



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
Α.ΔΙ.Π.
ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ & ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ
ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC
H.Q.A.
HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE
AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

DEPARTMENT:
DEPARTMENT OF AUDIO AND VISUAL ARTS

UNIVERSITY:
THE IONIAN UNIVERSITY



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External Evaluation Committee

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the **Department of Audio and Visual Arts** of **The Ionian University** consisted of the following four (4) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQA in accordance with Law 3374/2005 :

1. Professor Emeritus, Rick M. Newton (Coordinator)
Kent State University, Kent, Ohio, USA

2. Professor Diane Katsiaficas
University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota USA

3. Professor Dimitrios Kozaris
Accademia di Belle Arti di Milano, Brera, Italy

4. Professor Panayiotis Zaphiris
Cyprus University of Technology, Cyprus

N.B. The structure of the “Template” proposed for the External Evaluation Report mirrors the requirements of Law 3374/2005 and corresponds overall to the structure of the Internal Evaluation Report submitted by the Department.

The length of text in each box is free. Questions included in each box are not exclusive nor should they always be answered separately; they are meant to provide a general outline of matters that should be addressed by the Committee when formulating its comments.

Introduction

I. The External Evaluation Procedure

The External Evaluation Committee (henceforth: Committee) visited the Department of Audio and Visual Arts (henceforth: Department) on the campus of the Ionian University from 5 to 8 February 2014. To prepare for the visit, the Committee members had individually read and studied the Internal Evaluation Report which the Department had earlier submitted to ADIP/HQA, as well as other materials which had been electronically submitted. The Committee also had access to links from the University and Departmental website. During the on-site visit, furthermore, the Department Head and the Head of the Internal Evaluation Committee provided an updated copy with the most recent version (covering 2004-2013) of the Internal Evaluation Report and other materials (printouts and electronic versions of power-point presentations prepared by faculty, the departmental response to requests by ADIP for points of clarification arising from the Internal Evaluation Report, a list of externally funded research projects, DVDs with student work, copies of all faculty CVs and all course descriptions). In addition, the Committee reviewed samples of student written work (undergraduate theses and projects, and coursework) which were available at the meeting room and laboratories. The Committee also reviewed student creative activity which was on display and in-progress in various studios and laboratories.

On the evening of 5 February, the Committee members were met at the port of Kerkyra by the department head (Marianna Strapatsaki) and faculty members from the Internal Evaluation Committee (Nikos Kanellopoulos and Andreas Floros) and conveyed to their hotel. They were then welcomed at a dinner in a local restaurant.

On 6 February, the Committee visited the classroom and laboratory building to meet with 13 of the 14 full-time members of the faculty (Dalila Honorato was attending a conference in Portugal) and attend various presentations.

The Department Head introduced the faculty members to the Committee, and the Committee explained the rationale for the on-site visit. Faculty power-point presentations ensued, focusing on (1) the history and structure of the Department, (2) curriculum, administration and management of the Department (3) research and

creative activity, and (4) outreach activities, colloquia, conferences, and exhibits and the annual festival.

The Dean of the newly formed School of Music and Audiovisual Arts (Professor Charalambos Xanthoudakis) provided a history of the Ionian University and the School and addressed the serious impact which the prolonged economic crisis was having on the entire university.

The Committee then met with the faculty in two separate discussion sessions, one with tenured faculty (7 present) and the other with pre-tenure faculty (6 present).

On 7 February, the Committee proceeded to the Department's administrative offices to meet with the newly-appointed secretary and the two assistant secretaries. Then the Committee visited several laboratories and studios (Video, Sound, Multimedia, Computer, Drawing, Photography), during which time they had the opportunity to meet with undergraduate students who presented and discussed their work with the Committee.

The Committee then convened with ten undergraduate students, followed by a meeting with eight doctoral candidates. Some of the doctoral candidates presented samples of their work in progress.

After that, the Committee walked to the university's central offices in the town, to tour lecture halls and classrooms and also to visit the central library. Concluding the tour, the Committee visited the building that houses the faculty offices to meet with the Department Head and the members of the Internal Evaluation Committee to share their general impressions.

On 8 February, the Committee met to discuss and compose the External Evaluation Report. A cordial farewell dinner was hosted by the Rector of the University (who was unable to attend for reasons of health), attended by the Department Head and Internal Evaluation Committee members. Throughout these activities, the Committee was courteously transported by the University's driver, Frederikos.

