Graphic and Digital Design Program Review

College of Arts

Dean's Summary

Submitted by:
Dr. Jacqueline Nolte, Dean of the College of Arts

UNIVERSITY OF THE FRASER VALLEY

COLLEGE OF ARTS

MEMORANDUM

From: **Jacqueline Nolte, Dean, College of Arts**

Date: **July 2019**

Re: **Deans Summary of GDD Program Review**

The Graphic and Digital Design External Review team visited UFV campus on February 20 and 21, 2019. The site visit involved meetings with members of the department, with the Dean of the College of Arts, the Associate Deans, the Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President Academic, the AVP Research Engagement & Graduate Studies, the AVP Institutional Research & Planning and Research Analyst. The reviewers also met the Senior Advisor of Indigenous Affairs, the Director of Teaching and Learning, Library Liaison and an Advisor. The reviewer's conclusions were as follows, "Overall, this is a successful GDD program with dedicated faculty and staff, and with satisfied and employable students. The program curriculum is based on the current skills required in the industry, and there are many opportunities for student experiential learning. We are impressed that such a robust and comprehensive program is being delivered by such a small complement of faculty and staff." (p14, Program Review External Review Report, March 11, 2019)

Reviewers commented that the program "supports the University's vision for delivering a relevant educational program in the Fraser Valley". (p4) They noted that UFV's *Principles for Quality Curriculum* are met and that the GDD curriculum is "current, relevant, and flexible as it provides a variety of community-based projects and experiences for students that change with each student cohort. The program is inclusive, with domestic and international students, although the limited availability of public transportation may be a barrier for some students."(p 9) Reviewers noted the relevance of the curriculum for the industry and recommended "minor tweaks" to include more academic rigour, more writing skills, and more soft-skills to help prepare the graduates for laddering into a degree and/or the expectations of the workplace.

The main weaknesses of the program were identified as over-reliance on sessionals and the need to reassess and modify workloads to be more manageable. A notable recommendation was for GDD program to be connected to and integrated with Abbotsford campus due to its isolation on Mission campus, with students frustrated by limited transportation options.

The reviewers also noted, "[w]e want to stress that we find the GDD program to be very strong and only needing minor improvements, despite our long list of recommendations " (p2). These recommendations are listed below, under the headings submitted in the external review.

Programs' Contribution to the University's Strategic Goals, Vision, Mission, Plans and Values

Recommendation: Regarding Indigenization, work with the indigenous experts at UFV to help include more in the curriculum and to help modify the delivery of the program

Action: In fall 2019, the department will work with the Teaching and Learning to indigenize the curriculum while also building relationships with Indigenous partners. Faculty will be encouraged to broaden their understanding context through coursework such as the UBC MOOCS or UFV IPK courses.

Recommendation: Develop an identity that is distinct from other graphic design programs in the Lower Mainland, and market the program with clearly worded and deliverable expectations

Action: In fall 2019, the department will review current marketing and recruitment strategies to address distinctive qualities such as communication design and UI/UX combination at a comprehensive university. It will work with UFV Marketing further refine its visual identity and will promote the diverse employment opportunities for graduates.

Recommendation: Require that new GDD students attend the UFV Abbotsford campus New Student Orientation

Action: The department finalizes admission decisions based on portfolio submissions early-summer, well after the NSO event. In fall 2019 the department will: investigate alternate ways for GDD program students to participate in a NSO; work closely with School of Creative Arts (SOCA), Student Life, and the Student Union to find ways to expand the GDD student experience on both campuses; invite Student Life representatives to conduct information sessions on the Mission campus each semester; find more intentional ways of sharing information about the opportunities, services, and facilities on the Abbotsford campus; include "field trips" to the Abbotsford Campus in some GD Mission courses; continue hosting GDD creative community events on the Abbotsford campus; plan to host the annual GDD grad show on the Abbotsford campus

Recommendation: Integrate all GDD program students into some classes on the Abbotsford campus

Action: This summer we created a networked classroom (C1420) on the Abbotsford campus with access to GDD servers, high-speed internet, printers, and power. In winter 2020 we will have a first intake in Abbotsford of the first year of the diploma. There are limited networked classrooms on Abbotsford campus that will enable an easy delivery of GDD classes on Abbotsford campus; GDD students require connection to GDD servers, high-speed internet, printers, and power with their MacBook Pro laptops. In fall, the department will investigate the feasibility of delivering non-GD courses in Abbotsford (those that do not require a MacBook Pro) e.g. VA113, CMNS125.In winter 2020 we will consider delivering some GD courses for GDD Mission diploma students in Abbotsford when adequate space becomes available and inquire into "classroom swapping" between Mission and Abbotsford with complementary program areas.

Public transport between the two campuses is also very poor, with bus connections being two hours each way. What is required is a strategic decision by campus planning to relocate GDD to Abbotsford campus, which entails a 3-5 year campus plan

Recommendation: Require faculty to participate on various UFV committees

Action: As of fall 2019, participation on select UFV committees will be part of permanent faculty workloads. The department will invite sessional faculty to take part in UFV initiatives and committees where workload allows. The department head will cultivate interest through information sharing of the opportunities, scholarly activities, services, support, events and facilities on the Abbotsford campus. The department will also work with the Dean's office to foster inclusivity by building GDD's identity, visibility and space on the Abbotsford campus; this will include PR strategies and creating a visual GDD space and awareness in C-Building.

