University of the Fraser Valley

Graphic and Digital Design

College of Arts

Dean's Summary

Submitted by:
Dr. Sylvie Murray, Dean, College of Arts

Accepted by:
Senate in October 2026
Academic Planning and Priorities Committee in September 2026

MEMORANDUM

Academic Planning and Priorities Committee

TO:	James Mandigo, Chair, Senate
FROM:	Tracy Ryder Glass, Chair, Academic Planning and Priorities Committee
CC:	Sylvie Murray, Dean, College of Arts Jennifer Deon, Department Head, Graphic and Digital Design
DATE:	September 25, 2026
RE:	Program Review - Graphics and Digital Design

Graphics and Digital Design within the Faculty of Humanities, College of Arts recently underwent a program review. The Academic Planning and Priorities Committee reviewed all of the documentation related to the program review and accepted them at its September 23, 2026 meeting and recommend to Senate for acceptance.

The review affirms the program's strong applied orientation, industry and community engagement, and students' sense of belonging and pride. Building on these strengths, it recommends curricular improvements, including AI context, more accessible admission practices, and integrated technical support, as well as more effective use of physical spaces. Strengthened leadership and adaptive methodologies, together with renewed commitments to community engagement, Indigenous communities, and place-based design, will support continued innovation and alignment with UFV's Changemaking priorities.

The APPC offered their congratulations on this great review and thanked the committee for their work.

Suggested motion:
THAT Senate accept the Graphics and Digital Design Program Review as presented.

Dean's Summary Report

Graphic and Digital Design (GDD) Program Review, Faculty of Humanities, College of Arts

Dr. Sylvie Murray, Dean, College of Arts, July 9, 2026

Introduction

The GDD program review occurred in Fall 2025 and Winter 2026 in accordance with Policy 189.

The following credentials were examined: GDD diploma; GDD major, Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA); GDD extended minor, BFA; GDD minor

The program review was informed by a self-study report conducted by the GDD department in accordance with the template provided by UFV's Program Review office. The External Review Committee (ERC) conducted an in-person site visit on February 18-19, 2026, Abbotsford campus. The site visit included meetings with myself, GDD faculty, staff and students, an Academic advisor, the Manager of Operations and Planning for the College of Arts, and the Director of Strategic Initiatives for the Creative Arts.

The External Review Report (ERR) was received on March 18, 2026. The Action Plan presented by the program faculty addresses all recommendations made by the ERC.

Overall, the review highlights the strength of the program's applied orientation (manifested through practice-based learning and meaningful industry and community engagement), which constitutes a solid base for future growth, innovation, and curricular evolution. The report recommends incremental and measured changes to the curriculum and curricular support. Development of a coordinated Artificial Intelligence literacy framework will ensure that the program remains current in a rapidly-changing technological environment. Course coordination will ensure greater consistency in the delivery of the program's courses. Admission practices will be reviewed to ensure accessibility, with special attention to Indigenous learners. Improving the physical spaces and utilization to enhance collaboration, program identity (wayfinding) and access to adjacent spaces (e.g. gallery, woodshops, photography studios) is timely now four years since the move of the program to C Building on the Abbotsford campus, as is integration of technical support in the university IT system. Finally, strengthening the program's leadership and adaptive methodologies will reinforce its strong alignment with UFV's Changemaking priorities, as will the department's re-commitment to industry/community engagement, Indigenous communities and place-based design practices.

I note the many commendations offered throughout the external report. They include, amongst others, the faculty's active responses to the last program review and their continued attention to curriculum; the collegial, welcoming and growth-oriented environment the faculty members create; the students' strong sense of belonging and pride; and the department's strong desire to prepare students to be leaders of the future and to develop their own research interests.

I wish to express my appreciation to the department faculty, in particular Department Head Jennifer Deon, for their critical engagement in this core quality assurance activity, the ERC for their thoughtful observations and recommendations, and the program review staff for their impeccable logical support.

