Submitted By Bibiana Suárez, Associate Professor and Department Chair on October 1, 2002

In accordance with the University Academic Review guidelines the following is an account on our progress in regards to the “actions agreed upon” as stated in our Memorandum of Agreement of June 2001 after the Cycle 3 assessment process during 2000-2001. Using the MOA document as a reference, we have listed our responses in the same order as they appear in that document.

1. Curriculum

The Department of Art and Art History submitted a new curriculum proposal to the LA&S College Curriculum Committee in autumn of 2002. After a number of exchanges with this committee and the Dean, the department modified its original proposal and received approval from Michael Mezey in July. Attached please find a copy of the summary of approved changes per concentration.

Dean Mezey’s approval was subject to three informal understandings: 1) that as the number of studio sections increase because of the new curriculum and/or growth, the department accepts an increasing number of sections staffed by part-time faculty; 2) that to control the number of studio courses, which the College considers low-enrollment courses, the department develops a means to accommodate majors first in studio courses, especially courses in the major that are available to students for arts and literature domain credit; and 3) that the department works at not increasing the number of studio courses.

The Department of Art and Art History agreed to these contingencies and is taking the following measures:

1) The Department Chair and Administrative Assistant have been working with staff in the LA&S Dean’s office and the LA&S College Office to use the features in People Soft that allow seats to be reserved for majors, thus being able to better monitor the ratio of majors vs. non-majors in studio courses and in most cases eliminate the need to add additional sections for continuing majors. We have also worked with faculty to reinforce pre-requisites thus making sure that students who have not completed the designated pre-requisite(s) do not take seats. We have had, however, mixed results with these strategies, since, to this date, People Soft capabilities are limited. Automatic registration “blocks” for example, will be very helpful but have not been implemented yet.
The Department is also considering withdrawing Art 105 and 113 from the arts and literature domain. All art majors are required to take these two foundation studio courses and it has been a problem that we lack enough sections to accommodate them all.

Other enrolment management strategies have included:

- The more careful planning of cross-listings and LSP credit designations. This allowed us to increase our enrolment and in some cases, ensure the enrolment for classes that would have had to be cancelled otherwise.
- Domain offerings have been expanded, especially with our 200 level courses in art history.
- We have more carefully monitored the flexible scheduling of courses, especially on evenings and weekends to make upper level studio courses as well as art and design (among the lowest in enrolments) more accessible to students.

In general, while we have originally planned to keep the number of courses at the limit originally set up by the Dean, increases in the A&L domain courses and foundation courses had to be made this year to accommodate the larger-than-expected 2002-2003 incoming class. These additions, however, were done with the Dean’s approval and, at his request, in some cases.

2. Assessment

In accordance with the self-study, the Department created an Assessment Subcommittee. The Department’s Annual Assessment was dedicated to the review of the teaching of Art 102 Principles of Art history and Art 104 Creating Art courses, which are the two most important “gateway” courses in the department available to students for art and literature domain credit. The goal was to identify the learning goals of these courses and how these goals were perceived by faculty to be achieved. The committee reviewed syllabi and samples of final projects and visited three sections each of Art 102 and Art 104. Samples of the variety of assignments and initiatives being implemented by different instructors were also collected and reviewed. All faculty in the department were involved in the discussions sponsored by the Assessment Committee regarding the above-mentioned materials and visits.

In summary, the Committee determined that the classes were specific enough to present necessary and useful information and models to students yet were flexible enough for faculty to teach towards their strengths. Each class clearly emphasized specific learning goals including the use of innovative assignments, the attention to the material qualities of works of art, and the need to reflect on artistic production from more than one culture. While there are many strengths to the Art 102/104
classes as now structured, the department sees as necessary the clarification and more effective communication of its existing guidelines for this curriculum as well as better monitoring of instruction in these courses, particularly for new faculty unfamiliar with the program. The faculty recommend the following amendments to the department’s guidelines for 102/104: 1) making the classes more self-reflexive in terms of the contemporary issues and debates as they relate to historical and creative work; 2) a consistent emphasis on discussion and argumentation skills; and 3) an attention to critical thinking through specific reading assignments. These changes would involve an amendment of the courses, as they exist rather than a total revamping of the classes.

