

**Strategic Planning Report**

**Hartford Art School**

November 2001

**ALEXANDER GRAY  
ASSOCIATES, LLC**

## Table of Contents

	Page
Executive Summary	1
Introduction and Assessment	3
The Media Arts Program and Art Technology Center	5
Graduate Program Initiative and Graduate Center	7
Department Recommendations	9
Illustration	9
Visual Communications Design	9
Printmaking	9
Photography	10
Painting & Drawing	10
Sculpture	10
Ceramics	10
Foundations Program	10
General Faculty and Staff Recommendations	11



## Executive Summary

Dedicated to the belief that strong art is visionary, technically proficient, and intellectually grounded, the Hartford Art School at the University of Hartford is committed to nurturing developing artists in a caring, comprehensive and open environment. Since its founding in 1877, the Hartford Art School (HAS) has earned a reputation for exemplary undergraduate instruction in the disciplines of drawing, painting, ceramics, printmaking and sculpture. As it became a leading professional art school and founded the University of Hartford with two other colleges, the Hartford Art School added other programs, including illustration, graphic design, photography, and video. Now, new media technologies are expanding the strategies and tools available to artists that make connections to the other disciplines offered at the school. With its distinctive faculty of active artists, the proven strengths of its departments, and its highly effective Board of Trustees, the Hartford Art School is poised to embrace and support a greater interdisciplinary approach to art making on both the graduate and undergraduate level.

Introduced in 1997, the Hartford Art School **Media Arts Program** (MAP) set the stage for this new era of interdisciplinary possibilities. Acknowledging the moving image as a foundation for artistic practice, MAP is exploring the cross-disciplinary merging of photography, video, film, graphic design, illustration, sculptural installation and performance art that has occurred globally over the past two decades. Consequently, it is more important than ever to emphasize critical thinking and problem solving skills, in addition to art's conceptual and theoretical underpinnings. Distinguishing itself from similar programs, MAP's goal is to encourage maximum experimentation between disciplines, thereby bringing the full expertise and experience of the Hartford Art School to bear on the creative process. MAP provides an informal as well as formalized connection to the existing school departments. MAP incorporates and thus is informed by their essential artistic, theoretical, and technical traditions. It is the firm belief of the Hartford Art School faculty and staff that a successful interdisciplinary program can only exist within the context and heritage of strong individual disciplines.

Housed in a new **Arts Technology Building** on the University of Hartford campus, the Media Arts Program will join other programs using technology including Photography and Visual Communications (which will move from the Gray Center). Positioned between Taub Hall, the Sculpture and Ceramic Building and the Joseloff Gallery, the new building will feature a modular array of multifunctional work zones defined by practice and traffic. It will also house expanded student galleries, a Faculty and Student Café, and the administrative and faculty offices. The art and technology facility will present a superior naming and national development opportunity for the Hartford Art School and the University of Hartford, as a new architectural destination for Hartford,

The facility will not only host collaborative studies in exciting new fields such as digital printmaking and computer-aided 3D modeling, but will provide needed space for upgrading existing programs in Taub Hall and the Sculpture and Ceramic Building. With new facilities, cutting-edge resources, and a philosophy that encourages experimentation, MAP will attract qualified students.

As a separate initiative, an expanded **Graduate Program** will add to the stature and value of the Hartford Art School educational experience, while strengthening the already successful undergraduate program. Like the MAP initiative, such a program offers multi-faceted benefits to the Hartford Art School, University of Hartford and the greater Hartford community. A strong Graduate Program will attract quality students, faculty, and visiting artists alike and all would gain from the encounter. Visiting artists not only impact the lives of students, but they are often a source of professional development for permanent faculty. Additionally, graduate students become indispensable teaching assistants and lab technicians, thus reducing undergraduate faculty load. They will raise HAS's potential to increase enrollment, including undergraduate courses for non-art majors. A successful Graduate Program has "long coattails", raising standards at all levels of the



institution, as well as strengthening the school's national and international reputation and generating a culturally diverse enrollment.