II. The Internal Evaluation Procedure

The materials and documents which had been submitted in advance of the visit were extremely informative, exceptionally well organized and thorough. Honoring the spirit of the ADIP directives, the documents clearly articulated the strong points, weak points and opportunity for development of strong points and potential dangers emanating from areas of concern. The faculty CVs were presented in a consistent,

detailed and professional format that allows for an objective and fair evaluation. Likewise, the course descriptions were presented in a format indicating opportunities for self-reflection and improvements. The Department has clearly developed an internal and an ongoing evaluation and documentation process that serves as an excellent model for other departments to emulate.

The Committee believes that the on-site visit was the most useful, indeed essential, source of information. In particular, the person-to-person exchanges that took place in formal meetings and informal conversations established a healthy and open atmosphere for exchange of ideas and provided the most reliable foundation for a fair and accurate evaluation. The personal contact and in-depth information that arose from the on-site visit was especially beneficial in enabling the Committee to evaluate and assess departmental programs and resources as presented on the website and in the documents provided.

The Committee also notes, however, that the time allotted by the schedule which had been mandated by ADIP imposed an undue burden and stress on both the Committee and the Department, potentially resulting in an evaluation that may not do full justice to this impressive Department. The two full days were overscheduled and did not allow the Committee time to reflect and discuss their observations among themselves. If the Committee had been permitted to devote the amount of time normally allotted for such reviews (i.e., three full visiting days that include time to reflect and share impressions, followed by two days *in situ* to compose the External Evaluation Report), this evaluation may have been significantly stronger and more precise.

A. Curriculum

To be filled separately for each undergraduate, graduate and doctoral programme.

APPROACH

“Over the last decade, the rapid technological developments in the field of audiovisual media, combined with pursuits of the modern art scene, have created a new field of expression and creation. In this framework, systematic education and training of professionals and artists in the field of Audiovisual Arts is essential. The theoretical and practical knowledge, however, required for the development of suitably trained people, however is provided in an inadequate way by the Greek educational institutions that choose not to cooperate with each other in order to solve this educational gap. The Department of Audiovisual Arts was founded in 2004 under the EPEAEK programme, in order to cover this lack for the first time in our country. It is a hybrid Department where emphasis is put on the convergence of art

and technology in research and teaching. The result of this interaction is in line with current international research data of digital culture.”
<http://avarts.ionio.gr/en/department/aim>

The Department of Audio and Visual Arts in the Ionian University has created itself in an impressive and strategic manner. The objective was to develop a program new to Greece examining “ the convergence of art and technology in research and teaching”. What has resulted is distinctive and unique. The program is forging innovative paths for both undergraduates and PhD students. The past five years have been dedicated to bringing the program in line with ever-evolving contemporary practices in the arts and technologies. The Department views its challenge as being able to move well into the future.

This is a pioneering program, staffed by creative and intellectual artists, technologists, and entrepreneurs. They have realized their plan in a short time, in 10 years growing from an initial faculty of 4-5 to 14.

The curriculum is designed along two horizontal axes: theory and technology. What is common to both horizontal axes is the study of art. Within the areas of art, students can focus on sound, visual or sound+visual explorations. Theroretical and art historical courses provide a broad base upon which students can ground their creative activity and technological explorations.

Great effort has been made to develop (1) a European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), and (2) a meticulously detailed course guide that includes lengthy course descriptions/ syllabi. All of this information is available on-line. This online course scheduling system functions as an advising tool, guiding students to the next course in sequence, notifying them of prerequisites, etc.

In 2013, the undergraduate program admitted 72 students for a total of 750 (faculty student ration 1:53) undergraduate students of which 400 are active. The program is intended to be completed in five years, although students may and often do take more time to complete their degrees.

There are presently 14 candidates in the PhD program. In the next year, the first two PhD students are expected to complete their degree studies and dissertations. In addition to their own studies, graduate students assist in teaching undergraduate classes.

The Department is dedicated to students who want to come here as their first choice. Students come from all over Greece. There is a small number of international students in the undergraduate program.

The quality of student work, especially at the PhD level, is excellent. Students work with faculty mentors under close supervision and guidance. Undergraduate work is of a very high quality, showing that students are being well trained in producing theses, some of which are of publishable quality.

Undergraduate students choosing to do an artistic senior thesis/project submit a written text and an artistic component. Examiners come from the three disciplinary areas: theoretical, technological and artistic. For the PhD dissertation, candidates have the option of adding an external reviewer from another university.

