During the past decade, the School of Art has faced significant challenges created by a surge of enrollment that put pressure on its financial, physical, and human resources. During the past five years, the School’s leadership and faculty have worked closely with the College to address these challenges. While important issues remain, significant progress has been made. The School has developed and implemented an enrollment management policy that has begun to bring enrollment down to a more manageable level. Additional full-time faculty and staff resources have been added to allow the School to meet the demands created by a large number of majors. Collaboration with ITS has provided better technical service for the School’s digital arts program. Concomitantly, the School has continued to grow in stature and to provide students with a stronger education in the arts. The creative work of the faculty continues to grow in strength, and many have established national and international reputations in their areas. Moreover, students have benefited from the creativity of the faculty, as their success in showing their work in juried shows and gaining admission to graduate programs suggest. The School’s outstanding programs reflect well on the University and enhance the strength of the arts at BGSU and in the region. Moreover, the Director has been highly successful in representing the strength of the School’s programs to off-campus constituencies, increasing its profile in the region and among prospective donors. The growing visibility of the School augurs well for its continued success.

As might be expected given the serious challenges the School has faced, the Program Review Committee (PRC) report indicates that there are several issues the School must address in the coming years. These include developing and implementing a more meaningful assessment plan, making difficult decisions about focusing resources on the most critical and successful programs, addressing several important space issues, providing adequate access to technology for digital arts and graphic design, and refining the enrollment management program. Compared with the problems the School faced eight years ago at the time of its last program review, however, these issues pale in comparison and can be successfully addressed by continuing cooperation between the School and the College.

I accept the recommendations contained in the PRC’s final report with the following stipulations:

1. I agree with the PRC that the School must devote greater attention to developing a viable assessment program that can inform and guide curriculum revision. I am pleased that the School is amenable to a pilot project employing electronic portfolios as a vehicle for providing a more representative sample of student work than the BFA show currently does. I also encourage the School to experiment with other approaches, including review of random samples of traditional portfolios maintained by students. I will ask Associate Dean Simon Morgan-Russell, who is the College’s point-person on assessment, to meet with Dr. Ray and her advisory council to discuss future directions in assessment. Future annual reports to the Student Achievement Assessment Committee should document
efforts to develop a more effective assessment process and the use of the results gleaned from the process to improve curriculum.

2. While any comprehensive curriculum revision should await the results of a more systematic assessment program, the School will continue to modify its curriculum to meet apparent shortcomings and opportunities.

3. The College has already begun to take responsibility for advising B.A. art students, including mandatory advising of freshmen. This will not only lighten the burden on faculty advisors in the School, but allow us to counsel many of these students into other majors that may be more appropriate given their talents and employment aspirations.

4. As the School’s response to the PRC report indicates, the School has already developed a plan to address the problems created by the growing number of students who were unsuccessful in portfolio review for the BFA program and have elected to enter the B.A. program. No report is necessary from the School on this matter, although the College will continue to work with staff in the School to monitor the results of revisions to the B.A. program.

5. The graduate dean and I will meet with Dr. Ray to discuss the future of the M.A. program in art history. The School should submit a report to us by January 2006, indicating its decision with respect to the art history program. If it recommends continuation of the program, it must provide a strong rationale for doing so and establish benchmarks that the program will achieve in the next three years to establish its viability. As indicated in the School’s response, the M.A. in art has already been discontinued.

6. The College recognizes that the School needs more tenure track faculty and authorized one new position (i.e., not a replacement) this year. We also recognize the desirability of issuing three-year contracts to instructors and will continue to work with the director to assure that we issue as many three-year contracts as prudent.

7. In developing its workload policy, the School should work closely with Dr. Roger Thibault, Associate Dean for Budget and Planning, and me to assure that the policy is realistic. The report should be submitted in March 2006.

8. The College has increased support staff in the School during the past five years and authorized an additional classified staff position since the completion of the PRC’s report. Annual review of staffing and training as it relates to equipment maintenance, handling of materials, and safety is vital. I accept the recommendation contained in the School of Art’s response to the PRC report that the director report to the College on these matters annually, with the first report due in June 2006.

9. As the School of Art’s response indicates, two faculty members from the School are members of the planning committee for the Wolfe Center for the Arts, assuring that School will have its needs considered as planning for the new building moves forward and also that faculty in the School are informed about the progress of the new facility. Because space in the School is so heavily utilized for classes and studios throughout the day and evenings, I am sympathetic to the School’s desire to provide students with studio space outside the School where they can engage in making art. Locating space on campus will be challenging. There are a number of vacant spaces off campus that are suitable, but gaining access to them and making them suitable for student use requires commitment of resources by the University. Moreover, even if we can secure space, we will have to decide how that space is supervised to assure that students are working in a
safe environment. And that will undoubtedly raise resource issues. I will explore space and supervision issues during the fall semester 2005 with the appropriate offices on campus and report my findings to the director early in the spring semester 2006. At that point, we will know whether we are in a position to proceed on this matter.

10. An art usage fee was under consideration at the time the PRC completed its report and has, subsequently, been approved by the Board of Trustees, although not for all majors in the School. The College will continue to work with the School to assure that student fees are available, where appropriate, to support the School’s instructional mission.

11. Collaboration among ITS, the School, and the College has led to substantial progress in meeting the School’s technology needs. The College will revive discussions with the CIO that began last spring about several possibilities for addressing the needs of students and faculty in the Graphic Design and Digital Arts divisions.

Let me congratulate the School on its willingness to seek collaborative solutions to the significant challenges it has faced, the high quality programs it offers its students, the growing reputation of its faculty, and its contributions to the cultural life of the region. I look forward to working with Dr. Ray and her colleagues in the coming years to build on these accomplishments and make a strong unit even stronger.

____________________________________
Donald G. Nieman, Dean
Date

Concurred:

____________________________________
John W. Folkins, Provost
Date