

## **Response to External Reviewer's Evaluation Report:**

As indicated above, Dr. XXXXX, Professor of Technology at the University of Houston, served as the External Reviewer of the MS-MAAT proposal. The School of Media Sciences (SMS) is most grateful for his comments and suggestions and for the time and work he devoted to the report. The following paragraphs detail the School's response to Dr. XXXXX's Evaluation Report.

### **Section I of the Evaluation Report: Program**

The positive comments in this section by Dr. XXXXX concerning the sufficiency of writing within the program, the opportunity for students to complete the degree in one year, the "well considered" course content, and the effective administration are well received and welcomed by the School of Media Sciences. Dr. XXXXX cautions that courses that have been incorporated into the proposed program from the current MS in Print Media program should be expanded to be sure that the course content encompasses the broader perspective of media relevant to the proposed MS-MAAT program. This proposal has thus been modified to reduce the courses common to both programs to a single course, namely, Operations Management in the Graphic Arts. The two newly-added courses are Perspectives on Contemporary Publishing and Industry Issues and Trends. The SMS Graduate Curriculum Committee decided that these two courses are more consistent with the revised goals and desired outcomes of the MS-MAAT program. The current MS-MAAT proposal combines two goals that were formerly stated separately; these goals stressed the students' ability to guide organizational change and to determine new business opportunities. The newly-stated combined goal states that students will gain an understanding of trends and contemporary issues in graphic communications as a basis for identifying opportunities for organizational growth and innovation. The courses, Perspectives on Contemporary Publishing and Industry Issues and Trends, more directly address this goal than the formerly proposed Tone and Color Analysis and Research Methods and Trends in the Graphic Arts courses. It is recognized that the formerly proposed courses are more print-centric and are therefore more consistent as requirements for the existing MS in Print Media program than the MS-MAAT program. The School's Graduate Curriculum Committee feels that these two substitutions remove the concern about the use of courses that are too print centric. Moreover, the Perspectives on Contemporary Publishing and Industry Issues and Trends courses that have been newly substituted into the MS-MAAT program have been reviewed to ensure that they fit effectively with the MS-MAAT goals and desired outcomes.

Dr. XXXXX strongly advises that the School put in place an Advisory Board made up of individuals from relevant media industries. The School is taking steps to establish a formal Advisory Board whose input is anticipated to be critical in ensuring that content continues to be relevant and up to date across all courses, not only in the proposed program but also in the existing Undergraduate and Graduate programs in the School of Media Sciences.

Concerning the MS-MAAT Program Level Outcomes Assessment Plan (PLOAP), Section 10 of this Proposal, Dr. XXXXX comments that it reflects in-depth thought and is "certainly workable." However, he suggests that the Plan is too complex and recommends that it be simplified. In addition, he identifies the benchmarks for all of the assessments as course grades and the timeline as too dependent on the course professors, suggesting that an

Advisory Board would be more appropriate. As already described, the number of goals in the proposed program has been reduced to three from four, and the number of desired outcomes has been reduced to ten from fourteen. In addition, the MS-MAAT proposal committee requested that RIT's Assistant Provost for Assessment and Accreditation, Anne Wahl, review the PLOAP even before the reduction in the number of goals and outcomes was made. She stated that there is no prescribed number of goals and outcomes and that, given the School's history with its other PLOAP's, the MS-MAAT plan was within the assessment ability of the School. Given the changes made to the PLOAP for the MS-MAAT, the plan is less complex and significantly simplified, thus addressing Dr. XXXXX's concern in this regard.

Concerning Dr. XXXXX's comments about the benchmarks being course grades, the Assistant Provost suggested that the School emphasize that the direct and authentic benchmarks in all cases are a project, a capstone proposal, a case study, or a paper as shown in the Benchmark column and that grades are simply indirect measures. In order to emphasize the true benchmark in each case, the benchmark identity was also entered in the "Data Source" column of the PLOAP.

The Timeline column to which Dr. XXXXX refers merely identifies who collects data and when data are collected. It is the final column, "Use of Results," that identifies who uses the findings to suggest or effect any needed changes. Currently, the findings are shared with the whole of the School's faculty for discussion and for the development and implementation of action plans. Dr. XXXXX suggests that an Advisory Board could be particularly helpful in this area. Once the School has its Advisory Board in place, its input regarding the use of findings can be sought as he suggests. The findings are already shared at the university level via RIT's Annual Progress Report.

