

January 15, 2022

TO New England Commission of Higher Education
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803

FROM Massachusetts College of Art and Design
621 Huntington Avenue
Boston, MA 02115

RE: Progress Report for Distance Education Expedited Review Beyond Spring 2022

Massachusetts College of Art and Design (MassArt) presents the enclosed progress report for the Commission's review and feedback concerning distance learning activities at MassArt from fall 2020 to present as well as plans for after the spring 2022 semester. We are requesting limited approval for distance education less than 50%.

As an educational institution focused on artists, designers, and educators, we want to highlight the novelty of distance education for this campus and the innovation brought to address challenges we have experienced. For 80% of our faculty responding to a spring 2020 survey (n= 322, 56% response rate), the pandemic has been their first foray into teaching remotely. Our faculty have brought care, quality, and creativity to curricular transitions, supported by professional development both within departments and college-wide through Academic Affairs. Most importantly, we have continued as a campus to focus on individualized student support and connection in an isolating time. Our students have continued to create and amaze the community with their resilience during these challenges. It is in partnership with and seeking the continuous feedback of students in the classroom that our educator-practitioners have refined their approaches in these new modalities.

As we transition to a post-COVID world of education, we are working through a special governance committee on Shared Practices in Teaching and Learning, to take the best of the innovations made in the last two years and envision what the future of remote and hybrid teaching, learning, and assessment looks like for MassArt. This committee is expected to present recommendations at the end of the 2021-22 academic year to the All University Council for next steps.

We thank the Commission ahead for the time and feedback reviewing our progress report.



Mary K. Grant, PhD



James Mason, Interim Provost and Dean of Faculty

MASSART

MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE
OF **ART AND DESIGN**

*621 Huntington Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02115*

Distance Education Expedited Review (DEER) Progress Report

January 15, 2022

Request Limited Approval for Distance Education Less Than 50%

*Prepared for the Commission of Institutions of Higher Education
New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE)*

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Commission Requirements

Massachusetts College of Art and Design is pleased to submit this progress report as follow up to authorization granted by NECHE in January, 2021 for MassArt to offer our current courses and academic programs via distance education and to reflect upon the success through Spring, 2022. We are guided by the NECHE standards on The Academic Program and Educational Effectiveness:

The institution offering programs and courses for abbreviated or concentrated time periods or via distance or correspondence learning demonstrates that students completing these programs or courses acquire levels of knowledge, understanding, and competencies equivalent to those achieved in similar programs offered in more traditional time periods and modalities. Programs and courses are designed to ensure an opportunity for reflection and for analysis of the subject matter (4.45).

The institution defines measures of student success and levels of achievement appropriate to its mission, modalities and locations of instruction, and student body, including any specifically recruited populations. These measures include rates of progression, retention, transfer, and graduation; default and loan repayment rates; licensure passage rates; and employment (8.6).

Request Limited Approval for Distance Education Less Than 50%: this progress report includes an update on the College's distance education plans beyond the Fall 2021 semester. The report also demonstrates the institution's capacity to offer courses via distance education.

Introduction

The distance education expedited review application progress report process at MassArt occurred during and through a demanding time of the pandemic and through a Presidential transition, in July, 2021, we welcomed our new President, Dr. Mary K. Grant, an experienced leader in higher education who, in an earlier role, was part of the founding team for UMass Online. A team of dedicated administrators, faculty, and staff worked with the community to collectively and successfully navigate these challenging times. We recognize we have more to learn and improve upon, but we are gratified by what we accomplished, the level of engagement that we achieved with our students, and the interest in continuing to develop capacity in a multi-modal approach to working with students, advancing the goals of our strategic plan, and serving the needs of the Commonwealth.

To prepare this report, we brought together a campus-wide team whose members all contributed expertise as we responded and continued to adapt to the educational and technology needs of our faculty and students. We used this process of reflection to assess and recommend continued improvements and to look ahead to areas that will require additional support, expertise, and development.

Throughout the process we engaged with faculty, staff, administrators, and students to gain feedback, insights, and valuable recommendations for making improvements as we went and to take a longer look at how we continue to invest in this important work as we go forward. Below is a list of all who worked to compile the feedback received and contributed to the writing of this report:

James Mason, *Interim Provost and Dean of Faculty*
Karalynn Gau, *Executive Director of Institutional Research, Effectiveness, and Planning*
Katherine Russell, *Director of Academic Operations*
Katie Duvernay, *Executive Assistant to the Provost and Dean, Academic Affairs*
Hui-Ling Chen, *Director of Reporting and Analytics*
Lucinda Bliss, *Associate Provost and Dean of Graduate Programs and Continuing Education*
Ernest Plowman, *Assoc. Dean for Academic Operations*
Lauren Wilshuesen, *Dean of Admissions*
Erica Puccio-O'Brien, *Director, International Education Center*
Elizabeth Smith-Friedman, *Associate Dean, Academic Resource Center*
Jack McDonald, *Director of Business Operations and Financial Reporting*
Jamie Costello, *AVP and Dean of Student Affairs*
Shauna Summers, *Director, Counseling and Wellness Center*
Jonathan Rand, *Assistant Dean and Registrar*
Patrick O'Connor, *AVP and CIO, Technology*
Robert Perry, *VP and CFO, Administration and Finance*
Gina Spaziani, *AVP, Administration and Finance*
Laura Flynn, *Senior Director, Student Engagement*

MassArt Overview

The Massachusetts College of Art and Design (MassArt) is a historic educational institution located in the leading American cultural center of Boston, Massachusetts. Founded in 1873 as the Massachusetts Normal Art School, MassArt began in response to the Massachusetts Drawing Act of 1870, which mandated that drawing instruction be provided to men, women, and children across the Commonwealth. By 1873 Walter Smith was employed to lead the new school, which included instruction in the fine arts, as well as technical drawing. In 21st-century terms, MassArt was founded to promote the creative economy. The school has grown in size, stature, and programs over our nearly 150 years of operation. In 1925, the school became the Massachusetts School of Art, in 1960 the name was changed to Massachusetts College of Art, and in 2010 was renamed Massachusetts College of Art and Design to accurately reflect the range of programs offered.

Importantly, MassArt is a public institution, one of the nine State Universities that comprise the State Universities of Massachusetts, which is overseen by the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education. As a public institution, MassArt is focused on preparing students of diverse backgrounds, from Massachusetts and beyond, to participate in the creative economy and to contribute to the well-being of society. The mission to prepare students and to work for the public good is reflected in various ways: in MassArt curricula in art, design, and education, and in community engagement led by our Center for Art and Community Partnerships (CACP), Artward Bound (a college readiness program for 9-12 graders), and Looking to Learn (an art education program for grades 3-12 housed in the new MassArt Art Museum (MAAM)). The MassArt campus is located at the junction of the Fenway and Longwood Medical Area on Huntington Avenue, also known as the Avenue of the Arts. The school is located among leading educational and cultural institutions like the Museum of Fine Arts, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Harvard School of Medicine, the New England Conservatory, Berklee College of Music, and Boston Conservatory at Berklee. The campus comprises a complex of buildings with one million square feet of space, including the iconic Tree House residence hall, which opened in 2012, the Design + Media Center opened in 2016 and our new, innovative, free to the public MassArt Art Museum (MAAM) opened in February, 2020. MassArt offers nineteen different programs that lead to the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, and graduate programs that lead to the Master of Fine Arts, Master of Arts, Master of Design Innovation, Master of Education, and Master of Architecture. We have post-baccalaureate programs in design, media arts, and teacher preparation, in addition to certificate and continuing education programs for all ages. MassArt's faculty is composed of excellent classroom teachers who have distinguished themselves in their respective fields and includes many working artists, designers, architects, art historians and educators. Our students come from across Massachusetts, from over 40 states, and over 30 countries. All applicants, undergraduate included, gain

admission based on a portfolio review, in addition to typical admissions requirements. MassArt joined the state pilot to make SAT/ACT scores optional in 2016.

Report Outline

The College has expanded remote and hybrid offerings as noted in our original application for general approval for online education in fall 2020 to navigate the complexities of health and safety in the COVID-19 environment. The following will be explored in the remainder of this progress report to inform the Commission of MassArt's progress, challenges, and future plans related to distance education and our hybrid/remote model moving forward.

