UCC Program Review Committee summary of review

Program – School of Interdisciplinary Arts

This program includes the following degrees, minors, and certificates:

- Interdisciplinary Arts minor
- Ph.D. Interdisciplinary Arts

Recommendation

This program is found to be viable, see report for commendations, concerns, and recommendations.

Date of last review – AY 2009

Date of this review – AY 2016

This review has been sent to school director and the dean, their comments are attached.

This review has been sent to the Graduate Council, they had comments that have been attached.

The response of the dean and school director to the Graduate Council’s comments are attached.
IARTS Program Review

Executive Summary

- After reviewing the self-study and spending two days with the different constituencies of the program, this committee strongly believes that IARTS is viable.

Commendations

- Training and sustaining graduate student teachers in a first-rate program. Mutually beneficial, making IARTs a revenue-generating department and giving graduate students an advantage on the job market.

Concerns

- Problems of collegiality among Group I faculty are affecting morale and overall effectiveness.
- Faculty & staff retention. With such a small and specialized faculty, turnover visibly affects graduate training, recruiting, and efforts toward diversity.
- Questions of gender equity. Faculty members have worked with the director to find resolution to persistent concerns on the part of the two female Group I faculty members.
- The operating budget is insufficient. Department is relying on annual subsidies from the college. However, IARTs continues to generate revenue through its carefully maintained staffing model and leading-edge development of online course delivery
- The overworked administrator has great experience and institutional memory; it would be unfortunate to lose her.

Recommendations

- Guarantee remaining Group IV position will be restored to Group I.
- Restore viable operating budget.
- Workload document needs to be clearly defined.
- Governance structure and procedural guidelines for meetings.
- Apply for 1804 funding to support summer faculty workshop to revise IART 8901.
- Find solution with Film in order to retain the departmental administrator.

Program Review

General Program Summary
The School of Interdisciplinary Arts is a Ph.D. program that educates scholars and scholar-artists who are grounded in specific disciplines and able to address the arts through the unique lens of interdisciplinarity. The School serves the university by engaging undergraduates in the interdisciplinary study of the arts through general education courses.
Faculty Profile
The faculty consists of seven full-time members covering seven areas: African Arts and Literatures, Art and Architectural History, Ethnomusicology/Musicology, Film Studies, Performance Studies, Philosophy of Art, Theater. Five of these positions are filled by tenured, Group I faculty members. Two of these are full professors, the other three are Associate Professors. Since 2013, the position in Ethnomusicology/Musicology has been filled by Group IV appointment, ending this year. A search is currently underway for a Group I hire in this position. In 2015, the professor of Film Studies received tenure and promotion but accepted an offer at another university. That position is currently filled by a Group IV visiting assistant professor on the first of a three-year contract. It is difficult for a core field in a PhD program to be staffed by a Group IV position, whose term is not long enough to advise a student through completion of a dissertation. These departures and the use of Group IV instead of Group I appointments has affected faculty and students. This committee recommends that the University and College of Fine Arts restore the Group I position in Film Studies.

Faculty members have been extremely productive in terms of scholarship and creative activity. Moreover, most IARTS faculty have one or more appointments in other departments and programs, as well as affiliated faculty status in numerous interdisciplinary programs. In this capacity, they provide essential service across campus and are valuable members of the community. They are also highly visible giving papers, organizing interdisciplinary conferences, and submitting peer-reviewed articles. The faculty have been equally successful in garnering the kinds of grants that enable them to do research at external sites both in the US and overseas. All have engaged in service to their respective fields, participating in external reviews in other universities, reading dissertations, serving as peer reviewers, and moderating panels. On the whole, this is a vibrant and cosmopolitan group of faculty members whose own practices reinforce, and illustrate by example, the goals of an interdisciplinary program.

The committee also noted that the department protects its untenured faculty from service beyond advising and essential participation in departmental affairs. Currently, all Group I faculty are tenured and actively involved in service at the department, college, and university levels.

