



September 29, 2017

TO: ASC Curriculum Committee

FROM: Dr. Mary Anne Beecher, Chairperson, Department of Design

RE: Rationale for course changes and additions to Interior Design curriculum

This purpose of this letter is to provide the rationale for three specific changes to the curriculum for the Interior Design major in the Department of Design. Each addresses a specific curricular requirement/need in relation to the accreditation of that professional program. The Department of Design admits students into its accredited Interior Design major each year. The program is accredited by two distinct bodies: NASAD (The National Association of Schools of Art and Design) and CIDA (the Council of Interior Design Accreditation).

In an effort to anticipate and address areas of study that require more focused learning through specific coursework, the program wishes to delete two courses focused on graphic communication (DSN 3302 Visual Strategies for Interior Design 1 and DSN 4302 Visual Strategies for Interior Design 2). This allows for the inclusion of an interior design-specific course focused on the technical properties of interior finish materials and their application as part of sustainable design strategies (DSN 3550.02 Materials and Processes). It also creates space in the curriculum for an interior design-specific course focused on the use of moving digital images to communicate design ideas (Design Media 3). With this adjustment to the technical and technological elements of the curriculum, our program strengthens its ability to meet the accreditation criteria in those areas. CIDA Accreditation Standard 13 "Products and Materials" requires that "students have the skills and knowledge required to appropriately select and apply manufactured products and custom design elements to a design solution." CIDA Accreditation Standard 9 "Communication" requires that graduates are able to "apply a variety of communication techniques and technologies appropriate to a range of purposes and audiences." Because our department has prioritized the development of skills in time-based media for the presentation of design concepts using moving images, sound, and other cinematic characteristics, this course provides essential skills and knowledge of effective visual storytelling principles. The exchange of credit hours described here brings our program into complete compliance with the accreditation standards of both accrediting bodies while retaining a curricular structure that is parallel with the other two majors in our department.

While the accreditation standards for understanding the context of historical design is more general in the NASAD standards, CIDA accreditation standard #10 (History and Theory) requires that "Interior designers apply knowledge of history and theory of interiors architecture, decorative arts, and art when solving design problems." The intent of this standard is to ensure that "graduates have the knowledge base of design history and theory to inform design solutions." Without the addition of this advanced-level course, our students only receive an introductory-level exposure to design-specific history knowledge. In addition to learning how to form connections between developments in design over time and the social,



political, and technological influences that affect historical change in the built environment, this proposed new course provides students with an opportunity to understand the significant movements, traditions, and theories that have influenced the evolution of designed interior space, and it will provide a more focused presentation of the historical evolution of the history of furniture and other aspects of material and visual culture that influence interior spaces.

The proposed course DSN 5750 has the added bonus of appealing to students in the other two design majors and it could also be beneficial to students of architecture, art and any student with a desire to gain a more advanced understanding of how interior spaces—the aspect of architecture to which we are most intimately connected—can be understood from a technological, social, and human perspective.

Students in our program have needed this advanced history course for some time and we are very eager to see it approved. Knowledge of the past is critical for persons who desire to imagine the future. There is much to be learned from the examining case studies that represent the most significant contributions to the evolution of the interior environment.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mary Anne Beecher, Chairperson
Department of Design