- Pandemic and Campus Planning
- The Academic Program and Educational Effectiveness
- Professional Development
- Technology and a Hybrid Campus
- Ongoing Student Support & Services
- Academic Programs Updates
 - Credit Hour and Academic Integrity
 - NC/MA-SARA
 - New Stackable Certificates- Communication Design
- Next Phases as a Hybrid Campus & Future Planning
 - Shared Practices on Teaching and Learning
 - Mid- and Long-Term Planning
- APPENDIX- Moving Forward, Academic Operations

Pandemic and Campus Planning

The college established the Campus Planning Group to collaboratively assist in planning, coordinating, and implementing the facilities projects and space needs to ensure the campus was student-ready for the 2021-22 academic year. This administrative team gathered student input and developed plans for a phased return to campus, which provided a measured adjustment period for our students who had not yet had a physical connection to the campus, or to their majors or programs.

The "Summer Start-Up Phase" began mid-August of 2021, and allowed time for staff and faculty to return to offices for normal in-person functions. Staff teleworking plans were adjusted and testing regimens were increased to accommodate the return of faculty and students to campus. Students moved into the residence halls, and both virtual and in-person orientation programs were held not only for first year students, but also for

sophomores who had not previously experienced campus, and juniors who had not physically experienced their majors. We intentionally focused on daily student engagement programming at the start of the academic year. During the first two weeks of the semester, there was a student-centered program held every day. We continue to experience more student interest for in-person and virtual student engagement programs this academic year.

Phase One aligned with the start of classes in September of 2021, and increased access to support Student Development programming. The Campus Planning Group implemented a reservation system for students to access specific on campus spaces to study or work on remote coursework. The goal was to support student space needs in their adjustment to a new hybrid schedule and potentially new living arrangements, as well as student socialization needs in their adjustment to the new college experience.

Phase Two began in mid-October and reintroduced internal campus community activity by adding scheduled on-campus programming. This included in-person meetings for faculty, staff, and student groups, in-person Visiting Artists and Visiting Lecturers, Artward Bound, and academic gallery programming. This phase also saw the return of in-person Admissions tours, and celebrated the reopening of MAAM to the public.

Depending upon public health trends, data and recommendations, we anticipate Phase Three to gradually unfold during the spring 2022 semester, ultimately returning the campus to a “new normal” level of activity with the return of on campus public events and a greater number of external visitors and guests to campus.

In building the fall 2021 schedule, MassArt’s faculty had the following course modality options to choose from: fully in-person, fully remote, or one of 3 hybrid models (class meets on campus every other week, every third week, or once a month with the remaining sessions being virtual). For the most part, all first-year Studio Foundation, Fine Arts 3D, and Studio for Interrelated Media (SIM) courses were held in-person, while Liberal Arts and History of Art courses were held remotely, and the remaining departments held in a hybrid environment. The college offered a range of instruction modalities to support continuing education of students. For the upcoming spring semester, we have simplified the process and will be offering only one hybrid choice (class meets on campus every other week), while also continuing to offer fully in-person and fully remote options.

Everyone has shown great adaptability as we navigate new COVID variants. As we prepared for winter break, Faculty were encouraged and reminded to develop an alternative curricular plan (hybrid and/or fully remote interim work) should coursework unexpectedly shift to a remote environment. We have had great success in providing student kits for

certain courses and majors, which provide tools or materials that could not be easily obtained outside of campus and help our students to be successful in hybrid/remote learning environments. We have also experienced an increase in virtual visiting lectures by national and international artists and professionals, that are more accessible to faculty, students, staff and that we have been able to open to alumni and community members.

In light of the many changes that the pandemic has propelled in terms of teaching, learning and advising modalities, MassArt established a special governance committee to assess and review teaching, learning, and advising practices. The Special Committee on Multi-Modal Learning, composed of staff, faculty, and student representatives, met during the summer of 2021 and made a series of recommendations that are currently working their way through college governance. These charges include reviewing the current structure of registration and distribution of the first-year curriculum to ensure it meets students' needs for access and expectations of choice and agency, the establishment of a governance committee to continue investigating and drafting guidelines on distance learning, as well as other recommendations around remote learning and teaching. At the start of the academic year, the college approved their recommendation to establish the Shared Practices on Teaching and Learning Committee. More about planned actions from this committee will be covered later in this progress report. For more information about the college's progress in COVID, please see the Appendix section on Pivoting to a New Normal in COVID-19.

The Academic Program and Educational Effectiveness

The College has continued to assess the teaching and learning environment in partnership with faculty, staff, and students throughout the pandemic and our expansion of remote and hybrid learning. We partnered with our Colleges of the Fenway consortia peers to study best practices across MassArt, Wentworth, MCPHS University, Emmanuel, and Simmons in the remote and hybrid learning environments to inform our academic strategies and plans moving forward. We conducted pulse check surveys with students and faculty each semester to continue to assess changes in the academic experience and ensure holistic student supports, and individualized care in the turbulence of the pandemic.¹ Academic Affairs, our COVID tactical team, and department faculty worked closely to follow updated health and safety guidance from the public higher education system, and local, state, and national best practices to pivot course modalities as needed. And we prioritized aspects of our strategic plan to address needs we had pre-pandemic, including device requirements, supply kits, studio changes, and digital tools and technologies.

¹ Pulse check details- Spring 2020 surveys (total students n=1,857, response rate of 46%; total faculty n=322, response rate of 56%), Fall 2020 surveys (students n= 1,825, 25%; faculty n=268, 42%) , Spring 2021 (students n= 1,732, 25%; faculty n= 287, 25%)

Section Modalities and Changes Over the Course of the Pandemic

Below is a table displaying how our balance of course sections by delivery type has changed since the first full semester of the pandemic after our initial transition in March 2020.

Table 1- Section Modality Distribution by Semester

Section Delivery	Fall 2020	Spring 2021	Fall 2021	Spring 2022*
Remote	76%	66%	37%	31%
In-Person	0%	0%	30%	50%
Hybrid	24%	34%	33%	19%

* as of 01/10/2022

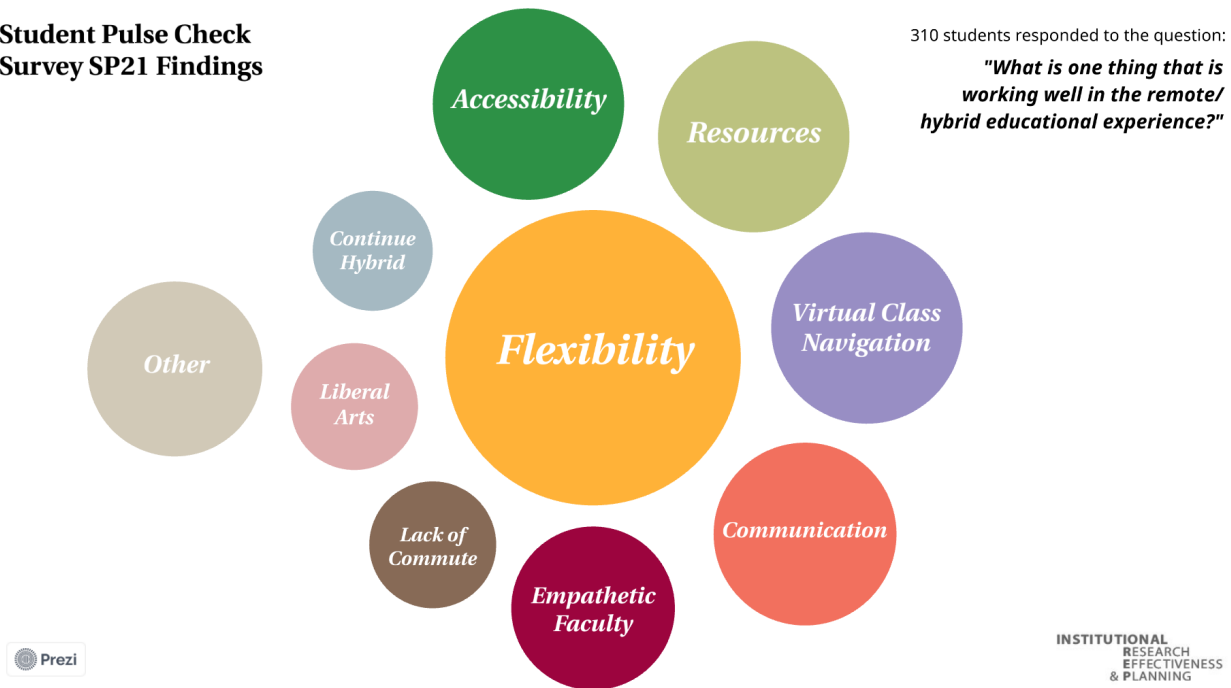
MassArt offered course modalities based on CDC, department of public health, department of higher education, and city of Boston health and safety guidelines, working closely with faculty in each discipline each semester during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic to transition curriculum to remote and hybrid modalities. In the spring 2020 semester, we went fully remote after a one-week extension of spring break when the pandemic hit. Table 1 shows a steady decrease in the proportion of course sections each term offered fully remote since our initial teaching and learning transition. We will continue to offer a mix of modalities for sections in future semesters so that students can continue progressing toward their degree. While 37% of fall 2021 sections were remote, less than 5% of students chose to take all of their courses exclusively online. This data point reciprocates other findings from internal student focus groups and surveys as well as the larger Colleges of the Fenway- Deloitte partnership study, emphasizing the importance of studio facilities time and hands-on learning that are such critical aspects of art and design education. Throughout the pandemic, we have provided at-home studio kits to students to provide equity in tools needed to access curriculum and to supplement studio access when health and safety guidelines limited on-campus facilities access. The kits have been funded through federal CARES act funds. MassArt intends to continue studio kits in future semesters to facilitate student success and is exploring financial strategies to support these costs.