Although the profile of the faculty has changed dramatically since the department’s change to IARTS, recent departures have also contributed to this transformation. Some of these changes have been deliberate and result in a program that balances traditional and cutting-edge approaches to the arts across a wide geographical and cultural scope. However, the loss of two African-American faculty members creates serious challenges for the mission of the department and affects the diversity of the student body (recruiting). With an all-white faculty, members of the department noted that this may make it more difficult to attract key demographics such as African-American students. Said one faculty member: “We educate the professoriate of the future. If we continue to educate the professoriate of the past, that’s a problem.”

Programmatic Practices
Governance

There are five Group I and two Group IV faculty covering the program’s core fields. In department meetings of Group I, faculty decision making is conducted by consensus. Currently, workload, annual evaluation procedures, and Promotion & Tenure procedures are included in a single document, last revised in 2013. Frequent turnover in some positions and the changing profile of the department challenges this informal style. As many other departments at Ohio University have done recently, IARTS should consider revising its written rules and procedures.

The informal procedures and decision-making mechanisms reveal a need for transparency and widespread collaboration. The addition of the Scholar/Artist track, for instance, is bold and innovative. It has brought new kinds of students into the program, students who might require different courses or assessments. Given the larger consequences for the curriculum and distribution of advising, the incorporation and cultivation of a new track needs the full participation of the faculty, with adequate deliberation to anticipate long-term changes. To this end, the committee recommends more formalized procedures in meetings, a process that has already begun with minutes being taken by Paula Morrison, the administrator. The committee further recommends that the school seek input from across the faculty for major policy and curricular changes. A smaller group of faculty can work on specific issues, but that group should report back to the voting faculty for discussion and consideration. The review committee finally recommends the creation of a separate workload document giving baseline expectations for teaching, scholarship, and service.

The only truly serious problem encountered by the committee concerns the current climate at IARTS. The Group I women faculty have expressed that their contributions to the program are not recognized, are undermined, or simply ignored. While there is no “smoking gun” to point to, there is tension in interactions among the faculty that should be addressed. We are concerned with gender equality but also with interpersonal relations which have clearly deteriorated. In a larger department such fractures would not affect the faculty body as strongly as it does in smaller ones. Poor collegiality can have an impact on the program in terms of faculty retention and recruitment, effectiveness of policies, and training of graduate students. Greater transparency and mechanisms for participation are formal practices that can assure that every member has a voice that is clearly heard and considered. All faculty members must rest secure in the knowledge that they and their chosen methodologies are valued by their colleagues; all must also do their part to ensure mutual respect.

Curriculum

This year, the first students entered the Scholar/Artist track. These take a primary field with an IARTS faculty member exactly as do students in the traditional Scholar track. Instead of a secondary field within the traditional IARTs areas, however, Scholar/Artist track students pursue Dance/Film/Music/or Theater training. This requires at least two graduate-level performance/studio courses with the pertinent arts faculty member over a two-year period. That faculty member may also serve on the students’ dissertation committees.

One student from the Scholar/Artist track offered that he wished that this track would take on more of its own identity rather than follow the template set up for the Scholar track, suggesting less theory and more performance-based training. Since this track is a new development for IARTS, one needs to give the program more time in order to gauge the students’ actual needs and to balance them with the program’s overall requirements. The committee was impressed by this innovation and recommends
that the department monitor the success and experiences of students in this track relative to the Scholar track.

The centerpiece of the curriculum is the interdisciplinary seminar, IARTS 8901, which all students take in the fall semesters of their first and second years. Students are exposed to different fields, methodologies, and faculty members. Although it is always team-taught, the specific topic and format of the course changes year-to-year. Faculty and students expressed a variety of ideas about the seminar’s mission and ways to strengthen it. Revisions were introduced and implemented in the fall of this year. The committee recommends that the department apply for financial support (e.g. an 1804 Grant) to fund a summer workshop for faculty to devote themselves fully to revising this exciting and important course.

