

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, EAST BAY

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TO: The Academic Senate

FROM: The Committee on Academic Planning and Review (CAPR)

SUBJECT: Five-Year Program Review for Multimedia

PURPOSE: For Action by the Academic Senate

ACTION REQUESTED: Acceptance of Five-Year Program Review for the M.A. in Multimedia and Approval of Continuation of Program without Modification

Executive Summary

This is strong program as shown by its history of innovation, their leader status in the development of multimedia programs, and the enthusiasm shown by the department in their report and oral presentation to CAPR on April 30, 2009.

The External Reviewer and the department's review of the program and its previous five-year reviews are positive about the program's development and plan.

The program needs more resources to continue its growth and development. CAPR recommends that the department continue to add faculty. The department also needs full-time technical support to maintain the labs and the variety of technical programming needed to ensure the program's relevancy in the current technological environment. The department also needs resources for recruitment and retention.

CAPR Recommendation for Continuation of Program

CAPR recommends continuation of the M.A. in Multimedia without modification. The date of the next Five-Year review is 2013-2014.

1. Background

1.1 Overview description of the program

The M.A. in Multimedia began in 1995 in response to the need for a program to address the new skills needed by workers in developing Internet-based industries. The program was initially a cross-College program; however, several Colleges now offer their own programs geared to the specific needs of their student bodies, e.g., the program in Educational Technology Leadership in CEAS. The multimedia program has focused on project development and information display using multimedia resources. The program does not focus on the development of program code or of hardware.

The program currently offers one track. A proposal has been submitted to CIC for a tiered admission process and the development of a track for admitted students who need additional technical skills before progressing to the full program. In addition, the program wishes to create two tracks, one for those interested in project management at the strategy level, and another for those interested in developing individual projects with focus on scripting skills and application.

The goal of the program is to develop collaborative student teams to research, develop, and produce innovative, content rich, interactive media experiences. The program focuses on the creative and technical aspects of using computer technology to create, control, deliver, and present new content in a variety of interactive forms. Students work with images, sounds, human-computer interactions, narrative, and a variety of human/cultural experiences to enchant and inform.

The program contributes to the CSUEB Academic Plan's seven mandates by being an innovative leader in multimedia development and education. The program also contributes to the mission and values of CSUEB by fostering active student participation in learning through applied learning, and research and community contribution, and by graduating students who are innovative, effective problem-solvers and skilled in organizing and expressing their ideas, both goals of CSUEB.

The program is solely a graduate level program and, as such, does not admit undergraduates or participate in the GE program. It does, however, link with the undergraduate Departments of Art and Music. These undergraduate programs have tracks to develop skills that students need to progress to the Multimedia Graduate Program, thus serving as 'feeder' programs. The recent program restructuring proposal (currently before CIC) would develop several tracks to improve student outcomes and retention. The program is currently discussing repositioning the department from the Office of Academic Programs and Graduate Studies to CLASS to be jointly administered by the Departments of Art and Music. Both of these departments currently contribute faculty to the program and are involved in the overall program.

Much has been accomplished from the last five-year plan. Specifically, significant space issues have been addressed by the move of the program into the new Valley Business and Technology Building. The old laboratory in the Arts & Education Building is now

shared between the multimedia program and the Art Department, with late and weekend hours being set aside for the graduate students of the multimedia program so that they have available the long access hours needed for their project work. This change in laboratory space has also allowed the graduate students to interact across projects and levels, and it has facilitated a better space for mentoring and social-professional interaction. However, the A&E Building still has many of the maintenance and space allocation issues described in the last five-year plan.

Fall 2008-2009 figures include the following: FTES was 6.33 for tenure-track faculty and 3.2 for lecturers; FTEF for tenure-track faculty was 0.56 and 0.28 for lecturers; and SFR was 11.33 for tenure-track faculty and 11.31 for lecturers. These numbers have varied significantly over the past years. Currently six tenure-track faculty from the Departments of Art, Music, and Math & Computer Science teach courses in the program, with four engaged in thesis advising. Two lecturers also teach courses in the program.

