

MFA IN VISUAL ART PROGRAM FACULTY HANDBOOK

FACULTY DEFINITION

All faculty (Core and Visiting) are issued six-month contracts, for one semester, beginning and ending with a residency.

CORE:

- Attend residencies and fully participate in all faculty meetings and relevant activities including group and individual critiques; Visual Culture returning groups, research groups, and new groups; graduate reviews, walk-through of all student exhibitions and review of time-based works.
- Present lectures and/or workshops on their own creative work or other topics of relevance at residencies as requested by Faculty Co-Chairs; attend student graduation and present graduating students; and remain generally accessible to all students, other faculty, visiting artists and critters for informal exchanges throughout the residency.
- Arrival on campus one day (or as specified by Co-chairs and Program Director) before the start of the summer residency for Faculty meetings and orientation.
- Advise and evaluate 5-6 students during the semester on their visual culture research and writing projects in accordance with Program guidelines (see Faculty Advisor Guidelines & Requirements below) and oversee progress of student's studio practice as necessary
- Serve on Guidance Committees of assigned students
- Serve on Review Committees of assigned students
- Service on program and college-level committees keeping in mind the restrictions of low-residency faculty time commitments and salaries.
- With Faculty Co-Chairs set strategic direction and mission for the program
- Represent the program at public conferences and events, as appropriate
- Participate in all-day mid-semester meetings
- Determine studio credit through work on Faculty Committee

VISITING:

- Attend residencies and fully participate in all relevant activities expected from core faculty (see itemized list above).
- Arrival on campus one day (or as specified by Co-chairs and Program Director) before the start of the summer residency for Faculty meetings and orientation.
- Present lectures and/or workshops on creative work or other relevant topics at residencies as requested by Faculty Co-Chairs; attend student graduation and present graduating students; and remain generally accessible to all students, other faculty, visiting artists and critters for informal exchanges throughout the residency.
- Advise and evaluate 5-6 students during the semester on their visual culture research and writing projects in accordance with Program guidelines (See Faculty Advisor Guidelines & Requirements below) and oversee progress of student's studio practice as necessary

- Serve on Review Committees of assigned students
- Determine studio credit through work on Faculty Committee

CO-CHAIRS:

- In addition to Core Faculty responsibilities as noted above, Co-Chairs are responsible for working with the Program Director to ensure that the MFA in Visual Art Program is fulfilling its academic mission by reviewing all program procedures and pedagogical goals and practices and by engaging the entire Faculty in a discussion of any changes to the Program's mission, procedures, pedagogical goals and practices
- Review and approve new faculty applications and Artist Teacher applications both during and post-residency (See Hiring Process below for further details on Faculty hiring process). Oversee and facilitate in collaboration with the Program and Assistant Director, student/Artist-Teacher assignments each semester
- Advise and evaluate 1-2 students during the semester on their visual culture research projects and oversee progress of student's studio practice as necessary (co-chairs have a minimum of 3-4 release time from student papers)
- As needed charge, discharge and solicit faculty to serve on College and Program committees
- Evaluate and supervise Core and Visiting Faculty in areas of pedagogical performance and general fulfillment of obligations to students and expectations of program every semester (see procedure described below)
- In consultation with Program Director and Faculty recommend to Academic Dean the hiring of Core and Visiting Faculty for each semester
- At least one Co-Chair must serve on the Academic Council of VCFA
- Maintain timely communication with students, Faculty, staff, and Artist Teachers regarding program and college-level matters
- At least one Co-Chair must serve on the Visual Art Program Growth Committee to help oversee and consult with VCFA Administration regarding decisions about publicity, marketing and advertising the program and the College
- During the residency, Co-Chairs function in collaboration with the Program Director as the public voice of the program at academic and/or administrative events, including new and returning student orientations, exhibition openings, graduation ceremony, and other collective activities and/or celebrations
- In consultation with Program Director and Faculty plan residency activities including agendas for faculty meetings, the hiring of Artist/Critic in Residence, Visiting Lecturers, and Visiting Lecturers, and Visiting Critics; planning of Faculty lectures, workshops, and possible special events
- In collaboration with the Program Director, facilitate all residency activities, including Faculty meetings, Faculty reviews of student work at the residency during the preliminary exhibition walk-through as well as the review, advancement, and granting of credit for all students' previous semester visual culture and studio work at the mid-week residency meeting
- Orient new faculty and other visitors to the residency

APPOINTMENT OF CO-CHAIRS

Any Core Faculty member can nominate himself or herself or another Core Faculty to run as Co-chair. The entire Core faculty and the Program Director vote on the nominations and the co-chair is elected. The Co-chairs generally serve for two years. The terms of service are staggered in such a way that a newly elected Co-chair will always serve alongside an experienced Co-chair.

