



Vermont
College of
Fine Arts

**MFA in Graphic Design Faculty Handbook
Fall 2015**

MFA IN GRAPHIC DESIGN FACULTY HANDBOOK

Faculty in the Graphic Design program serves in one of these capacities: Faculty, Core Faculty, Faculty Chair, or Co-Chairs.

FACULTY AND CORE FACULTY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Faculty and Core Faculty are issued semester-long contracts. All Faculty are responsible for the following, in no particular order:

- Attending residencies and fully participating in all Faculty meetings and relevant activities
- Presentations of their Graphic Design work or other topics of relevance at residencies as requested by Faculty Chair or Co-Chairs and Program Director
- Attending graduation and presenting graduating Students as needed
- Remaining generally accessible to all Students, other Faculty, and Visitors for informal exchanges throughout the residency
- Arriving on campus one day (or as specified by Faculty Chair, Co-Chairs and Program Director) before the start of residencies for Faculty meetings and orientations.
- Advising and evaluating as many as five Students during the semester on projects in accordance with Program guidelines (see Faculty Advisor Guidelines & Requirements below)
- Collaborating with Faculty Chair or Co-Chairs and Program Director to set strategic direction and mission for the program
- Representing the Program at public conferences and events, as appropriate
- Participating in phone meetings
- Periodically assessing Student work and Program content to ensure stated Program goals are being met
- Core Faculty will serve on Faculty Advisory committee as needed
- Core Faculty will serve on Program and College committees as needed (fair consideration will be given to restrictions of low-residency time commitments and salaries.)

FACULTY CHAIR OR CO-CHAIR ROLES

In addition to general Faculty responsibilities listed above, Chair roles are responsible for the following, in no particular order:

- Working with the Program Director to ensure Program consistently meets stated academic goals by regularly reviewing Program procedures and practices, and by engaging Faculty in discussions regarding proposed changes to stated academic goals, procedures, and practices

- Reviewing new Faculty applications in collaboration with the Program Director
- Advising at least three Students each semester
- Soliciting and rotating Faculty to serve on College and Program committees
- Evaluating and supervising Faculty teaching performances each semester
- Consulting with the Program Director and Faculty to make new Faculty hiring recommendations to the Academic Dean
- Maintaining timely communications with Students, Faculty, Staff, and Guest Designers regarding program and College-level matters
- Consulting with VCFA Administration regarding decisions about publicity, marketing and advertising the program and the College, as well as participating in Enrollment and Marketing meetings for program growth as needed
- Collaborating with Faculty and Program Director during residencies to be the public voice of the program at academic and/or administrative events, including new and returning Student orientations, exhibition openings, graduation ceremonies, and other collective activities and/or celebrations
- Planning, in consultation with the Program Director, residency activities including agendas for Faculty meetings, hiring of Guest Designers, Faculty lectures, workshops, and special residency events
- Collaborating with the Program Director to facilitate all residency activities, including Faculty reviews of Student work at residency
- Orienting new Faculty, Guest Designers, and other Visitors to the residency
- Collaborating with the Program Director to mediate and resolve major Student/Faculty issues through the semester and during the residency
- The Chair or at least one Co-Chair must serve on the Admissions Review Group
- The Chair or at least one Co-Chair must serve on the Academic Council

ADVISING GUIDELINES & REQUIREMENTS

During the semester, each Faculty and Core Faculty member is normally responsible for serving as advisor for five Students' creative work and research. Advising includes all scheduled meetings during the residency to help Students plan and write their Semester Study Plans and to build bibliographies. Faculty conduct monthly exchanges with assigned Students and should keep documentation of these exchanges. Guidelines for monthly exchanges are as follows:

- At least five formal exchanges with each Student indicating thorough and detailed responses to Student work are required. Responses to Student work submissions should be at the agreed upon time, no longer than a week after the submission
- Suggestions should be made for further readings, revisions, and other appropriate directions for completing the Semester Study Plan