1.2 Overview of the documents submitted to CAPR

- 1.2.1 Multimedia Five Year Review
- 1.2.2 Multimedia Additional Note
- 1.2.3 Multimedia External Review's Report
- 1.2.4 Multimedia Cover letter
- 1.2.5 Multimedia Annual Report 06-07
- 1.2.6 Multimedia Response to the External Reviewer's Report

2. Five-year Program Review Self-study (2003-2008)

2.1 Summary of specific areas of the Self-Study

Goals developed in the last five-year plan have largely been met, especially those related to space needs, when they moved into the Valley Business and Technology Building and began to share the laboratory in A&E. There has been support for Faculty to work on/establish grant funded projects; however, the current economic climate has impacted this and the program, in general, has no unified plan for seeking new funding sources. There has been a small trust fund established for the program, but the focus has not been on fundraising.

The new five-year plan focuses on re-visioning and re-positioning the Program. Proposals are before CIC to revise the curriculum with a tiered admission strategy to ensure greater proficiency of students in interactive scripting and to encourage more effective assessment procedures. Much effort has been placed in developing an assessment program that is formalized and contained within the coursework structure, as the Program thinks that there are insufficient resources to conduct a separate assessment of Student Learning Outcomes outside the assessment of course work. Assessment consists of an admission assessment, an assessment at the end of the first year, and a final thesis project and public presentation. These assessments are all rubric-based. They have developed rubrics that are used by all advisors and thesis committees based on the student learning outcomes for the program. In the program's opinion, these have been used effectively to evaluate the overall program and to change/develop courses as needed

within the program. For instance, the current proposal for the tiered admission system is based on information from this assessment process. This appears to be an effective assessment process, especially for a program with no dedicated faculty.

Currently, the Program is working on repositioning itself administratively in CLASS with joint administration by the Departments of Art and Music. This is still in the planning and development stage, with ongoing talks between the involved administrations and the program. The goal is to clarify the roles of each party and to give the program a firm base for the future.

The previous five-year plan included increasing technical support for the Program, still only a half-time technician position. This continues to be a problem, as does the oversight of the technician, as the technician is also half-time in the CLASS technical unit. This has led to concerns about the speed of response to requests and maintenance issues with the hardware and software needed by the program. Given the computer-based nature of the program, this continues to be of concern.

In the previous five-year review, concerns were raised about the program’s web presence. The program hired web designers (graduates of the program) to develop their website. The website is intriguing, but, as noted by the External Reviewer, almost impossible to find. The program is working with the CSUEB web team to address this issue as they think that the recent website revision is responsible for the current lack of web presence.

The previous five-year plan noted a need to improve recruitment and retention. The program has addressed retention through the proposed three-tier admission strategy developed to help students gain the skills needed for program completion. Currently, recruitment is based on the web presence, word-of-mouth, and work with CSUEB undergraduate programs that have been ‘feeders’ for the program.

As noted by many other programs, the current lean economic times have impacted budget priorities. Currently, the program has been able to adjust its budget, but given ongoing costs of technical maintenance and the costs of staying up-to-date in a rapidly changing field, the program thinks that another year of lean times will seriously erode their program quality and competitiveness.

2.2 Summary of supporting data

Majors	Program graduates by Year					
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Undergraduates	--	--	--	--	--	--
Graduates	21	10	15	11	20	8

Table 2.2.a Number of Graduates in Multimedia Graduate Program

Section	Section descriptors by Academic Year				
	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8
Number offered	28	28	23	37	20
Average size	8.9	7.8	10	6.6	9.2
Average non-thesis project section size	19	14	19	12	15
CLAS average size	24	25	23	23	n/a
Total Students enrolled in Program Sections	250	219	230	244	184

Table 2.2.b Numbers and sizes of section in Multimedia Graduate Program

Note CLAS average size based on undergraduate and graduate classes and multiple sections in MGP are thesis project classes ranging from 1-4 students per class section, non-thesis sections ranged from 16-26 students per section.