The Hartford Art School proposes the acquisition/leasing and renovation of an off-campus structure to house the expanded Graduate Program. The adaptive re-use of a warehouse-type facility in an under-served Hartford community, for example, will bring creative energy and economic development to a neighborhood ready for infusion, and thus potentially attract city, state and federal funding. As the base for approximately 60 students, this new **Graduate Center** will also provide permanent faculty studios, venues for collaborative projects with other cultural institutions, and space for commercial tenants to generate earned income. A new Graduate facility will encourage the School of Technology's expressed interest in partnering the Architecture Department with the Hartford Art School.

MAP, with the Art and Technology Building project and the off-campus Graduate Program are linked in important ways. Space pressures, which for some time have threatened the Hartford School of Art, will be alleviated. With a present enrollment of 330 undergraduate students and retention at an all-time low, the competition for space between department disciplines is at an all-time high. With projected undergraduate enrollments of 360 and with expanded service to students in other university colleges, the stress on space is becoming intolerable. A lack of faculty office space with inadequate telephone/computer resources greatly impedes student advising and faculty professional development. More importantly, unventilated and even unsafe studio conditions impede quality instruction and student project completion. An independent graduate program, with its own faculty and studios will help alleviate the undergraduate faculty load. The infusion of more graduate students, along with additional facilities to teach, will also alleviate undergraduate faculty load by providing student assistants in the classroom.

A great school has been hobbled by a past lack of resources and austerity staffing measures. However, this organization prizes continuity, as well as daring, and embraces openness as a conduit for both artistic excellence and institutional growth. In that spirit, the Hartford Art School proposes the Media Arts Program and Graduate Program with respective facilities as new initiatives to maximize the school's historic strengths while ensuring a viable and significant role for the Hartford Art School in the future.



## Introduction and Assessment

In September 2001, under the new leadership of Dean Power Boothe, the Hartford Art School began a strategic planning process to identify opportunities for the school's continued growth. A two-day strategic planning session with full participation from art school faculty and staff established the preliminary issues and ideas laid forth in this Report. Through a multi-layered process of evaluation and brainstorming, the faculty and staff have articulated in this document, their full commitment to the future of the Hartford Art School.

Working artists are the heart of the Hartford Art School. As professionals who practice and exhibit in their respective fields, the art school faculty understands the formidable challenges students face after completing their education. The transition from theory to practice requires confidence, the learning of technical skills and a broad-based understanding. Increasingly this means a global understanding. To maximize the chances of its educational mission succeeding, the Hartford Art School is committed to small classes and a rigorous first year "Foundations Program." This "basics first" approach to the student-teacher partnership lays the groundwork for successful and daring artistic development. Likewise, the intimate teaching and studio environment maintains an open channel between instructor and student. The 'studio' is the place where the educational process happens and the experience of making and reflecting on results is at the 'heart' of the learning process. The Hartford Art School's commitment to egalitarian principles, collegiality and professional accountability has maintained a uniquely caring faculty and staff, who are gifted and able to engage students in this effective and unpredictable teaching approach.

Testaments to this deep commitment are the numerous undergraduate students who have chosen to pursue degrees at the Hartford Art School and, in notable instances, joined the faculty as adjunct instructors and tenure-track associate professors. Similarly skilled and valued students have maintained their fond relationship to the school by joining the staff in technical and administrative capacities. Intimacy and creative flexibility ensure a tangible eagerness to gain new skills. There are numerous opportunities at the Hartford Art School.

The Joseloff Gallery plays a key role in exposing students to the practical and conceptual demands of exhibiting art. Mounting faculty and student shows, as well as the *Distinguished Artist Exhibition and Symposium*, the Joseloff Gallery is a vital introduction to museum studies. The Printmaking and Visual Communication Design departments have uniquely positioned students, faculty and staff to explore expanded opportunities in their respective fields. Visiting artist editions, continuing education courses, and a client-based Design Center are a few ways the Hartford Art School community connects students to wider, professional arenas.