- Advisors and Students should agree upon dates of exchanges in Semester Study Plans, as well as agree upon methods of exchanges, i.e., Skype, email, phone
- Advisors should alert the Program Director of any academic concerns regarding Students as early in the semester as possible to allow time for a midterm warning or other intervention as needed
- Advisors will also serve as Lookers for assigned Thesis Candidates and will submit their recommendations on said Thesis work to the Advisor at the time of the midterm exchange

In addition to these exchanges, Faculty are required to submit a timely mid-semester evaluation of each Student that should include a statement about whether the Student is progressing satisfactorily, or is in danger of not receiving credit for the semester. Faculty also submit a timely and detailed final written evaluation of each of their Student's semester progress, 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 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 conducted by each Faculty member.

FACULTY HIRING PROCESSES

Hiring Core Faculty

Core Faculty can expect to be rehired each semester, except in the case of enrollment fluctuations and/or teaching evaluation issues. They are entitled to take a leave of absence for not more than two semesters within a three-year time frame, except under extenuating circumstances, which will be reviewed and confirmed by the Program Director in consultation with the Faculty Chair or Co-Chairs. When possible, Core Faculty should arrange planned leaves with Faculty Chair or Co-Chairs and Program Director well in advance of each residency.

Hiring New Faculty

Eligibility for new Faculty hire requires review and approval of application materials by the Faculty Chair or Co-Chairs and the Program Director. Application materials will also be vetted by the Faculty Advisory Committee in the Program. Faculty are hired when a need arises due to increased enrollment, genre or skill enhancement of Faculty practices within the field of Design, or when a Faculty member steps down, leaving a vacancy. In such circumstances, all Faculty will be asked to recommend candidates. When possible, previous

Guest Designers who have shown promise and compatibility will be reviewed as potential new Faculty. Recommendations for hiring new Faculty are made by the Faculty Chair or 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
- Demonstrated suitability for interdisciplinary low-residency pedagogy and compatibility with the program's collaborative ethos
- Gender, ethnic, aesthetic, geographic, and/or 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 Guest Designers

The Graphic Design program has made a commitment to bring new ideas, talent, and diversity into the program by leaving room each residency to hire Guest Designers. Individuals serving in this capacity rotate in and out depending upon their own schedules and the needs of the program. Someone might be a Guest Designer for a single residency, or be asked to participate in ongoing residencies as needed and available. Guest Designers may conduct Lectures, Workshops, Roundtables, and Critiques. However, continued participation in the program is contingent upon successful evaluations and a thorough Faculty Hiring process as outlined above. The Faculty Chair or Co-Chairs regularly review unsolicited applications for Faculty positions in the MFA-GD program. All eligible candidates will be considered for Guest Designer positions as well. Suggestions for Guest Designers are also considered from current and former Faculty, Program Director, Alumni/ae and enrolled Students, former Guest Designers, and former unsolicited applications. Final selections are made by Faculty Chair or Co-Chairs and the Program Director based on residency, budget considerations, and strategic Faculty needs, in consultation with the Faculty Advisory Committee. In making Guest Designer hiring decisions, The Faculty Chair or Co-Chairs should regularly review the current make-up of the Faculty to determine what particular skills or areas of professional expertise or practice will best complement the Faculty during a given residency period.

APPOINTMENT OF FACULTY CHAIR OR CO-CHAIRS

Faculty Chairs or Co-Chairs are appointed for two-year terms. Faculty Chairs or Co-Chairs may not immediately succeed themselves except in rare circumstances, which would be approved by the Academic Dean. Core Faculty and the Program Director vote on the nominations to elect a new Faculty Chair or Co-Chairs. In the case of Co-Chairs, appointments are, ideally, staggered in such a way that a newly elected Co-chair will always serve alongside an experienced

Co-Chair. A Core Faculty member can nominate himself or herself or another Core Faculty member to run as the Chair or Co-Chair.

FACULTY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Core Faculty will elect representatives to serve on the Faculty Advisory Committee for three semester terms.