During 3 months in summer, students can participate in a practicum that is funded by the EU. This affords students the invaluable opportunity of professionally engaging in their field of interest. It also can be an opening to future employment. The practicum is assigned ECTS credit but is not graded. Because of the small number of students in the program, all students have the opportunity for a practicum.

Students have the option of participating in the ERASMUS program. The Committee was not informed as to how many of its undergraduate students take advantage of the ERASMUS option. The Committee was informed that a «good number» from other European Countries come to the Department. These students study in the areas of sound and visual arts. Language is the main factor they do not pursue theoretical courses.

The Department routinely revises its curriculum and is very open to suggestions.

IMPLEMENTATION

Because the study of Audio and Visual Arts does not for the most part have a presence within the Greek secondary school system, entering undergraduates lack background for this program.

Entering students would benefit from an introductory survey course, perhaps team-taught by several faculty members who represent the visual arts, sound, theory and technology disciplines. Such a course might better orient students to common theoretical perspectives, relevant vocabularies, design principles, the distinctions of creative activity within the areas, what constitutes ‘creative research’, and what are the range of studies and career options provided by each discipline. This survey would assist students in learning the special terminology of each field so that they could better comprehend the content and be able to think and write within the distinct “language” of audio and visual arts. This survey would also introduce students to all the faculty and subfields. The result may manifest itself in student senior theses that

are both reflective in content and audience-engaging in the presentation of works presenting sound and image, and kinesis.

Because the faculty are proactively open to expanding new ideas and generating new synergies, Departmental attention might be paid to establishing a forum for the informal discussion of topics that bridge current specialists working within extremely specialized sub-disciplines. Such informal conversations (such as “brown bag chats” at lunchtime once a month) could benefit both undergraduate and graduate students.

The Committee expresses a specific concern over the 13-week “Introduction to Drawing” course. It needs to be more ambitious in its scope. In the first semester, it is strongly suggested that this course serve as an introduction to the foundation elements of drawing:

1. Line (contour and gestural)
2. Value (how light and shadow influence subject)
3. Texture (simulated and actual surface treatments)
4. Shape (two and three dimensional illusionistic space)
5. Space (compositional studies)
6. The relationship between composition and meaning

Drawing introduces students to the ideas, methods, and materials essential for successful progress in the visual arts. This course therefore should provide an introduction to:

1. Conceptualization, development, and realization of visual ideas
2. Drawing practice within contemporary, historical, and cross-cultural traditions
3. The creative process through hands-on investigation
4. Observational investigation of the immediate environment
5. Methods for abstract and non-objective exploration
6. Methods for effective and constructive evaluation of visual efforts

Students must develop proficiency in expression of their ideas and concepts and in their critical abilities at an early stage in the program. The acquisition of such proficiency in drawing was not evident in the student work that was presented.

Introductory required courses are offered during the first year, but students lack direction in selecting a concentration for future courses. The curriculum, while very strong with specialized points of concentration, would benefit greatly from an early thorough review from a student-centered perspective. In particular, the Committee suggests that consideration be given to sequencing more courses on the intermediate

level, enabling students to transition successfully from beginning to specialized courses and helping them to make a better-informed selection of primary focus. In addition, the Committee recommends that the upper level curriculum requirements be more flexible so that students can address their own interests.

A review and revision of the wide range of electives currently available would be of service to the students. Such a review might also examine the effect of ECTS on student course selection. It is recommended that the faculty as a whole review the number of ECTS assigned to each course with respect to updated course content, demands of the course, and the number of in class/out of class work hours. Because the Departmental syllabi indicate when the content of a course was last updated, mechanisms are already in place for such a review. The content of specific courses, as well as their tighter sequencing, might generate deeper and wider knowledge among the students without the need for increasing the number of requirements or credit hours. There may be many latent “cross-fertilizations” among these courses that can be brought to light and expanded.

Anticipating the imminent retirement of a leading senior member of the visual arts faculty, the Committee considers it imperative that the Department immediately strategize hiring strong visual arts faculty so that this core facet of the curriculum does not suffer.

The Committee also notes that the curriculum lacks a formal professional development course (that could include: artistic statements, curriculum vitae, project descriptions, budget proposals, presentation skills, portfolio development etc.). Such a course would prepare students to transition after graduation to professional positions and practice both outside of the University and furthering their studies at the post-graduate level.