The School believes that today's students need a global perspective on art-making and their role as cultural citizens. Partnerships and exchanges with universities and art schools abroad are encouraged at the upper levels of the undergraduate program and the current graduate program. Strong existing relationships with SACI in Florence, St.Martin's School of Art in London, and Burren College of Art in Ireland are well-positioned as models to expand opportunities in Europe, Asia, and Latin America.

The Hartford Art School, Inc. Board of Trustees has made significant financial and emotional commitments to the School over its 125-year history. Generous in its support, the Hartford Art School Board has enhanced the value and stature of Hartford Art School with endowed chairs, such as the Koopman Chair, and numerous visiting artist funds. The *Distinguished Artist Exhibition and Symposium* series is an eagerly anticipated event, injecting substantial critical input into curricula and programs. Renowned artists and critics have directly shared their expertise and experience with the community. Additionally, the Wondriska Visiting Designers and newly funded Auerbach Visiting Artists



programs support and expand the offerings of departments. The endowed Hartford Art School Print Project has brought numerous artists to the school to work on their projects, shoulder to shoulder with students. At the discipline level, there are several Post Bach students who utilize one-year relationships with the Hartford Art School to prepare graduate admissions portfolios, while at the same time supplying vital technical assistance to undergraduate programs and students.

Despite these considerable strengths, it is important to note that, in critical areas, the Hartford Art School has become the victim of its own success. The deep commitment of its faculty, the reputation of its undergraduate program, and the dedication of its staff have allowed the institution to postpone formalizing key positions in the institutional structure, such as a central financial officer and a public relations staff member dedicated to enrollment, alumni and faculty development. The Art School's intimate size and over-reliance on tuition-based funding has left the institution vulnerable to competitive enrollments between departments. Consequently, faculty shortages and heavy course loads prevail in most departments, with an inevitable diminishment in student advising and faculty professional development. A provision for a faculty oversight committee has been suggested in faculty meetings. Among staff, salaries have not kept pace with health insurance increases and most are "wearing too many hats" as austerity measures lead to the combining of job descriptions.

Since 1990 the Hartford Art School has experienced a remarkable growth in its student population of over 42%, while studio space has only increased by 15%. With a present enrollment of 330 undergraduate students and a 90% retention rate, the stress on space is at an all-time high. With projected undergraduate enrollments of 360 and with the desire to expand courses to serve non-art majors from other colleges, space requirements have reached a crisis state.

The combination of space shortages and poor, out-dated equipment are taking a toll on student and faculty morale. Departments compete for classroom, studio and computer resources. Lighting, ventilation and custodial services need improvements throughout the school. Faculty offices are poorly equipped, cramped and communal, greatly impeding student advising and faculty professional development. Over-commitment has filled too many gaps for too long, and a strong, reputable institution is showing strain. This strain impedes the creative growth of the institution as a whole. The building initiatives described in this Report will address present and foreseeable space requirements.

Fresh, optimistic leadership is in place that recognizes the needs that must be addressed. The faculty and staff propose a daring vision of growth as a conduit for positive change through two new initiatives: **Art Technology Center/Media Arts Program** and an expanded **Graduate Program Center**. These initiatives are not a bandage but rather, a rigorous and strategic new outlook, which embraces contemporary movements while preserving the Hartford Art School heritage of disciplined art instruction. These initiatives support growth on all levels—artistic, intellectual, physical, and institutional. It is recommended that the two initiatives be regarded as inter-connected and inter-dependent, and that the success of each is dependent on achieving both possibilities within the same time frame.



## The Media Arts Program and Art Technology Center

In 1997, the retirements of Professors Christopher Horton and Peter McLean resulted in the banking of the Hartford Art School's Experimental Studio Department. As a telling "sign of the times," the Video and Sculpture Departments were the two disciplinary areas that recouped these abandoned concerns into their programs. Image-based electronic media and sculptural installation have been the fastest growing areas of global art practice in recent years. As these areas continue to mutually inform each other, it is apparent that the terms "experimental" and "interdisciplinary" have become synonymous. More and more, the Media Arts are facilitating a radical re-examination of all artistic disciplines, regardless of medium.