Graphic 1- Qualitative Themes for Hybrid Learning Successes to Carry Forward

**Student Pulse Check
Survey SP21 Findings**

310 students responded to the question:

"What is one thing that is working well in the remote/hybrid educational experience?"



For the three previous semesters, the College’s institutional research function has worked with Academic Affairs leadership to gather feedback from faculty and students to infuse quantitative and qualitative data into ongoing agile planning for each semester of the COVID pandemic. In our most recent survey in spring 2021, which had a response rate of 25%, students cited several common themes when queried about what was working well in the remote and hybrid learning experience in spring 2021. These common themes and the frequency each appeared across open-ended student comments were: flexibility (26%), accessibility (11%), resources (11%), virtual class navigation (11%), communication (9%), empathetic faculty (8%), lack of commute (6%), liberal arts (5%), continue hybrid (5%), and other (9%). Students appreciated flexibility within live/virtually live class times for 1:1 working sessions with faculty or peers, pass/fail grading, and working with faculty on projects based on the materials students had access to and the projects they were interested in creating within the assignment guidelines. These flexibilities, especially individualized meetings and breaks, helped students and faculty navigate zoom fatigue. The accessibility of course materials increased with remote and hybrid offerings, especially where students could rewatch demonstrations or catch up on lessons. Communities of faculty and students online chatting and sharing in platforms like Discord also increased access to feedback from peers and faculty and allowed for increased access to faculty outside of traditional office hours. Resources, like digital licenses, virtual desktops, and studio kits, enhanced students’ learning experiences and increased equity to support completion of coursework and faculty increased and individualized communications with students: “Professors often check in with us to see how we are doing and work with us to

ensure we are grasping the content of their course. I appreciate the more open and individualized communication,” cited a spring 2021 pulse check survey student respondent. Students appreciated having liberal arts and history of art courses mostly remote, and remote courses reduced commuting time for off-campus students, allowing more time to work on course projects and content. In “other” themes, students also cited the increase in visiting artists/lecturers and access to a broader array of these professionals because of the remote/hybrid environment, especially international artists.

Assessment of Student Outcomes and Distance Education

Assessment of student learning happens through critique and review processes, both formative and summative throughout a student’s academic course of study. Our expert faculty focus during the pandemic has been maintaining rigorous curricular standards as we transition to remote and hybrid learning, while providing individualized student support, flexibility, and open communications. Reviews and critiques during this time were structured in new ways using many different digital systems, from Kunstmatrix for online galleries displaying Thesis shows, to Discord for chats and informal feedback for student works in progress. We recognize institutionally that this transition has allowed for more digital collection of student work for direct assessment and, through the Shared Practices on Teaching and Learning governance committee, we will be making recommendations to All University Council on some models for what this could look like post-pandemic later in Spring 2022.

Our experience has confirmed that MassArt needs a more robust and more universally used Learning Management System (LMS). One that would support student digital portfolios, link to a back-end assessment system as well as students’ websites, social media, and professional networking accounts. The combination of a new, more robust LMS and working closely with department curriculum committees on the implementation of a digital portfolio system directly connected with assessment of the course, program, and institutional learning goals, will enable MassArt to systematically collect data at the individual-student level about student goal progress over time and infuse this information into curriculum planning processes at the department and institutional levels.

Additionally, MassArt collaborated with our consortium, Colleges of the Fenway (COF), to assess best practices and common learning gains gathered across lab and studio/maker environments during the COVID-19 pandemic pivot to remote and hybrid courses. The COF used a Fidelity grant project (\$200k) to assess pedagogical best practices in partnership with Deloitte.

We identified two areas of focus for this project: an assessment of the impact of different course delivery modalities (remote, hybrid, face-to-face) on learning outcomes; and a comprehensive assessment of how the use of virtual tools for teaching and learning have impacted the experiences and learning outcomes. We wanted to identify the pedagogical best practices for teaching and learning through a comprehensive assessment of how the use of virtual tools for online and remote teaching and learning have enhanced experiences

and learning outcomes in remote, hybrid, and face-to-face environments. Objectives of the project included:

- An inventory and analysis of learning tools and platforms by institution, modalities, discipline, and courses being employed across the COF.
- Document lessons learned from virtual and hybrid teaching and learning during spring, summer and fall 2020.
- Identify best practices within common courses taught across the institutions; students in specific academic programs and courses, including but not limited to science labs, large lectures, studio arts, first-year writing, and synchronous dual delivery.
- Document the impact of course delivery method in relation to virtual tools and student achievement.
- Document the impact of tools employed on learning outcomes.

The goal was to identify opportunities to support faculty development and expertise on pedagogical best practices for teaching and learning through a comprehensive assessment of how the use of learning management systems and additional tools have enhanced experiences and outcomes in remote, hybrid and face-to face-classroom environments. Additional outcomes under faculty development include:

- Based on study findings, build capacity of faculty members to effectively employ learning management tools to improve student outcomes
- Improve accessibility of content through developing a shared virtual resource site open to all COF faculty and staff to access tools, training, resources, and ideas to support teaching and learning

The COF plans to gather a range of best and wise practice resources and tools from all of its members and share them with the wider community through a virtual resource center accessible to all COF, faculty and staff. The center will also include downloadable templates, policy language, netiquette guidelines, laptop recommendations, resources for setting up accessible and inclusive classrooms and programs, and academic toolkits to help faculty with planning, teaching, etc.

Measures of Student Success

MassArt conducts annual evaluations of graduation and retention rates and surveys on student experiences that allow us to benchmark against other Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design (AICAD) . Likewise, Institutional Research and Student Development survey students periodically to inform academic, co-curricular, and career preparation programming. Student Development also surveys students after orientations to assess understanding of MassArt resources, supports, guidelines, and policies.

MassArt publishes an annual Performance Report that includes measures of student success and levels of achievement. The selection of measurements relate directly to the

mission. These fall under the key indicator areas of Academic Quality, Access and Affordability, Student Success and Engagement, and Service to the Commonwealth and the Economy/Financial Health. Specific measurements include rates of progression, retention, transfer, graduation, and employment, among others.

Across the country we have witnessed how the COVID-19 pandemic has amplified the systemic inequities students experience, including financial, access to technology, supplies/materials, and wellness challenges. Despite concentrated efforts to expand student support efforts across campus, we have seen a decline in our first-year retention rate - this is not surprising given the enormous pressures and challenges our students and their families have been dealing with during this extended, difficult crisis. Students taking a leave of absence in their first-year, during the pandemic, nearly doubled compared to pre-pandemic trends with the widest gap among our first-year Black/African American students. While retention for the fall 2020 cohort has rebounded to pre-pandemic precedents at 86%, the impact of the pandemic on student retention, especially for BIPOC and low-income students, will continue to require intentional, cross-campus collaboration, intensive focus on justice and equity across the student experience, and holistic student support. As President Grant noted at our virtual town hall in November 2021, anti-racist work “should be central work to our mission, not additive –, it is continual work, and involves every one of us.”

