

Monitoring Report to the  
Middle States Commission on Higher Education  
from  
**DELAWARE COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN**  
Wilmington, Delaware 19801

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September 9, 2011

Subject of the Follow-Up Report:

On June 23, 2011, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education acted: “To accept the monitoring report and to note the visit by the Commission's representatives. To continue to warn the institution that its accreditation may be in jeopardy because of insufficient evidence that the institution is currently in compliance with Standard 7 (Institutional Assessment). To note that the institution remains accredited while on warning. To request a monitoring report, due September 1, 2011, documenting that the institution has achieved and can sustain compliance with Standard 7, including but not limited to (1) implementation of a comprehensive, organized, and sustained process for the overall assessment of institutional effectiveness in achieving mission and institutional goals; and (2) evidence that key outcome measures are used in planning, decision-making, and the allocation of resources (Standard 7).”

Date of the Evaluation/Follow-Up Team’s Visit:  
February 17-18, 2011

## Introduction

The Delaware College of Art and Design (DCAD) presents this monitoring report as requested by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) on June 23, 2011. The report addresses and provides documentation for the following Standard of Accreditation:

- **Standard 7: Institutional Assessment**  
The institution has developed and implemented an assessment process that evaluates its overall effectiveness in achieving its mission and goals and its compliance with accreditation standards.

The Monitoring Report provides documentation that DCAD is in full compliance with Standard 7. Specifically, the report focuses on DCAD's strategies for implementing a comprehensive and sustainable institutional assessment process that generates data on an ongoing basis that are used in decision-making, resource allocation, and subsequent planning. Toward that end, the Monitoring Report includes numerous specific examples of the College's institutional assessment activities and outcomes, supplemented by appendices containing comprehensive supporting corroboration for those activities.

A private, non-profit institution that opened in 1997 as a creative partnership of Pratt Institute and the Corcoran College of Art and Design, DCAD received its independent accreditation from MSCHE in 2008 with the condition that it submit a follow-up report to address issues of non-compliance with Standards 2 (Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal) and 7 (Institutional Assessment) and to improve its compliance with Standard 14 (Assessment of Student Learning). Subsequent to that submission and a team visit in November 2009, in March 2010 the Commission placed DCAD on warning due to non-compliance with Standards 2 and 7 and the need to improve its compliance with Standard 14. In June 2011, following the submission of another monitoring report and team visit, the Commission acted to continue to warn the institution that its accreditation was in jeopardy based on non-compliance with Standard 7 and ongoing concerns over compliance with Standard 14.

DCAD is grateful to MSCHE for the opportunity provided by the preparation of this monitoring report to review and strengthen its processes for assessing institutional effectiveness and student learning and to make improvements in the ways it documents those processes and assessment outcomes. Based on the evidence provided in this report and in accompanying documents, the College respectfully requests that the Commission find DCAD in compliance with Standard 7.

## Progress to Date and Current Status

The Monitoring Report must document “(1) implementation of a comprehensive, organized, and sustained process for the overall assessment of institutional effectiveness in achieving mission and institutional goals; and (2) evidence that key outcome measures are used in planning, decision-making, and the allocation of resources (Standard 7).”

DCAD’s approach to institutional assessment consists of three distinct yet integrated components:

- Monitoring and evaluation of institution-level indicators, including measures for assessing the effectiveness of the Strategic Plan
- Assessment of the College’s administrative units
- Assessment of student learning

The Monitoring Report is organized around these three components, and describes each in detail, with a focus on actions taken to implement each component, information provided by these assessments, and actions taken to improve programs and services based on assessment results. As appropriate, examples are provided, especially those corroborating linkages between planning and assessment activities and decision-making and resource allocations. Further, following the description and analysis of DCAD’s three components for assessing institutional effectiveness, actions intended to assure sustainability of these processes into the future are outlined. Because the February 2011 MSCHE team expressed strong concerns about the College’s ability to document and present its planning, assessment, and decision-making processes, the present document necessarily includes information that was provided in DCAD’s February 2011 Monitoring Report.

Throughout this document, care is taken to address all concerns raised by the February 2011 visiting team; a complete listing of those concerns and the institutional responses are found in *Appendix A – List of Concerns and Responses*.

## Context and Institutional Actions

At the time of the February 2011 MSCHE team visit, the quality of assessment of institutional and administrative effectiveness was quite uneven across the College. As noted by the team, while the College had made progress in these areas, there were several “disconnects” that prevented DCAD’s institutional assessment from being comprehensive, systematized and sustainable. These included:

- inadequate assessment training for faculty and administrators
- marginal engagement by faculty in the institutional assessment process
- the absence of written assessment plans for all administrative units

- poor documentation by the institution of assessment planning, the use of assessment results to improve programs and services, and clear linkages between planning/assessment processes and decision-making and resource allocations

Based on these concerns and other observations, the visiting team offered the following requirement:

- As a matter of urgency, DCAD must come into full compliance with Standard 7, remembering that institutional assessment also includes student-learning assessment (Standard 14). The institution must develop and implement an assessment process that evaluates its overall effectiveness in achieving its mission and goals, and that uses assessment results in planning and resource allocation and to improve teaching and learning at the College.

