



Design Technology Department
Entertainment Technology Program
Advisory Board Agenda

Date: June 20, 2018

Time: 12:04-1:49 PM

Location: Center for Media & Design (CMD), Room 216

Advisors in attendance:

Ceci Aranovich, Warner Bros. Animation
Maija Burnett, CalArts
David Grau, Red Bull Media House
Brooke Keesling, The Animation Guild
Marios Kourasis, Independent VFX Supervisor
Dori Littell-Herrick, Woodbury University
Ken Locsmandi, Filmworks/FX
David Miller, Create Advertising
Jonathan Pan, Amazon Game Studios
David Sonnenschein, IQSONICS LLC
Jo Wright, DICE Los Angeles

SMC Faculty & Staff in attendance:

Young Choi, Faculty, Entertainment Technology
Frank Dawson, Dean, Career Education
Chris Fria, Faculty, Entertainment Technology
David Javelosa, Faculty, Entertainment Technology
Ann Marie Leahy, Staff, Career Services Center
Walt Louie, Faculty, Entertainment Technology

**I. Overview of Center for Media & Design (CMD) and Entertainment Technology (ET) Program
Student Demographics**

After an introduction of those present, Chris Fria gave a brief overview of the CMD facility and the Design Technology Department, outlining the history of the site and the resources available

to students. He also shared key demographics of the ET student population based on data from the 2016-2017 academic year:

- 593 unique enrollments
- 62% male, 38% female
- Average age of 24
- 60% intend to transfer
- 83.6% retention rate

II. Proposed Redesign of Entertainment Technology Degrees/Certificates

Chris Fria outlined the course sequences for the current programs in Animation and Digital Media. He stated that only 9 associate degrees were awarded in the 2016-2017 academic year despite strong course retention numbers. He gave examples of the challenges students face to completing the current course sequence including too many required units for part-time attendance, balancing outside commitments, and cancellations of required courses due to low enrollment.

Young Choi spoke about the difficulties of dealing with students of varying skill levels in the classroom. He said that his students sometimes ignore the recommended course sequence and/or advisories.

Chris Fria gave an explanation of the Guided Pathways effort the college is undertaking, and stated that the main goal for the ET program is to increase certificate and degree completions without compromising the quality of the instruction. To achieve this goal, he proposed a major restructuring of the existing degrees that involves the following:

- Reducing the core units for the Animation Certificate of Achievement from 34 to 15.
- Consolidating the existing 7 areas of concentration for Animation into 4: 2D Animation, 3D Animation, 3D Production and Visual Development.
- Converting the Animation areas of concentration from department certificates to Certificates of Achievement that would stack with the core units to form the Animation A.S. Degree.
- Expanding the Game Design concentration into a stand-alone A.S. Degree program.
- Reduce the total area of emphasis units for the Animation A.S. Degree from 50 to 32.
- Reduce the core units for the Digital Media certificate from 44 to 18, and create concentrations in Digital Audio Post-Production and Digital Video Post-Production as stackable Certificates of Achievement.
- Reduce the total area of emphasis units for the Digital Media A.S. Degree from 44 to 33.

Walt Louie outlined the new Sound Design and Color Correction courses that are under development for the Digital Media concentrations.

III. Discussion and Recommendations

Once the faculty presentation had ended, a general discussion began. Chris Fria answered questions regarding the General Education requirements for the Associate Degrees in Animation and Digital Media. The advisors were very supportive of the idea of contextualizing GE courses to make them more relevant to students in creative fields.

David Sonnenschein of IQSONICS expressed difficulty in recruiting interns from Santa Monica College. He stated that several SMC students applied but none had followed through unlike students from other schools. Mr. Sonnenschein also offered to be a guest speaker in the future.

Everyone agreed that internships are critical opportunities for students, and everything should be done to encourage students to take them seriously.

Ken Locsmandi of Filmworks/FX also expressed a need for qualified interns. He said hiring entry-level employees is a major investment for a small company, and internships are a valuable way to vet potential candidates. Mr. Locsmandi also stated that many entry-level jobs are being replaced by automation. Frank Dawson encouraged the advisors to keep faculty informed of changes in hiring so curriculum can be adjusted as necessary in order to stay relevant.

A discussion followed on the need to assess student goals early in the course sequences. Chris Fria answered questions regarding the role of SMC counselors, and stated that the stackable certificates were designed to help students make informed career/transfer decisions sooner. The group was very supportive of a stackable structure for the Animation and Digital Media degrees, but expressed caution about being too prescriptive with the curriculum. Brooke Keesling made the point that different companies are likely to have different opinions about what skills are necessary for entry-level hires.

Chris Fria spoke about the annual Cool Careers event that allows students to hear first-hand about career skills from industry professionals. Several advisors offered to participate in future events like this. Frank Dawson also spoke about the success of targeted cohorts in other programs such as Promo Pathways.

The feedback from the advisors on the redesign of the ET Degrees/Certificates was overwhelmingly positive. Most of the comments centered on the simplicity of the new stackable structure, saying it made it much easier for students to understand the correct sequence of courses to take.

Maija Burnett strongly encouraged one-on-one counseling with students early in the sequence. She shared her experiences with student reviews at CalArts, saying it was an effective tool for faculty to provide honest feedback to students on their strengths and weaknesses. Dori Littell-Herrick of Woodbury University said that transfer should be approached similar to industry concentrations because four-year schools may differ in their expectations of transfer students.

She recommended using hard data to see where SMC students are trying to transfer after completing our programs, and working closely with those schools to align course content in specific areas.

Many of the advisors offered their time to follow up on specific content within proposed Animation and Digital Media degrees as well as the proposed A.S Degree in Game Design. Overall, the consensus was that the redesign is an exciting step forward for the Entertainment Technology program and is definitely the right approach to improve completions while staying aligned with transfer institutions and industry.

IV. Action Items

Chris Fria will share the slide presentation and course outlines with all advisors. A separate advisory meeting will be organized to discuss the specifics of the Game Design A.S. Degree. The ET program will begin revising the Animation and Digital Media degrees by collecting of labor market data and meeting with SMC counselors. Further feedback from the advisors on specific course content will be used to revise existing courses.