

**University of Connecticut  
School of Fine Arts  
Faculty/Staff Meeting Notes  
Tuesday, February 11, 2020  
11:00a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
von der Mehden Recital Hall**

**School Updates (Anne D'Alleva)**

Anne welcomed the faculty and staff to the meeting and thanked them for making the time. Faculty and staff at our regional campuses are joining via remote connection.

The Production Facility is close to completion. The building has a temporary certificate of occupancy, which means that it is safe for people to be in there; however, it is not fully open and operational just yet. Colleen will communicate which areas will be shut of. However, it is on-schedule as planned and represents a huge step forward. Anne thanked Colleen Bridgeman for her tremendous work on this project. We will have an opening celebration in April when the weather is nicer.

The space for the “arts administration” program in the Wadsworth is nearly complete as well. It has taken a long time to come to fruition, but it is a unique partnership in the country. This space will allow us to partner with arts organizations in Hartford. Also do note that the program has been renamed to “Arts Leadership and Cultural Management.” That program is making great progress.

We are beginning work on a strategic plan for diversity, equity, and inclusion. This project is at the request of the President, who is asking all Schools and Colleges to develop such a plan this spring before launching into the academic strategic planning process in the Fall. All units have representation on the SFA Diversity Committee, which is taking the lead on drafting the strategic plan. Anne reminds everyone that volunteers are welcome to join the effort. Please reach out to Arielle if you are interested. We are following a model set by UC Berkeley. There will be several town hall meetings scheduled to solicit feedback – stay tuned for dates to come shortly.

The Krenicki Institute is continuing to progress. The two minors related to it (Industrial Design and Entertainment Engineering) have been approved and are ready to roll out for Fall. Eva is working on thoughtfully rolling out the minors to our students over the next few months. The former Dean’s Office will be transformed into the space for the Krenicki Institute. Academic Renovations will undertake the work over the summer; there will be room for students to collaborate, a computer lab, space for a Program Assistant, and more. Our design students are working on creating a logo for the Institute as well. Anne saw the Krenickis in Florida last week, and they are very excited about the Institute and the opportunities it provides for our students.

In terms of programming, we are working on a “Year of Sendak.” The University houses the Maurice Sendak Collection at the Dodd Center of his collection of children’s book art. We are going to collaborate across campus and interdisciplinarily in Academic Year 21-22 to offer comprehensive programming related to Sendak. We will be putting out a call for participation. Sendak designed a set for the opera *Brundibar*, which has a strong human rights component, and this will be restaged here in collaboration between Drama and Music.

Anne introduced Jes Zurell, our new Marketing Manager for the School of Fine Arts. She has degrees in painting and arts journalism from Syracuse, and comes to us from University of Hartford. We are thrilled to have her here with us. She is meeting with the different units and getting to know the school. Anne asked that faculty and staff share their accomplishments with Jes/copy her on emails to Anne about accomplishments, so she can disseminate that information. We are too often referred to as “the best kept secret,” and we need to change that and make ourselves better known publicly.

Anne also introduced Emily Auger Murray, who is now in place as our Alumni Affairs Coordinator for the School. She has been on loan to us for the past year and a half, but now she is permanently assigned to us (as well as Neag).

### **Arts Philanthropy Award (Anne D’Alleva)**

Anne presented the Arts Philanthropy Award to Eileen Ossen on behalf of the Jeffrey P. Ossen Family Foundation. This award is usually presented at A Night for the Arts in the Fall, but Eileen was receiving an award from another organization on that evening, which just goes to show that she is well-thought-of by many people. We are thrilled to have her here today to receive this award.

As principal of the Jeffrey P. Ossen Foundation, Eileen has provided major support to arts programming at UConn. More specifically, she and the foundation's trustees have worked to identify and bolster programs which introduce disadvantaged young people to the arts and nurture their ongoing involvement. Eileen is not simply interested in supporting UConn but rather in supporting and lifting up the community through partnering with UConn School of Fine Arts. The foundation's support of UConn Opera, the Jorgensen Outreach for Youth (JOY!) program, and chamber music, among other programs, has been transformational to UConn's outreach mission and it has also improved the lives of so many children and families in eastern CT.

Eileen expressed her appreciation of being recognized. She and her late husband Jeffrey had a vision to enhance the lives of those in their community when they started their foundation. They have supported health, education, and the arts in pursuit of that goal. She noted that she has been truly impressed with the Arts at UConn. After Jeffrey passed, all of his business entities were sold and the proceeds were funneled into the Foundation. They now make grants of \$1mil/year. The arts were always Jeffrey’s soft spot; he really believed in the arts, especially for children. She noted that the Foundation will continue to support the arts, and thanked us again.

