

PHILLIPS COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

Submitted by Dr. Deborah King on behalf of the Graphic Communications Program Review Committee Composed of Applied Technology Dean Linda Killion, Applied Technology Program Coordinator Vicki Cobb, (Program Review Co-Chairs), Randi Rauh-Tyler, and Cindy Grove.

Please go to the following link to access the entire PCCUA Graphic Communications Program Review http://www.pccua.edu/faculty_staff/

December 13, 2013

*Graphic
Communications
Program Review
Documents*

PCCUA ARTS AND SCIENCES PROGRAM REVIEWERS' BIOGRAPHIES

Eric Shawn Whittington, Instructor of Fine Arts, Itawamba Community College,
Primary Program Reviewer

Shawn Whittington holds a BFA and MFA in Fine Arts. He has been an instructor at Itawamba Community College since 2007 and is involved in curricula development for lecture and studio classes, student advisement, and has maintained an active exhibition record.

April Scott, ArkLa Regional Composing Manager, Gatehouse Media,
Secondary Program Reviewer

April Scott is currently employed as the Advertising Director for the Stuttgart Daily Leader and ArkLa Regional Composing Manager for Gatehouse Media. April's skills and expertise include advertising, sales, publishing, social media marketing, editing, mobile and email marketing, public relations, direct mail, media planning, magazine and newspaper advertising.

Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas

Graphic Communications Program Review

Prepared by Eric Shawn Whittington and April Scott

December 2013

Academic Program Review

External Reviewers Report

The report prepared by the External Reviewers will be used by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) to verify the student demand and employer need for the program, the appropriateness of the curriculum, and the adequacy of program resources. The report should not include a recommendation to ADHE on program continuation or program deletion.

The External Reviewers written report must include a summary of each area examined and should provide examples that document the conclusions. The questions below should be used by the reviewers as a guide in preparing the summary for each area. Responses to the questions should not be simply “yes or no”.

- I. Review of Program Goals, Objectives and Activities
 - A. Are the intended educational (learning) goals for the program appropriate and assessed?

Reviewer response:

The two major objectives as stated in the report are to provide hands on training in Graphic Design to equip students for employment directly out of school and to prepare those students who plan on transferring to an IHL to be competitive in that environment.

Both goals of the program are stated clearly in the required curriculum for an Associates degree and are relevant in preparing to students to enter into their chosen field or further their studies for a higher degree.

- B. How are the faculty and students accomplishing the program’s goals and objectives?

Reviewer’s response:

Curriculum designed by faculty addresses core competency requirements as outlined by university standards as well as offering training both in current graphic design software programs and printing industry tools and machinery. Faculty keeps abreast of the latest developments in the graphic design industry by direct communication with professionals in the field. Professional development requirements and faculty reviews implemented by Phillips Community College help ensure that the faculty are well trained and that the program

curriculum remains viable. Both faculty members that I spoke with had prior experience working or interning for a professional graphic design or advertising firm.

- C. How is the program meeting market/industry demands and/or preparing students for advanced study?

Reviewer's Response:

An understanding of the demands of the industry necessitates direct communication with industry professionals. In talking with the faculty, I gathered that both of the faculty members have previous experience in graphic design on a professional level as is stated in their resumes. To keep abreast of developments within the industry, the faculty continues to maintain contact with local advertising and newspaper agencies and monitor their needs. I was interesting to learn that Ms. Vicki Cobb worked for a well-respected graphic designer in my own hometown of Greenwood, MS, Mr. Allan Hammonds from Hammonds and Associates.

I confirmed that the software programs in which the students are trained are the same programs used by contemporary graphic design professionals. This would be the Adobe Creative Suite software programs. I was also impressed by the amount of printing presses and equipment accessible to the students. Practical application is demonstrated by student involvement in the production and circulation of school promotional literature.

In addition to lectures and lesson plans, instructors take a more active role in the classroom by assigning projects to each student, which simulate workplace situations in the graphics field. Students are encouraged to work together to come up with more efficient ways of completing projects and constructive critiques are offered by their peers to help gain insight into what was done well and what areas need improvement. By working as a team in a mock industry environment, students are readied for the fast-paced workplace they will be entering. Instructors have a vested interest in their students and often recommend graduates of the program to area industries. Instructors work with students who wish to continue learning, but may be limited financially or because of family obligations to make sure they are given the opportunity to further their education. By taking courses offered in partnership by the University of Arkansas program in Ft. Smith, students who have graduated the program with an Associates Degree can participate in classes at their local campus.

