MFA Design Satisfactory Progress

What Does ‘Satisfactory Progress’ Mean?

As a professional training program, the Design program of the University of Washington is concerned with a number of factors regarding the satisfactory progress of MFA candidates in design. A student making satisfactory progress is expected to be making progress in most of these areas in each quarter of their residency. While many of these criteria may be considered to be subjective, and while it is impossible to categorically determine any particular artist’s potential success in this field, it is the conviction of the Design Faculty that these are the most relevant criteria in determining a student’s potential for a successful career designing for the performing arts.

Dramaturgical skills (for the following, references to ‘text’ might refer to dramatic, musical and/or physical text:)

1. Ability to read and understand dramatic texts in a variety of genres including classical, contemporary, and avant-garde texts from a wide variety of cultures for a variety of audiences.
2. Understanding of differences in language styles including, for example, linear storytelling, verse, and abstract language, as well as the potential impact of these styles in visual design.
3. Understanding of dramatic structure, and the ability to articulate that understanding
4. Ability to clearly understand the complexity of individual characters and their relationships to one another in dramatic or other sources of text.
5. Ability to apply the above dramaturgical skills to visual designs in a way that improves the effectiveness of dramatic storytelling.

Collaboration skills:

1. Ability to work effectively with other designers in the creation of a cohesive design.
2. Ability to serve and be supportive of a director’s vision in the creation of a cohesive design.
3. Ability to work effectively and with actors, dancers, singers, other performers, and technicians in the seamless integration of design with performers.
4. Awareness and sensitivity to the concerns and issues of all collaborators on a performance including directors, performers, technicians, and other designers.
5. Politeness
6. Cultural awareness and respect for collaborators

Presentation/Communication skills:

1. Ability to effectively communicate (verbally and visually) design and dramaturgical ideas in small group meetings such as design or concept meetings with producers, directors, choreographers or other designers.
2. Ability to effectively communicate (verbally and visually) design, dramaturgical, and details about those designs as they might related to producers, actors, and technicians in large group meetings such as initial design presentations.
3. Ability to effectively communicate (verbally and visually) visual specifications in the context of technical, engineering, or budgetary concerns with producers, production and/or stage managers, shop managers and technicians and other collaborators.
4. In culturally/racially-specific or gender-specific work: The ability to respond appropriately to the work's self articulated point of
view/sensitivity to cultural, racial or gender representation. This does not preclude the adaptation of a unique point of view about a work, but does require an awareness and acknowledgement of current acceptable practices of representation.

**Organizational skills:**

1. Ability to deliver designs and specifications according to a previously agreed upon time schedule, (which may include the ability to effectively negotiate such a time schedule.)
2. Ability to control designs and specifications to fit within specific budget guidelines.
   Developing a timely and effective work process that allows the above to happen without serious compromise to the artistic integrity and/or effectiveness of said designs.

**Technical/craft/compositional skills:**

1. Ability to draw/paint/model/draft well enough to convey visual ideas that can be understood accurately by a wide variety of viewers, (e.g. collaborating directors, technicians, actors, designers etc.)
2. In historically-specific work: the ability to accurately reflect historical details in costumes, props, scenery, materials, construction methods, available technology, social mores, etc.
3. Familiarity with common construction methods and the continual accumulation of knowledge of materials.

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