The visiting team also offered the following recommendations:

- The team also recommends that DCAD should consider working on the next reiteration of the Strategic Plan that looks ahead beyond 2013.
- DCAD is at a great disadvantage with not having a Recruitment Plan and should consider developing and implementing a plan.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive and consistent assessment plan to demonstrate a documented “organized, systematized, and sustained” assessment process. This should include the appropriate relationships between program and course goals and student learning outcomes. Additionally, evidence of student learning assessment information should be used to demonstrate improvements in teaching and learning.

Since the MSCHE team visit in February 2011, DCAD’s institutional assessment processes and its documentation of those processes have improved significantly.

- The College has greatly strengthened its efforts at assuring that administrators and faculty members alike are educated about good assessment practices, both by sending individuals to national/regional conferences and workshops and hosting assessment experts on campus.
- All-campus meetings now include a direct report on institutional assessment processes and data, and the College website has been updated to include a page specific to the assessment of institutional effectiveness and student learning.  
*[http://www.dcad.edu/site/about\\_dcad/accreditation](http://www.dcad.edu/site/about_dcad/accreditation)*
- All administrative units have written assessment plans in place that include mission and goals with specified measures and annual targets for achievement (*Appendix B through I – Department Assessment Plans*).
- DCAD has significantly upgraded its documentation processes in order to assure that assessment data are recorded, compiled, and disseminated to appropriate members of the campus community for review, discussion, and action.

The remainder of this report provides detailed information on these and other enhancements to DCAD’s institutional assessment processes, focusing on the College’s three primary components

for monitoring and evaluating institutional effectiveness, respectively. Following the description and analysis of these components, institutional actions intended to assure sustainability of these processes into the future are outlined.

## **Institution-Level Assessment**

### **Assessing the Strategic Plan**

DCAD's primary mechanism for tracking and evaluating overall institutional effectiveness is its assessment plan for the College's Strategic Plan 2008-2013 (*Appendix J and Appendix K*). This assessment plan was developed by Strategic Goal Committees comprised of faculty and staff. It includes performance indicators with a timeline for the assessment for the plan's five strategic goals (*Appendix L – Strategic Goal Milestone Progress Report*). Annual action plans were also developed that include timelines for gathering data, adhering to schedules of implementation and analyzing results. Reporting on the achievement of annual targets and planned actions for the next fiscal assessment takes place every December and is documented in Strategic Goal Committee Assessment Reports (*Appendix M – Strategic Goal Committee Action Plans and Appendix N.1 to N.6 – Committee Annual Reports*).

Specific examples of assessment data being gathered as part of the Strategic Plan reporting process are as follows:

#### *Strategic Goal I: Increase enrollment*

- To achieve the annual new student enrollment target outlined in the Strategic Goal Milestone Progress Report, the Admissions department uses student records software to track how students heard about DCAD and the conversion rate of prospects from these sources to identify areas of focus for its recruitment initiatives. For example, recruitment efforts at National Portfolio Days in Fall 2010 yielded 134 prospects with 19% becoming applicants of which 88% became accepted applicants with a final yield of 27% of the accepted applicants becoming deposited students. Compared to the yield of 6% prospects to applicants from purchased lists from the National Research Center for College and University Admissions (NRCCUA), this will become an increasingly important recruitment method along with visiting high schools and college fairs. In addition, data from on-campus activities (e.g., campus visits, students sitting in on a studio class) will be used as measures for evaluating the success of the Recruitment Plan developed in 2011 (*Appendix O – Recruitment Plan*). Data collected on how students heard about DCAD and the effectiveness of on-campus recruitment activities are found in *Appendix P and Appendix Q*, respectively.
- Tracking the effectiveness of merit awards in attracting and retaining qualified students is another example of how the College is collecting data to assess the Strategic Plan (*Appendix R – Merit Conversion Rates*). Since DCAD awards an average of 21% of total tuition in the form of DCAD Merit Scholarships and DCAD Need Grants, it is critical

that the institution be able to demonstrate that these awards have a significant impact on recruitment and retention. In 2009-10, 155 students received DCAD Merit awards out of a total enrollment of 218 for that year. Additionally, DCAD actively tracks the percentage of high school students taking part in Continuing Education programs who enter degree programs. One prime example, the Pre-College Art Studio Program, enables students to spend a week at DCAD in studio courses during the summer. This program began in 2007 with 26 students and grew to 48 students in the Summer 2011 program. From Summer 2009, eight of the Pre-College students became degree students in Fall 2010 representing 26% of the total Pre-College class. The following summer, eight of the Pre-College students became Fall 2011 students as outlined in the Strategic Goal Milestone Progress Report. As growth continues, this program will become increasingly valuable in attracting high school students to the degree program.