### **Proposal: Revision of Operating Principles for PTR Procedures for SFA (Alain Frogley)**

Alain presented on a proposal for changes to the operating principles for PTR procedures for SFA. This proposal was developed by a committee being chaired by Professor Gary English, which is looking at the school’s by-laws as a whole. There will be more to come from that, however it was felt that there was some urgency to sending this particular issue to the faculty to vote.

The primary issue is that we have fewer full professors at the school than we did a decade ago. As such, it makes it difficult to appropriately populate PTR committees. Typically, faculty do not vote on promotions to ranks above that which they hold themselves (i.e. assistant professors do not vote on

promotions to associate, associate professors do not vote on promotions to full professor). This causes an issue at the School-level council, as they look at more cases of promotion to full professor than the department-level committees do.

Five years ago, we introduced a measure that allowed associate professors to serve on the school-level council when a department is unable to send enough full professors to serve on that council. This year, close to half of the school-level committee were only at the rank of associate, and thus had to abstain from voting on promotions to full professor. The Provost's Office doesn't particularly care for high numbers of abstentions on votes, so it is preferable to fill the school-level committee with as many full professors as possible.

As such, the proposed change is to put an order of operations into place for elections to both the school and department council and committee, respectively. This change asks departments to elect, from the pool of full professors, members to the school-level council first, and then fill the department committee from the remaining pool. It also provides guidance as to threshold numbers for allowing associate professors to serve, or for membership to be borrowed from other departments.

Alain noted that we will soon have a new Provost, and it is likely that we will be asked to revise our PTR regulations and procedures as the School level as a whole shortly thereafter. This is thus a bit of a stop-gap measure, but it would provide guidance in the meantime.

Alain shared the proposal itself. Alain noted that any later questions or comments may be sent to the Dean's Office.

Janet Pritchard asked for clarification regarding the voting procedures. Janet voiced that at-large votes were prohibited at the department level some years ago, but she would like to see that return if permissible. Anne clarified that this edict was proposed by a prior Provost, but never fully implemented, which is why it has not been standardized. She suggested that if AAH wants to reconsider that proviso, they are welcome to do so at the department level, but she noted that it may be prudent to wait and see what the new Provost wants to do before making those changes.

Eric Rice added that, in the Music Department, they do vote at-large, but the votes of the at-large faculty only report their votes to the council, not to the Provost's Office. Alain added that the form we fill out to the Provost's Office does not include a space to include a vote of faculty-at-large, though that information may be included in letters.

### **Proposal: Department Name Change (John Richardson/Heather Elliott-Famularo)**

Anne introduced this proposal, which came from the Department of Art and Art History (AAH). The process for considering this change has been set for us by the Provost's Office. It mirrors the process used for C&C, which is that the faculty of the school must vote on the proposal. Anne noted that DMD had an interest in presenting a departmental response to the proposal, but Music and Drama did not have the same interest. Thus, John Richardson will present the proposal from AAH, and Heather will present the departmental response. The floor will then be open for comment and discussion.

Anne did note that the time is ripe to consider all manner of names and name changes.

Anne also clarified that only faculty will vote on the name change, though staff are encouraged to participate in the discussion.

Stacy Webb noted that the remote participants were having a hard time hearing questions, so the audience was asked to please wait for a mic to come to them before asking questions.

John presented the rationale for the proposed change. At the beginning of this academic year, faculty in AAH identified the single most important issue to them to be a change to the name of the department to more accurately the work taking place in the department. Names of similar departments across the country were researched, and based on that research, the proposal is to change the name to the Department of Art, Art History, and Design.

The AAH full-time faculty voted overwhelmingly in favor of the change (22 in favor, 1 against, 3 abstentions).

There are three primary reasons to make the change.

1. Faculty disciplinary affiliation
2. Student interest and affiliation
3. Disciplinary context

24% of the department's full-time faculty are in design. The majority of BFA-Art majors with declared concentrations are in design (60%). This high concentration of students in design also impacts how non-design faculty teach; John noted that he teaches his intro to sculpture class differently when half of the class is made of design students (as it currently is).

Additionally, the change of name will help prospective students to understand that they are able to study design in this department.

Finally, it is an equity issue to have faculty who are designers represented within the name of the department.

John finished by respectfully asking support in the change of name.

Heather offered a slide presentation. She noted that DMD was surprised by the proposal, and the faculty in DMD were upset by it. She noted that, in spite of a long history between DMD and AAH, there was no dialog between the departments about this proposed change. This was disappointing, as it was felt that good progress had been made in relations between the departments.

Heather presented a series of figures related to the use of the term "design" in DMD vs. in AAH, for degrees and within the catalog (see slides). She also noted that the question of equity leaves out Dramatic Arts, which also includes designers.