Contemporary practice in Audio and Visual education engages practitioners with a healthy dialogue between digital and analog output in the visual arts, in which one approach inspires the other and vice versa. This dialogue is not present in the curriculum of this Department. The Committee encourages the incorporation of analog output process from digitally printing onto a variety of surfaces (rag paper, poly films, vinyl, transparent plastics, canvas, fabric), to working with a variety of traditional drawing media on digital output. If finances allow, the purchase of a vinyl cutter and small laser cutters would prove a dynamic addition. This would expand both the content and context of the work in VIS333 “Digital Image Process and Synthesis”.

RESULTS

- How well is the implementation achieving the Department's predefined goals and objectives?
- If not, why is it so? How is this problem dealt with?
- Does the Department understand why and how it achieved or failed to achieve these results?

The online course scheduling system functions as an advising tool, guiding students to the next course in sequence, notifying them of prerequisites, etc. Designing their program with undergraduate and PhD tracks (without a transitional Masters degree to bridge them), the Department is able to deliver all programs effectively. As additional resources become available over time, the Department will be prepared to complete its degree offerings on the Masters level.

Also see above

IMPROVEMENT

- Does the Department know how the Curriculum should be improved?
- Which improvements does the Department plan to introduce?

See above

B. Teaching

APPROACH:

The knowledge, experience, and skills of the faculty are manifold. All faculty are either technologists, theorists or artists in media with experience and training that covers the teaching of a wide range of courses. Thus the program provided by the Department is particularly multifaceted and is a reflection of the diversity of the faculty in multimedia. Generally, each faculty member teaches a block of 5-8 courses that is related to their particular expertise.

This practice provides basic knowledge in core courses, but it does not progressively lead to more advanced levels. There is room for further curriculum development and acquisition of faculty with the goal of enriching intermediate level courses especially in the creative arts. Specifically, students and faculty recognize the need for the teaching of narrative cinematography.

Collaboration between students and faculty takes place in both theoretical and laboratory courses. Teaching materials include published texts, online software tutorials, and extensive use of e-class and the web. The students who attend class on

a regular basis participate actively in these courses and in laboratory sessions (Caution here should be noted that the first-hand experiencing of projects is critical. Looking at work on the web is not enough). Every year the best projects produced in the audio and visual courses are exhibited at the department Festival. This practice provides the first opportunity for some students to publicly showcase their work.

After 10 years, many of the basic needs of the program remain unmet. This includes inadequate space, lack of equipment, and shortage of full time faculty. The accumulation of these problems impedes the effective and efficient teaching of the students.

The use of new technologies in teaching occurs on a daily basis in all courses and workshops. Although the faculty are clearly knowledgeable in the uses of technology in teaching, the lack of updated software, access to site licenses, insufficient HD equipment, etc. impedes effective teaching.

IMPLEMENTATION

Please comment on:

- Quality of teaching procedures
- Quality and adequacy of teaching materials and resources.
- Quality of course material. Is it brought up to date?
- Linking of research with teaching
- Mobility of academic staff and students
- Evaluation by the students of (a) the teaching and (b) the course content and study material/resources

The available teaching resources are good but extremely limited, thereby limiting the effectiveness and lowering the overall quality of the students' learning experience. The faculty are up-to-date regarding technology, theory, practice. Although students study under a particular faculty member within a single course, the input of diverse faculty perspectives contributes to critical dialogues for each student.

Students are provided the opportunity for mobility through the ERASMUS program.

The Committee was not provided with student evaluations or a summary. Furthermore, it remains unclear to the Committee as to how these evaluations are used for the improvement of teaching. Discussions with undergraduate students, however, provided the Committee with insightful perspective. Specifically, students raised the following issues:

- Although the program is broad, students find it difficult to select and master a specialization.
- Students find that they receive excellent training in technology but that their total program is often unrelated to art.
- The program offers wide choices of electives which do not consistently lead to a unified set of specializations (e.g., media arts, media design, film, television, theoretical studies of media).
- There was universal agreement that the Department's physical infrastructure (in spaces , buildings, equipment technology video / photo) is in serious need of upgrading.
- Students expressed concerns that the entire external review process taking place through Greece is not designed to improve the University's quality. They suspect that the aim of the entire procedure is to restrict and shrink higher education.
- Students deeply appreciate the integrity and research of their faculty. They recognize that they are working with unique individuals. On the other hand they are dismayed that so many faculty do not reside on the island and are only available on their teaching days.

