

***Program Evaluation
University of Victoria, Art History and Visual Studies (AHVS)
April 2018***

Executive Summary:

This is a strong program, with dedicated faculty and staff and a cohort of excellent students. The work of the program is highly valued and regarded as essential to the University's mandate.

The committee was highly impressed by the quality, dedication and pro-active attitudes that pervade AHVS. The full-time and part-time teaching faculty, and the entire professional staff, place the interests and needs of students at the top of their priority lists, and act effectively and energetically to ensure that students receive the best possible education experience. Undergraduate and graduate students alike testified to the quality of their time in AHVS, and the career successes of graduates, as well as the ability of former students to obtain major funding for continued study at prestigious institutions in Canada and abroad, offered ample evidence of the effectiveness of the AHVS as an institution.

AHVS is the second-largest Art History program in Western Canada, and the only one on Vancouver Island. It offers BA Major, Honours and Minor degrees in Art History and a Minor in Museum Studies, and contributes expertise to a Diploma program in Cultural Resource Management (CRM) and to a Professional Specialization Certificate in Collections Management, both of which are offered through the University's Division of Continuing Studies. At a time when registration in Art History Major and Honours programs is in decline across North America, AHVS is tackling this trend by embracing a leading degree of inclusiveness that comprises not only Western historical and contemporary art, but also offerings in South and South-East Asian historical and contemporary art, Islamic art, North American (especially Northwest Coast) Indigenous art, film studies, popular culture, and cultural theory. Students graduating with Major and Honours degrees thus have the opportunity to engage with the demographically diverse local, national and international communities in which they live. The faculty members provide a high level of instruction by ensuring that their teaching is informed by their research projects, by having an ongoing curriculum review process, and by incorporating current themes, theories and developments into their programs. The recent institution of a limited-enrolment first-year seminar course is excellent. So is the creation of the Art Collections Classroom, in which students are able to work directly with artworks.

AHVS is located within the Faculty of Fine Arts, where a vibrant, dynamic, creative culture contributes to an excellent learning environment. The students who met with the Academic Program Review Committee (APRC) were unanimous in their enthusiasm. There is, however, room for improvement in the provision of more experiential learning for the students: expanded internships and other placement

opportunities, field trips, study abroad, and more information about career possibilities.

Faculty members are well established in their fields, have good scholarly reputations, and for the most part have maintained active publishing and conference profiles. They would, though, benefit from the drawing up of a Strategic Research Plan, which would highlight their accomplishments and articulate AHVS's research goals, all with the result of further enhancing to the rest of UVic the research profile of the department as a whole.

AHVS is well positioned to deliver on most of the program-specific goals enumerated in its very strong five-year strategic plan (included in the department's self-assessment report for the APRC).

AHVS has been active in building strategic interdisciplinary relationships with departments and programs not only in the Faculty of Fine Arts, but elsewhere at UVic. More work can yet be done in this regard, with a view to ensuring that AHVS students derive maximum academic benefit from the University as a whole. Similarly, AHVS's DIDO image database is an invaluable tool, and the department is to be congratulated on having built it into such an effective support for teaching and research.