

Governance Document
Doctoral Program in Media Art & Text
Virginia Commonwealth University
(April 2012)

Preamble

The interdisciplinary doctoral program in Media Art & Text (MATX) is a joint endeavor of the Department of English, VCUarts, and the School of Mass Communications. The program emphasizes the historical and theoretical foundations essential to the scholarly study of media, both old and new, broadly defined. It provides an intellectually stimulating environment that encourages students to work both collaboratively and independently, as well as across and between disciplines and media. Students maintain a base in their primary area of research, which is usually but not always the field in which they have done prior graduate work.

The program is administered by a Steering Committee and a Director, who is assisted by the Graduate Programs Adviser in the Department of English. This document spells out the appointment and responsibilities of the Director and the Committee.

The MATX program is housed primarily in the College of Humanities and Sciences. Program forms (special action, degree candidacy and graduation applications) are processed through the College Dean's office. Curriculum changes are approved by both the College's Graduate Academic Committee and the VCUarts Graduate Studies Committee prior to submission to University Graduate Council.

Because students maintain a base in a primary area, it is imperative that all applications be reviewed by faculty with appropriate expertise. It is the responsibility of the Director and the Committee to ensure that no student is admitted without review by the relevant departments and/or individual faculty beyond members of the Committee itself.

MATX Core Faculty are those who have taught an MATX core course in the past two years. Affiliated faculty are those who have taught MATX core or topics courses in the past and those who currently serve on dissertation committees or have an interest in doing so in the future.

MATX Director

Appointment and Term of Service

The MATX Director is appointed jointly by the Senior Executive Dean in the College of Humanities and Sciences and the VCUarts Associate Dean of Academic Affairs in consultation with their respective Deans. The Director is appointed for a term of three years, renewable once; he or she may serve again after two terms have elapsed.

Appointment of a new Director will be finalized no later than December of the current Director's third year of service. The following spring semester will serve as a transition period, during which the outgoing Director will orient the new appointee.

The Director is drawn from one of the participating units. While there is no set rotation, each successive Director should come from a different unit. The Director must hold a doctoral degree. Ideally, a Director will have served at least one year on the MATX Steering Committee.

Contractual issues, such as adjustments to teaching load and salary, are negotiated between the appointee and his or her Dean at the time of appointment. Annual performance reviews remain within the Director's home unit.

Responsibilities

The Director administers the daily operation of the program, with assistance from the Graduate Programs Coordinator, and chairs the Steering Committee. Specific duties include but are not limited to the following. The Director

- interprets and enforces MATX and University policies and procedures
- approves minor exceptions to MATX policies
- consults with the Steering Committee on major exceptions and all issues regarding student status (including but not limited to termination)
- initiates changes in program policy as needed in consultation with the Steering Committee; coordinates approval of changes by the H&S Graduate Academic Committee and the VCUarts Graduate Studies Committee prior to submission to University Graduate Council
- coordinates MATX course offerings in consultation with relevant units and administrators; recruits faculty for core courses and MATX seminars
- advises all first-year students and others until they select a dissertation director
- reviews and signs candidacy and graduation applications
- arbitrates and/or refers student problems as appropriate
- coordinates GTA assignments for students on Assistantships
- oversees administration of qualifying exams (by the Graduate Programs Adviser) and submission of the e-portfolio; appoints review committee for the e-portfolio
- approves make-up of all MATX dissertation committees and forwards forms to H&S Dean for approval; this includes requesting appointment of outside members as Affiliate Graduate Faculty
- meets with prospective students and initiates recruiting efforts
- oversees, with the assistance of the Graduate Programs Coordinator, review of applications by the MATX committee; coordinates distribution of applications to relevant faculty not on the Steering Committee (primarily in the studio art departments)
- represents MATX on the H&S Graduate Academic Committee and the VCUarts Graduate Studies Committee
- administers the MATX budget for student travel support, speakers, etc., in consultation with the fiscal officer in the English Department
- is responsible for currency and accuracy of content on the MATX web site, maintained with the assistance of the Graduate Programs Adviser
- selects speakers in consultation with the Steering Committee
- serves as Faculty Adviser to the MATX Student Guild

MATX Steering Committee

Composition

The MATX Steering Committee consists of the Director (ex-officio and voting, serves as Chair), the Graduate Programs Coordinator (ex-officio, non-voting), and tenured or tenure-track faculty drawn from the three participating units as follows: three from the department of English, two from VCUarts, and two from the School of Mass Communications.

Appointment and Terms

Members are appointed by the head of each unit (English Chair, VCUarts Associate Academic Dean, Director of Mass Communications) in consultation with the MATX Director. Terms of service are determined by each unit and may depend on various factors, including faculty expertise, leaves, and other committee assignments.

Meetings & Voting

Meetings are convened by the Director as needed, but at least once per semester and for review of applications in spring. Committee meetings follow standard parliamentary procedure. As Chair, the Director sets the agenda and keeps the minutes. Minutes are circulated to the Committee by e-mail following each meeting for approval.

Voting is by voice vote. For approval, any matter before the Committee must have a "yes" vote from at least one member from each of the three participating units, not counting the Chair. This applies also to revisions to this Governance Document.

Responsibilities

The Steering Committee assists the Director in administering the program. Responsibilities include but are not limited to the following. The Committee

- considers and approves major exceptions to program policy
- reviews student appeals
- reviews applications for admission and support
- assists the Director in setting program policy and direction

Graduate Programs Adviser

The Graduate Programs Adviser assists the Director in the administration of the program. Duties include but are not limited to the following. The Adviser

- fields inquiries from prospective students
- counsels incoming and continuing students on non-academic matters
- maintains MATX student files
- processes routine paperwork
- assists in the processing of admissions materials
- assists in recruiting accepted applicants
- assists the Director in maintaining the MATX web site
- assists with visiting speakers
- administers comprehensive exams