RESULTS

Please comment on:

- Efficacy of teaching.
- Discrepancies in the success/failure percentage between courses and how they are justified.
- Differences between students in (a) the time to graduation, and (b) final degree grades.
- Whether the Department understands the reasons of such positive or negative results?

The Committee received no report or summary of the grades assigned for each course and therefore can not determine the efficacy of teaching for any particular course. Around 50% of admitted students graduate but most of them seem to take more than 5 years.

Research is well-embedded in all forms of teaching. In art courses, students are given the opportunity to create complex works that are frequently displayed in exhibitions and at the annual festival. In technological courses, coursework and theses often result in published work at conferences.

IMPROVEMENT

- Does the Department propose methods and ways for improvement?

- What initiatives does it take in this direction?

The Department faculty are clearly devoted to their disciplines and their students. They are open to suggestions for improvement. The biggest obstacles, which are beyond faculty control at this point, are:

1. Budgetary cutbacks have resulted in a hiatus in hiring both faculty and technical staff.
2. Bureaucratic delays preclude the advancement of faculty in rank.
3. The university does not currently house the Department in a single and unified location.

C. Research

For each particular matter, please distinguish between under- and post-graduate level, if necessary.

APPROACH

- What is the Department's policy and main objective in research?
- Has the Department set internal standards for assessing research?

The Department is interdisciplinary, including academics from (1) technological/scientific disciplines who publish their work in high-quality traditional research venues and (2) audio, visual, and new media artists whose creative activity manifests itself in a variety of approaches (ranging from traditional drawing, photography and animation to video art, multimedia, installations, and sound works). Some faculty members have joined this Department with well-established and impressive research careers, including members who have studied and worked in prestigious research universities in USA, UK and Japan. They have brought to this Department strong research portfolios that include the supervision of PhD students and a record of securing external funding. It is especially commendable that some junior members have a publication record that far surpasses their current rank.

Faculty in the areas of creative activity demonstrate a diversity of creative methodologies and approaches. Their work has appeared in prestigious national and international venues. As a result, students choose the Ionian University because they want to study under their supervision.

The Department has a clear strategy and approach to PhD supervision, which includes regular student-faculty meetings, annual presentations and final defense of PhD dissertations.

A large number of PhD students from within Greece and indeed from distant regions

have opted to choose the Ionian University for this specific program. Many hold undergraduate or Master degrees from outside Greece. These students often select the Department through recommendations from colleagues in the field and after having carefully studied the profiles of Department faculty. The international reputation of this Department extends well beyond its regional location.

The interdisciplinary character of the Department is exemplary.

IMPLEMENTATION

- How does the Department promote and support research?
- Quality and adequacy of research infrastructure and support.
- Scientific publications.
- Research projects.
- Research collaborations.

The Department does not have dedicated research labs for faculty and PhD candidates. At present, teaching studios and teaching computer labs house the creative activity of practicing artists, while the bulk of research conducted by faculty from scientific and technological areas takes place in traditional office spaces that often also house PhD students.

The constraints under which the Department operates (inadequate funding for equipment, travel to international academic conferences and events, research positions, physical facilities) have a pronounced negative impact on actualizing and maximizing the full research potential of the Department.

By organizing local, national, and international conferences, festivals, and exhibitions, the Department has attained prominence as a leading research entity within this emerging new discipline. If funding becomes available, opportunities for further collaboration and research partnerships will surely arise.

RESULTS

- How successfully were the Department's research objectives implemented?
- Scientific publications.
- Research projects.
- Research collaborations.
- Efficacy of research work. Applied results. Patents etc.
- Is the Department's research acknowledged and visible outside the Department?
Rewards and awards.

In addition to research published in traditional written venues (including high-quality journals and conferences), the faculty are engaged in creative activity that has

resulted in numerous colloquia, symposia, seminars, lecture series, workshops, exhibitions (both individual and group) and a well-organized annual international art festival. Many of these workshops and exhibitions are highly collaborative, involving faculty and students both from this Department and other universities.

