

**“The First-Year Student’s Experience & the Art/Design History Survey” – MID-YEAR REPORT**  
Alice J. Walkiewicz

- **What have you accomplished this semester as a CTL Fellow?**

A new foundation-year-wide cohort initiative was announced partway through the spring semester. Beginning next fall (Fall 2024), the entire first-year class will be divided into cohorts across their Foundation, HMS, and HAD classes. Additionally, students who are living on campus will be housed in the same dorm based on their cohorts. This essentially means a vast expansion of the Living-Learning Community at Pratt and a change to the way that HAD 111 and 112 will operate.

With this new Institute approach to the first year, my project has shifted slightly to aid in the implementation of the new Cohorts. I have since spent the semester information gathering, meeting with various parties involved in executing the new program, and working closely with the department Survey Coordinator to both identify what the new structure will mean for HAD 111/112 specifically and brainstorming what avenues of research will best inform and aid the survey faculty in the new rollout.

- **What did you learn, what are your important takeaways so far?**

One of the most important outcomes for me this semester was developing a better understanding how HAD 111/112 fits into the larger first-year picture at Pratt. Conversations with colleagues (in my department, in other Pratt offices, and with other CTL Faculty Fellows) have particularly helped me better situate the skill-building that takes place in HAD 111/112 within the larger framework of the foundation-year curriculum. This knowledge has helped me to reconsider the skills that we focus on in HAD 111/112 and how they align (or diverge) from the other required courses first-year students are all taking. Part of the goal of the new Fall 2024 cohort structure is for the faculty teaching the linked courses to communicate with each other more and work together to hopefully better harmonize our courses and ideally create a more supportive environment for Pratt’s first-year students. Having these conversations this spring, however, means that I can begin to do some of that work and thinking now, in advance of the Fall 2024 Cohort rollout.

- **Do you feel like you accomplished the goals you’ve set for yourself? Please explain.**

I believe that the meetings I have held this semester have helped me begin to much better understand how the Art History survey connects to the rest of the first-year experience at Pratt. With this information, I feel that I have successfully laid the groundwork and identified avenues of additional exploration, setting me up to move on to the next phase of my project over the summer and into the fall.

- **How will your project continue, evolve or change in the next semester?**

The new first-year Living-Learning Community Cohort structure at Pratt will be implemented beginning in Fall 2024. I plan to use the summer to delve into the research avenues I identified this spring, including research/literature about Living-Learning Communities on college campuses, pedagogical strategies for fostering a sense of community within the

classroom, and reconsidering the skill building we will focus on next semester. One of the big changes that will be impacting the Art History Survey in the fall is that our class sizes will decrease from 24 to 15 students. To address the way that this will change the classroom culture, the HAD Survey Coordinator and I are planning to hold workshops/roundtables in the fall to discuss relevant pedagogical strategies to help HAD 111/112 instructors build classroom culture with a reduced class size. In addition to these discussions, we will also be holding another pre-semester Information Session for HAD 111/112 faculty to go over the new cohort structure (especially as the department will be onboarding many new faculty members to staff the extra HAD 111 sections that will be required). This will be an opportunity for me to also share out what I have been learning about Living-Learning Communities and the ethos behind the new first-year initiative. Additionally, the fall semester will also be a valuable opportunity to analyze, evaluate, and identify further avenues for investigation and consideration with the pilot of this new first-year experience at Pratt.

MID-YEAR EVALUATION DATA:

- **Please list the number of people you reached out to, communicated with, especially those who attended your events (full name, title, date of event, title of event)**

Over the spring semester, I had approximately 10 meetings with 7 different colleagues from at least 5 different Pratt offices/departments to discuss the new cohort structure, what it will mean for HAD 111/112 and the Learning Communities, as well as inter-departmental discussions about the learning objectives for different first-year classes.

- **Number of interviews, number of meetings, events, resources (if applicable)**

I participated in a department HAD 111/112 Faculty Information Session on Monday, April 15<sup>th</sup> from 12:00-1:00pm.