The Hartford Art School recognizes its responsibility to prepare students for artistic careers in the evolving arena of cross-disciplinary Media Arts. Spurred by student and faculty interest, HAS acknowledges that the potential for interdisciplinary practice is driven, in part, by curricula and resources. To provide for both, the newly accredited **Media Arts Program** proposes a bold initiative that is unique in scope and design in the State of Connecticut, as well as competitive with similar programs at the Maryland Institute, College of Art; Rhode Island School of Design; and the San Francisco Art Institute, to name a few. This initiative is important to the well-being of the Hartford Art School and in keeping with the University's strategic aims as an educational institution.

The BFA in Media Arts integrates curricular issues from Video and Experimental Studio at a number of levels, developing consistency in critical thinking throughout the course sequence. In addition, contemporary design, photographic practice, performance and sculptural issues are incorporated to broaden the conceptual framework of the program and promote an interdisciplinary approach. Although most of the studio work requires computer and digital image production, it is important to underscore that the Media Arts Major is not a computer-based field of study, but a conceptual-based strategy for art making. Supporting experimental and non-commercial work in an interdisciplinary studio environment, the Media Arts Program is, first and foremost, an art program. As professional artistic practice continues to shift, this approach gives students the flexibility not only to compete in the changing job market, but also offers them the ability to help define new artistic directions for themselves and the field in general. MAP's instruction and studio opportunities include the following:

- Video: single channel, multi-channel installations, projection, and "movies" for Internet and interactive disc production.
- Typography: as it relates to image production and the visual field.
- Digital Imaging/Photography: lens and non-lens based (computer generated) image production and manipulation with applications in Internet and print-based options.
- Spatial Multimedia: the interface of object, architecture, electronic imagery, sound, performance, interactivity and virtuality.
- Performance: integration of live components and theatrical applications.
- Programming Concepts: examination of visual and conceptual architecture in software interface and interactive project design.
- History and Contemporary Practice: academic research into the precedents of photography, filmmaking, video, design, sculpture, and performance as related to semiotics, cultural studies, critical thinking, and contemporary discourse on the production of electronic images and their impact.

The Hartford Art School faculty nurtures a healthy, open atmosphere. Elective coursework in Sculpture, Painting, Ceramics, Photography, Illustration and Visual Communication Design is encouraged for students in the Media Arts Program. Cooperation with the Design, Sculpture and Illustration and Printmaking Departments is critical as these fields make increasing use of digital technology and moving image production. Likewise, University students in Cinema Studies and the



School of Communication will continue to rely on the Hartford Art School for alternatives to traditional forms of media production.

Clearly, staffing of the MAP program will be key to the program's success. To meet the growing needs of students in the Media Arts arena, the MAP initiative recommends two full-time, tenure track positions (one in addition to current HAS faculty), adjunct positions where required, and a full-time MAP facility technician.

A plan for a new building, endorsed in 1999 by the Hartford Art School Inc. Board of Trustees, will provide a physical focus for the Media Arts Program. The new facility, **The Art Technology Center**, will feature "smart" classrooms with digital and multimedia capabilities. Studio projects will be supported by digital, post-production workstations designed for all moving image production. A "Black Box" exhibition space and an auditorium for multimedia presentations will accommodate students, faculty and visiting artists. Key facilities and aspects of the Center will include:

- Public façade and entrance that says "art school"
- Video production lab
- Post-production lab with digital video workstations
- "Smart" classrooms
- Computer labs
- Visual communications studio
- Photography wet and digital labs
- Lighting studios
- Auditorium for screenings, lectures and visiting artist presentations
- Foundations classrooms
- Faculty offices
- "Black box" exhibition/performance space
- Student galleries and project spaces