- D. Is there sufficient student demand for the program?

Reviewer's Response:

The number of Graphic Communications majors served by the program varies from year to year. According to the state report, the number of students who either received a GRCOM.AAS degree or a Certificate of Proficiency from the years 2011 to 2013 was 26. This would be close to 9 students per year. Although this number seems slightly low, the program also serves non-communications majors as well.

The program is offered at three different campuses in southeast Arkansas. The majority of students majoring in graphics communications I spoke with want to remain in southeast Arkansas. If the number of students enrolled and graduating the program are compared with the number of available jobs in the area, there is a justification for the program. Furthermore, this program provides an opportunity for students who aren't likely to enroll in a graphic program at another institution because of financial reasons or familial obligations.

- E. Do course enrollments and program graduation/completion rates justify the required resources?

Reviewer's Response:

The resources offered at Phillips Community College are appropriate to the demands and needs of the department. The number of students who declare graphic design as a major or who obtain their GRCOM.AAS degree are relatively small but appropriate to the size community. The number of students graduating with a degree remained consistent in 2011 and 2012 at eleven but trailed off in 2013. However, non-graphic design majors utilize the facilities and courses as well which puts the number of students who the program actually serves at about thirty.

One full time instructor and one part time instructor are utilized between three campuses.

In my estimation this is not a strain or waste of institutional resources.

- II. Review of Program Curriculum
 - A. Is the program curriculum appropriate to meet current and future market/industry needs and/or to prepare students for advanced study?

Reviewer Response:

The two-year program lays the foundation for future study by introducing students to the basics of graphics communication — whether it be newspaper, magazine, or web design.

Students will be prepared to take more in-depth courses with a basic knowledge of the software and process. The students are also given the opportunity to tour the type of facilities they would be working in, and the campuses provide student access to computer labs outside class time.

The program curriculum is developed in part through consultations with an advisory committee consisting of professionals from local advertising and newspaper agencies. The courses taught at PCCUA cover the foundational design classes that are the requisite classes of transference to any IHL art program. In addition to the foundational classes, PCCU offers courses more specific to the graphic design industry such as training in digital photography, typography, and printing layout and design. It also provides student access to up-to-date equipment found in working print shops in their on campus print lab.

- B. Are institutional policies and procedures appropriate to keep the program curriculum current to meet industry standards?

Reviewer Response:

Professional development policies for faculty, peer and student reviews, all serve to ensure that the program is a growing and viable entity. An advisory committee made of industry professionals consults with college personnel to develop courses and curriculum. Assessment of current curriculum is done by both faculty and students as well as through monitoring market needs through media resources.

- C. Are program exit requirements appropriate?

Reviewer Response:

The completion of 60 hours of core curriculum classes and electives to obtain a GRCOM.AAS degree is appropriate and standardized by the state educational system.

- D. Does the program contain evidence of good breath/focus and currency, including consistency with good practice?

Reviewer Response:

It appears that the faculty makes the most out of what they have. Both the faculty and the administration seem to be very resourceful with their equipment and their limited budgets. An example would be the practice of 'stacking' classes if the enrollment is low so that an instructor can teach two levels of classes at the same time.

The DeWitt and Stuttgart campuses are fairly close, and the computer lab at the Stuttgart location is available and open to DeWitt students to utilize if needed for projects. Limited budgets and staffing are utilized to the best of the department's abilities.

- E. Are students introduced to experiences within the workplace and introduced to professionals in the field?

Reviewer Response:

Students have the opportunity to learn from industry professionals in a Q&A session, and through tours of local newspaper facilities. Some internships are also available to students.

- F. Does the program promote and support interdisciplinary initiatives?

Reviewer Response:

It is my understanding that the graphic design program reaches across the board to other departments in service to the college as a whole. Brochures, newsletters, theatrical performances and sports flyers etc. are printed in the print facilities located in the art building and overseen by art faculty and students.

Part of the graphics program is community involvement. Students help with local promotions, advertisements and newsletters not only for the college, but various non-profit organizations as well.

The department also reaches out to the community with Service Learning Projects involving such things as bringing together art students with nursing home residents.

- G. Does the program provide respect and understanding for cultural diversity as evidenced in the curriculum, in program activities, in assignment of program responsibly and duties; in honors, awards and scholarship recognition; in recruitment?

