

Program Review Form

This report is to be filed with the Board of Regents Office within a year of the final report of a review. All departments or schools undergoing an accreditation review by an outside agency of a periodic institutional program review are to complete this form. The form is available in electronic format from the Office of the Academic Vice President so that its size can be adjusted to fit responses of varying lengths. The dean or department chair is responsible for completing this report and submitting it to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for approval and submission to the Board of Regents.

Institution: Dakota State University

Department or School: College of Arts and Sciences

Program(s) Reviewed: Digital Arts and Design

Date of Review: Spring 2010

Please identify the program reviewers and any external accrediting body: Elena Bertozzi, Assistant Professor, Media Arts and Game Development, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

Part 1: Strengths and Limitations Identified by Reviewer

Appropriateness of goals:

According to the reviewer, the current college and program goals are broad and encompass skills traditionally taught in programs with multiple majors rather than specializations within a single major. While it is difficult for all specializations to meet these broad goals (given the number of faculty and college resources), the specialization areas are doing an excellent job of ensuring that students have marketable skills.

Program Goals Relative to Institutional Mission:

Because of DSU's mission on providing programs specializing in information technology, the reviewer expected students to be trained in art and design for digitally mediated delivery. But, she also emphasized that for workplace success, students also need grounding in the analog art and design traditions and appropriate spaces and materials. In addition to the well-maintained and up-to-date computer labs that DSU currently has, the degree program would benefit from additional space, faculty and materials so that students could study and produce traditional forms of art and design.

Program Goals Relative to National Trends and Forecasts for the Discipline:

There is strong industry demand for students with in-depth skills in Web Design, Computer Graphics, Production Animation, and Audio Production and it appears as though those specialization areas are producing graduates with the skills necessary to obtain employment in their specialization areas. However, the reviewer recommended that the faculty re-consider the curriculum for the specialization in digital storytelling. (That review has occurred and the curriculum has undergone significant change since the reviewer was on campus in Spring 2010.)

Program Resources:

The reviewer indicated that the program has sufficient resources to effectively meet program goals, although she indicated that additional space and resources could be devoted to traditional art and design. The reviewer did express some concern about the broadness of the program (one set of core courses and then program requirements for each of 5 specializations). She suggested that the program requires faculty to teach in too many different subject areas and that the college may not have staffing, facilities, or other resources to teach all the specialization areas well.

Staffing Levels and Credentials:

The faculty are well-qualified and dedicated to the program and students. Both faculty and students suggested that faculty members are sometimes required to teach out of their area of expertise. However, since the review in Spring 2010, two additional faculty positions have been added in the digital arts and design program, so that issues has been resolved somewhat.

Classroom Facilities:

While classroom facilities are adequate, the reviewer did note that some spaces are used for dual purposes. At the time the review took place, the Mac lab needed to be upgraded and the students expressed their desire to include Mac tablets within DSU's wireless mobile computing initiative. The reviewer also suggested that additional servers be made available for rendering. All three of those suggestions have been implemented since the review.

Financial Support:

The reviewer suggested that the institution increase its spending on program hardware and software. (At the time of the review, both hardware and software were upgraded every 3-4 years.) The reviewer also suggested that additional funding should be allocated to the campus gallery and/or to online galleries to showcase student and faculty work. Since the review, the SDBOR system has implemented a \$4 technology fee, which has made it possible to upgrade software and hardware on a more regular and more frequent schedule.

Program Curriculum:

The reviewer suggested that the program requirements and course offerings were too broad. For example, she felt that courses in Performance, Stagecraft, and Acting did not relate to the program or the stated goals. She further suggested that an emphasis in web video might be considered for the program. Since the review, the curriculum for the digital arts and design and the curriculum for the 5 specializations has been reviewed and upgraded. In addition, the two new faculty make it possible to offer a more skill-specific (and less broad-based) curriculum.

Technology Integration:

The reviewer had no substantive remarks regarding technology integration.

Appropriateness of Assessment Measures/Activities for the Discipline and Major-field Assessment Activities, Relative to the Program Goals:

The reviewer suggested that the assessment goals and measures were overly broad. She suggested that a coherent mission statement and associated goals needs to be developed. She also suggested that the program faculty develop more specific rubrics for the major field assessment activities and that classes taken during the final year be used to assess student

progress in the program's learning outcomes. She did note that graduates are finding appropriate work.

Student Support:

The program is very popular with students and is likely to continue to grow.

Program Strengths and Areas of Improvement:

The reviewer noted that the program has dedicated faculty and administration. Students like the program and offered suggestions for strengthening the program, including calling for higher standards in both their work and the work of faculty. The reviewer recommended consulting students regularly about the program and having student representatives engaged in the development of goals.

