

Response to Senate

Scott Anderson

11/25/14

Dear Mark, Bill and Michelle,

I've had a chance to consult with my department and am happy to address some of the concerns raised by the Academic Senate over our proposed curriculum revision.

- *Fiscal impact:* Bill raised legitimate concerns that the newly redefined requirement of ART 70 3-D Sculpture might not be staffed enough to meet demand. To address this concern, we have determined the following:
 - The ART 70 course will move from a cap of 10 to 12 per semester. Broadening the focus of the course beyond the current exclusive emphasis on stone sculpture will allow us to fit a couple more students into that work space.
 - We will scale back our Ceramics course offerings from three courses a year to two courses, and add an additional section of ART 70. This change in offerings will happen in the fall of 2017, which will correspond with the junior year of the students under the new curriculum requirements.
 - We will still honor the transfer agreements we have in place with our abroad programs (Orvieto, Cortona, and SACI in Florence), so that their sculpture courses will count as our 3-D requirement. This alleviates some pressure, as many of our students go abroad on these programs.
 - We will possibly begin offering it in Mayterm, to also accommodate demand. We feel confident that all three of these steps in total will accommodate demand.

- *Unit load rationale:* The committee raised the question of whether moving the major from 53 units to 57 units is truly necessary. The department believes that it is, for the following reasons:
 - The curriculum has been carefully assembled to match standards set by other liberal arts schools. Every component we have crafted is echoed by fellow institutions, with no “extras” tacked on.
 - Curtailing the amount of electives from 16 to 12 would, in our opinion, be a disastrous option for our students. We require that four units of electives be in an upper-division course, to ensure that our students “go deep” in at least one media area. If we moved to 12 units, then they would essentially be limited to trying out only 2 media areas, which impacts them as artists and hurts their graduate school opportunities. We strongly feel that 16 units is the minimum needed

in order to offer our majors the diversity that is demanded of the contemporary art graduate.

- Fewer elective requirements would also likely result in lower enrollment in upper-division electives, a problem we already face with the small student population at Westmont.
- The course we are adding to the major (ART 65, to be renamed Digital Tools) is an absolutely essential course for today's art student, required in many other programs.
- We understand that this move would make us one of the highest unit-count BA granting departments in the institution. Given the intense and broad training that is required for an aspiring artist to "make it" after graduation, we feel this higher unit load is appropriate. Some of our competitor institutions (such as Azusa Pacific) offer a BFA degree, which is even more unit intensive. A rigorous BA degree program from Westmont makes us more competitive with sister institutions.

We are happy to field further inquiries from the Senate if the above information still leaves unanswered questions. We understand our proposal is one that raises questions, and it is our goal to make sure that any underlying concerns are fully addressed.

Sincerely submitted on behalf of the art dept.,

Scott Anderson
Chair, Department of Art