1. Purpose: To represent the interests of the Faculty to the Chair or Co-Chairs, the Program Director, and the College; to facilitate communication between the Faculty and the College; to formulate, in conjunction with the Co-Chairs and Program Director, academic and policy proposals for discussion and come to a consensus or vote on a recommendation by the Faculty; to participate, in conjunction with the Faculty Chair or Co-Chairs and Program Director, in any decision or recommendation, as appropriate, involving curriculum, Program policy, hiring, firing, censure, admission, denial of academic credit, suspension, probation, expulsion, petition, appeal or any other matter with which the committee might be charged.

2. Areas of Responsibility: The Faculty Advisory Committee is empowered to come to a consensus or vote on a recommendation on matters relating to the following subjects, as well as on other matters relating to academic and policy decisions that may come under its scrutiny:

- Admissions
- Academic standards and requirements
- The future of the program
- The hiring, firing, and censuring of Faculty
- Student affairs
- Selection of Guest Designers
- Selection of fellowships and other program specific awards to Students
- Reviewing and recommending petitions for acceleration and transfer credit as needed
- Reviewing and recommending extensions, leaves of absence, Faculty and Student petitions as needed
- Any other academic issues that affect the curriculum and residency plans for the degree

3. Membership: Faculty must have attained Core Faculty status to be eligible to serve on the Faculty Advisory Committee. Committee Members may not immediately succeed themselves except in rare circumstances, which would be approved by the Academic Dean. Elections will take place as needed to replace members who rotate off the committee, go on leave, or leave the program. Faculty Advisory Committee members taking a leave of absence may choose to remain on the Committee during their leave time. The Chair or at least one Co-Chair must also be a member of FAC, and FAC will consist of at least two

members who are not the Chair or Co-Chairs. The Program Director is also a member of FAC.

4. Procedures: The Faculty Advisory Committee will meet each semester at midterm and as needed to discuss with the Faculty Chair or Co-Chairs and Program Director those concerns that have been determined to be the immediate priorities of the program. These will then form part of the agenda for succeeding Faculty meetings and Faculty Advisory Committee meetings. To further efforts of the Faculty Advisory Committee to communicate and cooperate with the Administration of the College, as well as to become better informed about the larger context in which the Program operates, a meeting of the Faculty Advisory Committee with the Academic Dean may be scheduled, as needed, during residencies.

FULL FACULTY MEETINGS

All program Faculty, Faculty Chair or Co-Chairs, and Program Director meet as needed during each residency. During residencies, they will 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 of Student work
- Evaluate Student progress, advancement, credit, and academic problems
- Review FAC reports
- Assess Program status, discuss proposals for new Program ideas and future initiatives
- Share ideas about enrollment, recruitment, admissions, and growth as needed
- Discuss Program and College-wide academic, Faculty, governance and policy issues

PROGRAM AND COLLEGE FACULTY GROUPS/COMMITTEES

MFA-GD currently has the following ongoing Program faculty groups and committees:

- Admissions: reviews all applications to the Program and makes recommendations of acceptance
- Faculty Advisory Committee: details above
- Growth Team: participates in growth team meetings with Faculty Chair or Co-Chairs, Program Director, and other key Administrative Staff at the College, strategizes and recommends initiatives for enrollment and visibility

Core Faculty are required to participate in some form of Faculty group/committee work each semester. Needs change each semester and group/committee assignments are generally decided at each residency.

FACULTY REVIEW AND RETENTION

Faculty and Core Faculty members are hired on semester contracts. Each semester, the Faculty Chair or Co-Chairs and the Program Director recommend Faculty for rehire to the Academic Dean. Seniority will be an important factor in decisions to retain Faculty, but a balanced, holistic approach to Faculty hiring will always be taken into account. Four factors - teaching effectiveness; professional activities; program needs; and seniority - will be evaluated when making Faculty retention decisions.

