

Weber State University-Program Review Report
Interior Design
Conducted on March 27, 2014

1) Overview

The Interior Design program is a hidden jewel of the Weber State University. It prepares exceptional students who exhibit market-ready skills. Students have ample opportunity to work in internships with community partners that are also eager to hire graduates into award-winning studios. The program faculty are dedicated, qualified professionals who continue to work in the interior design industry lending credibility to their outstanding teaching skills. The program is extremely self-reliant, particularly since moving to the Davis campus, but the faculty need administrative support to allow them time to focus on students.

2) Program Strengths

Program Strength 1: Program standards align to the program mission statement, which is aligned with external accreditation (CIDA) standards. This alignment facilitates careful and thorough assessment of students, assessment of the program, and maintains ongoing accreditation recognition. Interior Design 1010 has been approved as a general education course, increasing the enrollment in the course, resulting in overall growth of the program. Faculty course assignments are based on individual expertise. They have opportunities for professional development to extend their proficiency. The Study Abroad program has expanded the learning opportunities for students, and also enriches the curriculum. (Standard A: a-d; Standard B: a, b; Standard E: f, g)

Program Strength 2: Courses are sequenced for students to move through the program in an organized and timely manner. The course schedule is published before each semester registration period begins and has adequate course credits to support students within the course sequences. In addition, advising is provided by the program coordinator to ensure all students continue with the designed sequence.. (Standard B: b, d; Standard D)

Program Strength 3: Courses are taught by faculty who have expertise in the field and continue to practice Interior Design. All faculty possess appropriate degrees and NCIDQ credentials. The adjunct faculty member in the ID program is exceptionally well qualified. A recommendation below is to make the adjunct faculty member at least part time to show support for the program and to retain a highly qualified individual who has shown commitment to the program (See Program Concern 1 below). Courses are scheduled to accommodate both daytime and afternoon/evening time slots. The faculty members are dedicated professionals who often make great sacrifice to the program and to students in order to maintain “momentum” for success. Faculty diversity is reflective of the industry, which is predominantly female. The faculty has diverse background and expertise (residential, commercial, legal, artistic, etc), which benefits students. Canvas, the learning management system used by WSU, is used to support courses, allowing students to see rubrics, receive feedback and communicate with faculty. (Standard E: a, d; Standard C)

Program Strength 4: Student assessment is closely monitored to meet CIDA accreditation

requirements including course assignments related to environmental safety, ADA compliance, and global and socioeconomic awareness. In addition, the requirement of proficiency (B grade or better) ensures that standards are met at exceptional levels of achievement. The thresholds are set to comply with these CIDA requirements. *All* student work is archived by the program during the six-year accreditation cycle. Students hold electronic versions for their own work for portfolios. Assessments include formative work during studio time and these support summative tasks. *(Standard C)*

Program Strength 5: The program is situated in the Professional Sales department. This has many advantages for students in the Interior Design program. Students acquire skills that support careers in interior design: they develop communication skills for conducting client interviews and responding to client concerns; they develop skills in ongoing customer service; and they apply the psychology of working with clients in business. The program has worked with the Professional Sales department to develop a dual major, which was cited by community partners as program strength. One partner stated, "Graduates of this program that I have hired were able to hit the ground with their feet running." *(Standard B: a)*

Program Strength 6: The program has developed significant relationships with external communities, both within the interior design industry and with other academic institutions (SLCC and LDS Business College). The partnership with industry allows students to complete internships and participate in community events in an authentic, skill-developing manner. These opportunities include regularly scheduled seminars in which interior design industry professionals talk with students about aspects of the career, opportunities for jobs, specific skill development, and industry standards. In addition, the faculty and students have completed projects on the Ogden campus for the alumni center, student services, and others. These partnerships also increase the likelihood of employment for graduates. The relationship with SLCC and LDS BC facilitates a smooth transfer of credits from certificate and associate degree programs into the WSU ID bachelors degree program. *(Standard G: a-c).*

Program Strength 7: The program includes courses that directly teach students to use software packages that are standard within the interior design industry, such as Adobe Illustrator, AutoCAD, and Revit. Software needed for the program has recently been updated. This is crucial for keeping the program current. The program director has supported software upgrades through grants, IT support, and student fees. *(Standard F: c)*

3) Areas of Concern

Program Concern 1: Faculty capacity (1 full time, $\frac{3}{4}$ time, $\frac{1}{2}$ time, and adjunct) is not sufficient to comfortably sustain the high quality program that is in place. It is imperative that COAST supports another full time position and possibly transitions the adjunct faculty to a part time position. The review recognizes that student enrollment is necessary for expansion, but greater enrollment is noted, leading to compelling reasons to increase FTEs. Community partners stated that WSU ID is a leader in the region and should be expanded, if possible. More full time faculty would be necessary for this to come to fruition. *(Standard E: b).*

Program Concern 2: There is inadequate support staff for the program. The location at the Davis campus is ideal, but undermines support for administrative tasks from the department, such as p-card reconciliation, travel support, supply ordering and general administrative support. This presents a logistical challenge, and is not a criticism of administrative personnel. In a discussion with the department chair, this challenge was recognized. However, as a new incoming chair takes his position, we strongly encourage additional conversation about how to lend greater support to the Interior Design program. This concern would not be ameliorated by hiring a student aid to “man the phone”. Support needs to come from personnel with administrative clout with university support departments such as purchasing, accounting, travel. (Standard F: a, b)

Program Concern 3: The Davis campus does not have a color copier within the copy center, which is needed by ID students to complete required assignments. It is unreasonable to expect students attending a program housed in Davis to use equipment on the Ogden campus. A color printer would benefit students at the Davis campus beyond the ID program and thus, is likely an issue that is beyond the scope of the department or college. (Standard F: c).

4) Recommendations for Change

- Following established policy, devote funding to establish at least one additional full-time faculty position and allow for at least one more part-time faculty position. This would lead to two full time faculty and two part time faculty.
- Provide an experienced administrative assistant to the program at the Davis campus, even if on a part-time basis.
- There is a lack of technology support for program-required software maintenance at the Davis Campus. The server for ID is located on the Ogden campus and that presents issues when there are problems, without a strategy for an expedient way to fix the problem. This delays learning for students because there isn't timely support. We recognize that there is IT support at Davis, but the logistics of who can support the computer labs needs to be resolved.
- Additionally, a work study lab aide would be beneficial to assist all students in the lab, offering software support during non-peak hours when faculty are unavailable. This would facilitate learning of all students using the open labs.

5) Additional recommendations and comments from the review team

- Based on the review, we recommend that the Interior Design program remain within the Professional Sales department. This recommendation is based on the skills obtained by students through the SST courses that are valued by employers, the well-designed dual major, and the collaboration within the department that supports student success.