As we assess the impact (short and long-term) of the pandemic on student success and degree completion, MassArt has made progress in closing graduation gaps for our BIPOC students. Looking at the proportion of first-time full-time students who finish their BFA within six years, not surprising, we did see an impact of the pandemic on completion overall. The overall graduation rate decreased from 73% for the 2009-2011 incoming cohorts to 69% for the 2011-2013 cohorts, who finished 2013 through 2017, and 2015 through 2019, respectively. However, graduation trends for Black/African American students and Hispanic/Latinx students *increased* within these cohorts in the same time periods. Black/African American student graduation rates increased from 50% (2009-11 cohorts) to 63% (2011-2013 cohorts), and Hispanic/Latinx student graduation rates increased from 54% to 65%. While a gap persists, we are encouraged that we are moving toward a more just and equitable learning and teaching environment.

Course Evaluations

In line with all the other Massachusetts state universities, MassArt did not conduct course evaluations in the 2020 calendar year. When course evaluations resumed in Spring 2021, we worked with the vendor Scantron to distribute evaluations in both paper and electronic format. Fall semester, 2021 was the first time we had conducted electronic evaluations.

Given the short timeline to provide Scantron with the necessary we submitted the highest enrolled course to be evaluated for each tenured faculty member. The response rates for online evaluations continues to be one of our main concerns, but given that this change happened during a very turbulent period, we understand that it will take time for students to adapt to this new process. We will continue to communicate the importance of these evaluations and provide information to faculty and students as soon as possible in the semester.

Professional Development

With the rapid and necessary movement to remote instruction in March 2020, the college invested in faculty professional development that spring and the following summer to better prepare for teaching and learning in the fall 2020 semester. Thirty-six percent (36%) of part time faculty and 53% of full time faculty attended the sessions. This professional development was divided into three areas of focus: pedagogy, studio arts, and technology.

The area of pedagogy focused on designing remote learning for engagement and student success, and was led by Laura Saunders, Associate Professor at Simmons University School of Library and Information Science. Topics included:

- Designing for Engagement & Student Success
- Designing for Engagement: Student-to-Instructor & Student-to-Content Interaction
- Designing for Engagement: Student-to-Student Interaction & Student Success

The second group of sessions focused on *Studio Teaching and Learning in a Remote Environment* led by Clara Lieu, critic in the Division of Experimental and Foundation Studies at RISD. Topics covered included:

- Shifting Your Mindset to Teach Remotely
- Platforms, Communication, and Managing Content
- Technology & Equipment

The area of technology training focused on the resources available in MassArt's technology toolbox, and was provided by our IT department, including:

- LinkedIn Learning
- Remote Learning: What did and didn't work this past spring
- How to use Break out rooms in Zoom
- Recording Demos & Teaching Tools and Tips in Zoom

- Teaching with Google Drive and Google Classroom
- Strategies for Archiving Student Work

Faculty who participated in these workshops expressed that the workshops benefited their teaching and learning practices in the pivot to remote/hybrid. Continued feedback from faculty since summer 2020 emphasizes the importance of development of models for continued and ongoing best practices training and professional development. This important issue is being discussed as part of the recommendations from the Shared Practices in Teaching and Learning committee as well as other governance committees and department curriculum committees.

Technology and a Hybrid Campus

Technology Infrastructure

MassArt accesses the Colleges of the Fenway Area Network (COFAN) with speeds of 10gpbs (up and down) - COFAN is in that sense our Internet Service Provider (ISP). The network is shared by the five Colleges of the Fenway (COF) schools (MassArt, Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (MCPHS), Simmons, Emmanuel, and Wentworth Institute of Technology).

The Technology department infrastructure team, consisting of three staff (system administrator, network engineer, and network and systems specialist), services the local area network (LAN) and assures connection to COFAN for internet connectivity. Connectivity is achieved via multiple fibre links between two cores, one hosted at MassArt, the second at Wentworth Institute of Technology, which are connected via 40gbps fibre links, and provide fail-over to each other (if core 1 is disrupted, all internet traffic transfers over to core 2, and vice-versa). COFAN's primary infrastructure is hosted by the Markley Group in downtown Boston, and the COFAN service is provided via a combination of ISPs (Cogent, GTT and Crown Castle), support providers (Markley, Integration Partners), and peering agreements (Boston IX, Apple, Netflix, etc.) MassArt staff is working with COF staff and technical and business stakeholders at each of the COF colleges on an upgrade to COFAN which will provide improved bandwidth, performance, reliability, and redundancy for all of the institutions.

Ellucian Colleague (v18) is the college's Student Information System, and we use Moodle (v3.7), hosted via Moonami, as our Learning Management System (LMS). MassArt also uses Google Workspace's suite of applications (Gmail, Drive, Meet, Docs, etc.), and acquired a site license for Zoom which has assisted with remote learning and collaboration. Some faculty also utilize Google Classroom.

The Client Services team manages the help desk, and utilizes JIRA Service Desk (v 7.13.12). Infrastructure and enterprise security are managed by the infrastructure and enterprise applications team (six staff total), and include scanning (vulnerability and SIEM), the use of firewalls/VPN, network access control (NAC), and system and application hardening, IDM/IAM, directory services, authentication and authorization (via LDAP, AD, SAML, OAuth), and server patch management. Endpoint security is managed by the Client Services team (currently five staff) and includes malware and endpoint encryption software (Sophos), binding endpoints to the domain, and centralized endpoint patch and configuration management (via GPO for Windows, JAMF Pro for macOS/iOS/Android). Enterprise infrastructure and on-premise enterprise systems utilizes enterprise-class backup (via redundant UniTrends appliances in two different locations), and endpoints are backed up to an enterprise-class cloud backup solution (Code42/CrashPlan). Email is backed up using Google Vault.

Verification Procedures

Our plans are in line with the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA) requiring institutions receiving Title IV funding to verify the identities of distance education students in requiring a username and password to access academic and administrative systems, applications and services, including our LMS, SIS, cloud/hosted resources (library databases, LinkedIn Learning, Adobe Creative Cloud, Zoom, etc.). A student who registers for a course receives separate emails containing their Network Identifier (NetID), which provides them with access to online and on-premise technology resources, and a randomly generated password which must be changed when they first login. Students are provided with a NetID after they have been accepted to one of the college's degree, certificate or professional/continuing education or youth programs. IDM/IAM, authentication and authorization to systems, applications, services, devices, etc. is managed by the Technology department. Students arriving on campus for the first-time are provided with a physical ID card by Public Safety, in person, after proving their identity with a qualified, government-issued ID. Students are provided with swipe access to locations on campus which are appropriate for their major and progression towards degree.

Technology Curricular support

The Technology department worked with faculty and other stakeholders in Academic Affairs, Administration and Finance, and Student Development to identify, procure and implement technology solutions to support remote and hybrid learning models. Two examples detailed further below in technologies purchased is a sitewide Adobe Creative Cloud license and Zoom.

Administrative System Modernization

The college had decided, prior to the pandemic, to modernize administrative systems, with a focus on Ellucian Colleague, which serves as the College's Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) tool, and Student Information System (SIS). The goals of the modernization are as follows:

- improve the student user experience
- provide a stable, redundant, reliable and more secure ERP/SIS platform
- provide a solid foundation to introduce additional features and more robust integrations with third-party applications and services.

Some of the critical steps to meet those goals included the following:

- implementing modern user interfaces and retiring legacy interfaces
- migrating the legacy on-premise database (UniData) to a modern database (PostgreSQL)
- migrating on-premise infrastructure and applications to the cloud, where they can be delivered as software-as-a-service (SaaS).

These steps were completed when the college migrated Colleague to the cloud in December 2020. When the pandemic hit and we were required to go remote/hybrid, we were significantly ahead of peer institutions that chose to host infrastructure and applications on-premise, and who had not modernized, or had a plan to modernize, legacy manual processes (e.g., online forms vs paper forms). The modernization initiative was prescient in that many student transactions which previously required access to locally hosted technology resources, or were performed manually via in-person interactions and/or using paper forms, can now be performed entirely remotely using any web browser on any device.