Just as MAP builds on the core disciplines of the existing Hartford Art School programs, the proposal for The Art Technology Center will offer an opportunity to renovate Taub Hall and the Sculpture and Ceramic building to greatly improve existing facilities. Creating synergy across disciplines, the new building will incorporate all of the technology-dependent programs (Photography, Visual Communications Design, Illustration and Media Arts) in closer proximity to the multi-departmental computer facilities. Thus, additional space will become available in Taub Hall to update and expand the Printmaking and Painting studios and free desperately needed space for students in these disciplines. Likewise, the relocation of the 3D Foundations Studio will open space in the Sculpture and Ceramics facilities for additional student studios. The move of the student galleries to be in greater proximity to the Joseloff Gallery will open up the present student galleries to become project spaces for sculpture or an auditorium. Administration and faculty office needs will also be addressed by the new building.

A Student Union, Café, and specially designed Media Arts exhibition spaces are additional elements in the proposed Media Arts building to enhance student and faculty practice. With its wide range of benefits, the MAP initiative positions the Hartford Art School and the University of Hartford more competitively among a growing number of national undergraduate programs in the Media Arts field, and creates a highly marketable destination on the University campus.



## **Graduate Program Initiative and Graduate Center**

A successful graduate program is the crowning tribute to an undergraduate school. In many ways, it emphasizes the strengths and philosophy of the undergraduate experience. At the same time, it must stretch the goals of both, while addressing the unique needs of the graduate student preparing to be an artist in an exciting and demanding world.

With these qualities in mind, the Hartford Art School proposes the creation of a reinvigorated, off-campus **Graduate Program**. Though self-contained, the Graduate Program will be designed to augment and enhance the Undergraduate experience as well as contribute in significant ways to the University of Hartford and greater Hartford communities. Noting the potential for real estate development in the neighborhoods, the Hartford Art School Graduate Program Initiative has identified a prime opportunity to expand its, and the University's role in the cultural life of Hartford. Redeveloping a vacant, commercial space in an under-served neighborhood offers multi-use options for a wide array of educational, civic and economic interests. Such a project recognizes that art and culture lead economic development, a trend with extensive precedents and funding sources. For the Hartford Art School, the initiative offers the potential to improve its programs, facilities, faculty development, and international relationships with visiting artists.

The Hartford Art School Graduate Program will increase total enrollment to 45 students, up from the current enrollment of approximately 15 students. Admitted with a combination of scholarships, tuition waivers, and tuition-based students, the peer-reviewed student body will be instructed by a mixture of revolving visiting artist faculty, full-time graduate faculty, in full-year and summer MFA programs.

The MFA degree would allow and encourage interdisciplinary experimentation. Current courses of study could be expanded to include Critical Studies, Cultural Studies (in Cinema, Drama and Visual Culture, for example), Art Education and possibly Art Therapy. Collaborations with other University departments are a certainty, noting the current interest expressed by the School of Technology's Architecture Department.

Coupled with the new Art and Technology building, a strong Graduate Program will participate in the exploding, national trend toward utilizing visiting artist faculty. Enticed by first-class facilities and the opportunity to work with quality students and close proximity to New York and Boston, visiting artist faculty will enjoy short-term commitments that expand course options and add many institutional and cultural benefits including Hartford Art School faculty development. With the expansion of the MFA Program, HAS will see an increase in staffing: a Graduate Program Office Manager will be needed, as well as a two Graduate Program Directors, one Post-Baccalaureate Director, and eight Artists-in-Residence as revolving faculty for the Graduate and Post-Baccalaureate programs. Revenues generated by tuition for the Graduate Program, Post-Baccalaureate Program and Design Center, as well as commercial rental income will allow the hiring of this new staff and faculty.