Program Review: Action Plan
Graphic and Digital Design

Curriculum and Assurance of Learning			
Goal: Restructure and clarify the curriculum pathways			
Rationale: The panel recommended reviewing the current credit load in all Graphic and Digital Design (GDD) programs and exploring more flexible and modular curriculum structures.			
Task	**Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome**	**Timeline**	**Assigned to**
Audit required courses in the BFA major, extended minor, minor, and diploma to identify consolidation opportunities, and develop a revised credit structure proposal targeting a reduction to credits in the GDD BFA major.	Draft credit reduction proposal submitted to Dean; faculty consensus on courses to consolidate or repurpose.	Fall 2026 – Winter 2027	Department Head, Faculty, Curriculum Committee
Develop visual curriculum maps for all credential pathways to support advising and recruitment.	Visual maps published on GDD website and used in one recruitment cycle.	Fall 2027	Faculty, Department Head. (work in consultation with an Academic Advisor)
Design and pilot a Special Topics course based on faculty research expertise or emerging industry challenges.	Consult with the Dean for budgetary feasibility and impact. Special Topics course approved and piloted.	Fall 2027 – Winter 2028	Faculty, Department Head, Curriculum Committee
Evaluate the revised curriculum structure adjust as needed.	Evaluation report shared with Dean; further refinements identified and actioned.	Spring 2029	Department Head, Dean's Office
Goal: Develop a coordinated AI literacy framework across the curriculum			
Rationale: The review identified inconsistency in how AI is handled and recommended a student-centred competency framework covering boundaries, ethical application, and design leadership framing. As AI fluency becomes an employer expectation, a proactive strategy will position graduates as critical designers rather than passive tool users.			
Task	**Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome**	**Timeline**	**Assigned to**
Establish a GDD AI Literacy Working Group to survey current use in our programs, benchmark peer programs, and draft student-centred AI guidelines.	AI Guidelines approved by faculty and adopted as program consistent with university guidelines and policies (https://www.ufv.ca/teaching-and-learning/artificial-intelligence/)	Fall 2026 – Winter 2027	Department Head, Faculty
Address AI tools already used in courses and develop a framework to intentionally integrate it into pedagogy and course outputs. Support faculty through shared professional development resources.	Update syllabi; sample student AI generated work; at least one faculty PD session held per year; framework reviewed and updated annually.	Fall 2027, then ongoing	Faculty, Department Head

Student Achievement			
Goal: Improve course coordination, critical feedback, and Process-Based Learning			
Rationale: Students want deeper engagement with design process and more critical feedback beyond mood boards. Faculty noted challenges coordinating Part I and Part II courses taught by different instructors. Addressing these gaps will improve learning consistency and better prepare graduates for professional practice.			
Task	**Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome**	**Timeline**	**Assigned to**
Establish a course coordination requiring faculty teaching to share and align syllabi each term.	Coordination of syllabi including project topics and deliverables adopted; course content matrix completed.	Fall 2026 – Winter 2027	Department Head, Faculty
Introduce structured process-based deliverables in studio courses and formalize critique culture program-wide through peer critique protocols and criteria-based feedback frameworks.	At least one program-wide critique event held per year; student satisfaction with process and feedback assessed via end-of-term survey.	Fall 2027, then ongoing	Faculty, Department Head
Goal: Revise program specific admissions practices and Indigenous pathways			
Rationale: The diploma's competitive model may be constraining enrolment. Alumni have also identified an Indigenous knowledge pathway as a necessary enrichment to the program.			
Task	**Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome**	**Timeline**	**Assigned to**
Review the GDD diploma admissions model in consultation with the Academic Advisor, Registrar, and Dean's Office; pilot a revised process.	Revised process piloted for at least one intake cycle; conversion rates compared to prior years; recommendations finalized.	Winter 2027 – Fall 2027	Department Head, Academic Advisor, Registrar, Dean's Office
In partnership with "xwexwilmexwawt" https://www.ufv.ca/indigenous/ and community knowledge keepers, develop pathways to provide options for courses on Indigenous knowledge systems and place-based design.	Develop community partnerships; Interdisciplinary opportunities for Indigenous knowledge systems established as options in programs.	2027 – 2028	Department Head, Faculty, UFV Indigenous Affairs

Governance and Resources

Goal: Improve physical spaces, program visibility, and cross-program facility access

Rationale: Since relocating to Abbotsford in 2023, GDD has faced space constraints affecting collaboration, program identity, and access to facilities. The Hive is increasingly crowded by equipment, GDD classrooms lack clear wayfinding and visual presence, and students have no dedicated gallery space for exhibiting their work. Improving the physical environment will reinforce the program's collaborative culture and elevate its professional profile.