These new interfaces, aptly named *Self-Service* by Ellucian (the vendors), allow students, faculty and staff to perform administrative and academic transactions more efficiently. For example the Financial Aid Self-Service (FASS) interface provides them with the ability to securely upload financial information, and provides them with a digital to-do checklist to complete FA requirements. Over the past two years, MassArt has enabled Self-Service interfaces which allows students to update chosen name and pronouns and emergency contact information, plan and register for courses (via Student Planning, which includes online advising and registration), and review their accounts and pay bills (via Student Finance which provides online access to student accounts, statements, billing and payments). This self-service capability improves the efficiency, accuracy and turn-around for business processes, and frees staff to focus on higher-value interactions with the community.

MassArt Experience Portal

In April 2021, we piloted a launch of the MassArt Experience Portal, based on Ellucian's Experience platform. The card-based user interface provides users with a one-stop launching pad to access MassArt's online technology resources and the ability to customize their interface (e.g. card-based).

Student-facing Business Process Refinement

In March 2020, MassArt completed the implementation of Ellucian's modernized web interface to Colleague, called Self-Service, to replace legacy interfaces (daVinci/WebAdvisor). Self-Service significantly enhances the user experience, allowing users to perform administrative and academic tasks and transactions, conveniently and efficiently. For example, the Student Finance Self-Service interface allows students to navigate the billing and payment process through a secure, mobile-friendly interface.

Over the course of the pandemic, many of the college's paper-based processes were converted to a virtual process to support hybrid operations. The Registrar's Office upgraded transcript services to be able to send official electronic transcripts, which is not only more efficient for the office, but also a better experience for students and alums. They also transitioned the process for dropping classes to online and have almost eliminated the need for paper forms in the office.

Faculty Laptop Program

Faculty are provided with a suitable laptop to support instruction.

Software and online resources

MassArt acquired software licenses or subscriptions for software and online resources for all students, faculty and staff. These decisions were based on the impact for delivery of the curriculum in a remote setting, and ways to improve collaboration between all community members, and our ability to support the technology. The primary driver, however, was to ensure that tools which had previously been available in on-campus computer labs at no extra charge were made available to students in a remote/hybrid environment.

Zoom

While Zoom and Google Meet both provide online video conferencing and collaboration capabilities, Zoom provides additional features that faculty identified as crucial for online teaching and learning (e.g. breakout rooms, audio and video clarity, etc).

Adobe Creative Cloud

MassArt acquired a campus-wide site license in fall 2020 to ensure all students, faculty and staff had unlimited access to Adobe's entire suite of Creative Cloud applications (including Photoshop, Premiere, and Illustrator), which are widely used in multiple disciplines across the curriculum, at no extra charge.

Virtual computing

MassArt is currently piloting two virtual computing solutions, which allow students to access a high-powered lab computer, or a virtual computer hosted in the cloud, using a modestly powered computing device (e.g., an inexpensive laptop or tablet). The Technology department helped procure and implement Amazon's AppStream technology for the Film/Video department. Film/Video is piloting the use of this technology, and testing its impact on the delivery of the curriculum in the current environment of remote/hybrid learning. Additionally, lab computers have been outfitted with SplashTop remote access technology, which allows staff or employees to remotely access lab computers.

Bring Your Own Device- BYOD Recommendations

MassArt instituted a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy in fall 2020 to ensure students had access to the technology to be successful in their year/major. By adopting the BYOD policy, we also ensured that students could access financial aid to assist in the purchase of their device. Based on student survey data collected in the spring 2020 semester, we knew that over 90% of students already had a sufficient device. The device requirements were done in consultation with faculty and studio managers. The requirements can be viewed at: <https://massart.edu/sites/default/files/DeviceReqs.pdf>.

User Documentation

The Technology team updated user documentation hosted on the college's wiki to provide additional guidance and links for faculty, staff, and students to leverage our technology resources, and stay current on best practices and trends in remote learning.

LinkedIn Learning

In spring 2020, MassArt acquired a campus-wide license for LinkedIn Learning (formerly Lynda.com), an online library of high-quality content with a particular focus on instructional videos for software widely used in art and design curriculum, and the creative economy (including Adobe Creative Cloud and AutoDesk applications). This platform is available to all students, faculty and staff, and provides 24/7/365 access to instructional materials to enhance the teaching and learning experience.

Student Support & Services

Orientation and Student Engagement

Our phased return to the fall 2021 semester allowed faculty and staff to focus on being student-ready and provided a measured adjustment period for our students who had not yet had a physical connection to the campus, or to their majors or programs. Many students who had been distance learners during the last year and a half of the pandemic were coming to campus daily now for the first time. We hosted tours of campus for returning and new students orienting them to campus spaces after being fully remote. We intentionally focused on daily student engagement programming at the start of the academic year. During the first two weeks of the semester, there was a student centered program held every day.

Both virtual and in-person orientation programs were held not only for first year students, but also for sophomores who had not previously experienced campus, and juniors who had not physically experienced their majors. MassArt piloted and rolled out a new online orientation model for first year students, including an assessment of the new model. In the summer of 2020, MassArt launched a fully virtual Orientation program utilizing the Comevo platform and added more virtual ways for incoming students to connect with student leaders and their peers. In the summer of 2021, Comevo was used once again over the summer (as well as the new virtual connection opportunities) and a new in-person program was piloted in the days leading up to the start of classes. Virtual connection opportunities for new students over the summer included:

- Email communication from Primers to their Orientation groups (June)
- Virtual Orientation group meetings (twice monthly in July and August)
- Virtual Game Nights via Discord (July through August)

The previous in-person program focused on important content but required students to sit in the Auditorium listening to presenters for much of the program. With the addition of the Comevo virtual program, this important content was covered over the summer, where the students could go through the material at their own pace allowing the in-person program to focus on students meeting their peers, learning the physical campus layout and connecting with campus resources. Six weeks into the semester a survey gathered assessment data for the new Orientation model. Next year's program will reflect changes based on what we learn from the results. We are reviewing the long-term learning gain results from this survey in tandem with planning changes and updates to next year's orientation cycle in February 2022.

We began utilizing the Discord and Presence platforms during COVID and have continued to use them post-COVID. Our students were already using Discord as a way to communicate/stay engaged, so we created some MassArt-hosted channels where we can communicate with students and the MAC Board even hosted some virtual events on their Discord channel. There are also some active channels that are not MassArt sponsored, but SGA Executive Board members are a part of them and are able to answer student questions and raise student concerns that are brought up in Discord to the appropriate administrators.

We launched MassArt Connect, our Presence platform, in mid-October. This is a one-stop shop for students to learn about/interact with student clubs and campus departments, see what events are coming up and complete some campus forms that were formerly on paper. We will be continuing to add new features to MassArt Connect as well.

A self-service reservation system for students was developed to access specific on campus spaces to study or work on remote coursework. Desktop and mobile app interface allowed for real-time booking, confirmation, and cancellation. The goal was to support student space needs in their adjustment to a new hybrid schedule, and potentially new living arrangements, as well student socialization needs in their adjustment to the new college experience.

Counseling and Wellness, Health and Welbeing

In September 2020, Counseling and Wellness launched My SSP, providing 24/7/365 remote mental health and wellbeing support to all students at no cost. Confidential support is accessible by smartphone app, text, or by phone call, and students can connect with master's level counselors in addition to accessing self-directed digital content. In addition, My SSP offers multilingual services, assisting students from many different cultures, and they can access it for both crisis and non-urgent situations.

Table 2- Students Accessing Counseling and Wellness Appointments

Sept 1- Nov 30 by Year	Total Appointments	Appt Attendance Rate	Students Served	Average Wait Time (min)
2019	1,767	77.5%	334	3.03
2020	505	77.4%	101	5.08
2021	624	79.2%	195	2.77

The table above shows a decrease in both appointments and number of students accessing in-person services at the Counseling and Wellness Center over the course of the pandemic. Part of this decrease is related to the outsourcing of services provided through My SSP as well as the small number of students on campus during this period. As more students return, we are seeing an increase in in-person appointments comparing the same time period in fall 2020 to fall 2021. These data and the partnership with My SSP are informing a new model of student mental health case management under development by the new Director of Counseling and Wellness, and examining community-based resources, area social work and counseling graduate program students for in-person appointments, and peer resources that can support our changing environment and students' ongoing mental health needs.