NEW FACULTY REVIEW PROCESS

For new Faculty members, the Faculty Chair and Program Director will examine Student evaluations at the end of the first teaching semester along with feedback from their residency workshop, lecture, and/or critiques to determine whether they should be invited back to teach for a second semester based on enrollment and specific program needs. If the Faculty Chair and the Program Director do not agree, the Faculty Advisory Committee will be consulted to review the Faculty member's evaluations and other teaching materials. A recommendation will be sent to the Academic Dean for a final decision. Faculty members will be reviewed in this manner each teaching semester until or unless they become Core Faculty.

CORE FACULTY DEFINITION AND REVIEW PROCESS

Faculty members are eligible to join the Core Faculty of the MFA in Graphic Design Program after teaching as Faculty for three consecutive semesters. A Faculty member may petition to waive the requirement that these semesters be consecutive. Core Faculty members have the expectation but not a guarantee of ongoing employment with the College. Core Faculty status gives Faculty seniority and brings with it the expectation of Faculty group/committee work. It allows a Faculty member potential entry into the Faculty Advisory Committee, the Admissions Review Group, the Growth Team, and to run for the Faculty Chair or Co-Chair position. Core Faculty status also gives Faculty the right to vote in program elections.

A Faculty member who wishes to be considered for Core Faculty status should petition the Program Director and Faculty Chair, and they will notify Faculty Advisory Committee for a full Core Faculty review. If a Faculty member has not petitioned for Core Faculty status after having taught for five semesters, the Faculty Advisory Committee will review the individual for Core Faculty status at that time unless the Faculty member explicitly does not wish to be Core Faculty for some reason.

The Faculty Advisory Committee review for Core Faculty status will consist of the following:

- Evaluation of the Faculty member's teaching in the VCFA program to date, including advising, workshops, lectures, and critiques
- General interaction with Students and Faculty during residencies, as well as semester exchanges with advisees
- Evaluation from the Program Director and from the Faculty as a whole.
- The Faculty member being evaluated may also submit a letter and other supporting materials for the Program Director, Faculty Chair, and Faculty Advisory Committee to take into consideration

Upon completing the review, the Faculty Advisory Committee will come to a consensus or vote on the individual's entry to the Core Faculty. The Faculty member will be invited to return only if they are approved for Core Faculty and based on enrollment and specific program needs. This recommendation for Core Faculty status will be forwarded to the Academic Dean for final approval. In some cases, however, the Faculty Chair and Faculty Advisory Committee may require the Faculty member to continue teaching for an additional semester to address any concerns with progress toward the criteria for acceptance into the Core Faculty. It should be noted that even when a Faculty member is accepted into the Core Faculty, a semester contract is dependent on enrollment and/or Program needs.

The Faculty Chair, Program Director, and Faculty Advisory Committee will evaluate the performance of Core Faculty in order of seniority, with the most senior Faculty evaluated first and so on, in three-year cycles. The Faculty Chair and the Faculty Advisory Committee will examine the Student evaluations for each Faculty member's semester work, workshops, lectures, and residency contributions for the previous three years. In addition, they will request evaluations from the Program Director and from the Faculty as a whole. They will also examine the Faculty member's Curriculum Vitae in order to evaluate professional activity over the previous seven years. Each Faculty member being evaluated may also submit a letter or any other supporting materials to the Faculty Chair and the Faculty Advisory Committee for consideration. After examining this information and completing the VCFA Core Faculty Review, the Faculty Chair, Program Director, and the Faculty Advisory Committee will attempt to reach a consensus. In some cases, the Faculty Chair, Program Director, and Faculty Advisory Committee may decide to request that the Faculty member to take a leave to address concerns with progress toward the criteria for retention as a member of the Core Faculty. In all cases, the Faculty Chair and Program Director will discuss outcomes of the evaluation process with the Faculty member, and the Faculty member will have the opportunity to respond to this feedback.

a. Determination of Seniority:

When considering seniority, the College will take into account the number of semesters a Faculty member has taught in the program, as well as how recently and consistently they have taught.

b. Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness:

