

**Summary of Internal and External Review Team Reports  
Graduate Programs in the College of Mass Communication and Media Arts  
Fall 2007 and Spring 2008**

The following summarizes the findings of the internal and external review teams that conducted reviews during the Fall 2007 and Spring 2008 semesters.

Both team reports described a graduate program in the throws of rapid change, and in the wake of considerable turmoil fueled by those changes. The curriculum changes remain incomplete, faculty relations remain strained but improving, governance in the past has been inconsistent and undemocratic, and the recruitment of students has degenerated. Yet, there are many top notch scholars in the college; PhD students who finish are securing ideal jobs; resources for OTS budgets, start up packages, technology, and GA's are better than in many other units around campus; and the overall size of the faculty has actually grown while most other units are in decline.

MCMA graduate programs are adequately supported given the university's current financial context; in fact, the external team indicated the resources seem impressive compared to many media programs. The current and previous Directors of Graduate Studies have done a laudable job advising students through and around a cumbersome curriculum. Advisement is hampered by the myriad requirements and meager offerings, and faculty turnover has hampered the advisement of many doctoral students.

Faculty gender balance is appropriate, but there are few ethnic minorities. Faculty vitas are impressive in terms of research; faculty research cooperation is particularly important for graduate programs structured like MCMA programs.

Both internal and external reports addressed these recommendations:

- Enhance the visibility of graduate programs at regional, national, and international conferences to restore the reputation of MCMA faculty and programs.
- Refine rules, improve communication, and enhance the transparency of decision-making regarding all graduate programs.
- Require annual proposals for faculty research/creative work and travel so funds may be requested from ORDA and budgeted through the college for adequate faculty support.
- Review staffing for graduate student advisement. Consider (a) adding a professional advisor position to free the Director for more indepth leadership activities, (b) assigning an appropriate faculty advisor to doctoral student when beginning their program, and (c) identifying strategies for master's students to interact with faculty so thesis advisors can be identified earlier in students' programs.
- Revise the doctoral program curriculum, reducing the number of required courses and separating master's and doctoral courses.
- Review the master's program curriculum to assure a balance of production and methods courses so students are prepared for their career expectations.
- Carefully plan the scheduling of graduate courses to regularly offer required courses taking into account teaching strengths and, when possible, the desires of graduate faculty.

- Provide more effective orientation for all graduate students.
- Annually review the teaching loads of graduate faculty to reflect their research/creative work and service responsibilities with their teaching assignments.
- Review and adjust the TA/RA assignments to reflect faculty/curriculum needs.
- Although MCMA technology resources are impressive compared to many media programs, develop long-term plans for new and replacement technology to assure currency.
- Prepare an “Operating Paper” for graduate programs which should be discussed and approved by the entire graduate faculty.

Additionally, these recommendations were offered:

- Improve the match between faculty needs and TA/RA capabilities which may require modification of criteria for awarding assistantships.
- Better integrate private foundation grants with MCMA and ORDA administration to ensure proper credit, support for extramural grant activity, and better grant management.
- Increase effort to enlarge faculty applicant pools to attract minority applicants.
- Immediately implement plans identified for graduate student recruitment. Particular attention should be paid to recruiting strong students with requisite skills and language facility to serve as TA/RAs. Assure an appropriate balance between domestic and international students.
- Adjust faculty teaching loads proportionally to reflect their performance in research/creative and service activities.
- Give attention to these items regarding facilities:
  - Housing all faculty in contiguous space.
  - Addressing safety and health issues—chemical storage; roof and mold situations.
  - Reviewing TA/RA office space so instructors have space to work with students, and researchers have space needed to fulfill their roles.
- Develop a plan for the regular rotation of required and optional graduate courses in all graduate programs.

Finally, the words of the External Review Committee Report can be used to summarize the program review reports--“faculty are positive about the quality and growth potential of graduate faculty. They are ready to move on from the period of conflict toward a more productive future.”