Part 2: Reviewer's Recommendations for Change

In the analysis of the program, the external reviewer made the following specific recommendations:

- A coherent mission statement should be developed. This mission statement should include goals for the program and students. The curriculum, staffing needs, and resources should be assessed to ensure that they support the goals.
- Program faculty should have regularly scheduled meetings to discuss and resolve program issues.
- Faculty should discuss the need for minimum GPA requirements and/or other standards for admission and retention in the program.
- The last year of the program should ensure that students are prepared for the workforce. This should include some opportunities for foreign study and travel, project-based instruction, internships, team projects, creation of personal portfolios.
- Better utilization of the on-campus gallery should be considered and a web gallery for showcasing student and faculty work needs to be created.
- Labs need to be regularly updated, so that industry-standard software and hardware is available to faculty.

Part 3: Institutional Response

In Fall 2010, the dean of Arts and Sciences and the Digital Arts and Design faculty has a retreat to discuss the recommendations from the external reviewer. From that meeting, committees were established to address the concerns and the recommendations raised in the review. As a result of those meetings, these program changes were made:

- **Program Goals:** A mission statement and goals were established by a subcommittee and approved by DAD faculty in December 2010.
- **Program Resources:** The DAD faculty and the dean of Arts and Sciences believe that one of the strengths of the program is the curriculum designed around 5 specializations. While the reviewer was critical of that approach, she comes from a larger and more traditional university setting. Since the review occurred, we have been fortunate to add two new faculty members -- one in Audio Production and one in Production Animation.

We will continue to request additional faculty positions to support the growth of the DAD program. And, during Fall 2011, the DAD faculty began work on a web gallery to showcase faculty and student work. The faculty have begun work on the DAD website, so that it will include:

- directory information, linking faculty to their areas of specialization,
- webpages for each of the specializations, with links to specialization blogs and a web gallery for each specialization.
- content and design that reflects the personality and strengths of the DAD program.
- **Staffing Levels and Credentials:** Since two new positions have been added, it is far less likely that faculty will be asked to teach courses outside their areas of specialization. When faculty are asked to teach new courses / learn new software, the college will provide access to software / hardware training.
- **Facilities:** A faculty subcommittee analyzed the facilities available for the DAD program. They evaluated available spaces in terms of display of work and curriculum needs. They identified ten places on campus that have been or could be used to display faculty and student work. In addition, there is at least one location off campus that could be used. While these locations are available, the faculty feel that having these spaces under the control of the College of Arts and Sciences would allow for easier scheduling. Digital presentations and digital designs could also be presented more easily if the available gallery space were repurposed or if additional space would be made available. Other needs include lockable presentation cabinets and a way to store a permanent collection of guest, student and faculty work. The college will explore one option for storage in Beadle Hall.
- **Financial Support:** The faculty also recommended that additional equipment be purchased to support the program: HD video cameras, lighting equipment, digital SLR cameras, a rendering farm, and an entry-level motion capture system. While the college has been supportive of the program and have purchased needed equipment in the past three years, that budget is relatively limited. DSU's technology budget does not cover the cost of program-specific equipment, so the college will need to include those requests in the annual budget process.
- **Program Curriculum:** A significantly modified curriculum was developed to address weaknesses in the program. These changes to the program should result in enhanced student skills. For instance, one concern voiced by internship students is their unfamiliarity with InDesign. A new course is being developed which will expose our DAD students to InDesign. In Spring 2011, the DAD faculty re-examined the program curriculum and student learning outcomes relative to the new goals and mission statement for the program. Finally, the DAD faculty will establish an advisory council, composed of members from industry. This advisory council will provide ongoing evaluation and conversation about curriculum that meets the needs of industry.
- **Assessment:** While the DAD faculty would be willing to consider more rigorous admission requirements for DAD majors, the faculty prefer to focus on raising curriculum standards. As indicated earlier, the program curriculum underwent a review in 2010-2011 and many changes have been made as a result.
- **Marketing for recruiting:** The DAD faculty have developed a marketing plan which includes participation in two employment and/or marketing opportunity events each year.

These could include the Sioux Falls Film Festival or the Technology Conference. The faculty members have also developed talking points about the program to provide to recruiters, faculty, or administration to use when presenting information about the DAD program. The faculty will also investigate the possibility of advertising in area magazines and will sponsor a faculty exhibit annually, in addition to developing a website presence to showcase faculty and student work.

- **Administrative Organization:** The Dean of Arts and Sciences requested a Digital Arts and Design faculty coordinator position to provide faculty leadership to the program and quarter-time release is currently being provided to a faculty member for that responsibility.