

Request to Establish a Bachelor of Arts in Art History, Criticism and Conservation Degree Program at University of North Carolina at Asheville

UNC Asheville requests authorization to establish a B.A. in Art History, Criticism and Conservation degree program (CIP 50.0703).

Program Description

Currently, the Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Art with a concentration in Art History is one of seven areas (Painting, Drawing, Sculpture, Ceramics, Printmaking, Photography, and Art History) within the B.A. in Art degree program. Since Art History is qualitatively different from the other Art concentrations, and because enrollment in Art History courses has increased by 80% since FY 2006 when the first concentration in Art History degree was awarded, UNCA is requesting that Art History become a stand-alone degree program. If this proposal is approved, the department would be renamed "Department of Art and Art History" reflecting the increased emphasis on Art History. In addition to traditional art historical areas, the proposed program offers a range of courses distinct from other UNC institutions. Further, in addition to a strong liberal arts focus on enhancing student skills in thinking critically, writing well, analyzing thoroughly, and presenting effectively, the program integrates the Art History major with a developing Crafts Studies curriculum at UNCA. A total of 120 semester credit hours will be required to complete the degree program.

Mission Relevance

The Art History major, in following the mission of the Department of Art, will be directly linked to UNCA's mission of providing a broad, general education in the liberal arts and sciences with an emphasis on critical thinking, thoughtful expression, and honest, open inquiry. In addition, the Art History program will continue to integrate essential elements of UNC Asheville's Strategic Plan in the standard curriculum; for example, participating in undergraduate research and engaging with the community (via field research, internships, and joint projects). Also, in following the emphasis in the Strategic Plan, Art History courses are interdisciplinary in nature and strongly address issues of diversity.

Student Demand

In conjunction with the increasing enrollment noted above, student interest in the discipline is attested by the fact that the majority of Art History courses operate at or above capacity. UNC Asheville is not seeking the B.A. in Art History, Criticism and Conservation degree program as a way to drastically increase enrollment, but rather to provide a nationally recognizable and more marketable degree for the UNCA students already concentrating in art history.

Societal Demand and Opportunities for Program Graduates

At UNC Asheville, Art History is firmly embedded in the liberal arts curriculum, and thus prepares students for the working world through a combination of skill sets: soft skills, hard academic skills, and transferable skills (such as critical thinking, research skills, problem solving, comparison and visual observation skills, and communication skills). Asheville's active arts and crafts communities allow UNCA students to explore career options and acquire professional experience through numerous internship opportunities. In addition to employment in traditional art institutions (such as museums and galleries), Art History majors find employment in a wide

range of careers including restoration, conservation, and preservation, as well as art professionals and administrators in a wide variety of public, private, and non-profit agencies. UNCA Art History graduates currently hold art-related employment positions in a wide range of agencies, both within and outside North Carolina.

Resource Implications

No new resources are needed. The successful delivery of the Art History concentration curriculum for nine years -- a curriculum that is the substantive and qualitative equivalent of a BA in Art History -- indicates the long-term success and sustainability of the proposed major program. The Art History program is successfully operating with three tenure-track and two non-tenure track faculty positions; it is projected that the current faculty can initiate and sustain the new major for the first four years. No additional courses, library resources, or information technology support are required, and the program will utilize existing facilities and classrooms.

Collaborative Opportunities

Currently, the Department of Art at UNCA collaborates with New York University, Florida State University, and SACI (Studio Arts Center International, Florence, Italy) through an archaeology field school located in Tuscany, Italy. A collaborative project between these four institutions brings students and faculty every summer to the site of Cetamura del Chianti for a five-week introduction to Ancient art and archaeology. Students are introduced to archaeological techniques, learn about art conservation and laboratory methods, and visit museums throughout Italy with professors from the participating universities.

Outcome of System-wide Review

Two disciplinary experts representing two UNC institutions responded to the survey questions concerning the proposed B.A. in Art History, Criticism and Conservation at UNCA. One subject matter expert indicated no concerns regarding the proposed program, and the other provided questions or comments regarding student demand, program requirements and curriculum, faculty sufficiency and student support, and budget. UNC Asheville responded to the questions and comments to UNC General Administration, and those responses are reflected in this summary.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve University of North Carolina at Asheville's request to establish a B.A. in Art History, Criticism and Conservation degree program (CIP 50.0703) effective August 2013.