



**Commission on  
Higher Education**

CHE

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Rayburn Barton  
Executive Director

March 7, 2002

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Mr. Dalton B. Floyd, Jr., Chairman, and Members, Commission on Higher Education

**From:** Ms. Dianne Chinnes, Chairman, Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing *D. Chinnes*

**Consideration of Follow-up Report to Consultants' Evaluations of Existing  
Programs: Performing and Visual Arts Programs, FY 1997:  
Clemson University**

**Background**

At its meeting on April 20, 1998, the Committee on Academic Affairs approved the CHE Consultants' Evaluation of Existing Programs in Visual and Performing Arts which was submitted to the Commission in November 1997. The report represented the findings of a team of four external consultants who reviewed during FY 1995 the existing programs at seven institutions.

The Commission's purposes in conducting these evaluations are:

- 1) to ensure that postsecondary opportunities of high quality are available to State residents and that the State's resources are used wisely in promotion of that end;
- 2) to improve educational effectiveness and strategic planning at the State level;
- 3) to guide the Commission and the public institutions in making decisions to continue or recommend discontinuation of existing program and in considering requests for new programs; and
- 4) to assist the Commission and the public institutions in strengthening programs to ensure that public higher education in South Carolina remains vigorous, dynamic, and capable of renewal.

This report provides a summary of actions taken by Clemson University with respect to the programs that were cited in the evaluation report as needing improvement and were granted Provisional rather than Full Approval. Provisional approval for

Clemson University's Bachelor of Fine Arts in Fine Arts and Master of Fine Arts in Visual Arts programs was granted by the Commission on May 7, 1998.

## **Clemson University's Progress Report Relating to CHE Recommendations**

### *B.F.A. in Fine Arts*

The Commission has been made aware by the University of its endeavors to attain accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD). The NASAD Commission on Accreditation has twice reviewed Clemson's application (March 2000 and March 2001) and has twice deferred judgment until further information can be presented to the Commission. In its letter of May 8, 2001, the NASAD Commission commended Clemson "for the substantive progress made in bringing its programs into compliance with NASAD standards."

The CHE consultants recommended the following changes to the bachelor's program:

- Expand the mission of service to the entire university community from its more focused service to Architecture;
- Develop a university art gallery/museum;
- Expand studio space and equipment although these were deemed "adequate";
- Update outdated equipment, particularly in computers and ceramics;
- Address health and safety issues regarding studio space in particular for ventilation;
- Add faculty lines to broaden offerings in graphic design and art history;
- Allow non-art majors access to foundation studio courses and art history courses.

The NASAD Accreditation Commission correspondence with Clemson University echoes many of the same issues raised by the CHE consultants' report. In NASAD Commission's May 8, 2001, letter, there are four main areas of concerns:

- The Commission requests additional information concerning progress in strengthening the foundation courses for art majors. They requested additional evidence that the University was implementing a revised foundation curriculum and that all faculty taught in the foundation program;
- There was a request for the status of the faculty search to expand support in the foundation program;
- The Commission requested evidence that the University had completed all work to address health and safety issues in studio space used for ceramics, computer labs, painting, photography, printmaking and sculpture;
- A request for evidence that the University has the needed financial support to maintain tools and equipment. There were questions about the adequacy of the budget as it was dependent upon a variety of sources.

- The Commission requested a copy of the Department of Arts completed strategic plan.

The Department of Art is in the process of addressing its role on campus as it has developed a new mission statement and is completing a new strategic plan. Clemson has indicated that it will not have the Department of Art share courses with Architecture. In terms of a new art gallery/museum, the Friends of the Lee Gallery has been established and is working with the College of Architecture, Art, and Humanities to raise private funds for a new gallery and the department has expanded its exhibition programs.

Studio space was expanded by 5,000 square feet but renovations for health and safety issues have not been completed. The College will expand into Lowry Hall in 2005-06 once the new Textile/Civil Engineering Building is completed. However, there continues to be a shortage of space for the program, particularly with the increase in undergraduate enrollment in the program. In addition, the health and safety issues continue to be an area of great concern.

The Department of Art presented a report to the University's administration regarding the updating of equipment. The University indicated in its report to the Commission that due to a lack of funds it would not be possible to replace equipment at the rate requested by the department. The NASAD Commission letter also indicates that there is concern about the funding sources for replacement and repair of equipment.

The NASAD Commission letter of May 8, 2001, further indicates that there are remaining concerns about the foundations curriculum and faculty to support the program. In addition, it appears from this correspondence that the department is still in the process of making changes to the assessment process of its majors.

#### *M.F.A. in Visual Arts*

As with the B.F.A. in Fine Arts, many of the issues raised by the CHE consultants are also raised by the NASAD Commission. The main areas of concern noted in the CHE consultants' report were as follows:

- The department of art needs to encourage greater experimentation by its graduate students and the curriculum needs more theory and criticism;
- The department needs to expand its visiting artists program to include artists outside the region;
- The library holdings needs expansion to promote critical thinking;
- Space is not adequate for graduate students and there is a particular need for larger graduate studios.

Although the May 26, 2000, report from the NASAD Commission listed five areas of concern regarding the M.F.A. program, the May 2001 report only cites two areas needing additional information:

- The department needs to provide evidence that all students meet the NASAD standard of a minimum of 15 percent of the total credit for the practice-oriented degree in academic studies concerned with visual media;
- The department was urged to examine the proposed title change for the program so that it accurately communicates what the specific content and purpose of the program is.

The University's report to the Commission indicated that graduate students are now provided with several courses that deal with both theory and practice in the visual arts and that there is more ongoing assessment of student progress. The report also noted that the department had expanded its visiting artist program to include national and international scholars, although no quantitative data were provided.

The University disputed the CHE consultants' report regarding library holdings by citing that the collection "appears to meet the minimum operational norms for accreditation by the NASAD." In terms of space, 1,000 square feet has been added in Martin Hall for graduate students in FY 2000 and an additional 5,000 square feet for graduate studios in spring 2001.

It appears from the Clemson University report and the two NASAD Accreditation reports that the Department of Art has made progress in addressing some of the concerns raised for the B.F.A. Fine Arts program. However, the most recent NASAD report indicates that there are still five areas of concern that focus on curriculum, financial support, and health and safety issues. With these issues still outstanding, particularly the health and safety concerns, and the program has not yet earned accreditation it does not appear to have resolved the issues raised in the Commission's consultants' report. The M.F.A., while still not accredited by NASAD, appears to have made greater progress in resolving the issues of the Commission's consultants' report. Compared to the NASAD's letter of May 26, 2000, which listed many of the same recommendations as the Commission's report, the May 8, 2001, letter only lists two areas of concern that deal with course taking in visual media and the name of the program. From this report, it appears that the prior issues in the graduate program have been addressed.

## **Recommendation**

The Committee recommends that the Commission approve the following designations for the art programs at Clemson University:

B.F.A. Fine Arts, Clemson University	Provisional Approval Continued
M.F.A. Visual Art, Clemson University	Full Approval

As program enhancements are made, follow-up reports should be submitted to staff for re-evaluation and program approval status will be reconsidered in light of additional progress made.