Addressing Food Insecurity

MassArt's food and supply pantry for students, the SHELF, is exploring a new system that will increase the ease of online ordering and live inventory management, allowing students to fill out an online form and get rid of the need for paper sheets and manual inventory updates. We will also have a feature for students that are completing the form online so that we can be alerted when their order is ready for pick up. We had temporary online forms during the pandemic so that students could place a food order and pick up the request in a locker system to protect confidentiality while supporting food insecure students during the pandemic.

Academic Resource Center (ARC)

The ARC has been providing remote and in-person meetings for students throughout the pandemic. Anecdotally, there are fewer missed appointments when students can access support online without needing to come physically to the center on campus. This year, there has been a decrease in the number of students visiting ARC compared to the number of visits in the past (see table below).

Table 3- ARC Visits and Appointments

Visits or Appointments	Count
Total Visits Fall 2019	1,254
Total Visits Spring 2020 (pre-COVID)	633
Total Online Appointments Fall 2020-Spring 2021	2,635
Total Online Appointments & In-Person Visits Fall 2021	1,130

The ARC provided information on several venues (MassArt website, Instagram, Discord) on success strategies for remote learning. MassArt created several online orientation materials for students to prepare for hybrid/remote courses. These can be viewed using the following links:

- <https://massart.edu/guide-remote-learning-skills>
- <https://massart.edu/zine-guides>

While these strategies focused on creating space, managing time, and reducing distraction, the greatest challenge that students reported was online exhaustion. As MassArt continues to offer remote and hybrid courses, the ARC will partner with Counseling and Wellness to create additional strategies to support students navigating Zoom fatigue.

The ARC will continue to provide recordings of workshops and events, so students are able to access advising and registration information both in real time and on their own time. Students have the option for both in-person and remote appointments. ARC is open until 7:30pm Monday – Thursday to be available to students outside typical 9am – 5pm college operational hours.

International Education Center (IEC)

On the regulatory side, supporting F-1 international students during the pandemic was complicated by the new sub-populations that developed during this time, all needing different kinds of advising in a range of areas, from course selection/delivery to internship/work options. Examples include; those who remained in the U.S. in F-1 status; those who returned to their home countries and remained in F-1 status; and those who

continued or started their programs remotely and were not in F-1 status but remained qualified as international students and therefore needed advising from us either during their time at home or upon reentry to the U.S.

The International Student Advisor significantly increased individualized advising because students fell into so many different categories. The IEC collaborated with academic and administrative departments more than pre-pandemic, to ensure students knew both their options and their responsibilities. This high-touch advising has led to retention of students. We also supported students with a regular newsletter, which included both immigration-related information as well as co-curricular activities; a section in the MassArt COVID-specific website with international student-focused information, updated regularly; virtual office hours; and a 'Tips for Supporting International Students During COVID-19' information sheet for faculty and staff.

We nominated students to the IIE Emergency Student Fund, which gave grants to international students with need. Along with matching grants, we secured over \$11,000 for five students.

Immigration status is not usually shared to protect student privacy; however, during the pandemic we asked F-1 international students if they would permit us to share their names with the faculty/department chairs in their major so that they could better support them. Most students gave us that permission, and department chairs were sent the names. Many of the Chairs reached out to the students in their departments with offers of support, and many faculty worked individually with students who had access or severe time zone issues on course delivery. Some faculty changed the times that their courses met to accommodate international students in different time zones.

Admissions and Prospective Students

While recruiting in a pandemic we are challenged by the operational changes made to admissions campus tours. Specifically, this included decreased visitor capacity and following COVID visit protocols. Studio/classroom access during tours has also been impacted by the remote/hybrid environment; not all spaces are accessible to visitors. We are also fielding expected questions and concerns from newly admitted and enrolling students regarding hybrid/ remote learning and its impact on their overall first year experience. Admissions has been collecting survey data from on-campus and virtual visitors and has developed an internal process, using our CRM, to collect and review COVID-19 testing and vaccination records for all tour attendees. Given that the number of visitors per tour was limited we have added additional tour times to accommodate as many visitors

as possible. We continue to work with academic departments to find alternative ways to showcase areas that may not be available for viewing during the tour. In person portfolio reviews and interviews have shifted to virtual.

With the support of faculty and senior leadership, Admissions hosted a series of Virtual Town Halls for admitted/enrolling students to address their questions and concerns. Hybrid/remote learning has also been addressed in admissions print materials and web content.

While a return to more robust in-person admissions content is the goal, we must also acknowledge that virtual admissions recruitment options are viable but necessary for equitable access. We plan to continue to offer virtual meetings and virtual tours post-pandemic to support our diverse prospective student populations and their families/support networks in the admissions process.

Academic Programs Updates

MassArt is a distinct school of art and design with a reputation for teaching the highest level of craft in the field. Finding ways to expand this excellence and distinction into offerings into the digital arena is both exciting and essential, but it will require ongoing collaborative work with our talented faculty and continued support and investment.

The shift to online teaching and learning, made a necessity by the pandemic, provided the opportunity to imagine and explore the digital environment, and now we are doing the work to return to campus, while retaining online components for some of the programs that proved highly innovative and successful online.

Below is an excerpt shared about the process faculty have been undergoing to transform the academic program experience for students. This example is from a faculty member in our Fine Arts 3D Jewelry and Metals:

I was also reimagining a curriculum for studio courses that would be delivered across wifi and through a screen. In addition to handouts and detailed instructions, I also filmed a majority of demonstrations during live class meetings. I navigated multiple cameras and microphones via Zoom to ensure that these videos would be a helpful resource to students. These videos then became available on the course website for further asynchronous learning. I also used the course website as a visual information hub for students, where they could find class handouts, presentations, and the videos in one virtual space. Organization and ease of access to information proved particularly important because each class I taught half of the students via Zoom and half of the students from six feet away, at the same time. While this is the most challenging form of teaching I have ever encountered thus far, I was inspired every day by the resilience, determination, and dedication my students brought to

each class, as well as their patience, understanding and adaptability during these unique hybrid sessions. During the spring semester, I continued to use demo recordings and course websites as visual communication tools in my studio courses, and also developed a new course called Virtual Exhibition. This course was designed to be an introduction to computer and smartphone based technology that could help students create 3D digital representations of their work for exhibition in virtual settings, such as 3D modeling, 3D scanning, animated gifs, augmented reality, and digital rendering. This course was fully remote, and each student had access to a different type of computer or smartphone. For each type of technology I introduced, I did extensive research to provide students with a variety of resources that were open source and no-cost in order to help cultivate accessible and inclusive methods for integrating digital technology into their artistic practice, no matter what type of computer or smartphone they had access to. I was excited to see each week how students navigated this technology within the context of their own interests, and how it could help support their 3D artwork during a time when we experienced so much through 2D screens.

Credit Hour and Academic Integrity

Courses offered in concentrated time periods, remotely, and hybrid models must demonstrate an equivalency of contact time and outside work time that approximates a total of 45 hours per credit. Likewise, the courses must demonstrate to the program faculty, department chair, governance committees, and administration that the learning goals, rigor, and expectations are in accord with more traditional time periods and modalities. The rigor is demonstrated through projects and assignments within these offerings that call for reflection and analysis of the subject matter. However, MassArt courses often additionally require the creation of new forms that demonstrate critical thinking through making, along with critical dialog through presentations and critiques.

The academic integrity of our remote courses do not deviate from the Massachusetts state universities adherence to a shared governance model for academic oversight. This ensures faculty participation and assures the quality of the academic programs from a broad range of perspectives. Shared governance follows a committee structure in which members consist of faculty and librarians, administrators, and students. Faculty and librarians are voted onto committees by their membership, the Student Government Association selects students, and vice presidents assign administrators. The All-University Committee (AUC) seeks input from the broader MassArt community and monitors the proceedings of all other standing governance committees. Any charge involving changes to undergraduate academic programming and policies must first be considered by the AUC. Charges may then be sent to appropriate standing committees for consideration and recommendation before coming back to the AUC for final approval as a recommendation to the Provost and President. Standing committees include Curriculum, Academic Policy, and Student Affairs. The Graduate Council under the direction of the Associate Provost and Dean of Graduate Programs governs graduate programs' curricula and policies. In addition, each academic

department has a departmental curriculum committee of faculty and students that reviews current offerings and considers new courses. The department chairs have taken a central role in ensuring the academic integrity of the remote courses. The departmental learning goals and the university-wide learning goals remain the same. While the format and methods of instruction may have changed, the expectations also remain the same.

