

FRÍÐA BJÖRK INGVARSDÓTTIR  
RECTOR

## INSTITUTION-WIDE REVIEW

DECEMBER 2014

- "Confidence can be placed in the soundness of the Iceland Academy of Arts' present and likely future arrangements to secure the academic standards of its award"
- "Confidence can be placed in the soundness of the Iceland Academy of Arts' present and likely future arrangements to secure the quality of the student learning experience"

## MEMBERS OF THE STEERING GROUP

- Björg Jóna Birgisdóttir, Director of Learning and Teaching
- Fríða Björk Ingvarsdóttir, Rector (Chair)
- Kristín Valsdóttir, Dean of the Department of Arts Education
- Magnús Loftsson, Managing Director
- Mist Barbara Þorkelsdóttir, Dean of the Department of Music
- Ólöf Gerður Sigfúsdóttir, Director of the Research Service Centre
- Rebekka Sívía Ragnarsdóttir, Director of Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

Consultants were experts and staff from the academic office, academic staff, the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee, the Student Union, Alumni and various other stakeholders and critical friends.

The consultation process was ongoing throughout the school year 2013 – 2014. The Reflective Analysis was submitted in June 2014.

## CASE STUDY: HOUSING AND FACILITIES

When the IAA was founded in 1999 all stakeholders (including the Ministry of Culture) agreed to three basic principles:

- The importance of interdisciplinary approaches in higher arts education
- Higher arts education in the country would be more efficiently run in a single academy than in several subject-based schools
- The constant and pressing housing situation of the upper secondary art schools preceding the IAA would be resolved by moving their activities into a single location with better facilities.

In 2008 there was much optimism regarding a new building on Laugavegur, but these ambitious plans were abandoned in the financial crisis.

The strategic plan for 2013 – 2017 states that the "IAA policy is based on the premise that the Academy will be operating on a single site, and that a satisfactory solution will be found concerning its unique position and plans"

## CASE STUDY: HOUSING AND FACILITIES

In spite of the recent strategic plan's statement the case study that we were working on in 2013 - 2014 revealed the need for a fresh approach. Thus a new housing policy was formed in spring 2014, based on the urgent needs of students and staff.

- The short term strategy aims at bringing together all activities into premises that fulfill the professional criteria of the arts, in addition to fulfilling national legal requirements of access for the disabled, by renting more suitable facilities in the city centre or improving the older ones.
- The long-term strategy aims at bringing together all activities into a single location within the next ten years.

As a result of this the facilities in Laugarnes have been improved considerably, both for students and staff, and early this year the school opened new specially designed premises in Austurstræti for dance and theater.

## ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

Many organizational posts have recently been revised or are in the process of being revised:

- The Academy Board of five members, two appointed by the Ministry of Culture and three by the Society for the Iceland Academy of Arts, is currently being revised in collaboration with stakeholders (BÍL, the Federation of Icelandic Artists, and the Society for the IAA).
- The Academic Council, established in 2009, has already been revised. It is now chaired by a member of academic staff and has nine members with cross departmental representation and two student representatives, instead of seventeen before. Its mandate has been clarified and one of its main roles is the management of the Teaching Committee and the Research Committee.
- The Grievance Committee on Students' Rights has been revised.
- Revision of Learning and Teaching Services is still underway

## REVISION OF LEARNING AND TEACHING SERVICES

Since autumn 2014 the Teaching and Learning services have been changed considerably:

- A new Director of Academic Affairs was hired in August 2014 and now works alongside the Director of Student Affairs.
- Student counselling has been strengthened
- Career counselling is being prepared
- An Alumni Association has been founded
- Training for part time teachers has been increased
- A new Teaching Committee is operating under the mandate of the Academic Council

#### REVISION OF THE FRAMEWORK FOR FACULTY APPOINTMENT, PROGRESSION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The process of revising the framework for academic appointment and appraisal was started when we were halfway through writing the report, in January 2014 and finished in June 2015. The conclusions are recorded in three documents:

- **Academic positions and working procedures**
  - *defining all academic standards with regard to the IAA emphasis on appointing prominent artist and scholars*
  - *defining professional responsibilities in teaching as well as regarding research and innovation*
  - *defining the division of responsibilities and work schedules.*
- **Rules on Sabbaticals**
- **Rules on Academic Appointments**

#### REVISION OF THE FRAMEWORK FOR SUPPORT STAFF

Revision of the framework for support staff is currently taking place. This process has just been started and we aim at finishing early next term. At the moment we are looking specifically at issues such as:

- Continuing education, support for furthering professional knowledge
- Staff development
- Promotion opportunities within a small institution
- Increased emphasis on team-work

#### REVISED RESEARCH POLICY

The IAA is now placing a special emphasis on research and has for quite some time been developing methods to evaluate research output within the arts. This school year is a testing period for these new means of evaluating research output.

- An evaluation framework specifically designed for output in the field of the arts has been revised by the recently appointed Research Committee and is ready for a trial period until spring.
- The arts now share, for the first time, a peer reviewing panel with the humanities within the Icelandic Research Fund, which hopefully increases the chances of financing projects through competitive funds.
- The IAA needs to be perceived on an equal basis with other universities in Iceland when it comes to state funding for research. The National Audit Office has remarked on how the IAA appropriation in the state budget differs from other universities, since research is not separated from contributions for teaching in the case of the IAA.

#### MISSION, ROLE, VALUES AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES ACCORDING TO THE INSTITUTION-WIDE REVIEW

- "Being the only higher education institution of its kind in Iceland, the IAA has a unique role in Icelandic society."
- "The art education provided by the IAA and the range of artistic activities in the Academy are of fundamental significance for the culture of Iceland."
- "The past and present arts life and arts scene, not only in Reykjavik, but also in the rest of the country, constitute *a conditio sine qua non* for higher arts education and research in Iceland."