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Develop a proposal for modular collaborative spaces and implement a visual identity strategy for GDD spaces.	Proposal approved; at least one collaborative area established; wayfinding and visual identity completed in the GDD wing.	2026 – 2028	Department Head, Dean's Office, Facilities, Marketing
Develop a coherent program narrative that articulates not only what tools students learn, but who they become as graduates—designers capable of navigating ambiguity, leading interdisciplinary initiatives, and contributing meaningfully within civic, technological, and enterprise contexts.	Updated prospectus, website, and develop a social media strategy.	2026-2027	Faculty, and the COA Digital Communications Strategist
Negotiate recurring gallery access for GDD student exhibitions and participate in a university-wide cross-program space-sharing review to establish equitable access to galleries, woodshops, photography studios, and other specialist facilities.	Gallery access agreement in place; GDD student exhibition held; cross-program facility agreements established.	2027 – 2028	Department Head, Gallery Committee, Dean's Office

Goal: Strengthen technician support

Rationale: Two GDD technicians currently operate independently of university IT, managing equipment maintenance, student orientations, and lab and studio support. The review panel found this unsustainable—a single resignation or illness could fracture program support. Physical infrastructure gaps, including missing drying racks and storage for Risograph supplies, compound the pressure. Integration with university systems and a formal succession plan are essential for long-term program stability.

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Work with GDD tech team to clarify the evolving needs and possible futures of GDD programming and establish protocols between GDD department and tech managers.	Roles and tasks of the tech team are clearly established, including tech research and testing assignments. Protocols in place.	Fall 2026 – Winter 2027	Department Head, Technicians, IT Services, Dean's Office
Review risograph management at other institution(s) (ie: ECUAD) and develop guidelines for usage and resource management; Secure dedicated storage and space for risograph supplies and planned equipment expansion.	Risograph storage solutions in place. Guidelines for usage and management established and publicised to students, staff and faculty.	Summer 2026 – Fall 2027	Department Head, Technicians, Facilities

Planning and Sustainability

Goal: Embed design leadership and adaptive methodologies; expand industry engagement

Rationale: Leadership and adaptive thinking are referenced in GDD's Professional Practice PLOs but are not yet systematically scaffolded across courses and credential levels. The review panel recommended working backward from an aspirational graduate profile to ensure coherence across program-, term-, and course-level outcomes. Alongside this, the program has an opportunity to deepen industry connections through a revived External Advisory Committee, community-embedded project experiences, and micro-credentials that extend the program's regional reach.

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Revise PLOs to explicitly articulate leadership, systems thinking, ethical practice, and far-transfer learning as graduate attributes; map these capacities progressively across lower- and upper-division courses.	Updated PLOs approved through UFV curriculum process; graduate profile statement published; at least two courses updated to reflect explicit leadership outcomes.	Winter 2027 – Fall 2027	Faculty, Department Head, Curriculum Committee
Pilot a community-embedded design leadership experience with Fraser Valley industry or community partners focused on research-driven problem framing; re-establish an External Advisory Committee.	Pilot course approved and offered; Advisory Committee re-established.	2027 – 2029	Department Head, Faculty, Dean's Office
Conduct a feasibility study on micro-credential offerings in design (e.g., Generative AI fluency, design leadership, freelance business skills) aligned with industry demand and program expertise.	Feasibility report completed	2028-2029	Department Head, Director of Strategic Initiatives

Goal: Deepen Indigenous community engagement and embed place-based design practices

Rationale: UFV's commitments to decolonization and reconciliation, combined with student and alumni feedback, point to a meaningful opportunity to strengthen the GDD program's relationship with Indigenous communities in the Fraser Valley. Building these relationships takes time; early steps must prioritize genuine partnership and relational accountability.

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Engage UFV's Indigenous Affairs office to establish appropriate relationship-building protocols and identify community partners for ongoing curriculum collaboration.	Initial relationship established with at least an Indigenous community organization or Elder; protocol documented and shared with faculty.	Fall 2026 – Winter 2027	Department Head, "xwexwilmexwawt" https://www.ufv.ca/indigenous/
Integrate collaborative, place-based design projects with Indigenous community partners into at least one upper-level course per year; support faculty engagement with decolonizing design scholarship and professional communities.	At least one upper-level course includes a community-embedded Indigenous design project annually; at least one faculty member presents or publishes in this area within the five-year period.	Fall 2028, then ongoing	Faculty, Department Head, Community Partners

Dean's Summary Statement

Action Plan reviewed and approved by:		
Information verified by:		
Department Head: Jennifer Deon	Date: May 28, 2026	
Dean: Dr. Sylvie Murray	Date: July 9, 2026	