. While the team did not have the opportunity to speak with any of the adjunct faculty members as part of the review process, the faculty CVs were reviewed by the team. Each of the adjunct faculty members hold degrees consistent with the requirements in this program and the faculty are the same for the M.Phil. degree and for the Ph.D. in Visual Arts.

The faculty handbook outlines the role of governance for faculty members. The IDSVA has full-time, part-time and visiting faculty members who are all eligible to participate in faculty meetings and have voting rights. Since the full-time and part-time faculty are limited in number and come together for the residency seminars throughout the academic year, they are able to work collectively to address issues of policy and governance. The institute also utilizes Skype to connect faculty while addressing issues of benchmarking assignments and curriculum development.

The Director of the school reported that the opportunity for faculty members to come together for the residency experiences in Tuscany, Berlin, New York and at Brown University in Rhode Island creates a unique opportunity for the faculty to “become a cadre of new thinking.” The faculty members also have the opportunity to work directly with students during these experiences which serves to strengthen the faculty-student relationships extended to the online platform of the program.

This Standard is Met.

Standard G - Student Services

Student services are available to students, with services such as career counseling provided by the faculty and administration on a case-by-case basis. Referrals for personal counseling are made to qualified professional counselors when appropriate.

Each student is assigned an advisor from the core faculty for the entirety of his/her program. Students consult with their advisors during residencies, at the beginning of each semester, and as needed. In the Ph.D. program once a student passes his/her qualifying exams, he/she is also assigned to a dissertation director who serves as an additional advisor.

As stated in the Student Handbook, IDSVA provides a Disability Services Coordinator to work with students who have provided evidence of a professional assessment and documentation of a disability. Specific guidelines for documentation are available from the Disability Services Coordinator. Once appropriate documentation is received, the Disability Services Coordinator develops an Educational Profile which includes recommendations for accommodations and suggestions for students and faculty in the “living/learning environment.” Upon the signed request of a student, the Disability Services Coordinator sends the appropriate faculty/staff member a copy of the Profile. The student then meets with the individual(s) to discuss implementation of the recommended accommodations. Decisions about specific adjustments to the educational profile can be made only in consultation with the student and with further diagnostic information. The list of legal accommodations included in the student’s educational profile can then be revised by the Coordinator.

If a student is dissatisfied with the adjustments made to accommodate a disability, he/she has the right to appeal. Procedures for an appeal are identified on page 25 of the Student Handbook and are as follows:

“The student will initiate a discussion with the Disability Services Coordinator. Should this not resolve the issue, the student will send a written statement of the appeal to the Director of the School. This statement should include all relevant information and should request clear remedial action. Based on this statement, the Director will either activate changes to the individual accommodations, or resolve that the profile as developed is appropriate. The Director level of appeal will be final”.

This Standard is Met.

Standard H - Library and Learning Resources

IDSVA has a fully on-line library and a librarian who supports both faculty and students through a ¼ FTE position. The librarian, who has the appropriate Master of Library Science degree, tries to respond to students within 24 hours of their questions being asked. Research assistance is

available via email, video, chat, and phone, and research guides are available on the library website. The librarian travels to the Brown residency, as well as the New York residency to offer specialized library instruction. Additionally, the librarian oversees collection development and administers library policies.

The Visual Arts, particularly Aesthetics, Philosophy, and Theory, are the focus of IDSVA's library collection. The general purpose of the entirely digital collection is to support the curriculum and research requirements of the students and faculty associated with IDSVA. The library subscribes to a variety of on-line resources on an annual basis, although new resources may be purchased by the librarian, in consultation with the faculty and administration, as a result of curricular change or need. Emphasis is placed on providing full text access to journals, books, online indexes and reference sources, and consortial catalogs such as Worldcat and Redlightgreen. Full-text articles are found via JSTOR and Project Muse. ARTstor provides over 300,000 images for use in teaching, learning, and research. The Virtual Library Homepage can be found at idsva.libguides.com/library. The library upholds the Guidelines for Distance Learning Library Services, as approved by the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL).

IDSVA is affiliated with the Maine State Library System, so students are able to borrow physical texts through interlibrary loan. Students are encouraged to utilize local library resources, and some students choose to buy library privileges that allow them to access their undergraduate libraries.

This Standard is Met.

Standard I - Physical Facilities

The IDSVA does not have a designated physical location besides the home of the President in Portland, Maine which serves as the base for program development and operations. Residency accommodations have been established in locations such as Tuscany, Berlin, New York and at Brown University in Rhode Island and provide students with an impressive array of experiences. Specific contracts exist for each of these locations ensuring appropriate accommodations for the residency experiences while the remainders of the IDSVA degree programs are taken through a distance education platform.

This Standard is Met.

Standard J - Financial Resources

The IDSVA submitted a five year budget plan that outlined all of their academic programs as well as a copy of their April 30, 2011 independent auditors report. The five year plan projects an increase of FTE students to increase from 24 to 48 during this time frame. The financial plan

projects a net profit by the third year of the plan as the first two years of the plan depend on fundraising initiatives to offset net income. The program director noted that the M.Phil. Degree does not require any additional resources beyond those already designated to the Ph.D. in Visual Arts.

In developing plans for the future it was recommended the Institute consider branding and web site development in addition to advertising costs. While the proposed degree has been uniquely designed to address the needs of current students deciding not to pursue the Ph.D., the team agreed it could provide the Institute an increased revenue stream if it were available to a broader student audience.

As the five year budget plan included a notable increase in fundraising, the Institute is encouraged to consider dedicating monies to increased financial aid and scholarship opportunities as a means of increasing the competitiveness of their degree programs.

This Standard is Met.

SUMMARY OF REVIEW TEAM 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 (IDSVA), the visiting team recommends that the State Board of Education accept the team report and approve the request for degree authorization of the Masters of Philosophy Degree in the Arts.