### *Strategic Goal II: Focus on the students*

As the percentage of students living in DCAD housing increases, the College has had to change its view of itself as a commuter school and focus on enhancing residence life, especially given the challenges an urban location presents. The initiatives that DCAD has identified in its current strategic plan to improve residence life are primarily being assessed by student satisfaction with housing facilities and associated issues, such as housing activities and the impact on interactions with other resident students. The Year-End Student Survey allows the College to monitor student satisfaction levels closely and make improvements as necessary. Additional questions related to satisfaction with the facilities and activities were added to the Year-End Student Survey in 2010 and 2011 (*Appendix S – Year End Student Survey Results*) to monitor the results of initiatives such as:

- Renovations to the Saville Residence Hall including a new student center,
- Renting adequate and appropriate off-site housing, and
- Student Services activities including social, safety and study programming.

The impact of initiatives has been positive. The 2005 Student survey resulted in only 26% of the respondents being satisfied when asked, “How satisfied are you with the extent to which housing has enhanced your ability to meet other people, study more effectively and adopt a healthy lifestyle”. In 2010, the same question resulted in 62% of the respondents being satisfied.

### *Strategic Goal IV: Maximize use of existing resources*

As one initiative under this strategic goal, DCAD intends to implement a student laptop requirement policy by Fall 2013. Computer labs within the school are currently being used by more than the traditional graphic design and animation classes. With the addition of a four-dimensional design course in Spring 2006 and the move toward digital color photography over the last few years, room scheduling of the College’s three computer labs has become increasingly difficult. Student surveys indicated that students are already using their own computers for assignments, so converting studios and classrooms spaces into laptop-compatible spaces will save the College from the ongoing costs of creating more

computer labs. In order to measure progress toward this objective, DCAD developed an implementation schedule and is using the Year-End Student Survey to determine issues related to the technology requirements in courses and academic majors. In addition, 15-year enrollment projections with room usage forecasts will be used in this planning process to identify classrooms and studios that will be equipped for laptops. Determining the classroom set-up and cost of adding power connections is currently being researched.

DCAD has also significantly strengthened connections between strategic planning and budgeting and resource allocations. Specifically, the Strategic Goal Committees monitor progress on the Strategic Plan and these committee reports mark the beginning of the annual budget/planning process that guides departments in evaluating their overall effectiveness and that contain data that must be used to justify budget requests. *Only initiatives that are tied to the institution's strategic goals are funded.*

Specific examples of initiatives funded through the strategic planning process are as follows:

- Based on the effectiveness in converting 29% of prospective students to enrolled students through college fairs, high school visits and National Portfolio Days, the Admissions department proposed as part of its Committee I Strategic Goal Assessment report that its academic year 2011-12 budget be increased to support a part-time Admissions Counselor to attend additional National Portfolio Days, college fairs and high school visits. From 2008-09 to 2011-12, the budget for travel to National Portfolio Days almost doubled, from \$10,000 to \$20,000. In further support of this initiative, the budget for printed materials was increased in 2010-11 to develop a new view book, degree catalog, and poster to send to high schools and prospects in areas that DCAD would be visiting.
- In support of the Strategic Goal Focus on Students, one of the methodologies identified was to expand building hours. The 2009-10 Budget included an increase in security service expenditures of \$18,000. A problem that arose in conjunction with additional building hours was the need for additional evening and weekend support services. As a result, \$20,000 for a part-time librarian is included in the 2011-12 budget.
- As a result of the need to create new full-time positions to achieve specific strategic initiatives and directly supporting the Strategic Goal Build Infrastructure, the new position of a full-time Dean/Director of Institutional Assessment was filled in Summer 2010. This supports the strategic initiative to enhance academic excellence under Strategic Goal Focus on Students. In further support of this important goal, the College has budgeted in FY2012 to separate the position into two distinct positions (Dean, and Director of Research and Institutional Assessment) for \$166,000 in total compensation.
- As part of the Strategic Goal, Plan for the Future, \$25,000 was budgeted for a Facilities Master Plan with two main components of the plan identified as program space and student housing. This plan will guide DCAD in future budget decisions related to the next iteration of its strategic plan.

Further demonstration of DCAD's commitment to its strategic planning process is the amount of funding it has dedicated to the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan's implementation (*Appendix T - Strategic Plan Funding FY11 and FY12*). For the 2010-11 fiscal year, the College spent almost \$1.9 million on strategic initiatives, with \$1.6 million coming from the operating budget (i.e., 33% of total expenditures for the year). For the 2011-12 fiscal year, the College has committed \$1.8 million in support of strategic initiatives, with \$1.3 million coming from the operating budget (i.e., 25% of total expenditures for the year).

As a final observation regarding the College's existing Strategic Plan, the plan was revised in Spring 2010 and approved in June 2010 by DCAD's Board of Directors, with a particularly significant change being the elimination of immediate future plans to explore the possibility of offering four-year programs. Instead, college faculty and administrators agreed that DCAD's priority must be continuing to assure that its existing academic programs are of the highest quality. This revision was supported by observations and a recommendation made by the February 2011 MSCHE visiting team.

The February 2011 MSCHE team also recommended that DCAD begin development of its next strategic plan, and that process was initiated in February 2011. The development and implementation of the College's Strategic Plan for 2014-19 is described fully in *Appendix U – Strategic Planning 2014 - 2019*.

