Hi Patricia and Brook,

I reviewed the AAD Undergraduate Minor Change proposal over the weekend and have determined that the proposal needs to be reviewed by the full UGC. There are several reasons why this doesn't seem like a simple change that I'm comfortable signing off on as UGC chair. Here is a summary of my thoughts on the matter:

1) Name change. The request for a name change from AAD Community Arts Minor to Arts Management Minor seems reasonable and it makes sense to remove "AAD" from the official name of the minor. My main concern is that the new minor name implies that this is a specialized minor involving technical training--more so than the more general sounding community arts minor. However, it's not clear to me how much training in arts management students actually get--see point #6 below--especially those in the Freshman/Sophomore track.

2) New 300-level course in arts management. The program change introduces a new 300-level course (Arts Management) that is central to the minor. My concern is that in the wording of the proposal the course serves as a capstone AND an introduction to the topic. It doesn't seem possible to do both of these things in one course. It would seem more reasonable in my mind to have two new courses--one as an introduction to arts management (at either the 100 or 200 or, perhaps, 300-level) and a capstone course at the 400-level that requires them to integrate material and learning from their other experiences in the minor (and perhaps integrate it with what is being learned in their major). The capstone would then be required for the minor. I'm sure there are other approaches.

3) Advising. The proposal discusses the streamlining of advising which is fine in theory but the issue it raises for me is that all the advising in the program seems to be done by an administrative staff member (Managing Director Tina Rinaldi) rather than by the regular faculty. Ms. Rinaldi may be well qualified to do this advising but it would be beneficial to have some involvement of the regular faculty. If this is actually being done already, it would be useful to spell out the process in more detail--both for the purposes of program review but also for students interested in the program.

4) Tracking within the minor. The proposal officially splits the minor into two tracks/pathways--based on when in their undergraduate program a student starts. As far as I am aware, this is unique at UO. I'm aware of programs with minors that are very flexible but not ones that create two tracks that are meant to achieve the same goals but with different pathways based on when a student starts. I think it would be useful to provide a better justification of why a student is getting an equivalent minor through each of the pathways (I am a bit concerned about the depth of training for those in the Freshman/Sophomore track). Also, it would be useful to specify whether the pathway is automatic based on class standing at the time of declaring the minor or whether students have a choice as to which track they want to follow.

5) Summary table. On the summary table with the two minor pathways, I'm confused as to exactly what options are available or not available. For example, in lower division AAD courses in the pathway for those starting as a Freshman or Sophomore, students are required to take 8-12 credits and this must
include AAD 250 and 251 or 252. It is not clear to me whether you can take both 251 and 252 or just one. For students beginning as Juniors or Seniors, can they only take one of the 250-252 series?

6) Depth of arts management training. It is difficult for me to assess the depth of training in arts management that these students will be getting, but it seems like this might be light and especially so for those in the Freshman/Sophomore track. The 300-level course appears to be meant to be the intro to arts management but that, depending on the path through the minor, students could get additional training or very little. This variability is not unusual in some other programs but this seems like a specialized minor but without much specialized training. I’m particularly concerned with the F/S track. It appears that they can take two (maybe three) of the AAD 250-252 series and a freshman seminar for up to 12 credits. These are general subject courses (and the AAD 250-252 series has gen ed credit so by definition they are general/introductory classes) and by looking at the classes they don’t seem to be specific to arts management. With up to 8 credits in “related upper-division coursework from your major” there may be little additional training in arts management except for the one additional course at the upper division. This would seem to me to be relatively little in arts management. Not that the other courses aren’t relevant but calling the minor Arts Management implies to me that there is specialized training beyond what seems possible here. I think the Junior/Senior track would be the model to follow, especially if one of the upper division AAD courses was a 400-level capstone class.

7) Grading. The AAD 250-252 courses are repeatedly mentioned in a lot of meetings that I’ve attended of late because of the concern over the very high grades being awarded. Grades for AAD classes are very high overall (~60% in the A-range) and in our recent review of online offerings the AAD 250-252 series had the highest percentage of A’s being awarded in gen ed satisfying online courses (and this percentage was much higher than other courses). This is significantly out of step with UO grading and is a cause for concern. Our goal is not to achieve uniformity in the grade distributions but rather to identify potential issues and make sure that the grading process is rigorous and transparent.

8) Staffing. Many of the classes in the program appear to be taught primarily by adjunct instructors (I do understand that the size of the regular faculty is fairly small so this constrains your options). This isn't necessarily a problem since many adjuncts do a fantastic job teaching their classes and may do a better job than career faculty and can provide a different perspective to students. That said, certain problems can arise when a program is staffed exclusively or almost exclusively by adjuncts. For example, adjuncts may be unfamiliar with grading standards at the university level and this can result in grade inflation. Further, there needs to be an appropriate oversight structure that works with adjunct faculty and reviews their offerings and teaching. It is unclear to me whether this exists in AAD. One possibility would be to have the 300-level course on the topic always be taught by a regular faculty member.

9) Online classes. Given the rapid movement of AAD courses into the online environment, is there a plan to have more of the AAD courses relevant to this major taught online? If so, will there be a limit to how many online courses a student can take? Would it ever be possible to have all the classes in the minor taken online?
These are my thoughts on the proposal and the committee may raise other questions. I've offered to Brook to meet at some point in the next week to touch base about these concerns and the next steps. I would be happy to meet with you as well. As I told Brook in my previous message I would like to bring this proposal to the UGC in the very early spring so we can potentially get this approved by the April 24 deadline to get this into the spring curriculum report. My apologies for the delay moving this forward--it's been a particularly busy term. I will keep you both posted on when we schedule our meetings for the spring (we're still trying to find a time that works).

Josh