Additionally, a quality pool of graduate students is advantageous to Hartford Art School's undergraduate programs. In addition to their influential presence in the art school community, these students will also provide technical and teaching assistance to undergraduate courses. Some graduate students will also choose to participate in undergraduate classes, thus improving their enrollment and caliber. Likewise, senior undergraduates will have the opportunity to participate in graduate critiques, with similar results. The artistic and social interaction between visiting artist, regular faculty, graduate and undergraduate students is a significant benefit to the entire art school community.



A quality Graduate Program not only improves the national reputation of the Hartford Art School, but also encourages a wider, more diverse enrollment than is currently achieved at HAS. With such an initiative, HAS can also capitalize on its enviable proximity to the national art capitals of New York and Boston. At home, the program, in its new facility, offers superior opportunities for collaborative relationships with other cultural institutions such as Real Art Ways and the Wadsworth Athenaeum. Faculty studios and possible living spaces guarantee the facility will be a vibrant community and valuable asset to the Art School and the greater Hartford Community.

Encourage Graduate Study in the Hartford Area. The Hartford Art School is a prominent cultural institution and a center of excellence in the region. The school's reputation for quality education and its proximity to the national art capitals of New York and Boston make it an ideal location for a graduate program. The school's existing facilities, including the Wadsworth Athenaeum and the Real Art Ways, provide excellent opportunities for collaborative relationships with other cultural institutions. The school's faculty and staff are highly qualified and experienced in their respective fields. The school's location in the heart of Hartford, Connecticut, provides a vibrant and diverse community for students and faculty.

#### Visual Communications Design

The Visual Communications Design Department is currently housed in the Harry Mark Building on the Third Floor. The department's facilities are limited and do not meet the needs of a graduate program. The department's current facilities are outdated and do not provide the necessary space for a graduate program. The department's current facilities are outdated and do not provide the necessary space for a graduate program. The department's current facilities are outdated and do not provide the necessary space for a graduate program. The department's current facilities are outdated and do not provide the necessary space for a graduate program.

#### Printing

The Visual Communications Design Department's printing facilities are outdated and do not meet the needs of a graduate program. The department's current facilities are outdated and do not provide the necessary space for a graduate program. The department's current facilities are outdated and do not provide the necessary space for a graduate program. The department's current facilities are outdated and do not provide the necessary space for a graduate program. The department's current facilities are outdated and do not provide the necessary space for a graduate program.



## **Department Recommendations**

The following recommendations for each department impact all departments, and include directions that are addressed by both the MAP and Graduate School initiatives.

### **Illustration**

Enjoying strong growth in student enrollment during recent years, the Illustration Department is experiencing a serious dearth of classroom space, senior studios and faculty offices. Existing space requires natural light sources, better ventilation, and improved janitorial support. The department expresses a need for an operational copier, digital imaging and scanning technology, and increased computer resources in general. In curricular areas, the department advises the creation of a Design/Computer Graphics component in the Foundations Program, a Figure Modeling course in Illustration, and collaborative coursework with Design and Printmaking Departments. Additionally, student projects would benefit from staggering course schedules to allow for overnight film processing. Other recommendations: Endowed Senior Award in Illustration, Continuing Education/Community Classes, decreased faculty teaching load, commercial opportunities for seniors, professional development for faculty.

### **Visual Communications Design**

With its Design Center, whose commercial clients generate supplemental income for its programs, the active Communications Department is physically split between the Harry Jack Gray Center and Taub Hall. First and foremost, the department advises uniting the program into the new Art and Technology Building. The department advises the creation of two computer labs with approximately 20 stations with Internet capabilities per lab. Additional classroom space is also required. The addition of one full-time faculty and a dedicated technician is requested. Faculty offices with fax/phone/computer/Internet resources are also requested. The need of new technology proficiency training for faculty, staff and students is anticipated. In curricular areas, the department advises the creation of a History of Communications Design course and team-taught courses with other disciplines. Like Illustration, Design students require staggered schedules to allow for film processing, lab time, and project completion. Additionally, the department requests more books and magazine subscriptions for its library, more visiting artist opportunities, and professional development for faculty and students.