Students take comprehensive examinations in the fall of their third year. These consist of written exams in the primary and secondary fields followed by oral examination. Although no students have yet taken comprehensives in the Scholar/Artist track, the requirements are the same. Some students expressed concern about consistency across different fields and/or advisers. For example, some fields may test primarily on coursework material, while others may require a separate reading list. The committee recommends that the department maintain a file of recent primary and secondary reading lists for each field, and make that available to students.

Teaching
The primary goal of the program is to allow doctoral students the opportunity to explore interdisciplinarity among the arts and related disciplines, testing the different methodologies pertaining to each field, and balancing scope with depth. Hence the primary teaching mission of IARTS is graduate teaching. The successful curriculum and mentoring of its graduate training is evident in other sections of this report.

Although IARTS does not have undergraduate majors, the school nevertheless contributes to undergraduate education at Ohio University on a number of fronts. The school offers approximately 18 sections of IARTS 1170 and IARTS 1180 each year, as well as Tier III courses in IARTS. Additionally, individual faculty members actively mentor Honors Tutorial Students in their respective fields and offer undergraduate seminars. IARTS thus remains actively involved in undergraduate education. Faculty members have shown great creativity in development of online education courses that increase the interdisciplinary reach of the department.

Research
As a whole, and despite their work load, the faculty has been very productive, publishing papers in peer-reviewed journals, editing scholarly volumes, and writing single-authored books. All have won awards and fellowships both within and outside Ohio University. IARTS faculty members have also been active in giving papers in international conferences, in keeping with the program’s international reach.

Students
The department has been extremely successful in attracting an extraordinarily diverse body of first-rate graduate students not only from the United States but from different continents. Though the program currently lacks diversity in the case of African Americans, IARTS admitted students from China, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Syria, Taiwan, Turkey, two from Iran, two from Ghana,
and three from South Korea. Out of 37 students admitted since 2007 and beyond, only 20 are Caucasian. This is a remarkable achievement in itself. Our meeting with several of these students revealed a strong, closely-knit cohort that is extremely happy with the program. Most mentioned the importance of the classes on Pedagogy as one of the reasons for their being here, and they praised every one of their professors. One described his time here as a “captivating experience.” Yet another said that thanks to the IARTS student advisory board, she felt that “her voice was heard.” However, having just lost Michael Gillespie, there was real concern with the tenuous position of Group IV faculty; students are thus understandably eager for greater continuity in their curriculum.

The department has shown a strong commitment to teaching graduate students how to teach. The mentoring that is done when first year students serve as TAs for IARTS 1170 and 1180, and the ongoing mentoring when students are instructors of record, equip the graduates with extensive experience. This training serves them well on the job market, as it gives them both experience and confidence in themselves.

The committee was concerned about graduate students teaching “mega sections” of 175-225 students without grading assistants. Veterans were good-humored about the labor this entailed, acknowledging that the extra stipend they received for taking on such sections was welcome. But they also admitted changing their pedagogy—essentially relying on Scantron exams—in order to be able to manage the large enrollments. The committee recommends that IARTS consider assigning grading assistants for such sections.

**Group IV**
The two visiting assistant professors repeatedly said they felt lucky to be here. They were grateful for not being overloaded with extra work, and indicated that they had both time and money for their own research. While they clearly enjoyed and learned a lot from teaching the interdisciplinary seminars, they made a point, later echoed by the graduate students, that these did not quite achieve their goals. They expressed the hope that in future the interdisciplinary seminars would be more “student-centered”, enabling a greater match between interdisciplinary breadth and a sharper focus on the discipline students chose to follow. One of them said that it was necessary to address the question “what is interdisciplinarity?” since it clearly means something different in each field. This would comport with the suggestion of a graduate student who thought that the issue should be clearly articulated, not just as a means of clarification but also to help build an intellectual community out of individuals who focused on different areas of study.

**Alumni Profile**
Graduates of the IARTS program have been placed in academic appointments, higher education administration, and the arts, not only in the United States but abroad, and the school is to be commended for fostering their success. Graduates of the program are also publishing and receiving nationally competitive awards.