### **Other Institutional Assessment Activities**

Like all institutions of higher education, DCAD uses a wide range of performance indicators to monitor its status and progress institution-wide, including retention and graduation rates as well as transfer information from the National Clearing House. The College also administers surveys on an annual basis to alumni, faculty, and students, and this information is routinely provided to appropriate units to be used for planning purposes. These evaluation activities were greatly strengthened in Spring 2010 with the creation of a new position, Dean and Director of Institutional Assessment.

Specific examples of how information obtained through institution-level performance indicators has been used to improve programs and services are as follows:

- Retention rates for students who enter DCAD in the fall and who remain enrolled to their fourth semester have been relatively consistent over time (e.g., averaging 60% for 2003-04 to 2007-08 and 2005-06 to 2009-10 (*Appendix V - Average Semester to Semester Retention*)). Fall-to-fall retention has averaged around 63% since 2003-04. The College monitors these rates closely and has initiated a number of actions in an attempt to improve student retention. Chief among these is the administration of placement testing before students begin their first semester, with students who do not meet target thresholds being advised to enroll in a developmental course, *Introduction to Academic Studies*. Initially students took this course during the fall semester, but because they then were not on track to graduate with their student cohort, DCAD began offering an intensive version of the class three weeks prior to the start of the fall semester. Results to date indicate that

of the students who took the 2010 intensive version of the class, 70% returned for their third semester compared with 65% of the students who took the course during the 2010 fall semester returning for their third semester. Another key institution-wide performance indicator for the College is graduation rates (*Appendix W– Graduation Rates*). The current five-year average through 2010 for students finishing in four semesters is 48%. DCAD expects that with the success of the summer intensive version of *Introduction to Academic Studies* its percentage of students completing in four semesters will increase.

- DCAD also strives to improve retention rates through attracting quality students and has increased its top DCAD Merit Award to \$8,000 per academic year. In planning for the FY2010, the College recognized that tuition increased steadily over the years, but the top merit award had remained the same. Seventeen of the 56 top merit-awarded (\$8,000) DCAD applicants (31%) converted to student status. The past two years saw higher percentage conversion rates of 34% and 35%, respectively, for the top award of \$6,000. This means that the College was still not the school of first-choice for some top students seeking to attend other art and design schools. DCAD will always be challenged to attract students who seek the native enrollment four-year school experience, but the value of DCAD’s education, at a significantly lower tuition for the first two years than other professional art schools, could be a decision-making factor for many students. Admissions adjusted the requirements for awarding the top amount for the 2011 fall class so that there would be more merit dollars available for the mid-level awards. Results from this adjustment along with retention rates for the Fall 2010 top-Merit award cohort will be reported in December 2011 Strategic Goal Assessment reports.
- Although the College has only been tracking its graduates who enter four-year institutions based on information from the National Clearing House for a short time, it has aggressively used this data to improve programs and services. To illustrate, when 2008 data demonstrated that only 27% of DCAD graduates were transferring to four-year schools, the College enhanced its efforts to familiarize students with prospective colleges. One specific initiative focused on taking students to visit four-year institutions, accompanied by Student Services personnel and the Area Coordinator of their program major. In addition, a direct effort was made to have recruiters from four-year institutions visit DCAD. These efforts have proved to be very successful, with transfer rates for the classes of 2009 and 2010 increasing to 54% and 58%, respectively (*Appendix X – Transfer Rates*).
- As a final example, DCAD surveys its alumni on a regular basis, with major administrations conducted in 2005 and 2010. Primary issues of interest include alumni success in their area of study as well as whether they continued their education after leaving DCAD or went directly into the work place. In 2005, 25.6% of alumni surveyed said that they received a BFA degree and 42.3% were working in their major or related field. In 2010, 43.9% reported they had received their BFA, with 35% working in their major or related field. In the 2010 survey, 53.7% of respondents said that DCAD had prepared them “very well” for working toward their bachelor’s degree. In recognition of the importance of keeping Area Coordinators well-informed of their respective fields, a new strategic initiative includes a more systematic plan for Area Coordinators to attend professional development conferences and workshops. Area Coordinators must be aware

of changes in market trends of their profession in order to make informed adjustments to their program at DCAD and to prepare students to make well-informed decisions in the pursuit of their BFA. Each Area Coordinator may attend at least one major conference in their field every three years sponsored by DCAD. Historically, DCAD has not had the funding and has only been able to supplement faculty development cost to individuals. The allocation of budget dollars reaffirms DCAD's commitment as a professional art and design school to its students through supporting ongoing development of the faculty (*Appendix Z - Faculty Development Planning*).

## **Assessment of Administrative Units**

All administrative departments at DCAD have in place annual assessment plans that reflect the College's Mission and Strategic Plan and that include action items to achieve initiatives, assessment strategies and measures, targets for gauging success, and needed resources. During the academic year 2010-11, six departments (Admissions, Communications, Continuing Education, Development, Library, Student Services) assessed their progress toward goal achievement, discussed current actions undertaken and made proposals for future actions to be taken along with the required budget allocation to implement their plans; the remaining departments did so by the summer of 2011.