Reviewer Response:

The Graphic Communications Program at PCCUA serves a large minority population many of which are at-risk kids. The faculty is a huge champion for all of its students. They recognize the hard work and dedication their pupils put into their projects, and take a vested interest in making sure the students meet their goals. I greatly sensed that the faculty was sensitive and respectful of the needs of these students and that ethnic diversity was celebrated in their projects and in the classroom.

At the time of my visit I was surprised to learn that the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater was scheduled to perform in the coming week. This is great exposure for the students to a successful African American artistic touring group.

Since the area served is lower income residents, faculty benefit in awareness and sensitivity from the joint study of books such as 'Bridges Out Of Poverty'.

III. Review of Academic Support

- A. Does the program provide appropriate quality and quantity of academic advising and mentoring of students?

Reviewer Response:

Not only do the instructors focus on the strengths of the students enrolled in the program, they also work with individual students to help them achieve their goal. Whether it be entering the workforce upon graduation, or continuing their education in a specialized field. The students I spoke with were all very passionate about their instructors, and they all knew the field of study they were interested in. Most of these students admitted they didn't know what they wanted to do before joining the program.

The campuses also provide an academic advisor for the students to help with class schedules and financial aid. I found the students in this program rely heavily on the advice of the instructors in the graphics program, and often seek council on what best to take.

- B. Does the program provide for retention of qualified students from term to term and support student progress toward and achievement of graduation?

Reviewer Response:

Yes, the faculty is committed to the retention of students. In an area with a declining population student retention is a top priority. Close monitoring of students by what I perceived as dedicated and caring faculty advisors helps to ensure that students stay on track to graduate.

Because of financial reasons or family obligations, some students are unable to complete the program in two years — it might take them up to 4, but the majority of students do graduate from the program and are ready to enter the workforce or continue their education.

IV. Review of Program Faculty

- A. Do program faculty have appropriate academic credentials and/or professional licensure/certification?

Reviewer Response:

Yes, Vicki Cobb has a Master's Degree in Education from the University of Arkansas as Fayetteville as well as having professional experience in the field.

Randi Rauh-Tyler has a Bachelor's of Applied Science from the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith as well as being a free-lance web developer.

- B. Are the faculty orientation and faculty evaluation processes appropriate?

Reviewer Response:

It appears that they have a fairly rigorous if not standard evaluation process in place. Faculty undergo student evaluations each semester and are required to submit yearly accomplishments for peer reviews by the dean of the department. These accomplishments are evaluated on the faculty's service and effectiveness to the school as well as to the community. Industry professionals are also asked to weigh in on instruction methods and changes in the industry itself. Professional development opportunities are encouraged and provided by the college. According to my observations, the faculty takes advantage of community service groups, workshops, and other design related organizations as budgets permit.

- C. Is the faculty workload in keeping with best practices?

Reviewer Response:

According to their program review for 2012-13, each instructor taught an average of 10 credit hours per semester. I was a bit confused about this because it was my understanding that Randi

Rauh-Tyler was a full time instructor requiring a minimum of 15 hours taught per semester. I was notified that in 'stacked' classes when she is teaching two classes at the same time, she only gets credited for one class whereas in reality she is teaching on average of 20 credit hours per semester. This counts for the discrepancy. This would be the minimum number of hours I would think to be able to offer the amount of class requirements students need for their GRCOM.AAS degree. In my judgment the workload seems appropriate to the needs of the college.

V. Review of Program Resources

- A. Is there an appropriate level of institutional support for program operation?

Reviewer Response:

I spoke with both the instructors privately and the Dean of the department directly about this issue. The instructors recognize the Dean's interest in getting the funding needed for software upgrades and equipment needed to keep current in an ever-changing industry. And the Dean recognizes the instructor's need for equipment and software to be able to prepare students to enter the workforce or further their education.

When asked about specific examples I was told that the Dean had approved of the purchase of new cameras for the digital photography class and that plans to purchase new computers was next on the agenda. The Dean concurred with the assessment and seemed agreeable to funding the needs of the department within the constraints of the budget.

- B. Are faculty, library, professional development and other program resources sufficient?

Reviewer Response:

The computer lab and art room were small but adequate. The instructors teach the software tools so students are able to work from any type machine (PC or Mac). The library was also sufficient to meet student needs. The computers in the lab looked like they needed to be updated but from my understanding this was scheduled to occur next year.

