

Board Meeting
May 21, 2009

ESTABLISH THE MASTER OF ARTS IN DESIGN CRITICISM, COLLEGE OF
ARCHITECTURE AND THE ARTS, CHICAGO

Action: Approve the Establishment of the Master of Arts in Design Criticism

Funding: No New Funding Required

The Chancellor at Chicago with the advice of the Chicago Senate, the Graduate College, and the College of Architecture and the Arts recommends the establishment of the Master of Arts in Design Criticism.

The mission of the proposed Master of Arts in Design Criticism is to develop textual and visual argumentation in the areas of architecture, urbanism, landscape, and allied design practices. The program revolves around intensive writing seminars and publication workshops for the objective of developing the practice of writing into diverse fields of electronic and print media communication. The M.A. will offer an intellectual opportunity for post graduate and mid-career professionals who are interested in re-focusing on research, writing, and publication. Graduates will have the professional education that will allow them to obtain positions as writers, editors, and educators with both print and electronic media, colleges and universities, magazines, journals, not-for-profit organizations, and architectural firms.

Today, architecture and its corollary design fields have become increasingly focused toward academic and professional specialization. In this context, architecture and its allied design professions have become central in producing the complex environment in which we live, but increasingly unable to situate and evaluate the cultural and social significance of such developments for a wider audience. The field has become louder (and more spectacular) but less articulate. At the same time, the requested product of design competitions is increasingly gravitating to books and arguments. Locally, for Chicago to become an important cultural center requires not simply material evidence, but the ability to marshal such evidence to tell relevant and surprising stories to diverse audiences. This program proposes to fill these public and professional needs by understanding criticism as a platform for new practices and future production.

The proposed program is composed of 56 credit hours, consisting of dedicated pro-seminars and writing tutorials for those enrolled in the Master of Arts program, supported by existing coursework in architectural, urban and design theory, and history offered in the School and College. The course-work only program will meet its curricular objectives by offering a concentrated graduate sequence in architectural and urban theory, history, criticism, writing, and graphic argumentation. In addition, students will benefit from participation in an annual research seminar, resulting in the publication of its findings.

The Board action recommended in this item complies in all material respects with applicable State and federal laws, University of Illinois *Statutes, The*

General Rules Concerning University Organization and Procedure, and Board of Trustees policies and directives.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs concurs with this recommendation. The University Senates Conference has indicated that no further Senate jurisdiction is involved.

The President of the University recommends approval. This action is subject to further review and approval by the Illinois Board of Higher Education.