**Adequacy of Resources**
The department is at the edge of adequate space: Water seepage into a faculty office and a GTA office during the summer of 2015 forced that personnel to move out of the department space. It is critical that Facilities address the leak and repair the damage to regain one faculty and one graduate student office as soon as possible.
The departmental administrator was reduced to 0.50 FTE 2.5 years ago (shared with Film, covering what had been two Film administrators). Compare this to all other COFA departments except dance: each has two 1.0 FTE administrators. This situation, which was supposed to be temporary, still has not been resolved. The current incumbent spends her mornings in IARTS and walks across the hall to spend her afternoons in Film. She has stayed because of her love of and interaction with students. In turn, graduate students rely on her and are uncomfortable with the split. One student said that he no longer comes to IARTS in the afternoon because the office is impersonal. All scheduling, GA work, evaluations, Concur, and other administrative work is carried out by this person. This load includes assisting 19 professors and ±75 graduate students for Film and IArts. More often than not, she works 10- to 11-hour days and occasionally must come to the office on Sunday to catch up with her tasks. Under the circumstances, she is looking for employment elsewhere. This has been an ongoing problem, causing significant turnover in this key front-office position. The committee recommends that the College find a way to restore the position of the departmental administrator to full-time status.

The department enjoys significant support in the area of library resources, consistently budgeted at $40,000 annually, and faculty members note the superb collection of print materials available at Alden Library. IARTS faculty has helped build up special collections through library grants. However, it was noted with concern that with the removal of both the metal detector and the metal strips, books are no longer secure. Books are essential to a student-centered learning environment that prides itself on scholarship. This is also a major issue not only because of the pecuniary loss but also because many of these items are irreplaceable. It also was noted that reference personnel at Alden may be moved to other floors, furthering the concern of theft and removing a crucial interlocutor to whom students could go to for help.

The books in Alden Library are part of a valuable patrimony that should be passed on intact for future generations.

The committee therefore recommends that the College urge the Library to take significant measures to insure security of library resources, including replacing security system and maintaining a reference librarian on the third floor.
Professor David Ingram, Chair
Program Review Committee of UCC
Ohio University, Athens

Dear Professor Ingram:

I would like to thank the members of the Program Review Committee for their careful consideration of the School of Interdisciplinary Arts, their characterization of the department as “first-rate,” and their strong belief in its viability. The committee raised some concerns about the School and offered some recommendations, to which I would like to respond briefly.

I am appreciative that the committee recognizes the importance of converting the position in the Film Studies area from Group IV to Group I. The faculty was delighted when this occurred with the Ethnomusicology/Musicology position last semester, which will assist in faculty retention.

The faculty recognizes that the team-taught interdisciplinary seminar, IART 8901, is the most important course that we offer; we discuss it on a yearly basis to determine its effectiveness. We have been in continual discussions as well about the disparate natures of the individual areas and how best to address diagnostic, qualifying, and comprehensive exam procedures.

I am thankful as Director for the committee’s suggestions to address the department’s governance structure and procedural guidelines for meetings, and will consult with the faculty on how these can best be instituted.

Concerning workload policy, the teaching load is 2 courses per semester for each Group I faculty member, and the percentages of distribution for teaching/research/service are 40/40/20. I will consult with the faculty on whether we need further codification.

Concerning the operating budget, the Dean (newly appointed in December) and I have been working closely together on addressing its sufficiency. In addition, I agree with the committee’s characterization that having one Office Associate split equally between two departments is untenable.
Concerning the issue of collegiality, I believe that the committee’s astute suggestion that all faculty must do their part to ensure mutual respect will be well received by the faculty.

Concerns of gender equity were brought to my attention by the Ombuds at the beginning of the summer of 2015. I had two meetings over the summer with the concerned faculty members, the Ombuds, and the Director of Athens Area Mediation Services, on how best to bring this issue up with the faculty. Therefore, in the fall we had a half-day meeting with all faculty, as well as the Office Associate, at Athens Area Mediation Services. I twice invited the Ombuds to attend fall faculty meetings; she was able to attend one.