The Department produces a steady stream of journal and conference publications (about 5-8 journal papers and 15-20 conference papers per year) and brings in external research project funding (in excess of one million euro since 2006). Most of this funding comes from European Regional Development grants (ΕΣΠΑ) with an applied practical focus. The Committee suggests that the new EU calls for funding (Horizon 2020 and the Culture program) may provide further opportunity for additional projects with wide international scholarly potential and prestige. Acquisition of such funding would strengthen and confirm the momentum of the Department.

IMPROVEMENT

- Improvements in research proposed by the Department, if necessary.
- Initiatives in this direction undertaken by the Department .

To cultivate and strengthen the Department's research culture, the Committee recommends the following:

1. The University should explore ways of providing consistent and adequate funding for research/conference travel for faculty and Phd students.
2. The Department should further encourage research collaborations among faculty across disciplinary lines to bring art and technological activity into full harmony.
3. The Department should build on its current practice of annual research seminars for its PhD students and offer them to the faculty and undergraduate students as well.

Within the context of the University as a whole, the Committee recommends that. at a minimum, financial support be provided for upgrading and maintaining teaching/research software and hardware. The hiring of knowledgeable technical support within the discipline is imperative. Students and researchers must have ready access to state-of-the art research equipment. Providing useful research equipment will create a better environment for research collaborations and outputs.

D. All Other Services

For each particular matter, please distinguish between under- and post-graduate level, if necessary.

APPROACH

- How does the Department view the various services provided to the members of the academic community (teaching staff, students).
- Does the Department have a policy to simplify administrative procedures? Are most procedures processed electronically?
- Does the Department have a policy to increase student presence on Campus?

The Department views the various administrative services provided to the faculty as satisfactory. At the moment, the Department has three administrative staff (a secretary and two secretarial assistants). Their office maintains an impressive and well organized archive of all Department-related documents.

The University offers free housing and board to students with demonstrated financial needs, and it secures local hotel space for them after the dormitory is filled. There is an active union of students within the Department which meets regularly to discuss and organize activities.

In order to guide all undergraduate majors to the successful completion of their degrees, the Department assigns a study advisor from among the faculty to advise students on academic matters.

Students in need of personal counselling services (e.g. psychological, emotional stress management, etc.) are served on an ad hoc basis by individual staff and faculty who, for all their good will and intentions, do not have the training to provide such service.

A major concern of the Committee is the fact that no departmental facilities are accessible to individuals with disabilities. Of even greater concern is the fact that the University Senate, after consulting with various departments, has deliberated on the issue of admitting students with physical disabilities into the University. As the Committee understands, the decision was made not to accept students with specific physical disabilities into this particular Department. Although this process is currently legal, it is morally incumbent on the University to make all reasonable adjustments to the buildings so that they become accessible to people with physical disabilities.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Organization and infrastructure of the Department's administration (e.g. secretariat of the Department).
- Form and function of academic services and infrastructure for students (e.g. library, PCs and free internet access, student counseling, athletic- cultural activity etc.).

All administrative staff are well trained. In addition, the University has a strong infrastructure of services, including career advising and placement. The University Library provides ample reading spaces. Students report a lack of holdings in the audiovisual collection of DVDs and films that are of central importance to their studies.

Ongoing access to computer labs and art studios for coursework and project work is limited. Furthermore, without the presence of support personnel, these facilities remain improperly supervised and lacking in security.

RESULTS

- Are administrative and other services adequate and functional?
- How does the Department view the particular results.

The Committee finds that the existing support services work well and effectively. The Department expressed a similar opinion and seems to be generally satisfied with the support provided. Interviews with the students and secretarial staff confirmed these impressions.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Has the Department identified ways and methods to improve the services provided?
- Initiatives undertaken in this direction.

The Department needs to put more emphasis in documenting and following the employability and future careers of its alumni. Examples of successes and recognition among its alumni have been mentioned to the Committee but these remain anecdotal with no full system for monitoring these issues in place.

Technical support staff for art studios is currently inadequate. The Committee urges that, with University support, the Department identify and hire technicians who are also artists within the needed specialties.

Collaboration with social, cultural and production organizations

Please, comment on quality, originality and significance of the Department's initiatives.

The Department's initiatives include organization of social events, local art exhibitions and a dynamic annual art festival with international participation. Connection with business and industry exists through the internship program. The

Committee encourages these outreach efforts both in order to expose the Department to society at large and to provide important cultural and educational services to the community.

E. Strategic Planning, Perspectives for Improvement and Dealing with Potential Inhibiting Factors

For each particular matter, please distinguish between under- and post-graduate level, if necessary.

