

Dean's Comments and Recommendations
Program Performance Review: Department of Cinema and Television Arts
College of Communications, California State University, Fullerton
Submitted By Edward J. Fink, Ph.D., Acting Dean, March 5, 2017

I wish to thank the faculty and staff of the Department of Cinema and Television Arts for all their work in conducting this Program Performance Review. I thank especially Bob Davis for serving as the lead writer of the self-study and Garry Hart for his oversight of the PPR process, including his thoughtful response to the external review report. I also wish to thank the three reviewers for their hard work, diligence, and excellent review report: David Isaacs (USC), Ted Frank (CSUN), and Chuck Grieb (CSUF). Through the efforts of all involved, we have a better understanding of the many strengths of the CTVA department, as well as areas to improve. The reviewers' recommendations will serve as a guide as we move forward.

Executive Summary

I concur with the findings and recommendations of the self-study, the external review report, and the department chair's response. In the comments that follow, I offer a few points of clarification and reinforcement. I outline my comments according to the external review outline.

Facilities

I agree that we must continue to strive to acquire the funding for an adequate build-out of facilities for production, screening, and instruction. The faculty members are to be commended for doing so much so successfully with so little. The reviewers commended the faculty's "sweat equity," including one faculty member who has invested his own time and money into a room for sound design. This is most admirable and serves as evidence for the great need to support the buildout of professional facilities.

I was particularly intrigued by the reviewers' recommendation that we look to upgrade the television studio to Ultra-HD 4K resolution. In 2006, when the current studio was configured, we looked at HD, which is 2K (approximately 2000 lines of horizontal resolution), but the cost was too great, so we stayed with standard definition (SD). Television technology evolves so quickly that HD is now becoming obsolete as production and distribution (broadcast, cablecast, satellite, and internet streaming) have begun 4K implementation. I concur with the reviewers' recommendation for 4K, which supports the overall recommendation of a professional buildout of studios and related spaces.

Steps. (1) Drawings. I commend Dr. Hart, Dr. Paynton, and Katie McGill for working with Advancement on design drawings for a facility, and I will continue those efforts. The drawings will provide us something to show potential donors, allowing them to see what their support will do for our students.

(2) After-hours access to editing. I will support Dr. Hart's efforts in this regard. Additionally, for classes where Adobe Premiere may be used for editing, Amir Dabirian is working to put

Premiere on the computers on the first floor of the library. Then students can edit as long as the library is open. Currently, thanks to the Student Success Initiative, the library hours are:

Monday – Thursday: 6:30a-12:00a

Friday: 6:30a-9:00p

Saturday and Sunday: 10a-12p

Additionally, students can get Premiere free on their own computers through the university Adobe license. Finally, for classes where students need to edit on the Avid system, I will work with Dr. Hart to try to find a way to get after-hours access.

Curriculum

I join with the reviewers and chair in commending the faculty for their continual review of curriculum to keep it current and to revise student-learning outcomes as appropriate. I also note that one of the goals in the previous review was to establish an M.F.A. in Screenwriting program. That goal was met, thanks to the lead work of Dr. Selbo with assistance from many others. The M.F.A. program continues to be a success story. Additionally, the previous review recommended removing radio from the curriculum and focusing on cinema and television. That goal has also been met, with the sibling Department of Communications taking over the radio courses. Moreover, the department has changed its name from Radio-TV-Film to Cinema and Television Arts, further focusing its curriculum and brand.

The reviewers noted some student frustration in not getting to make films hands-on until late in the curriculum. They also mentioned the need for evidence of student's accomplishments, recommending capstone courses. The following steps address these issues.

Steps. (1) Production courses. Dr. Hart plans to review the sequence of production classes with the faculty, developing strategies for students to get hands-on experience sooner. He will also discuss capstone courses for the four informal tracks: critical studies, management, production, and screenwriting. I support Dr. Hart in these efforts.