During the current academic year, I have paid additional attention to gender balance in committee assignments. I appointed each of the two female Group I faculty members to serve as chair of a search committee: one for the Group IV Film Studies position last summer, the other for the current Group I Ethnomusicology/Musicology position. The Film Studies search resulted in the successful hire of a female candidate. Concerning the Ethnomusicology/Musicology position, I ensured an equal balance of women and men on the search committee.

It is my sincere hope that these efforts, as well as this report, will help the department to move forward.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Buchanan, PhD
Director
March 25, 2016

Dear Dr. Ingram,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the program review report for the School of Interdisciplinary Arts (IARTS). I appreciate the careful attention provided by the reviewers in their visit with the unit. I strongly concur with their assessment that the School of Interdisciplinary Arts is a viable, “first-rate program” with particular strengths in preparing graduate students for teaching and research careers, and in recruiting an “extraordinarily diverse body of first-rate graduate students.” I also concur that the quality and quantity of scholarly and creative research accomplished by the faculty is very high. I wanted to provide some additional context to areas of concern and recommendations that were included in the report.

• Operating budget: The budget team from the college met with the director of IARTS to go over the operating budget. We will continue to review this; as noted by Group IV faculty in the reviewers’ report, the budget provides adequate support for faculty research.

• There is currently a Group I search for one of the Group IV positions; the other Group IV position will be evaluated as part of the College of Fine Arts staffing plan.

• A workload of .5 FTE for the administrative position in IARTS is appropriate for the size of IARTS. Whether a .5 FTE position in the Film Division is adequate is being evaluated, but is primarily a Division of Film issue. While the report states that other units except Dance have higher FTE administrative support (2 FTE in general), it is important to note that student numbers are much greater in those units as well (e.g., Music has 274 students, and Art has 395, while IARTS + Film has 89 students).

• Dan Harper, Assistant Dean for Facilities and IT, is working with Environmental Health and Safety to conduct additional tests in the spaces in 31 S. Court St. that were exposed to water in summer 2015.

• I have passed the reported concerns about the library to the Dean of University Libraries, but otherwise this is outside the scope of a review of the Interdisciplinary Arts program.

• Since concerns about collegiality and gender equity arose in summer 2015, the Director has worked extensively with university resources, such as the Ombuds office and the Athens Area Mediation Services, to explore and address these issues with the faculty. This work will continue as necessary. I appreciate the suggestions
about governance structure and procedural guidelines for meetings as a way to also address these issues.

Thank you for the constructive feedback, and I thank you, your committee, and the reviewers for the time and expertise that you have brought to the review process.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Elizabeth Sayrs
Interim Dean, College of Fine Arts
The Graduate Council met on Friday, September 9 and discussed 3 of the 9 program reviews that were on our agenda. There was no comment about the School of Music and Media Arts program review reports. However, there were significant concerns about the IARTS program. Many of these concerns were found in the report, including faculty relations and turnover, gender equality, program resources, lack of transparency, and more formal implementation of procedures. We would like to note the following comments.

1. There was concern that promised changes had not yet begun to be implemented. Given the issues involved, Graduate Council felt that some type of report prior to the next 7-year review was in order. This update could be in the form of a brief report and/or a visit from an IARTS representative to Graduate Council or UCC. Alternatively, some members expressed a desire for you to consider accelerating the next program review to 2-3 years.

2. Given the concerns of the report, we also found it confusing for the report to state that the committee, "strongly believes that IARTS is viable."

Perhaps a statement that more clearly addressed the concerns in the report. For example removing the work strongly in the above sentence or "there are serious concerns which could threaten the viability of the program in the future.

Regards

Steve

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22 January, 2016

Program Review Committee  
University Curriculum Council  
Ohio University, Athens

Dear Program Review Committee members,

In response to concerns that were raised by Graduate Council on 9/29/16, this letter outlines that the promised changes in my 3/28/16 response to the Program Review Committee are in the process of implementation.