The Associate Provost and Dean of Graduate Programs provides leadership and oversight of the graduate degrees, certificate, and continuing education programs. The Director of Professional and Continuing Education is responsible for certificate programs and adult courses; and the Director of Youth Programs is responsible for youth programs. They report to the Provost, ensuring all programming meets quality standards of the institution and our accreditors and determining available and appropriate resources.

Taken together, the shared governance model, departmental committee structure, inclusive membership, and the critique/review assessments endemic to art and design higher education (in-person, hybrid, and remotely) ensure broad and deep participation in the academic mission of MassArt.

NC-SARA and Online Programs

MassArt applied for and was granted NC-SARA approval, which took effect before fall 2021, which allows us to offer any online programs to admitted students from 48 states. The National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements is a private nonprofit organization [501(c)(3)] that *helps expand students' access to educational opportunities and ensure more efficient, consistent, and effective regulation of distance education programs.*

MassArt's first fully online program is our newly re-visioned Communication Design Certificate (formerly graphic design). In addition to its new title, the program has gone fully online and is now offered in three stackable certificates. The complete sequence of three can be completed in just over 2 years. This new format is a means of serving a diverse body of students with a range of goals in a model that supports achievement for working adults.

The former Graphic Design program had a high attrition rate and a declining applicant pool, and the plan had been to add a high intensity full-time 1-year program in order to draw students to attend. After many months of analysis among staff, faculty, and academic leadership, we determined that students were not finishing the program because they had diverse goals, and many were meeting those goals before completing the certificate (securing a job, earning a raise, building a desired set of skills, etc.). In order to better serve our students, we rebuilt the program around 3 stackable certificates in the fully online program (outlined below).

Three Levels of Certification:

Level 1 consists of 4 courses, which provide a solid foundation in communication design. Students gain insight into how to design impactful visual communications for any medium (print or screen-based) and gain a solid foundation of basic design skills. Level 1 courses can be taken as a stand-alone certificate or as a foundation for proceeding to Level 2.

Level 2 is a sequence of 3 courses and one non-credit workshop, which build on the basic skills learned in Level 1. In these courses students advance their skills in typography and in brand design, enter the world of UX Design, gain skills in interactive design for web and mobile interfaces, and build their own professional design portfolio. Completion of Level 2 gives graduates the skills to obtain a paid internship or junior designer position at a design firm, agency, or in-house design department at a company or non-profit.

Level 3 is a sequence of 4 courses and one non-credit workshop, which challenge students to conceive of and design complex and comprehensive design systems at a more creative and sophisticated design level. Completion means they have achieved the portfolio and skills to launch their career as a professional designer.

The future success of the program, and any online program at MassArt, will depend on offering the high level of access to faculty and staff, individualized advising, and the sense of community that MassArt is known for.

Graduate Programs Online

Prior to the pandemic, our MFA Low Residency program and our MEd program, were delivered in a hybrid format, with intensive summer residencies on campus and online classes during the year. Table 4 displays enrollment and degrees in the MFA BLR program over time.

Table 4- MFA/ BLR Enrollment and Graduates 2010-2020

MFA- BLA program trend analysis												
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017- 18	2018 -19	2019-20	2020-21	Total
New enrolled			7	12	7	5	14	12	19	8		84
Degree awarded				0	7	11	8	4	12	9	9	60

Both programs have gone through a period of transition, and in the former, the curriculum has had an overhaul in the last academic year, which has led to increased opportunity for

students to cross-register with other graduate programs. Contemporary Pedagogy, among other courses, are now available to low residency students. This is due in part to a shift in curricular structure, and also because of an increased number of online offerings in other programs. We look forward to seeing the positive impact on program enrollment and graduation figures as more students experience these curriculum changes.

Next Phases as a Hybrid Campus & Future Planning

Shared Practices on Teaching and Learning Committee

As noted previously in this report, MassArt established a special governance committee to assess and review teaching, learning, and advising practices at the college during the current academic year (2021-22). The pandemic has propelled changes in teaching, learning, and advising as well as issues related to quality of life, community building, and communication. The Special Committee on Multi-Modal Learning composed of staff, faculty and student representatives, met during the summer of 2021 and made a series of charges that are currently working their way through governance. These recommendations include reviewing the current structure of registration and distribution of the first-year curriculum to ensure it meets students' needs for access and expectations of choice and agency, the establishment of a Shared Practices on Teaching and Learning governance committee to continue investigating and drafting guidelines on distance learning, as well as specific recommendations around remote learning and teaching. At the start of the academic year, the college approved the Shared Practices on Teaching and Learning Committee, whose current focus is on 1) drafting a vision for distance learning, 2) reviewing curriculum delivery platforms and expectations (LMS), and 3) reviewing systems of grades and student assessment/ college-wide critique models. They are also developing guidelines for recordings of virtual content, course camera use, attendance models, faculty resources for professional development in hybrid/remote teaching, and synchronous/asynchronous course work.

Mid- and Long-Term Planning

The work of the Shared Practices Committee on Teaching and Learning will shape recommendations for policies, professional development needs, and curricular experience commonalities for future semesters of distance education at MassArt. While the college is awaiting the committee's recommendations and seeking the commission's review and feedback on this report in our request for limited approval for distance education less than

50%, we cite the following mid- and long-term planning projects and targets for assessment:

Mid-Term Projects (2022-2024)

- Continue to offer studio kits each semester by major for equity in course equipment. Continue to gather student and department feedback to refine kit offerings and determine ways to include these through long-term funding models or student fee structures. Assess impact on course completion and retention.
- Refine Bring-Your-Own-Device recommendations with each department's faculty. Continue to gather data from students about use of recommended systems and where these costs can be reduced/refined given the curricular needs in each department. Assess impact on course completion and retention.
- Collect and publicize minimum hardware/software/connectivity requirements by course and publish these in the course catalog and online registration planning tool for students. Assess patterns in registration and student course planning/advising to determine if course technology requirements impact registration choices. Assess impact on course completion and retention.
- Continue to offer best practices and training resources for faculty teaching remote and hybrid courses. Formalize faculty feedback/evaluations for best practices professional development offerings to continue to improve these over time. Assess impact on faculty retention and tenure portfolio materials.
- Continue to partner with local, national, and international visiting artists and lecturers in a remote/hybrid learning environment to expose students to global art and design opportunities and expanding the cultural canon. Work with faculty incorporating visiting artists and lecturers to document impact or influence on student projects and course objective attainment. Assess impact on course completion and retention.

Long-Term Projects (2022-2026)

- Develop long-term financial fundraising and/or operational revenue streams for studio kit costs, including the potential for use of student fees. Continue to gather student and department feedback to refine kit offerings.
- Determine new model for Learning Management System (LMS) and e-portfolio course materials by discipline as advised by faculty curriculum committees. Partner with AICAD peers (art and design consortia) to develop benchmarks for art and design institutional use of LMS tools and set targets for faculty adoption, student use, and best practices sharing.
- Centralize resources for faculty professional development in partnership with Colleges of the Fenway, increase faculty efficacy in use of LMS best practices for art

and design remote/hybrid learning, and create more opportunities for formal and informal faculty peer-to-peer sharing and collaboration. Assess budgeted resource effectiveness in addressing these needs and whether additional resources or reconfigured resources can benefit this model.

- Implement enterprise management software for room and space reservations. Monitor usage of this system to assess ongoing campus space use and pivot to expand space use patterns where data indicate successes.
- Upgrade pilot spaces for continuing hybrid model of teaching and learning (students online and in-class simultaneously). Gather student feedback for this model and assess costs and space requirements for providing designated simultaneous spaces in each discipline where faculty are requesting this model.

APPENDIX

Moving Forward

MassArt has been successful in keeping COVID cases low and maintaining a safe environment for its employees and students throughout the pandemic. Our COVID-19 positivity rate remained below 1.5% for the entire 2020-2021 school year. This accomplishment is the result of our community's diligence in adhering to masking, physical distancing, symptom attestation, testing, and, for the current academic year, following vaccination requirements.