The assessment report received the support and praise from Dean Mezey who has agreed to fund stipends for part-time faculty to attend an all-day retreat this spring or early summer to discuss best practices as they now exist as well as further changes to the teaching of 102/104. The goal of the retreat will be to create new teaching guidelines and provide training to faculty on how to implement changes.

3. Faculty

The Department Chair and Department Area Heads have engaged more aggressively in recruiting part-time faculty to ease the problem of not having a big enough pool of part-time applicants to draw from (this is particularly cumbersome in art history and art and design).

Equally aggressive have been our efforts to recruit diverse applicants for our searches. Last spring we conducted a search for two tenure-track sculptors. There were 120 applications. From the information candidates provided, we gather that there were 6 ethnic minority applicants (4 Asian, 1 Middle Easterner, 1 Indian) in this pool. Fourteen applicants were chosen by the search committee to be interviewed at the CAA conference last February and/or locally. From these 4 were ethnic minorities (3 Asian, 1 Middle Easterner). Four finalists were invited to interview on-campus. Three of the four were ethnic minorities (2 Asian, One Middle Easterner). One of the two candidates that were offered a position was a woman of color. Unfortunately, she declined our offer and took a position at a research institution. While we did hire two males, one of them is Armenian born, whose personal background and experience we feel brings a strong degree of diversity in its more complete definition.

As stated in our self-study, it would be important to highlight here that the Department of Art and Art History does not subscribe to a definition of diversity that is limited to racial classifications. The department faculty is committed to a more expansive definition, one that includes all levels of diversity: racial, ethnic, cultural, gender and sexual orientation, conceptual and material expertise as well as in approaches to teaching.

That said however, the Department is indeed interested in increasing its pool of racially diverse faculty and is making a concerted effort to look into increasing the number of racially diverse applicants for both full-time and part-time positions. The
Department Chair sends information on our available positions to “diversity” contacts in the field. Members of the search committee are making an extra effort to closely review the traditional minority candidates. The College advertises our positions not only in the primary job advertisement publication in the field (CAA Careers) but in two diversity publications, Black Issues in Higher Education and in The Hispanic Outlook for Higher Education.

The Department looked into the possibility of hiring a “diverse visiting scholar”, a possibility that was offered to us during the academic assessment process. However, given that our program is composed of four concentrations (art history, art and design, fines arts and media arts) a single individual didn’t seem adequate enough to increase the visibility of diverse faculty in the program at this time. For this reason, we decided to lobby for diverse hires in the one-year full-time faculty category as well as in the adjunct (six-course) faculty category. We were successful in hiring this year a diverse candidate for each, both of which are Asian. These faculty members teach in more than one area of the program. In addition, we have funded lectures by high profile visiting speakers of color. Last spring for example, we brought Dr. Anthony Lee, a respected Diego Rivera scholar from San Francisco and had students go to the Pilsen neighborhood to meet Marcos Raya and Jose Guerrero, two well-known Chicano artists. So far this year we have lined up three Latino visiting artists: Elisam Escobar (November), Celia Rodriguez (February) and Juan Sanchez (March). The art history area is also working on sponsoring the visit of an Asian Art scholar.

2. Facilities/Resources

With Dean Mezey’s financial support the department renovated its facilities last summer to include a new and expanded second Mac lab on the third floor (RM 328/330) with an adjacent print room, added a new multi-purpose studio classroom on the second floor (RM 201/203) and converted another (RM 327) into an additional “clean” classroom for design and 2-D foundation courses. Furthermore, we have added a third “satellite” proprietary art history classroom where we moved most of the Art 102 and ISP lecture courses. In addition, our seminar/meeting room downstairs (RM211) was made larger so that it could become a better room suitable for seminar style courses (especially capstone courses) and meetings. Two additional faculty offices were built also this summer and art and art history faculty were able to move into the former McNair program offices. The office additions have helped ease the problem with overcrowded part-time faculty offices, as well as have give us the space for new full–time faculty. Furthermore, earlier in the year we converted one of our two art history classrooms into a smart classroom, thus allowing art historians now to use the University’s digital image collection as well as other collections on line in class.