The faculty of IARTS held its first meeting of the fall semester on 8/29/16 to discuss the issues of school governance, procedural guidelines, and workload policy. Concerning the first two, the faculty felt that the two professors who had raised the issue with the external reviewers needed to be in attendance. Faculty at this meeting also discussed the codification of a workload document for the department, without resolution for the same reason. On 9/14, I contacted one of the two professors requesting the creation of a workload policy, which would then be discussed by the faculty as a whole. This professor in mid-semester went on a medical leave of absence (still ongoing), so this issue continues to be unresolved. On 11/21/16, I submitted to the faculty the workload policy of the department of English, whose doctoral structure is quite similar to the School of Interdisciplinary Arts. My intent is that this document can provide a template for the creation of an IARTS workload policy, since our two programs have strong similarities. We are awaiting the return of the professor on medical leave (tentatively scheduled for mid-March) to return to all three issues delineated above. In the meantime, faculty meetings have been moving forward collegially this academic year, and at my 12/6/16 meeting with the Student Advisory Committee (consisting of a 1st, 2nd, and 3rd year student), the members reported that the program was working well for them and their colleagues and that there were no complaints.

Concerning faculty turnover, there are seven Group I faculty in the school. Five of these are tenured, one is tenure-track. The line of the previous Director of the School, now Professor Emerita, was converted this past year from a Group IV to a Group I position. The individual who held the Film Studies Group I position, upon receiving tenure here, left for a tenured position at another university in 2015. We currently have a Group IV filling that position, but are hopeful that next year we will be able to convert it also to Group I, as the recent Program Review committee
recommended. If that is successful, there will be five tenured faculty and two-tenure track faculty, which is appropriate rank for a doctoral program.

Concerning the suggestion from Graduate Council that the Program Review’s characterization of the School as “strongly...viable” be stripped of the term “strongly,” it is my belief that such an action counteracts the external review process. Notwithstanding, I continue to make every effort that the School of Interdisciplinary Arts lives up to the Program Review’s characterization of the School as “first-rate” by addressing the concerns that were raised in both its and Graduate Council’s reviews.

I would be happy to provide any updates requested by Graduate Council before the next 7-year review, although accelerating the next program review to 2-3 years I feel would be unduly burdensome.

Please feel free to contact me if there are any further questions or concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]
Charles S. Buchanan, PhD
Director
January 14, 2017

Dear Program Review Committee,

It has come to my attention that some concerns were raised at a Graduate Council meeting regarding the program review for the School of Interdisciplinary Art (IARTS). According to Steve Bergmeier, Chair of Graduate Council, there were concerns about progress being made on some of the issues identified in the report related to program resources, more formal implementation of procedures and transparency, faculty turnover, faculty relations, and gender equality.

Program resources
The program review mentions four areas of resources: operating budget, space, library support, and the administrative assistant.

- The operating budget is adequate. The financial staff of the college met with the Director in early 2016 (after these concerns were raised) to clarify the operating budget as well as discuss additional sources of revenue (e.g., fees). After this discussion, the Director was satisfied with the adequacy of the operating budget. As noted in the program review, even Group IV faculty feel they have the “time and money” for their own research.

- The planned environmental testing (noted in my letter of 3/25/16) was conducted in the IARTS space and no issues were found. In addition, the university worked with the landlord who owns the building at 31 S. Court St., and the water seepage in the IARTS space was fixed in spring 2016; in addition, affected carpet was cleaned and ceiling tiles were replaced.

- The program review notes that the “department enjoys significant support in the area of library resources.” I have discussed the concerns about collection security with Dean of Libraries Scott Seaman; while this is outside the scope of a review of the Interdisciplinary Arts program, I am satisfied that the collections are secured appropriately, with higher levels of security for more valuable books and manuscripts.