Please, comment on the Department's:

- Potential inhibiting factors at State, Institutional and Departmental level, and proposals on ways to overcome them.
- Short-, medium- and long-term goals.
- Plan and actions for improvement by the Department/Academic Unit
- Long-term actions proposed by the Department.

Inhibiting factors on the state level include the severe and ongoing reduction of funding that negatively impacts all aspects of University education throughout Greece. State-imposed budget cuts, in particular, have resulted in this Department's inability to procure, maintain, and upgrade high-level technological equipment and physical facilities to adequately deliver the programs it has designed. The very serious lack of disability-access to the buildings is a special concern, since such structural modifications are very costly. In addition, legislative instability and bureaucracy has created an environment in which departments and faculty members are left in limbo concerning programmatic development and professional advancement (tenure track hirings, promotions, replacement of faculty lines, personal insecurity of faculty who apply for promotion and endure bureaucratic delays that threaten their very employment).

Because this Department is the creation of specific visionary individuals, many of whom have worked with much self-sacrifice, the loss of even a single faculty line to retirements or resignations jeopardizes future developments.

On the University level, the Department of Audio and Visual Arts is a relatively new creation within the relatively new School of Music and Audiovisual Arts. Meeting in person with the Committee, the Dean of the School expressed both support of and pride over the Department. Unable to meet in person (for medical reasons) with the University Rector, however, the Committee was not able to assess the University's commitment to this Department and its mission. The Committee notes, however, that

the University's recent acquisition of additional facilities from the local Psychiatric Hospital and the expected allocation of these spaces for the Department's use is a positive sign. Established in 1824 as the Ionian Academy, the Ionian University, newly created in 1984, maintains a long-standing commitment to the promotion of fine arts in this region of Greece. The fact that this Department has by now rooted its annual festival on this island over the past 7 years confirms that the Department's identity is tied to Kerkyra.

The most significant challenge facing the Department is the shortage and absence of physical space and essential equipment. Simply put, there is not enough room and not enough technological equipment to meet the needs of students and faculty. In addition, there is no technical support staff. PhD students are asked to maintain these spaces and to incorporate these duties within an already overburdened program of teaching, advising, and research. Laboratory space is unacceptably tight, some labs large enough to house only 2-4 workstations. The photography dark room houses only 7 spots. As a result, many faculty must offer multiple sections of lab sessions, taking time away from research, student consulting/advising, etc. There is no exhibit space or areas for installations. Up-to-date photography equipment, cameras with adjustable focus, software, software licenses, and tablets are not available. One entire lab is equipped with old Mac computers that students cannot use.

Given the above, the Committee advises that the University provide the following:

- Dedicated spaces for laboratories for a) video production, b) sound production, c) photography, c) 2D and 3D graphic arts and animation, d) research, e) analog and digital drawing.
- At least two fully equipped and updated computer labs, with full software licenses, and 3 dedicated teaching/lecture halls (with 100 student capacity).
- Improved meeting rooms and secretarial office space.
- Three technical assistants (1 for computer support and 2 for audiovisual support).
- Substantial increase in funding for software for teaching needs in order to allow annual updates.
- Installation of a complete security system for all laboratory areas.
- Substantial increase in funding for the annual festival to ensure participation by international attendants.
- Substantial increase in funding for student excursions (nationally and internationally) and for inviting international scholars and artists.

Audio and visual sciences rely on technology as the *sine qua non* for teaching and research in innovative applications of art. Because audio and visual arts are, by

nature, inextricably tied to technology and specialized equipment, this discipline cannot exist without abundant and up-to-date equipment. The University budget must allocate funds to allow this Department to establish, maintain, and consistently update ever-emerging technologies. Because this allocation is inadequate to the point of being practically nonexistent, the Department requests that no more than 60 new students per year be admitted. Nevertheless, the University now imposes up to 90 new students annually without providing the necessary physical spaces or equipment. This is an intolerable situation, perpetrating an injustice on the students, the faculty, and the disciplines they serve. The influx of undergraduates without the addition of full time faculty has already resulted in the Department making use of PhD candidates to teach entire undergraduate sections, a responsibility that surpasses the international standard of graduate students serving as teaching assistants. The Committee considers this both inappropriate and unfortunate.