Administrative departments develop their plans so that they align with the College's strategic planning goals, and understand therefore that unit plans may change as institutional goals are revised. In addition, as part of plan development, unit directors work with the College's Chief Administrative Officer to assure plan objectives and activities include high quality performance indicators to assist in decision-making. The Chief Administrative Officer also provides units with information to determine the specific resources that will be needed to realize plan activities.

As another step in the process, administrative departments present their goals and assessment plans to the other Directors for discussion. Effective for the 2011-12 academic year, these meetings will also include faculty and students in order to make the process more inclusive and to engage those constituent groups into the institutional assessment process more meaningfully.

Data gathered by administrative departments are updated annually in the Department Goal Milestone Progress Report (*Appendix B.1 through I.1*) as well as in the college-wide Milestone Strategic Plan Progress Assessment Report. Department Level Assessment Reports (*Appendix B.2 through I.2*) are also presented by departments to the Directors, with special emphasis placed on whether annual targets were met and subsequent actions required; this information is used to determine resource allocations for the next fiscal year. In this way, DCAD's administrative units truly "close the loop" on the preceding year's assessment plan, using collected information to inform the subsequent year's planning. Further, by tying funding in the subsequent year to the prior year's outcomes and subsequent actions, DCAD assures linkages among planning, assessment, and resource allocations.

Specific examples of how administrative units have successfully "closed the loop" on their annual assessment plans are as follows:

- Admissions did not meet its enrollment target of 134 for Fall 2010, enrolling only 120 new students. Discussion of the Fall 2010 assessment results revealed that the College's strategy of targeting a significant number of venues in a single recruiting season required more resources than had been allocated, which led to a \$2,000 increase in the Admissions travel budget and the hiring of an additional part-time recruiter. The revised fall 2011 enrollment target for 134 new students was essentially achieved, with 133 incoming students enrolled.
- Based on analysis of conversions from acceptance, to student deposit, to enrollment in DCAD, Admissions discovered that there were early inflated numbers of deposited students due to students being encouraged by DCAD to make their deposit within two weeks of receiving their acceptance letter. Students would then later be accepted elsewhere, and decline the admission opportunity at DCAD to attend the other school. This caused inflated numbers in admissions to be recorded prior to May 1, and also caused DCAD additional administrative work in returning student deposits. DCAD changed its policy to encourage students to meet the universal deposit deadline of May 1, consistent with other colleges' policies. This change gave DCAD a better idea of progress in enrollments, and higher consistency for conversion for students who make deposits to their enrollment in DCAD.
- Tracking results from Merit Scholarship Awards and student enrollments, Admissions recognized the importance of the overall link between the percentage of students receiving Merit Awards and enrollment at DCAD. In Fall 2009, 38% of the new students received Merit Awards. In Fall 2010, that number dropped to 33%, which was reflected in missed enrollment targets. This led Admissions to propose a revised Merit Scholarship policy, to include more students. By doing this, the conversion rate of awarded to enrolled students increased by 10% (from 33% of the previous year to 43% for FY11). This support of the students through Merit Awards was a contributing factor in improved new student enrollment for Fall 2011.
- Communications, acknowledging the immense value of a high-quality college website, did not have the capability of monitoring website traffic in 2008-09. There were also problems with respect to the site's effectiveness and consistency. These observations led to the redesign and launching of a new site in Fall 2009 as well as the hiring of a student worker to assist in updating the site. Since that time, target projections for website hits from Delaware, the primary indicator of interest, have been exceeded by far, going from a baseline of 17,361 hits in 2010 to 31,183 hits in 2011.
- In support of Continuing Education Goal, to build enrollment in the degree program, the Department focused on a summer course, the Pre-College Art Studio Program. This course brings high-school students to campus for a week to study art and design and attendees may stay in student housing. Attendance has grown steadily, from 26 in 2007 to 48 in 2011. Due to the success of this program, the Continuing Education Department's marketing budget was increased 18% for the 2011-12 budget year. This increase in budget allocation will be supplemented by e-newsletters and customized links to the

DCAD website to drive visibility of the program resulting in increased enrollment and conversion rates to the degree program.

- In the 2010 assessment of Student Services Goal 2, maintain a safe living environment, the target of 55% of students responding positively to the survey question that they feel safe was not met. Based on these results, the Director of Student Services actions to achieve the 2011 target included increasing requests for additional patrols from the Wilmington Police Department and Downtown Visions, a safety patrol organization outside of the police department. There was noticeably more patrolling in the vicinity of the College since May 2011, which coincided with a newly-opened music venue one block from DCAD. Additionally, Downtown Visions and the police department have been involved directly by giving presentations at DCAD to parents and students regarding their organizations efforts to keep the city and DCAD safe. The 2012 Year-End Student Survey will measure the success of these efforts. If the current non-budget actions do not have the expected outcome, Student Services will look at actions that may include hiring DCAD's own security to patrol the campus. Another key indicator in the achievement of this goal is the actual number of crime incidents per student, tracked through Cleary Act Reporting. At 1% for the 2010 reporting year, DCAD was well below the national average. The statistics for crime incidents for 2010-11 are currently being tabulated.
- The Library goal to increase user access to library resources and services not only led to the 2011-12 budgeting for a part-time librarian as mentioned earlier in this report, but also a new library website that would better serve as a portal to information services. The 2009-10 target for library references to increase 5% over the prior year was not met, which resulted in the action of redesigning the library page on the website as part of Phase II of DCAD's website development. The redesign was included in the 2010-11 budget and the results will be evaluated in the next department assessment cycle. Additional non-budget actions that support the redesign are a new library blog, links to library browse guides, and a Twitter account specific to the Library.