Last year we incurred a budget “surplus” of $25,000 because of an increased amount of collected lab fees. We invested these dollars in new furniture and equipment needed to go along with the new classroom improvements. We expect to have a similar surplus this year, which we plan to invest in beginning the update of equipment in our Mac Labs as well as turn the second art history classroom into a
“smart classroom”. This kind of careful planning we believe has resulted in savings to the College, who would have had to cover these necessities otherwise.

4. Barat

The Department of Art and Art History has assumed responsibility for offering a BA in Art and Art History degree at Barat of DePaul. While the LA&S Art and Art history program at LPC offers four concentrations (art history, fine arts, art and design and media arts), only two of these (art history and studio arts) will be offered at Barat. Our program at LPC has experienced tremendous growth in recent years, which produced a number of challenges regarding space and the number of full-time faculty. For this reason, we decided that adding a full satellite operation in Lake Forest was not feasible at this time. In addition, because of existing facilities and faculty as well as a history of student interest, in our view, Barat showed the greatest potential for curriculum and program development in these areas.

Former Barat College BFA and BA students in studio arts and art history (Humanities) will take Barat of DePaul courses as well as LA&S Art and Art History courses at Barat to fulfill their requirements for graduation. A course articulation was created in collaboration with Barat of DePaul faculty and staff, to use in creating course equivalencies for these students. The LA&S Art and Art History schedule was created to serve all student constituencies at Barat including the LA&S Art and Art History majors, the Barat Interdisciplinary Program majors as well as the “teaching-out students”. Most of our courses therefore have “double and triple duty”. Whatever course was needed for the teaching-out students that our program couldn’t cover, Barat ‘s Associate Dean has scheduled in consultation with Barat faculty.

Barat of DePaul faculty with expertise in the areas that we are to teach at this campus are teaching a number of courses for the LA&S Art and Art History program at Barat. In fact, our 2002-2003 course schedule in those areas was created to accommodate their expertise and scheduling preferences.

As stated before, at present, the LA&S Department of Art and Art History has planned to have only two concentrations at Barat: art history and fine arts. Our fine arts curriculum does not include photography or computer graphics. Photography and computer graphics in our program are part of the Media Arts and Art and Design concentrations. Consequently, we were not involved in the scheduling of courses in these areas at Barat next year. We were asked however, to assist in the planning of a new Photo Lab in the 4th Floor of Main. We have also provided advice on what kinds of software upgrades are necessary for the Mac lab.

One of the challenges we faced in the planning of a new program at Barat was the basic condition of its studio facilities and the lack of adequate resources in the way of visual arts materials to use in teaching (slides, books, videos). Richard Meister provided funding to do cosmetic work in the fourth floor studios and to purchase the necessary equipment for a new photo lab, a new computer graphics lab as well as tools and replacement of
furniture in the remaining studio areas. Because there is no slide library at Barat (an essential tool for art history courses) and a very small collection of other visual arts library materials, the Department Chair has been in contact with Doris Brown about augmenting the image resources (both analog and digital) for the use of art and art history faculty.

We obtained approval to hire a full-time Fine Arts Studio Lab Manager to oversee the maintenance of our facilities and equipment at both LPC and Barat. We have hired Ellie Wallace in this capacity. Wallace has worked as Assistant Facilities Coordinator for our department at LPC for the last two and a half years. An accomplished artist herself, Wallace had taught at Barat College some time ago and knows the faculty and the facilities very well. For this reason, her oversight of the renovation and the purchase and installation of new equipment and furniture has allowed the process to go smoothly. Barat of DePaul and LA&S share Wallace’s salary.

The same lab fees structure as what we have at LPC has been put into place for studio courses at Barat. The collected fees will support the purchasing of materials and equipment needed for instructional purposes. We still need to figure out who will manage these accounts.