VI. Review of Program Effectiveness

A. Indicate areas of program strength.

Reviewer Response:

Clearly one of the greatest strengths of the department that I witnessed was the dedication, commitment, and caring that was more than evident in both Randi Rauh-Tyler and Vicky Cobb. Both administration and faculty care about each student enrolled in the program. The instructors push the students to reach their full potential, and they take time to direct the students into the field that would play to their strengths. The students often seek advice from their instructors on what courses to take, and whether they need to further their education or enter the workforce upon graduation. The faculty also understands the financial and familial challenges most students face, and makes recommendations on what route would best benefit the student (i.e. continuing their education through the partnership with Ft. Smith, entering the workforce, or commuting to another institution.).

I also took note of the rapport the instructors had with the Dean of the department and how comfortable they felt discussing important issues concerning the college. Mutual understanding and teamwork seemed evident and is a terrific asset for any department.

It is my understanding that the campus has a very strong, helpful, and knowledgeable IT service department.

B. Indicate the program areas in need of improvement within the next 12 months; and over the next 2-5 years.

Reviewer Response:

It might be fair to say that in a region with diminishing population, the program should continue to develop new strategies for recruitment and retention.

The equipment the students and instructors use will need to be updated. Having another platform to learn the software would also be beneficial (i.e. Apple computers). The software will also need to be updated as technology changes and evolves in the industry.

One observation that I made was that students were not exposed to student's work from other colleges so that they could gauge and assess the quality level of their work as compared to other students of the same level. This could be done through some form of juried competition hosted either in a building or online.

- C. Indicate areas for program development based on market/industry demands that have not been identified by the institution.

Reviewer Response:

As far as I could tell all the industry demands and changing trends were being identified.

VII. Review of Instruction by Distance Technology (if program courses offered by distance)

Reviewer Response:

Not applicable as online classes are not offered. Although Randi Rauh-Tyler had talked about implementing an online component to her digital art classes.

- A. Are the program distance technology courses offered/delivered in accordance with best practices?

Not applicable as online classes are not offered.

- B. Does the institution have appropriate procedures in place to assure the security of personal information?

Not applicable as online classes are not offered.

- C. Are technology support services appropriate for students enrolled in and faculty teaching courses/programs utilizing technology?

Reviewer Response:

The IT department is one of the most recommended programs at the college. The administration and the instructors work with one another to provide the best equipment they can for the funding they have. They are well-trained and able to assist students with any needs they might have.

- D. Are policies for student/faculty ratio, and faculty course load in accordance with best practices?

Reviewer Response:

Although the amount of students served is relatively small, the student to faculty ratio is appropriate, particularly in light of the fact that one of the two instructors is part-time.

The type of instruction needed for students to learn the appropriate programs and procedures requires more individualized attention than most college courses. The teacher to student ratio still works well, even when some of the courses are taught simultaneously.

- E. Are policies on intellectual property in accordance with best practices?

Reviewer Response:

PCCUA graphics department follows standard procedure concerning state and federal plagiarism and copyright laws.

Not only does the program follow state and federal law, instructors emphasize the importance of following copyright laws. Being familiar with the rules and regulations will benefit students greatly when they enter the workforce in the graphics field.

VIII. Review of Program Research and Service

- A. Are the intended research and creative outcomes for each program appropriate, assessed and results utilized?

Reviewer Response:

If the intended research and creative outcomes for the program are to train students in graphic design so that they can enter the workforce when they graduate, then yes. These outcomes are assessed by the number of students who graduate, transfer to an IHL or go into the work force. The numerical statistics are utilized to institute effective recruiting and retention measures as well as making the necessary modifications to the program curriculum itself. The number of students that graduate the program and enter the workforce or continue their education is relatively high. It might take some students longer to complete the two-year program due to financial or familial challenges. The instructors also push the students reach their graduation goal.

- B. Are the intended outreach/service/entrepreneurial outcomes for each program's initiatives appropriate assessed and results utilized?

Reviewer Response:

I am aware of some of the outreach and service initiatives such as their Service In Learning program however, I am not aware of how these programs are assessed for effectiveness to gauge their appropriateness. But from their descriptions to me they seemed rewarding and worthwhile endeavors.

IX. Local Reviewer Comments

- A. How is the program meeting market/industry demands and/or preparing students for advanced study?

Reviewer Response:

The program is meeting market and industry demands by closely monitoring ever-evolving technological advancements by faculty and partnering with a cooperative administration to keep the program up-to-date and viable.

Instructors keep a dialogue with industry professionals as well as continue their education through workshops and professional development opportunities. Students are prepared to enter the workforce or continue their education upon graduation through a rigorous and well-developed curriculum.

- B. What program modifications are needed?