Recommendation: Provide opportunities for all faculty to teach some of the courses offered on the Abbotsford campus

Action: Faculty already have one course per year on the Abbotsford campus in each faculty workload.

Alignment with Institutional Learning Outcomes

Recommendation: Increase the program's focus on soft skills. Rely less on static specialized skills, such as coding, and include more critical thinking and interpersonal skills in the curriculum design

Action: By fall 2020, the department will make critical thinking, collaboration, team theory, and interpersonal skill development explicit in lectures, during active learning, and within course syllabi and project briefs.

Beginning now and culminating in 2020, the department will engage external experts to assess and provide recommendations on curriculum, delivery, and competencies. Already this past May, the department has developed an interactive design think tank to review GDD's interactive design stream and to make recommendations. This fall, GDD faculty will revise the interactive design course outlines, consult further and approval an interactive design stream.

Between 2019 and 2021, the department will: review program learning outcomes and current curriculum maps; participate in design educators' discussion groups and events to gain new insight, research, and classroom resources; identify GD courses and develop projects that instill criticality and human centred design (HCD); create a term map identifying criticality and HCD major projects The department will ensure designers' responsibility in activating behaviours and designed experiences

Recommendation: Include more on writing for the industry, and develop more collaborative student projects

Action: With assistance from the Communications Department, GDD will create a new course on "research and writing for the design field."

Recommendations: Include industry practitioners to assess student work to help students handle criticism and critique; develop more collaborative student projects; include industry practitioners to assess student work to help students handle criticism and critique in a respectful workplace setting.

Action: In April, the department introduced capstone review panels comprised solely of industry professionals and implemented an industry assessment rubric as part of the process (GD361). In fall the department will plan to invite guest critiques of projects in select courses from industry, end users, and clients. The department will support students with active sharing of their work, giving and receiving feedback, and listening skills in preparation for the realities of the workplace. Students will be encouraged to participate in professional association mentorship programs (GDC and RGD).

Recommendation: Add an assignment that requires more in-depth analysis of academic and/or credible sources related to the GDD industry

Action: in 2019, the department will assign mandatory readings with measurable outcomes in all professional practice-based courses (e.g. GD101, GD102, GD202, GD204, GD260, GD316, GD317, GD361, GD369, GD374). Teaching and Learning will be approached to help engage students in reflection and analysis of readings using creative feedback and participatory learning strategies. The department will work with the library liaison in the development of library guides and assignments to include more in-depth analysis of academic sources. Faculty will be supported through workshops, peer groups, and shared resources.

Ministry, Professional/Industry and Academic Standards

Recommendation: Add more diversity and various disciplines from the creative industry represented in the advisory committee such as large ad agencies, digital agencies, film, and emerging technology companies such as VR/AR technology.

Action: The department will continue to draw on a large cross section of GDD and media experts

Standards of Educational Practices

Recommendation: Include sessionals in department meetings to discuss curriculum

Action: See above – these are planned

Recommendation: Engage in marking exercises to standardize rubrics and departmental expectations for grading of assignments

Action: This fall the department will request support from UFV's T&L Centre for a workshop on assessment for GDD faculty. The department will standardize assessment measures and departmental expectations for grading assignments.

Recommendation: Work with Teaching and Learning faculty to determine which courses could be adapted as hybrid or fully online

Action: GDD faculty will be encouraged to take the Facilitating Learning Online (FPO) course at UFV to gain skills for online instruction. In fall, the department will identify possible GD courses that could be offered online or hybrid.

Utilization of Resources

Recommendation: Provide a more comprehensive sessional orientation, connect sessionals with Teaching and Learning faculty, and require sessionals to obtain UFV's Instructional Skills Workshop

Action: In fall 2019, all new faculty will be asked to participate in an Instructional Skills Workshop. Staring in fall 2019, to be completed by January 2021, a GDD faculty handbook will be developed. Permanent faculty will be asked to mentor sessionals.

Recommendation: Clarify the job descriptions and workloads of the department assistant and lab coordinator

Action: In February 2019, work was started on re-assessment of the department assistant and lab coordinator position job descriptions and workload. This was done alongside a review of budget and other staff positions. In May, various flexible forms of support were introduced (auxiliary staff support, work-study students). A full review and assessment of supporting program delivery on two campuses will commence in fall 2019.

Recommendation: During this time of limited faculty resources, offer regular sessionals contracts for specific program projects and events

Action: The department will reassess department service requirements in relation to priorities and request sessional contracts to support larger projects and events.

Recommendation: Reassess and re-evaluate workloads, plan ways to use resources more effectively, and defer plans for growth until the program has a full and stabilized complement of faculty and staff

Action: The recent addition of two 7/7 tenure track faculty (August 1, 2019), the return of 4/7 faculty, a solid roster of sessional faculty, exceptional staff, and the introduction of a second (1/2 cohort) diploma stream on the Abbotsford campus (Winter 2020) should contribute to a more balanced delivery of GDD programs, stabilize enrolments in Abbotsford and position the department to deliver the proposed GDD Major once approved.