## **Assessment of Student Learning**

Although the February 2011 MSCHE team found DCAD to be in compliance with Standard 14, team members concluded the College was "marginally in compliance" for several reasons. Specific concerns centered on the following issues:

- Incomplete information provided in materials accompanying DCAD's February 2011 Monitoring Report, suggesting that program goals and student learning outcomes were missing for some programs;
- Continued inclusion in the Educational Assessment Plan (EAP) of baccalaureate competencies derived from NASAD standards for several program areas;
- Lack of adequate structure and clear standards for the Walkthroughs and portfolio assessments;

- Faculty frustration and skepticism regarding the value of rubrics to evaluate student work;
- Lack of faculty development opportunities related to the assessment of student learning.

As a result of these observations and concerns, in its June 23, 2011, action MSCHE requested that DCAD provide a second monitoring report, due January 1, 2012, to focus specifically on Standard 14. Because the assessment of student learning is central to overall institutional effectiveness, the College will take this opportunity to describe the significant progress that has been made in its approach to assessing student learning since February 2011. This progress has taken place in the following areas:

- Enhancement of program goals, program competencies, and student learning outcomes in courses;
- Revision of the College's Educational Assessment Plan;
- Implementation of a periodic Academic Program Review process;
- Enhanced General Education Assessment Process;
- Improved Walkthrough assessment process;
- Development of Graduation Show rubrics;
- Development of rubrics by faculty for use in program-specific portfolio reviews;
- Annual Art Show evaluation;
- Assessment training.

### **Program Goals, Competencies, and Student Learning Outcomes**

As part of the Academic Program Review (APR) process (see below), each of the six degree areas as well as Academic Studies (General Education) and Foundation (foundation studies for first-year students) have clearly delineated program goals that emerge from the institutional mission; these eight program areas also have a set of intended student competencies that stem from program goals.

During the process of revising program goals and assuring their congruence with institutional mission and more specific program competencies, faculty used this opportunity to address the MSCHE team's concerns about the inclusion of baccalaureate competencies in some of the programs. As such, the program competencies for all six degree programs, Academic Studies, and Foundation have been revised as needed by the faculty and are now appropriate to the mission of DCAD as a two-year transfer institution. These revised program goals and competencies can be found in *Appendix AA – Revised Competencies*.

Much progress has also been made at the course level. Notably, during the Spring 2011 semester, the Area Coordinators conducted assessments as part of the Course Outcomes Assessment Pilot, focusing in particular on student learning outcomes. The following courses were included in the pilot: Art History I, Character Animation, Drawing I, 2D Design II, Interior Design II, Illustration II, Typography II, and Color Photography. Materials resulting from this pilot project can be found in *Appendix AB– Course Outcomes Assessment Pilot*. The reporting grids, which summarize the results, include Program Outcomes, Course Outcomes (linked to Program

Competencies), Assessment Activity, Expectations for Performance (both individual and class), Outcomes, and Action to be Taken/Already Taken. These summaries were reviewed and recommendations for enhancements were made in the Area Coordinators' meeting August 24, 2011. Information is to be further disseminated and discussed with program faculty in order to inform teaching. In addition, a schedule has been created by the Area Coordinators for assessment of student learning outcomes in courses. (*See Appendix AC – Calendar for Course Assessment*)

Finally, all syllabi/course outlines for courses to be taught in Fall 2011 have been updated by faculty to include student learning outcomes specific to those courses (*see Appendix AD – Programs with Syllabi SLOs Updated*). Courses taught only in the spring term will be similarly revised in time for the Spring 2012 semester. Program competencies are also being added to syllabi, with links to the course-specific student learning outcomes, further clarifying connections between program outcomes and course outcomes.

### **Educational Assessment Plan (EAP)**

In response to concerns expressed by the February 2011 MSCHE team, the College significantly updated and improved its Educational Assessment Plan (*Appendix AE - DCAD Educational Assessment Plan*). The updated plan includes the following important information:

- Background information and an overview of academic assessment
- A profile for each of DCAD's six studio programs, Academic Studies (General Education at DCAD), and Foundation studies. These profiles include the area's mission, goals, program competencies (program learning outcomes), curriculum map linking program competencies to courses, and assessment tools.

### **Academic Program Review**

Early in the summer of 2011, faculty began the process of Academic Program Review (APR) of each of the six degree areas, Academic Studies (General Education), and Foundation. The purposes of this process are to conduct a significant review of the program in order to gain a clear understanding of its present status and to plan for the future. The APR relies on both internal and external perspectives, with the first step a self-study that is conducted by the program. For the second step, the program will bring to campus a professional external to the institution to examine the program and share recommendations for program development and improvement. For this first APR round, these external consultants will visit campus during the Fall 2011 semester.