In April, 2021, the Massachusetts State University system issued a requirement that undergraduate and graduate students who are attending in-person classes, living in residence halls, or participating in campus activities be vaccinated prior to the start of the 2021 academic year. That summer, MassArt launched a campaign to encourage students to get vaccinated and implemented a system for collecting proof of vaccinations from students. The State University system was also a partner in our negotiations with the MSCA, APA, AFSCME, and DGCE unions on COVID related agreements, including a vaccination requirement. At this time, we can report that 94% of students and 91% of employees are fully compliant with COVID-19 vaccination requirements, and we are working toward 100% vaccination compliance for all members of the MassArt campus community.

During the 2021 summer, senior leadership and supervisors developed staffing plans that kept our on campus employee population low while maintaining high levels of service. During this time, access to campus was very limited and appropriate testing schedules were developed. The president established a COVID Tactical Team to monitor pandemic

conditions and public health guidance, and to develop recommendations to guide decisions, policies, and protocols to keep the campus and community safe for the duration of the pandemic. This team includes representatives from COVID Operations, Human Resources, Facilities, Technology, College and Visiting Events, Marketing/Communications, Academic Affairs, and faculty.

Academic Operations

In response to the pandemic, we studied course schedules extensively and used the data to create heatmaps in partnership with Institutional Research to illustrate occupancy levels based upon a variety of space use and de-densification scenarios. Students and faculty were surveyed in a variety of ways to get feedback on the lockdown experience to inform an anticipated extension of remote learning for some programs. An extensive number of 'town hall' meetings were held to report out and gather input from all of the stakeholders. Departments and individual faculty were asked to consider on a course by course basis if the curricular needs could be met (or not) in an online delivery.

The abrupt shift from in-person to remote courses in spring 2020 forced the College to fast-track several changes to support and facilitate the new mode of instruction, many of which were already goals of the college, but were moved up in the timeline due to the urgency of the situation. These efforts included:

- Introduction of a device requirement and majors-based computing standards
- Provided free access to design softwares commonly used across the campus (Adobe Suite, Linked-In Learning)
- Introduction of new services to facilitate web-based access to high end software and create spaces for collaboration and learning (Zoom, Amazon Web Services, SplashTop, BaseCamp, Google Classroom, Slack)
- Developed online tutorials and offered online training sessions for students and faculty to aid in the transition to fully remote learning
- Modified policies and processes to create new ways for students to access equipment and tools (curbside pickup; 'Amazon Hub' style locker pickup and drop off)
- Using CARES Act funds created majors specific 'kits' to ensure all students had access to a basic set of tools or equipment
- Modification of Visiting Artist and Visiting Lecturer practices to allow greater and more diversified access to artist/designers across the globe

As we emerged from spring 2020 lockdown, but with significantly limited access, we implemented a blended solution of online, hybrid, and in-person curriculums that focused

on giving access to those disciplines/curriculums that were intrinsically linked to facilities. Some of our design programs were more readily suited for fully Remote learning and therefore were asked to make this change (Animation, Communication Design, Art Education, History of Art, Liberal Arts); others needed access to facilities but could also offer some parts of the curriculum remotely and were therefore designated as Hybrid (Illustration, Architecture, Industrial Design, Fashion Design, Film/Video, Performance); and the remaining 2D and 3D fine arts programs were almost entirely In-Person, on campus, in significantly fewer numbers than we normally would experience.

In some cases we modified physical spaces to address student needs and to meet spacing and occupancy requirements. A long-standing flexible furniture and equipment plan (everything on wheels!) served us well in our efforts to make bold changes. For example, classrooms, meeting spaces and galleries became studios. We also introduced an alternating cohort schedule that allowed us to spread out hybrid courses over a two-week period, with one week on- and one week off-campus. In cases where programs were fully in-person we implemented a home-grown scheduling tool to maximize access while minimizing the total number of individuals on site or in a given space at any one time. We also brought additional studio monitors on staff to facilitate access on evenings and weekends, and to ensure safety protocols were being followed.

In the online forum we introduced several opportunities for faculty training and professional development around remote learning. We were inspired by some of the creative problem solving our faculty brought to the new learning environment. In areas where we saw exemplary work, we facilitated opportunities for sharing, demonstrations, and cross-training among faculty. We hired facilitators and paid faculty stipends to expand on online curriculum training during the summer months in 2020.

We supported students in adjusting to the new online curriculum in a variety of ways. Information Technology and Academic Resource Center provided daily support to students with technical difficulties. In many cases we were able to provide students with the necessary technology through CARES Act funds, through institutional and foundation grants, with access to software and hardware specific to their majors, through a variety of service bureau style production (printing, lasers, 3D printing), and by providing on site study space and computer lab access to students who either preferred to be on site or who didn't have the means to obtain the appropriate device for curriculum.

A good number of the measures we implemented over the past four semesters have been stopgap and/or reactionary, and need further development and refinement to bring them up to the level of rigor and high standards we expect of all of our programs. In most cases we need to institute a set of policies, procedures and promote best practices that will create

an equitable and consistently high standard of education for all. These efforts are underway in a newly created Shared Practices on Teaching and Learning committee, and across other existing governance structures.

We need to introduce resources and tools that will help in our online learning efforts as well. The College is working on an expansion of existing database tools that will create more equitable access to information and services to students, faculty and staff. The College is also exploring a new Learning Management Service to create a more simple and consistent learning platform for students. Our efforts to define device requirements were hastily introduced during the pandemic, but need further consideration and development to ensure we're meeting departmental needs while also keeping the cost of attendance for students at the forefront of our considerations, balancing minimum requirements and needs with nic-to-have device features for making. We need to expand upon our monitored coverage of Specialized Shops (Printmaking, Glass, Ceramics, Wood Shop, etc.) that was refined during the pandemic, supporting safety measures that will keep students healthy and facilitating consistent access to studios for student making practices.

Many of the efforts mentioned are already underway or at least under discussion. Many are already priorities that were identified in our Strategic Plan, but that have been brought to the top of our list of priorities for the near term.

As noted previously, the fall 2021 undergraduate schedule was built so that MassArt's faculty had the following course options to choose from based upon discipline needs and faculty health and safety concerns. These were labeled in Self Service so that students had a clear expectation of their on-campus commitment:

- F2F: Face-to-face for each course
- R: Remote - Completely online/remote, no on campus expectation
- H1: Hybrid 1 - Course meets on campus as scheduled at least every other week
- H2: Hybrid 2 - Course meets on campus as scheduled at least every third week
- H3: Hybrid 3 - Course meets on campus as scheduled at least once a month
- (No hybrid course should meet less than once a month - those should be remote)

For the upcoming spring 2022 semester, we have simplified the process and will be offering only one hybrid choice (class meets on campus every other week), while also continuing to offer fully in-person and fully remote options.

In Spring 2020 MassArt moved all courses to a pass/no credit grading method to accommodate the many challenges both students and faculty faced as we transitioned to remote learning. The college extended the time period for students to request letter grades for courses that traditionally received them. As we moved into the next academic year,

Academic Affairs gave departments the flexibility of requesting pass/no credit grading for their departments or to return to their traditional method. Those departments that chose to stay as pass/no credit instead of letter grades included Fashion Design, Liberal Arts and History of Art. All departments resumed their usual grading systems by the Fall '21 semester.

Space Use Across Campus

As departments prepare course offerings for the fall and spring semesters, we want to emphasize that the way we use space is evolving, both from changes needed to respond to covid restrictions and in response to lessons learned from curricular successes implemented over the past several months, all of which will inform future space use. As we move to the 'new normal' for campus over the next two or more academic years, we anticipate a period of phased transition and transformation that brings us to the campus of our future. This period of flux has real time impact on availability of space for AY21/22 planning, and some spaces (academic and administrative) may require alternative uses compared to their historical designations to provide more curricular spaces. Some decisions can only be made when we have clear guidance from state/federal authorities on the next phases of covid safety measures for physical distancing, occupancy limits, etc. All of this results in a necessary period of uncertainty that we regret, but that we also hope will lead us to a stronger, more sustainable campus for future generations.