FACULTY HIRING PROCESS

Faculty in the Visual Art program serves in one of two capacities: Core or Visiting (each of these roles is described in more detail under FACULTY DEFINITION).

Hiring Core Faculty:

Core faculty can expect to be rehired from semester to semester providing enrollment numbers allow for this. They are entitled to take a leave of absence of one or two consecutive semesters within a three-year time frame. When possible, core faculty should arrange these leaves with Co-chairs and Program Director well in advance of each residency.

Eligibility for a Core Faculty position requires three semesters of successful work with students as a Visiting Faculty. However, after three semesters of successful work with students Visiting Faculty are NOT automatically reviewed for a Core position on the faculty. Core Faculty members are hired from the pool of Visiting Faculty when a need arises due to increased enrollment or demands made on the Core, or when a Core Faculty member steps down, leaving a vacancy. In such circumstances, all Core Faculty will be asked to recommend candidates from the pool of Visiting Faculty. The Co-chairs in consultation with the Program Director will review the nominated Visiting Faculty's student evaluations, service to the program, and overall contributions and share any relevant information with the faculty. The full Core Faculty then votes on the visiting faculty whose names have been put forward. Final recommendations for hiring of Core Faculty are made by the Co-chairs and Program Director to the Academic Dean for final approval.

Recommendations are based on the following criteria (in no particular order):

- Excellent academic and artistic qualifications and relevant degrees or equivalent (MFA, MA, PhD),
- Teaching experience and effectiveness (in the Program and elsewhere),
- Demonstrated suitability for interdisciplinary low-residency pedagogy and compatibility with the program's collaborative ethos, and engagement with interdisciplinary contemporary visual culture practices,
- Gender, ethnic, aesthetic, geographic, and conceptual diversity,
- Demonstration of excellent, on-going creative, scholarly, and professional activity that is in keeping with the high level of accomplishment of current faculty

Hiring Visiting Faculty:

The visual arts program has made an official commitment to bringing new ideas into the program by leaving room in the faculty each residency for positions that are to be filled by visitors. Individuals serving in this capacity rotate in and out depending upon their own schedules and the needs of the program. Thus, someone might be a Visiting Faculty for a single semester, or serve as Visiting Faculty available to the program for several years, sometimes taking a year or two off and then returning. However, continued participation in the program is always contingent upon successful evaluations. The co-chairs regularly review unsolicited applications for faculty positions in the MFA-V program. All eligible candidates will be considered for Visiting Faculty positions. Suggestions for visiting faculty are also solicited from current and former core and visiting faculty, Program Director, alumni/ae and enrolled students, Artist-Teachers, visiting artists critics, and unsolicited applications. Selections are made on the basis of the Co-chairs knowledge of the field. In making Visiting Faculty decisions, Co-Chairs always review the current make-up of the Core and Visiting faculty to determine what particular skills or areas of professional expertise or practice will best complement the faculty at that time. Visiting Faculty must meet equivalent high professional requirements, teaching experience, and standards as Core Faculty.

FACULTY ADVISOR GUIDELINES & REQUIREMENTS

During the non-resident semester, each faculty advisor is normally responsible for supervising of 5-6 students' Visual Culture research and writing projects. Supervision includes three scheduled meetings during the residency to help students plan and write a Visual Culture Study plan and build a bibliography. As well, Faculty Advisors discuss students' Studio plans and choice of Artist Teacher. Off-residency, Faculty Advisors conduct thorough written exchanges with assigned students, and are available for telephone or email dialogues as necessary. Such exchanges include:

- A minimum of three substantial responses consisting of 2-3 pages of written commentary and critical responses to student research papers and guided readings. Receipt dates for student mailings are specified by Faculty Advisers in the Visual Culture study group, and included in the student's VC study plan signed off on at the residency. The contents of the three mailings are specified in the study plan and generally include an outline and thesis statement or research goal and bibliography, a first draft or assessment of research to date, and a final paper or research summary mailed to Faculty Advisors by dates individually agreed on. Thorough and detailed responses to student work should usually be submitted within a week or ten days of receipt of student packets. Where mitigating circumstances make this impossible, faculty must alert students as to when they will be receiving responses.