Although each program is undergoing APR at the present time, after the 2011-12 academic year programs will conduct reviews on a rotating five-year schedule, as shown below:

2012-2013	Interior Design and Fine Arts
2013-2014	Academic Studies (General Education)

2014-2015	Illustration and Graphic Design
2015-2016	Foundation
2016-2017	Photography and Animation

The Academic Program Review Process guidelines are found in *Appendix AF – Academic Program Review Process*.

### **General Education (Academic Studies) Assessment Enhancements**

Assessment of student learning in General Education (Academic Studies) takes place through two distinct methodologies. First, like the studio programs, Academic Studies participates in the Course Outcomes Assessment process described above, with the achievement of specific student learning outcomes assessed in individual courses. Art History I, part of Academic Studies and a course common to all DCAD students, was included in the Spring 2011 Course Outcomes Assessment Pilot described earlier. Now that the pilot has been successfully completed, a rotating schedule for assessing individual courses has been created, including a rotation of all Academic Studies courses over seven semesters.

In addition, DCAD has a capstone assessment in place for the Academic Studies area in the form of a final paper for Art History III and Writing and Literature III. For this requirement, students write a shared final paper used for both of these courses, and the assignment involves not only writing and critical thinking skills, but art historical knowledge as well. While this assignment has been a significant ongoing part of the curriculum, these papers will now be evaluated by outside readers using AACU Values Rubrics to provide a more systematic and reliable assessment of the students' work.

### **Walkthrough Assessment Process**

The Walkthrough is inherently outcomes-based and has been an integral part of DCAD's educational process and evaluation of students since the College opened its doors. As part of the Walkthrough, scheduled four times each semester, projects from classes are displayed on the walls in the hallways, allowing students, faculty, and others to see the results of classroom activity. In the Walkthrough, one floor is selected for review, and either the Area Coordinator or a faculty member presents the project being displayed, followed by discussion by those viewing the display. Student work is then evaluated by participating faculty using the Walkthrough Follow-up Form.

Although the Walkthrough provides an exceptionally rich opportunity for assessing student work, doing so in a structured and meaningful way presents a challenge, in part because different programs and courses are represented on each floor's Walkthrough. Significant improvements have been made in order to assure a more systematic process and higher quality assessment data. Open-ended follow-up forms, which often produced wide-ranging evaluative comments, were initially replaced with a rating scale that includes five dimensions of student work that faculty members agreed all studio work share regardless of program or course. The new form was

piloted on the two final Walkthroughs of Spring 2011. Documentation of this process from the Walkthroughs using the improved form in Spring 2011 is found in *Appendix AG – Two Walkthroughs Spring 2011*. The faculty participants reported the new form represented a significant improvement to the process, providing additional focus and direction and yielding more useful information for assessment purposes. For Fall 2011, the form was further discussed and improved at the Area Coordinator meeting on August 24, and the rating scale was into a rubric with evaluation criteria. (See *Appendix AH – Updated Walkthrough Form Fall 2011*)

Walkthrough results, including comments from the open-ended section of the form, are compiled by the Dean and distributed to faculty, who then review and discuss the findings at the faculty meeting most closely following the Walkthrough. These discussions generate additional perspectives as well as suggestions for improvements to courses, programs, and projects.

In summary, faculty members have always used information from the Walkthroughs to improve the teaching and learning experience at DCAD, and the recent enhancements to this process will produce even more valuable data for this purpose. Further, because the new rating scale brings a quantitative dimension to the evaluation process, the Walkthrough evaluation data make it possible to benchmark and track student performance by area across time.

### **Graduation Show Rubrics**

DCAD's Graduation Show, held each spring, serves as the College's ultimate capstone experience for students, making it possible to evaluate performance at the point at which students are moving on to the next phase of their education. As with the Walkthroughs, faculty members desired a more structured and formal process for evaluating student work at the Graduation Show (as well as at the Annual Student Show held in February). Therefore, for the Spring 2011 Graduation Show, Area Coordinators created rubrics for this purpose based specifically on individual program competencies/student learning outcomes. Completed rubrics for this show can be found in *Appendix AI – Graduation Show Rubrics*. In this, the performance of students in each area is aggregated, giving an overview of the individual program's outcomes.

Area Coordinators and adjunct faculty examine and review the show, recording their evaluations and rubrics on the rubric forms. For the Spring 2011 Graduation Show, the Foundation Area Coordinator also evaluated the show from the perspective of Foundation. Data summaries from the Spring 2011 show were compiled by the Dean for discussion at the first Area Coordinator meeting in the fall semester held on August 24, 2011, with the focus on identifying strengths and weaknesses in student performance and making recommendations for change as appropriate in programs, courses, and teaching approaches. Further, assessment results from the Graduation Show are used by the studio programs as a part of the Academic Program Review process, and will be maintained over time by institutional research for benchmarking and tracking purposes.