(2) Festivals. I believe the CSUF showcase at the Newport Beach Film Festival serves as an additional point of evidence where students, faculty, and the external community can see our students' accomplishments in production. Other film screenings and competitions, including those that accept screenplays, can serve as further evidence. Finally, the best student research papers can be entered into the CSU and other paper competitions, as was the case this year when a CTVA student received the 2017 Outstanding Undergraduate Scholarly and Creative Activities Award for our college.

Faculty

I concur with the reviewers and the chair that the CTVA faculty constitute a major strength of the department. The faculty members bring a wide range of experiences and backgrounds, with notable professional accomplishments. Their passion for teaching is also evident.

Course Relief

Course relief is always an ongoing goal. Obviously, with the contracted 4/4 teaching load and limited budgets, it is difficult to offer a great deal of assigned course time.

Step. I commend Dr. Hart for looking at ways to begin funding a 4/3 load, and I will work with him in this endeavor.

Student Advisement

The reviewers noted some concern in this area. The college has more professional staff advising than ever before. Our retention and graduation specialists and our college advisor all specialize in analytic metrics, retention and graduation rates, regular student check-ins, the “murky middle,” students on probation, returning students, workshops, TDA reviews, graduation checks, and so on. However, for advising regarding the CTVA major specifically, including course selection, career and graduate school opportunities, and so on, students need to consult with faculty advisors. The reviewers noted that one faculty member is responsible for all the majors. They recommend returning to the previous model in which all faculty serve as advisors. I concur. In fact, the current Collective Bargaining Agreement requires this. Article 20 “Workload,” section 20.1.b (p. 78), states: “Faculty members have additional professional responsibilities such as: advising students....”

Step. I will work with Dr. Hart to have all faculty advise students in accordance with the CBA.

Internships

The college has an excellent internship director who is fully trained in today’s logistics of students acquiring, conducting, and getting credit for internships. This is a lecturer position with a great deal of training and specialization, including vetting internships through CICE, handling risk management, working with site coordinators on the requisite e-paperwork, conducting workshops for students, interacting with the Career Center on student resumes and letters, handling a large volume of correspondence with students and site coordinators, and much more. The reviewers noted something of a disconnect between faculty and the internship program, and they suggested that CTVA faculty have greater oversight.

Step. I concur with Dr. Hart’s plan to consult with faculty regarding greater integration of the internship program into the department. As a start, I would suggest inviting the internship director to a faculty meeting once per semester or year to interact with the faculty more formally than the informal chats that now occur. The director could report on CTVA internships, solicit feedback, answer questions, and so on, providing at least this additional checkpoint for faculty to work more collaboratively with her.

CTVA Website Design

Regarding a new website design, a new site was launched in January 2017. The site was created based on feedback from a focus group of students, staff, and faculty the previous semester, which

looked at the college's web presence and offered suggestions. Feedback on the new site has been mostly positive. Of course, things can always be improved.

Step. Dr. Hart correctly notes that keeping the site fresh and current with dynamic content requires a person, either a staff member or a faculty member with assigned time. This past year, the college hired a part-time graduate student to serve as a college digital media specialist. For the short term, I will work with Dr. Hart and the media specialist to see how she might assist the department. In the longer term, I will work with Dr. Hart, as well as the other chairs, on how we might secure a staff position to work with all the departments on dynamic content.

Alumni Outreach

Alumni outreach is always critical, and CTVA has taken a step in ramping up its engagement with alumni. One faculty member is compiling an updated list of alumni, working with faculty who have maintained contact with their former students. This list will serve as a foundation for a more aggressive alumni outreach campaign, beginning with a CTVA alumni mixer during Comm Week this year.

Step. I will support the department as it moves toward greater alumni outreach, specifically working with the college Director of Development in planning and executing additional alumni engagement opportunities.

Opportunity of Digital Media

The reviewers correctly summarize the many opportunities that today's digital media bring to the CTVA students.

Step. I concur with Dr. Hart's plan to consult with the faculty in implementing the reviewers' recommendation for a course devoted to content creation for the web. This would make the students' work more visible, and it would allow students to make their "demo reels" easily available to potential employers via the internet.