Assessment Update for the Department of Fine Arts, 2003-2004

a. **Changes to our assessment plan:** No changes to our assessment plan were made as we discerned the efficacy of the current plan. The current assessment system will be reviewed when the new degree programs are approved. The main change to the assessment procedure that is being considered is to have an objective third-party committee review the student and instructor reports at the end of the academic year. This would provide an unbiased view of the results and success of a course.

Since the new degrees are in theatre and entertainment, we are reviewing the overall curricular assessment recommendations of a university theatrical accrediting program, the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST), to determine how these might enhance our individual course assessments. The curricular recommendations fall into three main categories: curricular structure; specific recommendations for general studies; and essential competencies, experiences, and opportunities. The first category, curricular structure, is particularly relevant. For a degree in design/technology the specific guidelines are being studied to see how our courses meet the requirements. The NAST guidelines are, “Curricular structure, content, and time requirements shall enable students to develop the range of knowledge, skills, and competencies expected of those holding a professional baccalaureate degree in design/technology. Curricula to accomplish this purpose normally adhere to the following guidelines: studies in the major area, including basic design and/or technical training, should comprise 30% to 40% of the total program; supportive courses in theatre, 20% to 30%; general studies, 25% to 35%; and elective areas of study, 10% to 15%.

b. **Positive result/process:** Our technique of student assessment surveys is as follows: An instructor-written survey is given to students at the beginning of the semester for a course to be assessed. Preliminary questions regarding students’ expectations are answered. The survey is returned to the students at the end of the semester; the students then answer additional questions regarding whether their expectations were met and/or exceeded. The instructors of the course then review the students’ comments and write a summary report of the results, following a departmental outline. This is recorded in appropriate files in the FA Conference Room. The instructors have found the system easy to use.

The department is in the process of developing a more systematic process of assessment to ensure that all courses are reviewed. All Fine Arts courses are being catalogued by the semester in which they are taught and by instructor. An assessment calendar will be developed for each instructor. Each instructor will be responsible implementing this schedule which will allow courses to be assessed on a rotating basis.

c. **Assessment citations:** None.