### **Program-Specific Portfolio Rubrics**

Faculty members are now in the process of revising and creating portfolio rubrics that are program-specific. For the most part, these rubrics are based on the Graduation Show Rubrics created for use in assessing the Spring 2011 Graduation Show. Work on these rubrics will continue, and they will be used for evaluating programs at the conclusion of the Fall 2011 semester.

### **Annual Student Art Show**

A similar approach to the one now implemented for the Graduation Show will be used in assessing the Annual Student Art Show in Spring 2012. Information from this show will reflect the work of students in process of their studies and give the individual areas perspective as to results mid-cycle for these students. Previously, the Annual Student Show was placed on the same rotation as Walkthroughs, where faculty would observe, discuss, and write follow-up comments as part of the Walkthrough process. The Spring 2011 Annual Student Show (January 2011) was discussed as a part of revisiting the Spring 2011 Walkthroughs at the Area Coordinator meeting August 24, 2011.

### **Assessment Training**

Based directly on recommendations by the February 2011 MSCHE team, DCAD has made assessment and rubric training for faculty members and the Dean a top priority, as demonstrated by the following:

- Attendance in April 2011 by the Dean and three faculty members at an MSCHE assessment workshop at the University of Delaware conducted by Linda Suskie.
- Sponsorship in April 2011 of a workshop at DCAD for all Area Coordinators on assessment and rubrics conducted by Pratt Associate Provost Marianthi Zikopoulos.
- Attendance in May 2011 by the Dean at an MSCHE workshop on integrating planning and assessment at the University of Delaware conducted by Michael Middaugh and Sandra Starke.
- Sponsorship in August 2011 of one-on-one assessment training for Area Coordinators at DCAD by Sean McKitrick, Assistant Provost and Director of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment at Binghamton University.
- Sponsorship in August 2011 of an assessment workshop for full- and part-time faculty at DCAD conducted by Kathleen Pusecker, Director of the Office of Educational Assessment at the University of Delaware.

Participation in these various training activities has helped advance understanding of good assessment practice, which will contribute greatly to the sustainability of quality assessment into the future. Further, DCAD intends to make sure that professional development related to outcomes assessment is provided in an ongoing fashion. DCAD will support continued participation by faculty and staff in future MSCHE workshops, visits by external consultants, and has created a plan for ongoing educational assessment training for academic areas and on a rotating basis. *(See Appendix AI – Assessment Training Schedule)*

## **Sustainability of Good Assessment Practice**

As this Monitoring Report demonstrates, DCAD has expended extraordinary time, effort, and resource in assuring that its institutional assessment process is **comprehensive, organized, and sustained**. The initiatives and practices contributing to the sustainability of this process include:

- Developing and implementing an assessment-driven strategic plan that serves to guide planning, assessment, decision-making, and resource allocations at all levels of the institution.
- Building assessment into the institution's major operational processes in the form of annual assessment plans and reporting.
- Explicitly linking planning and assessment to the College's budget allocation process and communicating that linkage to the campus community.
- Tying assessment reporting to the annual budget planning cycle, enabling the identification of needs and resource allocations that support strategic initiatives.
- Making sure that college and unit meetings regularly include benchmark updates on assessment results and "closing the loop" activities.
- Establishing a schedule that ensures that all academic programs, courses, and administrative units are assessed on a regular and ongoing basis.
- Constructing an assessment training calendar ensuring that all DCAD personnel are involved in the assessment process.

Importantly, the College has also created and is searching to fill a new position, Director of Institutional Research and Assessment. This individual will have responsibility for overseeing and coordinating the College's planning and assessment efforts, at both the institutional and unit levels, and will play a special role in assuring that the good work that has already been done in these areas will continue and improve over time. The position was posted in August and the College expects to fill the position sometime in the Fall 2011 semester.

## **List of Appendices to the Report**

This is a list of appendices for the September 9, 2011 Monitoring Report. The appendices are available electronically in two ways: using the supplementary media disk with this report, or by accessing the Accreditation page on the DCAD website. The URL is listed below.

*[http://www.dcad.edu/site/about\\_dcad/accreditation](http://www.dcad.edu/site/about_dcad/accreditation)*

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Appendix B.2 – Admission's Goal Assessment Report 3.21.2011

Appendix C – Continuing Education Assessment Plan

Appendix C.1 – Continuing Education Goal Milestones Progress Report

Appendix C.2 – Continuing Education Assessment Report 3.21.2011

Appendix D – Communications Assessment Plan

Appendix D.1 – Communications Goal Milestones Progress Report

Appendix D.2 – Communications Assessment Report 3.21.2011

Appendix E – Development Assessment Plan

Appendix E.1 – Development Goal Milestone Progress Report

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Appendix F – Finance and Administration Assessment Plan

Appendix F.1 – Finance and Administration Milestones Progress Report

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Appendix F.3 – Financial Operations Goal Assessment Report 6.21.2011

Appendix F.4 – Human Resource Goal Assessment Report 6.21.2011

Appendix F.5 – Information Technology Goal Assessment Report 6.21.2011

Appendix F.6 – Student Financial Services Goal Assessment 6.21.2011

Appendix G – Library Assessment Plan

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Appendix H – Registrar Assessment Plan

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