At the Departmental level, the faculty see themselves as successfully collaborating among their disciplines. Although “art” and “technology” may be viewed traditionally by many as separate and distinct fields, the Committee finds that this Department invites and supports the union of the two domains as especially conducive to the creation of new synergies. The dynamic interplay between “art in the service of technology” and “technology in the service of art” provides a rich forum for discussion and creative implementation. Potentially inhibiting factors lie in the possible change of faculty attitudes as current personnel either retire or resign from the Department. The strength of this Department lies in its identity as an interdisciplinary and multimedia body. The division of this body into separate departments would seriously impair this vitality.

Both the Internal Evaluation Report and discussions with the faculty and Department Head revealed that the Department has well-defined plans for development. These include, but are not limited to, recruiting faculty who engage in the intersection of art and technology, hiring critical technical support staff knowledgeable in art, improving and expanding physical facilities, and further developing their outreach program for even greater publicity and interaction with cultural, social, and commercial institutions.

F. Final Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC

For each particular matter, please distinguish between under- and post-graduate level, if necessary.

The Department of Audio and Visual Arts of the Ionian University has created itself

in an impressive and strategic manner. It does not aim to compete with departments in other national universities but, rather, to offer something new to Greece. Its “niche,” which combines art and technology with an intense creative focus on audio and visual education, artistic creation, and research is not merely distinctive in this country: it is unique. Given the drastic shrinking of current and future employment within the public sector, this Department is forging innovative paths and creating new opportunities for employment of the university-educated population of Greece, enabling alumni --- on both the graduate and postgraduate levels -- not only to find meaningful careers abroad but also to contribute significantly to the economy and the cultural/artistic/technological society of all of Greece. This is a pioneering program, staffed by creative and intellectual artists, technologists, and entrepreneurs. The Department has realized its plan in a short time, growing in 10 years from an initial full-time faculty of 4 to 14. Despite the economic difficulties and legislative uncertainties surrounding all Greek institutions of higher learning, this Department is positioning itself to advance to the next stage of growth. It has submitted an extremely detailed and thoughtful Internal Evaluation Report that has been of great value to this Committee in preparing this report. Areas of particular strength include the following:

- The faculty, i.e., both artists and technological researchers, are internationally known in their fields, attracting students widely from within Greece and internationally.
- The faculty are innovative thinkers who fully understand that art and technology most not only coexist but also dialogue and collaborate with one another in society as a whole. Such artistic and technological interactions are to be encouraged and strengthened.
- The selection of this Department as the first choice of admitted undergraduate students has grown at a rapid pace.
- PhD candidates are actively seeking to come to Kerkyra to study under these particular scholars/researchers and artists.
- The quality of student work is excellent.
- The Department contributes to the intellectual and cultural life of the community with its annual Festival of Audio and Visual Arts in Kerkyra (celebrated annually since 2006).
- Graduates of the undergraduate program are finding promising employment and career opportunities in their fields of study, mostly outside Greece. Those who do not seek employment are being admitted into postgraduate programs in the US and Europe.
- The Department benefits from an excellent and dedicated secretarial staff.
- The Department presents a model of efficiency in the use of human and financial resources.
- The Department maintains an attractive and informative website that publicizes all activities and programs. The website captures the energy of

this discipline and transmits it to the audience and the market.

Calibrations:

Because this Department has succeeded in accomplishing so much with so little, and within a short period of time, the Committee considers the following points as matters of “calibration” and not “improvement.” As the Department looks to the future, the Committee advises the following:

- The University must provide the appropriate space, funds for equipment, new faculty positions, and at least three technicians knowledgeable in art (see previous sections).
- Consideration be given to sequencing more courses on the intermediate level, enabling students to transition successfully from beginning to specialized courses.
- Development of an introductory survey course for undergraduate students.
- A review and revision of the wide range of electives currently available.
- An examination of the effect of ECTS on student course selection, and a re-calibration of credits.
- Establish a forum for the informal discussion of topics that bridge current specialists working within extremely specialized subdisciplines.
- Formally institute a Departmental Alumni Association. Because students are already being placed in jobs abroad and are presenting work in noteworthy venues, the potential for establishing a wide international network of educators and employers is extremely rich. The focus of such an association would be discipline-specific, unlike the broader goals and fund-raising mission of University-wide alumni offices. The Department would thereby be in an even stronger position to demonstrate the effectiveness of and the growing need for its programs in future evaluations and accreditation reviews.

The Members of the Committee

Name and Surname	Signature
1. _____	
2. _____	
3. _____	
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