### **Printmaking**

Visiting artist editions, marketable prints, digital technology, commercial press services, continuing education and summer workshops are a few of the program avenues under consideration by this busy and successful department. The need for specialized spaces is at a premium and includes: slide room, temporary exhibition area with matting/framing resources, papermaking facility (wet), and print storage. Other space requirements include classrooms, studios for departmental majors, and faculty offices. Equipment recommendations address current and future needs. The former include ergonomically correct studio furniture, print drawers, and an operational stone lift. The latter embrace new technologies in the field, such as digital cameras, digital printers and expanded computer resources. In curricular areas, the department suggests emphasizing drawing components, providing figure models in the Foundation Program, and creating cooperative courses with the Design and Illustration departments. Additionally, the department advises offering combination majors as well as a Printmaking minor. Current faculty is sufficient, but it is advised to make Post-Bach opportunities available to qualified applicants.



### **Photography**

As noted by its senior faculty, the primary issue facing the Photography department is a lack of junior faculty. Consequently, there is no open channel to the new media technology that is currently impacting the field. Adjunct faculty and a full-time technician are also required to handle the ever increasing student load from the art school and university enrollments. Adding additional Photo I, non-major, and continuing education courses is advised. Space needs are substantial and include: classrooms, slide room, studio with lighting grid, shooting studio, and faculty offices. Additionally, darkrooms need a general updating, with added storage for chemicals. General equipment needs include studio furniture and computer resources.

### **Painting & Drawing**

Relatively self-sufficient, the key concerns expressed by the department involve space and curriculum. The faculty requests studios for departmental majors, additional storage, and offices for themselves. In curricular areas, it is advised that Drawing courses be added throughout the department, including an Introduction to Drawing course for non-majors and continuing education. The department also requests an increase in model availability and better janitorial support.

### **Sculpture**

Responding to the cross-disciplinary and multimedia demands of the field, the Sculpture department recognizes the collaborative role it will play with the Media Arts Program. Therefore, curricular issues are a guiding principle in determining future departmental needs. Theory and History of Sculpture courses are proposed, as well as cooperative coursework with MAP. Noting considerable student interest, the faculty advises a thoughtful analysis of the underdeveloped glassworks and foundry programs to determine direction and future in those areas. In terms of space, the department requests a slide/lecture area, a "white box" installation project space, video/computer lab, faculty offices, and additional storage. Ventilation and noise-containment improvements are requested for the current facility, and it is suggested that these issues be carefully considered in plans for the new Art and Technology Building.

### **Ceramics**

Featuring several Post-Bach opportunities, the department advises expanding these "mini-residencies" to qualified applicants. Additionally, the department suggests expanding course curricula. Adding a part-time faculty position and writing a Ceramics Technician job description to specify the position's skills and demands is also suggested. Better janitorial support is a crucial improvement required in this department.

### **Foundations Program**

Taught by faculty from every department, it is generally and collectively acknowledged that teaching Foundations courses is essential to the development of sound artistic practice. Most faculty members also share a passion for teaching Foundations courses and the satisfaction they experience interacting with new students. Given the shared responsibility of Foundations coursework, it is agreed that the program requires a dedicated coordinator. Space needs are generally course specific and include dedicated space for 2D & 3D courses, storage for 3D projects, a Foundations lab, and slide area. In terms of equipment, it is suggested that the program have a computer for 3D imaging, band saws, and other tools for Ceramics and Sculpture courses. Foundations will need to address the issue of media literacy and to what degree students should be introduced to digital imaging at the first year level. Friday and Saturday "skill instruction" classes for credit are also proposed.



## **General Faculty and Staff Recommendations**

The Hartford Art School acknowledges its active Board of Trustees who provide expertise and support to assure that the School's programs are of the highest quality and serve a vital function in society. In this time of growth and change, the active involvement of the Hartford Art School, Inc. Board of Trustees will be of critical importance to identify and implement the dynamic ideas set forth in this Plan.