- Suggestions for further readings, revisions, and other appropriate directions for completing the VC study.
 - Email and phone dialogues with the students as necessary. These can be requested and initiated by either student or faculty.
 - Faculty Advisor review of Artist Teacher mid-term and final evaluations of their students. (FA's are responsible for alerting Co-chairs and Program Director to any academic problems students are having.) Faculty Advisor also reviews the students' study plan, and mid and final semester self-evaluations.
- Faculty Advisor review and approval of Graduation Plan

In addition to these exchanges, Faculty Advisors are required to submit mid-semester Visual Culture project evaluation of each student that should include a statement about whether the student is progressing satisfactorily, or in danger of not receiving credit for the semester. Faculty Advisors also submit a detailed final written evaluation of each of their student's VC research projects, including granting or not granting credit for the semester's work. This evaluation must include a description of the student's semester project and an assessment of the quality of the work. This evaluation will substantiate a recommendation for, or against, advancement to next semester's work, and/or degree candidacy, or the awarding of the final degree.

It is recommended that Faculty Advisors retain copies of correspondence with all students for a period of three semesters. The Program office keeps a permanent copy of student evaluations of semester work, as well as residency activities.

FACULTY COMMITTEE

All MFA-V core and visiting faculty, and co-chairs meet as the Faculty Committee at each residency and at midterm. The Program's faculty governance process is entirely collaborative and consensual, and the faculty and co-chairs consult and act as a committee of the whole on all program issues and policies. During residencies, faculty attend frequent meetings to discuss and determine:

- Program needs in terms of new faculty, co-chair rotation, and other faculty issues
- Program policy and mission
- Possible changes and adjustments to Program curriculum
- Share pedagogical ideas and methods and report on issues with particular students
- Review all student studio work submitted for credit review
- Evaluate student progress, advancement, credit, and academic problems,
- Review Faculty committee reports
- Assess program status, discuss proposals for new program ideas and future initiatives

- Share ideas about enrollment, recruitment, admissions, and the like
- Discuss program and College-wide academic, faculty, governance and policy issues

PROGRAM AND COLLEGE FACULTY COMMITTEES

MFA-V currently has the following ongoing Program faculty committees:

- Admissions: Reviews all applications to the program and composes individualized acceptance letters.
- Faculty Committee (See above)
- Guidance Committee: Assigned to each incoming student, Guidance Committees are comprised of two core faculty members who track students semester by semester throughout each students tenure in the program. GC members serve on Review committees.
- Faculty Review Committee (See faculty Review and Retention below)
- Growth Team Committee

Additional Program committee-work is required by faculty every semester. Needs change semester to semester and committee assignment is generally decided at each residency.

FACULTY REVIEW AND RETENTION

Core faculty members are hired on a semester-to-semester basis. Every semester the co-chairs in dialogue with the Program Director recommend faculty for rehire to the Dean. Traditionally, seniority has been a factor in decisions to retain faculty. This will continue to be the case, but a balanced, holistic approach will always be taken. Four factors - teaching effectiveness; professional activities; program needs; and seniority - will be taken into account in making faculty retention decisions.

Semester Evaluation of Teaching

Teaching effectiveness is reviewed primarily through student evaluations of semester work and residency evaluations. In addition, faculty performance during residencies may be evaluated through observation by faculty co-chairs of lectures; critiques; workshops; new, research, and returning groups; and other presentations and interactions with students, program staff, faculty colleagues and residency guests. Co-chairs in consultation with the Program Director provide evaluation of faculty performance through discussion or written documentation after each residency.

In instances where two or more student complaints regarding a faculty member are received in a given semester, or a pattern of complaints, such as one complaint for three semesters consecutively, the Co-chairs in discussion with the Program Director will determine whether the complaints merit an informal review or can be handled via the semester performance review letter. Should the Co-chairs and Program Director decide to explore the legitimacy of these complaints further, they will initiate an informal review. This informal review will begin with the Co-Chairs

contacting the faculty member first to inform them of the students' complaints and gather more information about the complaints. After speaking with the faculty member, the Co-chairs will follow up with the student(s) and with the Program Director in order to then determine whether or not to proceed farther.