Reviewer Response:

One observation that I made was that students were not exposed to student's work from other colleges so that they could gauge and assess the quality level of their work as compared to other students of the same level. This could be done through some form of juried competition hosted either in a building or online.

Another recommendation would be to have students job shadow someone in the area in which they would like to work.

X. Report Summary

- A. Include reviewer comments on the overall need for program graduates/completers in the local area, region and/or nation over the next 5 years.

Reviewer Response:

In an economically-depressed area, PCCUA is one of the few institutions allowing students who would not be able to commute a long distance or afford a higher education at another institution an opportunity to learn graphics communication. The majority of their graduates enter the workforce locally.

Demand for students versed in graphic design and web development is on the rise nation wide. With designers being able to create locally and apply nationally, the need for relocation is not as relevant an issue as it was in the past. Currently there is significant demand locally and nationally for students to pursue a degree in graphic communications at Phillips Community College.

- B. Include reviewer comments on overall program quality, state program review process, etc.

Reviewer Response:

My overall impression of the graphic communications program at PCCUA was favorable. The college seems to serve an economically depressed region with many underprivileged students. Faculty and administration are working with limited budgets. However, these challenges are met with a dedicated and knowledgeable faculty and staff committed to educational quality and student success. Limitations of resources can be overcome with excellence in instruction and I believe the program at PCCAU succeeds at this.

The caring faculty and administration put the students' needs as their top priority, and local industries are provided educated prospective employees. The strength of this program is its instructors and other faculty. Their desire to see the students they teach succeed is a testament to the college and the graphics program as a whole.

Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas
Graphic Communications Program Review – Response to Reviewer Comments

Eric Shawn Whittington, Fine Arts Instructor at Itawamba Community College in Saltillo, Mississippi and April Scott, Regional Composing Manager at GateHouse and Advertising Director for the Stuttgart Daily Leader in Stuttgart, Arkansas visited our campuses and completed the program review. We were very pleased with their findings.

Reviewer Concern Addressed

- Reviewers stated that they were aware of the outreach and service initiatives built into the graphic communications program curriculum, but were unsure of how the service learning activities were being assessed for effectiveness. Two examples of the service learning activities are built into the Printing Layout and Design and drawing classes. In the Printing Layout and Design class, the assignment used for the service learning project is a printing project, greeting cards for children, which is assessed to meet the specified course criteria. The cards are then delivered to our local hospital children’s ward and emergency room. Another service learning project is completed in a drawing class. The students draw a portrait of a nursing home resident or a cancer survivor and present to them. These drawings are assessed by specific course criteria. The students also learn to complete projects successfully and share the beauty of their work with others.

Examples of Exemplary Practices

- The caring, dedicated faculty and administration aid the students in furthering their education and entry into the workforce.
- The program serves a minority population. Community activities help expose the diverse student population to a stronger cultural awareness.
- Graphics labs, equipment, and software are adequate to meet the student needs. New equipment is purchased regularly as funds are available.
- There is a rigorous evaluation process in place to assure the validity of classroom practices.

- Faculty keeps abreast of latest developments in the graphics design industry through direct communication with professionals in the field.

Suggestions for Strengthening the Program

Although the reviewers were complimentary of the program, they provided the following examples of ways to strengthen the graphics program:

- Students' exposure to the work of students from other colleges would help them gauge and assess the quality level of their work compared to other students. Both instructors have agreed to include some form of exhibit, possibly one online so that PCCUA students may have this opportunity.
- An internship or job shadowing experience would enhance the students' educational experience. The instructors are considering implementing this experiential component into the curriculum.
- Local industry involvement should be expanded to serve as a strong resource for actual work practices. Faculty will continue to make a concerted effort to work with local industries to schedule field trip and classroom guest lecturers.
- Exposure to Mac computers would be beneficial to students. The Chief Academic Officer is committed to purchasing three Mac computers (one for each campus). In addition, Adobe software is being purchased for the Mac computers. This will help to familiarize the students with more of the current technology used in the industry.
- The job opportunities board will be further enhanced so as to keep students aware of area job openings. This also helps strengthen the community relations.
- Online class offerings could be beneficial to area students because of the difficulty of balancing school, work, and families. Both instructors are developing hybrid classes to address this issue.

Academic Program Review for Division of Applied Technology Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas

External Reviewer's Report

**Prepared by Eric Shawn Whittington, Itawamba Community College, Slatillo, MS and
April Scott, ArkLa Regional Composing Manage at Gatehouse Media, Stuttgart, AR
December 13, 2013**