- The administrative assistant who was employed at the time of the review has moved on to a different position. The new administrative assistant is working well, with no lapse in administrative support for the program. As noted in my response of 3/25/16, the load of the administrative assistant in IARTS is lower than the load of other similar positions in the College of Fine Arts.

Formal implementation of procedures
As noted in the Director’s response, IARTS agrees with the program review that more formal procedures in some instances and a separate workload policy are
appropriate, and met to address these issues in August 2016 at their first faculty meeting of the academic year. Due to a last minute cancellation by a faculty member, the faculty who attended the meeting properly decided that changing departmental procedures and developing a separate workload policy should include participation by all members of the department. Subsequently, one faculty member who had raised these concerns needed a medical leave (still in progress), which has delayed discussion and resolution of these issues. As soon as that faculty member returns, these discussions will be resumed and these issues will be addressed.

Faculty turnover
As noted in the Director’s response, there has not been a lot of faculty turnover. At the time of the review, there were five tenured Group I faculty and two Group IV faculty in the department. A new Group I was hired in spring 2016 when one of the Group IV positions expired; the other Group IV expires after the 2017-2018 academic year. Thus there are six Group I out of seven full-time faculty in IARTS.

Faculty relations
There has been tension between faculty members that surfaced in the summer of 2015. Since that time, the Director has worked with resources such as the Ombuds office and the Athens Area Mediation Services to explore and address these issues with the faculty. I met with all Group I faculty at the end of spring 2016 to review the concerns raised in the program review, and they agreed to an additional meeting with Athens Area Mediation Services to focus on process in faculty meetings (related to implementing more formalized procedures as discussed above) and ground rules when team teaching courses. This was scheduled to occur the week before the beginning of the fall semester in 2016. In mid-summer, one faculty member who had raised concerns about faculty relations decided to withdraw from the mediation; since mediation requires that all sides be willing to try to find a resolution, I cancelled the mediation, talked with the faculty member who withdrew, and the faculty member agreed to meet with me and the Ombuds to discuss other possible avenues forward. As noted above, this faculty member then required medical leave; when the faculty member returns, this process will resume.

In the meantime, it is important to note that in the spring of 2016, the school successfully revised its promotion and tenure procedures. As noted in the program review, the school also recently revised its curriculum to include a new scholar/artist track; the reviewers wrote that this was “bold and innovative.” In other words, the evidence suggests that any tensions between faculty members are not making an impact on academic quality or on the ability of IARTS to perform its important administrative functions. It is important to address these types of issues before they have a chance to grow and impact the quality of a department, which is why we will continue to pursue working with the Ombuds, Athens Area Mediation Service, and others as appropriate; however, the
evidence does not indicate that there is an impact at this time, and in fact, the review notes that this “is a vibrant and cosmopolitan group of faculty members whose own practices reinforce, and illustrate by example, the goals of an interdisciplinary program.”

Gender equality
As noted in the program review, there is no “smoking gun” related to gender issues in the department. I have carefully reviewed teaching loads, assigned advising loads, annual merit reviews, faculty status/rank, and salaries, and could not find disparities related to gender. However, I still take concerns about climate seriously. In this case, different ideological approaches also align with gender, making it difficult to disentangle these concerns from other concerns about faculty tension. Thus addressing faculty relations as proposed above, especially with respect to more formalized departmental procedures and expectations for team teaching, should simultaneously help address both areas of concern raised in the program review.

Finally, I agree with the Director that the evaluation of the program reviewers—based on a careful examination of the self study and two days of interacting with multiple constituencies—should not be changed, and that their statement that they “strongly believe that IARTS is viable” is well supported by the evidence in their review. In addition, I agree with the Director that for a program identified by the program review process as a “first-rate program” with particular strengths in preparing graduate students for teaching and research careers and in recruiting an “extraordinarily diverse body of first-rate graduate students,” and with a group of “extremely productive” and “highly visible” faculty, accelerating the next program review to 2–3 years is unduly burdensome.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide further information.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Sayrs
Interim Dean, College of Fine Arts