It is important to note that there will be no assumption that a complaint has merit. This informal review process is meant to support faculty in instances of an unwarranted complaint. If after review, there appears to be no merit to the complaints, the co-chairs will inform the faculty of this outcome. However, if after review, the Faculty Co-Chairs in consultation with the Program Director determine that there appears to be some legitimacy to the complaints, the following procedure will be initiated:

- The Faculty Co-Chairs will draft a letter to the Faculty member indicating in detail the complaints and requesting a follow-up phone call to discuss methods for improving performance. During this process, the faculty member will be encouraged to put before the Faculty Co-Chairs any documentation to support and/or demonstrate his/her teaching effectiveness.
- This discussion will be followed up by a letter documenting the discussion and any recommendations or agreed upon course of action.
- After the conclusion of the following semester, the Faculty Co-Chairs in consultation with the Program Director will review the relevant student evaluations and make a decision on retention and/or how to support the faculty member in their continued relationship with the program.

Faculty members may also request a review of his/her teaching performance at any time as well as alert the Faculty co-chairs to a problem with a student that may result in a complaint.

Evaluation of Professional Activities

All Core Faculty are expected to demonstrate a thorough knowledge of Contemporary Art and Theory as well as maintain an active involvement with Contemporary Art, demonstrated through their professional practices. Every semester core and visiting faculty should submit an updated Curriculum Vita to the Program Office. If necessary, the Faculty Co-Chairs will consult this document in determining whom to recommend for rehire.

CORE FACULTY ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Purpose:

In addition to the on-going Core Faculty retention evaluations by Co-chairs and Program Director outlined above, a more comprehensive Core faculty review process has been put in place. The faculty reviews will be consulted when determining retention. In addition to providing insight on retention decisions, the purpose of the faculty review is to ensure excellent teaching that is consistent with the program's mission. Therefore, the Committee's review should be directed toward recognizing how the faculty member under review is furthering and enhancing the Program & College's mission while also noting areas for improvement.

Frequency:

Two-three core faculty members will be reviewed by a Faculty Review committee each year. The order of review will be based on seniority except when the core faculty member is on a leave of absence, serving as Co-chair, or serving on the review committee. When a core faculty member is excused from review, they will re-enter the review rotation in the year following their leave or service. Seniority will be determined on the basis of the date the faculty member became a Core faculty member.

Review Committee

The review committee will be composed of two core faculty members appointed by the Co-chairs. Review Committee members will serve for a minimum of one cycle of reviews and a maximum of two cycles of reviews. Co-chairs cannot serve on the Review Committee. At each Winter residency the Co-chairs will charge the Review Committee, re-articulate the criteria for the committee and confirm the rotation schedule with the entire faculty, noting any exceptions as described above. Overall, the fundamental criteria will be active engagement with the program and college and a demonstrated commitment to furthering the Program's mission and goals.

Format:

1. Faculty members should submit an updated CV and a statement of their Service to the College and Program over the past three years. These should be submitted to the Program Office one month prior to their review. Other relevant materials that the Review Committee will consider are Student Evaluations of Faculty from the last three years and Co-chair letters assessing the faculty member's semester work from the last three years, which the office will supply to the Review Committee.** The Review committee will review all relevant materials pertaining to each faculty member's review that address the following areas, keeping in mind the mission and goals of the program:

- Teaching (both visual culture work and residency participation)
- Service (both program & college)
- Professional Development ***

2. After reviewing these materials, the Review Committee will meet to discuss the faculty's evaluation in terms of the aforementioned criteria. At this time the review committee may request more information or a follow up conversation with the faculty member under review and/or request more information from the Co-chairs and/or the Program Director about the faculty member's participation in residency and non-residency program activities. After review and discussion of all materials the committee will complete the MFA-V's Faculty Review Evaluation Form, which will ask the committee make a recommendation regarding rehiring the faculty member under review. The Evaluation form should be submitted electronically to the Co-chairs and the office no later than June 15; committee members should also mail hard copies of the evaluation to the office.

3. Prior to the summer residency the Co-chairs will compose a letter to the faculty member under review summarizing the Review Committee's findings. In response to this letter the faculty member being reviewed may choose to submit a letter contesting or agreeing with the faculty's findings. A copy of the Co-chairs' letter and any response will be filed in the faculty's permanent file in the office and be consulted for determining rehire.

4. The Co-chairs will submit a summary to the Program Director and Dean of the Review Committee's Report and any further response from the faculty member being reviewed. A copy of this summary letter will also be filed in the faculty's permanent file in the office.

***Each faculty member's CV should present a record of their active engagement with their creative practice, teaching, research, and public professional activities.

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