In his evaluative comments, Dr. XXXXX states that he thinks the proposed program will attract a "far greater [number] than 12 [students] per year," as projected in the proposal, and he states that he would advise his graduates to enroll in the program. He agrees that "there is a definite need for this program." External letters from twelve industry representatives, several of whom are CEO's and presidents of their organizations, agree with Dr. XXXXX concerning the need for this type of program. (See Appendix D for copies of these letters.) All are extremely aware of and several have spearheaded strategic change in their organizations from being print centric to being marketing communications/operations providers. Again, the School agrees with Dr. XXXXX that an industry Advisory Board would be particularly helpful and plans to establish one through which the School can seek the *constant* input to which Dr. XXXXX refers.

## **Section II of the Evaluation Report: Faculty**

Dr. XXXXX devotes considerable attention to evaluating the faculty resumes, and he opens his discussion by stating that the "faculty are eminently qualified to teach this program." He then comments on the training, experience, research/publication, professional service, and recognition in the field of each faculty member. He finds that all of the faculty members indicated to teach in MS-MAAT are well prepared in their respective disciplines. He states that the majority of listed faculty have solid or even enviable records, and in the area of recognition in the field, he notes that some are well known with one being extremely well known. He further indicates that all of the faculty members need to pursue service in professional organizations. Given Dr. XXXXX's comments, the School is aware that there

are faculty opportunities for improvement in this area. One faculty member has already taken on an officer role in an industry trade group since the time of Dr. XXXXX's comments. All faculty members were also requested to submit their most recent CVs.

Dr. XXXXX comments that the number of faculty projected to teach in the program is "more than adequate"; however, he notes that the proposal does not contain projections for future staffing. Because this program is drawing on available capacity within the School and because projections are for twelve students annually for the program's first five years, the School has not provided for future additional staffing in this proposal. If enrollment in MS-MAAT proves to be greater than projections and if no additional available capacity develops, the School will need to limit the enrollment in MS-MAAT in order to maintain appropriate class sizes and the availability of the faculty to properly mentor students. There are presently no projections for increasing the number of adjunct faculty to handle unexpected enrollment increases. It should also be noted that the School is preparing to propose an online graduate level certificate that would allow students to transfer online credits into the MS-MAAT in line with New York State and the Institute's policies and guidelines. The certificate could serve as a "safety valve" if enrollment exceeds projections by possibly enabling students to begin graduate studies online if the on-campus courses have reached capacity.

### **Section III of the Evaluation Report: Resources**

In response to a request to "describe the alignment of student support services with the nature of the proposed student body," Dr. XXXXX answers that there is "no basis for assessment." The School anticipates that the MS-MAAT program will draw students from national and international populations. The students are well supported by the School's Graduate Director and the Academic Advisor assigned by the College's Student Services Office. If students have any qualified disabilities, RIT's Academic Support Center is a resource from which students can seek help. International students can receive help from RIT's International Student Services.

### **Section IV of the Evaluation Report: Summary and Final Comments and Additional Observations**

Dr. XXXXX writes that the concept of the MS-MAAT is "extremely sound"; however, he views the proposal as needing 1) empirical data that show potential demand for the program; 2) input from a formal Advisory Board; and 3) faculty vitae that show greater alignment with all areas on which he was requested to comment. In response, the proposal now includes approximately twenty letters from relevant constituencies, including industry leaders, trade association heads, and chairs of internal academic programs each of whom strongly support the need for this program. In addition, Bureau of Labor Statistic data are also included to show the significant growth in occupational roles related to the career preparation provided by the MS-MAAT. The School, as already indicated, is in the process of deciding the selection process for an Advisory Board so that it is relevant to the expanded nature of the industries that the MS-MAAT program supports.

As a result of Dr. XXXXX's report, the PLOAP plan was modified to clarify the benchmarks. The specific semester for data collection was identified, and the dissemination of findings was more fully described. In addition, the number of goals and outcomes was reduced as described in Section I of this response.

While Dr. XXXXX would like the faculty vitae to provide greater information, he states within Section II of his Evaluation Report that the faculty members “are eminently qualified.” In response to Dr. XXXXX’s comments, faculty were requested to update their CV’s; however, the additional activities and publishing efforts that Dr. XXXXX mentions are often more long-term efforts that become part of a faculty member’s Plan of Work and do not immediately translate into changes in the individual’s record of achievements.

### **Final Comment**

Once again, the School thanks Dr. XXXXX for his most helpful input.