There have been two full-time faculty hired by the LA&S Art and Art History department to teach primarily at Barat. Gagik Aroutiunian is a new tenure-track Assistant Professor in Fine Arts (Sculpture) and Joanna Gardner-Hugget is a non-tenure track full-time art historian (20th c and Contemporary). Their expertise nicely complements that of the Barat faculty. Dean Mezey has approved the conversion of the art history position into tenure-track for 2003-2004 and we will be running a search beginning next January. Aroutiunian and Gardner-Hugget will teach two quarters at Barat and one at LPC. Other LA&S part-time and full-time faculty will be teaching the courses they cannot teach at Barat while at LPC. The LA&S Art and Art History Department is responsible for teaching 12 courses at Barat during 2002-2003.

We are pleased with the progress we have made towards a successful beginning of the art and art history program at Barat. However, there are areas of concerns that we would need to address this year. Some of these are:

- Barat’s physical facilities and equipment need to continue to be upgraded. The former Barat College was operating under budgetary limitations that did not allow the proper upgrades and usage of facilities and equipment. We need Barat faculty’s cooperation in moving their practice to OSHA safety standards for example. This is particularly important in the Photo Lab. Chemicals in the past were not properly and safely mixed and disposed of.

Twenty hours of Ellie Wallace will not be enough to properly maintain the fine arts studio facilities at Barat. The former Barat Acting Dean had informed us that there were two student worker positions budgeted to help with the task, however, to this date we have not being able to access the positions. These two students would basically look
after the facilities on the days Wallace is not on campus. The department is seriously concerned that Wallace’s position will quickly turn into a two-full-time-jobs situation. Wallace has spent a number of 12 hr days in the last three weeks (weekends included) getting Barat ready for the beginning of school, an occurrence that given the many needs at Barat, could become the norm.

- Our relationship to the Barat Photography and Computer Graphics areas is problematic. We have no majors in these areas but were asked to help upgrade their facilities. Consequently, faculty teaching in these areas have no direct connection to us, however, they have in numerous occasions enlisted the help of our Chair to resolve various problems with their physical facilities. While we agree there is demand and potential for these areas, for the reasons stated before, our department does not want to assume full responsibility for them.

- The Computer Graphics lab does not have appropriate technical support. Computer labs need constant maintenance. Students need access after class hours to do their homework, but they need to be supervised during that time. Otherwise, they will troubleshoot on their own, often fouling the equipment and/or software specifications. Our experience at LPC taught us that the part-time assistance of the staff from the Academic Technology Department is not adequate. Furthermore, ATD is PC based and (at least at LPC) they lack staff with Mac expertise.

- A decision needs to be made as to who will act as Budget Manager for the Barat studio and art history facilities. There was a supplementary supplies budget that was approved by Vice President Meister, which we have not been able to access. In the meantime, we have covered the necessary purchases for autumn out of the LPC art and Art History budget. Early on we have agreed to keep the financing of the two programs separately so that one wouldn’t jeopardize the other.

- Finally, we still need to determine a way to work with student advising of art majors at Barat and to develop some kind of system to deal with student problems and/or special circumstances.

5. Other Issues

- The Department continues to be involved in the discussions pertaining to the development of a new MA in Media Studies in LA&S and had a faculty member participate in a committee this summer charged with re-writing the program’s proposal.

- The Department has not held any discussions on whether or not a BFA is a viable possibility in the near future. Our involvement with Barat and the administration’s implied message that because of space/funding constraints a BFA would only happen if we were to become a School of Art, have put a stall to that idea. Nevertheless, the discussion is in our agenda for our planning retreat next spring 2003.
We have begun working with the LA&S advising office on implementing the new curriculum as well as training our faculty on using the new online advising system. While we welcome the changes and can see how People Soft will help us be more efficient at advising, as more tasks are deflected from the LA&S office to the department, we predict there will be an added level of administrative burden placed at the department level (especially with regards to the responsibilities of the Administrative Assistant and the Chair) that we, at present, are not adequately equipped to handle. The Department will need the understanding and support of the Dean and the College office to help with the transition into a new system.