The faculty acknowledges the school's historic strengths, particularly the intimate and intensive scale of its programming that emphasizes strong, undergraduate instruction in art fundamentals. It acknowledges that specific disciplines must be strong in their own right and that a strong interdisciplinary program will only succeed if individual areas departments are not compromised, but engaged in ways to serve all involved. Faculty members prize their love of school, the passionate commitment of their students, and the longstanding spirit of collegiality and cooperation between departments. Additionally, they value the art school's commitment to nurturing artists, while maintaining both a quality teaching and professional art institution.

The faculty notes areas of recent concern that should be addressed in order to maintain the Art School's historic strengths and prepare for the institution's future. The faculty fears that not addressing these needs will result in loss of instructors, poor student retention and a general loss of competitiveness with comparable institutions. First and foremost, the faculty unanimously calls for additional space to augment the following areas: classroom instruction, junior/senior studios, faculty offices and advising. Inadequate space is further intensified by insufficient, outdated equipment and resources in most discipline areas. This includes, but is not limited to computer technology, lighting, and studio ventilation. A lack of proper janitorial support compounds these issues.

In recent years, the faculty has become concerned with the load issue, especially when the graduate program was added to the undergraduate instruction. The Hartford Art School's reliance on an over-committed and underpaid faculty has resulted in low morale. Under these circumstances, the institution can not fulfill its mission to support both the teaching and practicing roles of its faculty artists and designers. One remedy is to develop a strong independent graduate program that does not involve undergraduate faculty, except if they so choose, and provide competent graduate students as teaching assistants to cover some class hours and assist undergraduate faculty. Another way to address load issues is to link load reduction to professional development, rewarding faculty for specific accomplishments that raise their profile, and thus, the profile of HAS.

Another issue that concerns the faculty and staff is that departmental enrollments have been used to determine hiring and funding recommendations. This quota system has created an adversarial relationship, as departments compete to fill classes, rather than advise with the best interests of the student in mind. To remedy the situation, it is suggested that the Hartford Art School make evaluations based on whole-school enrollments and restructure degrees to promote cross-disciplinary support for all areas of instruction. A Faculty Oversight Committee is suggested to help mediate and minimize problem areas. Other faculty recommendations address the issue of development, such as memberships in professional artist organizations, stipends for seminars, faculty studios "on site", and more travel/research opportunities.

The Hartford Art School staff expresses concerns that affect the efficiency and development of the Hartford Art School programs. The lack of a dedicated Financial Officer puts undue strain on existing staff members and faculty. The lack of a dedicated Public Relations staff member leaves large areas of support underdeveloped, including alumni relations, the Hartford Board of Trustees, student recruitment, faculty development, and Joseloff Gallery publicity. It is recommended that with the financial duties shifted to a new Financial Officer position, that public relations and alumni relations be



added to recruitment duties of the Assistant Dean. The staff also notes that rising health insurance costs have nullified salary increases. With staffing shortages, "comp time" benefits and free University classes are not feasible alternatives.

Other recommendations address the role of the Hartford Art School in wider communities. The Hartford Art School faculty and staff express a desire for a greater acknowledgement of the value of the Hartford Art School to the University. To encourage this relationship, it advises stronger marketing of classes to non-art majors, emphasizing the art component in the Liberal Arts education. The faculty also supports a more thorough effort toward a culturally diverse and wider, national and international student enrollment and faculty. It advises increased recruitment of graduate students, to find higher quality graduate students.

As the Hartford Art School contemplates growth and change, the faculty reiterates the value of the school's intimate community and suggests that these two new initiatives, along with their building projects, will enhance as well as preserve the Hartford Art School's remarkable history. These goals are natural outgrowths of the School's historical strengths, and are closely aligned with the mission of the University and its strategic directions. With the new initiatives and general recommendations set forth in this Plan, the Hartford Art School is on course to reinvigorate its extended family of it's board, faculty, staff, and students along with the wider Hartford community.