Teaching effectiveness will be determined primarily by examining Student evaluations of semester work, residency workshops, and lectures. Copies of semester advisee evaluations will be provided to every Faculty member at the conclusion of each semester. Copies of Student residency evaluations will also be provided to Faculty each semester. In addition, performance during residencies may be evaluated through observation of lectures, workshops, critiques, and other presentations and interactions with Students. In measuring a Faculty member's teaching effectiveness, the College will also take into consideration the relative ease or difficulty of finding a sufficient number of advisees who want to work with them, as evidenced by continuing patterns of high or low numbers of Students who list them on their Advisor Selection forms. Finally, the College will also take into consideration evaluations by the Faculty member's peers as evidenced in the Faculty Residency Survey results. The Faculty Residency Surveys are confidential, but if a problem is expressed and identified in a Faculty Residency Survey by a peer, the Program Director and the Faculty Chair will jointly provide an anonymous written synopsis of the results and the Faculty member has the option to respond in writing for any official record or file.

It is recommended that Faculty retain all correspondence with their Students for a period of three semesters. This includes recording Skype/Hangouts sessions and/or making notes of what has been discussed in monthly check-ins. The Program Office will retain copies of Student evaluations of semester work and residency evaluations for a period of five years.

In instances where a Faculty member receives two or more Student complaints in a given semester's final evaluations, or at least one Student complaint in end-of-semester evaluations for three semesters consecutively, or a negative evaluation from a Faculty peer, or written complaints from two or more Students, a review will be conducted by the Faculty Chair and Program Director to investigate the legitimacy of the complaints. The Student and Faculty names will be redacted before the review. It is important to note that there will be no assumption that a complaint has merit. A review process is also a means of supporting Faculty in instances of an unwarranted complaint. If there appears to be legitimacy to the complaints, the Faculty Chair and Program Director will report to the Faculty Advisory Committee who will uphold the following procedure:

The Faculty Chair will draft a letter to the Faculty member indicating in detail the complaints and suggest methods for improving teaching performance. Upon

receipt of the letter, the Faculty member will be encouraged to present evidence of teaching effectiveness to the Faculty Chair, Program Director, and the Faculty Advisory Committee. After the conclusion of the following semester, the Faculty Chair, Program Director, and the Faculty Advisory Committee will review the relevant Student and/or Faculty evaluations and make a recommendation on retention.

In instances where legitimacy of a complaint is not found, a letter of support, if necessary, will be written in response to the complaint and copies will be given to the complainant and another will be placed in the Faculty member's file. In addition, a Faculty member also may request a review of his or her teaching performance at any time.

b. Evaluation of Professional Practice:

At the time of review, Faculty members will submit an updated CV containing evidence of professional growth in the field of Graphic Design and/or Graphic Design Education. The following list provides examples, in no particular order, of areas of professional growth that could be considered:

- Design commissions
- Design work completed within a freelance or studio design practice
- Self-initiated or speculative design work
- Design scholarship
- Publication
- Curation
- Prizes and awards
- Teaching accolades
- Conference participation and presentations
- Promotions
- Academic service to VCFA
- Academic service to other institutions of Art and Design
- Design related Entrepreneurial endeavors
- Impact generated by professional practice

The Faculty Chair and Program Director will review updated CV's for evidence of professional growth. In the case of a Faculty member falling below the standards of professional growth, the Faculty Chair and Program Director will report to the Faculty Advisory Committee, who will uphold the following procedure:

That the Faculty Chair and Program Director will first inform the Faculty member that it appears they are falling below the standards set by the Faculty for itself and encourage the Faculty member to seek more professional exposure. The Faculty Chair and Program Director should, in this conversation, discuss professional development plans, ongoing projects and plans for other kinds of professional activities in the near future.

At the end of the second semester following this initial conversation, the Faculty Chair, Program Director, and the Faculty Advisory Committee will review the Faculty member's progress and make a recommendation on retention to the Academic Dean.

It is important to note that while a Faculty member's practice as a Graphic Designer is a major reason students are drawn to the program, the Faculty member's practice as an educator is of even greater importance at VCFA. While a wait-and-see attitude might be taken in cases of publication and other professional activities, the same will not be the case with identified teaching problems.