Regarding the impact on DMD, Heather noted that DMD is the largest major in SFA, and the program in Stamford would also be impacted. She noted that there is already confusion amongst prospective students about which discipline to choose, and adding that having the term "design" in both department names would increase that confusion rather than alleviate it.

Heather acknowledged that the graphic designers within AAH have been in conversation about their representation within the department name for longer than DMD has been in existence. However, DMD does exist now, and must be taken into consideration.

Heather noted that DMD has taken several actions to try to heal old wounds and try to open a dialog between DMD and AAH. The two departments should work collaboratively rather than against each other. She noted that all students go into the world as UConn graduates – they aren't necessarily identified by their degrees.

Heather noted that, although many practitioners within DMD are artists, they do not include the word "art" within their department name. She suggested that DMD could change their name, or better yet, the School might consider a change in its name to the School of Fine Arts and Design. The upcoming strategic planning process offers ample opportunity to consider holistic and thoughtful changes to names.

Heather respectfully asked faculty to vote no on this proposal.

Anne noted that she believes everyone in the school is committed to our students, and would like to keep the focus on the future, not the history. She then opened the floor to comments.

Michael Chybowski (Drama) offered comment: for 4.5 years he was the head of the design concentration within his own department, and he understands the frustration of not being recognized as a designer within his field. He noted that it is common. He suggested that he tends to agree that including the name "design" in the name of a department is misleading in terms of suggesting that there is only one department in which to study design, when really  $\frac{3}{4}$  of our departments offer design coursework. He felt it would be ideal to discuss further rather than voting now, and that this is indeed a great opportunity to work together and emphasize the totality of the design opportunities across the school. It's a great marketing opportunity to showcase our strength in design.

Peter Kaminsky (Music) noted that it seems like a good deal of the argument has to do with the branding of our departments. He asked whether Jes Zurrell has any thoughts on the branding and the possible consequences having the name "design" in multiple department names has regarding the potential for brand confusion. Jes offered that she has seen this argument in many places; it can be difficult for branding, but what you have to do is put on the hat of a 17 year old student who is looking online for a major – how are they going to find you? The bigger problem, to her, is to figure out how to make the School of Fine Arts into a holistic place where you can find what you want to study. When a student is typing something into a search box, they are looking for a major, perhaps not a concentration. She suggested that the bigger picture is what we should be looking at.

Anne asked whether Elizabeth Foody could comment from the perspective of admissions. Elizabeth agreed with Jes – there's confusion for both 17 year olds and their parents, regardless. Sometimes they don't even really know what they want to do anyway, and they are simply being forced to choose something on the Common App. There *is* massive confusion about which department to choose to study what, but that is true within Drama as well (much confusion between Acting and Theatre Studies, for example). She offered that there is probably more confusion amongst students who do want to study

design, but don't know how or where to do that. Elizabeth does think that it's the nature of the beast – there will always be confusion, and this is something all universities with similar programs struggle with.

Monica Bock (AAH) noted that, several years back, it was considered to add a BFA in Art and Design. She found Michael's suggestion to not have the term "design" in any of the department names was a fine option. She noted that DMD got it's "design" when the graphic designers from AAH moved over there, and when they moved back, the name stayed. She noted that the idea that AAH is not interested in consulting or being involved interdisciplinarily is unfair. They would like to move forward as quickly together to best serve the student body, so they are not signing up for one program and finding it's not what they thought it was.

Michael Chybowski (Drama) offered that it will be up to each individual student to find their niche. He continues to advocate for representation at a broad level.

Anne noted that there is a lot of good-will in the room. The next Academic Year is the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of SFA, and in conjunction with the academic planning process, this really might be the moment to step back and re-evaluate holistically whether the names of the school, the departments, etc. might need revision. She suggested a faculty task-force could be established to consider names holistically, and asked whether AAH might put their request on pause and let that happen first.

Monica Bock and Janet Pritchard asked that the issue not be further delayed. Anne suggested that we resolve it this semester; in fact, settling names ahead of the academic planning process could provide framework for that process.

Elizabeth Foody added that the one of the largest issues of confusion for prospective families is that the performing arts are often not considered to be "fine arts," so applicants don't understand that Music and Dramatic Arts are under our umbrella. Thus, she supports looking at the name of the school on the whole. She frequently colloquially describes us as the School of Fine Arts and Performing Arts.

Anne said she will circle back to the department of AAH to see how they would like to proceed with the vote. She will then communicate with everyone about what will happen next. She expressed her support of forming a task-force, but faculty would have to agree to move in that direction.

Anne thanked everyone.