Faculty and Student Ratios	Fall Quarter – Student and Faculty Ratios				
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
FTES	n/a	n/a	15.4	13.87	9.53
Total Instructional FTEF	n/a	n/a	1.67	2.63	0.84
SFR (All Faculty)	n/a	n/a	9.24	5.26	11.32
CLAS SFR (All Faculty)	23.21	20.80	21.57	n/a	n/a

Table 2.2.c Faculty and Student ratios in Multimedia Graduate Program

Note: SFR, FTES and FTEF are variable by quarter within an academic year, for instance SFR in 2007-08 ranges from 5.26 in Fall to 13.41 Winter.

Faculty	Academic Year – Tenure Track/Tenured Faculty				
	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8
Full time Tenure Track	6	5	6	6	4
FERP	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Program FTE quarterly average for TT faculty	2.39986	2.39986	1.86658	2.13318	1.33324
Lecturers	4	3	4	3	4
Program FTE quarterly average for Lecturers	0.79998	0.53330	1.33324	1.59992	1.59994

Table 2.2.d Number of faculty in Multimedia Graduate Program

Note: Program has no dedicated faculty. These numbers indicate faculty who teach MCP courses in a given year.

3. Outside Reviewer's Comments and the Department's Response

3.1 Summary of Outside Reviewer's Comments

The External Reviewer, David Heintz, Professor of Fine Art, California College of the Arts, former Chair Film/Video/Performance and former Director, Core Program, generally finds that the program compares favorably with comparable programs, while noting that the program is orders of magnitude lower in funding than those same programs. "There is no question that Grad MM at CSUEB continues to fulfill its mission

and renew its vision, and remains positioned to excel in the ever volatile digital future,” states Prof. Heintz.

The External Reviewer notes that two of the three major recommendations from the last five-year review related to special resources have been stunningly achieved. However, the third recommendation, increasing the technical manager from half-time to full-time has not been achieved and this continues to be problematic for the program.

The Reviewer finds that the program’s strength lies in its small, but dynamic faculty who share a passion for interdisciplinary and integrated multimedia curriculum with a vision for the emerging possibilities of the media.

The Reviewer noted two more major concerns for the program in addition to the unresolved Technical Manager issue. First is the autonomy of the program in terms of its ability to purchase appropriate technology and staff its programs with appropriate levels of technical support. Second is the need for a larger applicant pool for the program.

3.2 Summary of Department’s Response

In general, the program concurred with the External Reviewer’s findings. Dealing with half-time technical support has been challenging and hampers the program’s progress. The program thanks the External Reviewer for supporting the current curriculum change proposal. The program also concurs with the External Reviewer’s view that program funding for technical and outreach needs must improve in the near future, in spite of the current economic situation, which means that there will be no increase. In addition, there has been a decrease in funding this year.

The department differs with several of the External Reviewer’s suggestions. The department thinks that the proposed administrative realignment within CLASS with joint administration will be sufficient for the program’s needs, especially as the realignment will include a detailed plan to clarify responsibility and authority within and for the program. The program does not think that, at this time, and given the realignment planning process, they need to have full autonomy over their technical resources, but the realignment should increase the overall availability of technical expertise for the program.

4. Program’s Five-Year Strategic Plan (2009-2014)

The program’s five-year plan for 2009-2014 includes realigning the administration of the Program, moving it from the Office of Academic Programs and Graduate Studies to CLASS with joint administration by the Departments of Arts and Music. Currently, the faculty teaching in the Program come from these departments (plus, occasionally, from the Department of Math & Computer Science), and the Program has switched its focus from being a general multimedia program for all CSUEB Colleges to a more focused program in line with the needs of CLASS, specifically the Departments of Arts and Music.

The program is also in the middle of a curriculum revision that includes a three-tiered admission process where students would be: admitted regularly without provision;

admitted provisionally, but needing to take a limited set of classes to prepare for the program's demands; or admitted for a preparatory one year, to take a prescribed series of classes to increase their skills, specifically in scripting, for subsequent admission to the program upon satisfactory completion of the year. The curriculum revision also aligns and updates the available electives in consideration of the new revision of the Department of Arts' undergraduate option in web design.

Over the next five years, the program plans to expand enrollment to 40 students in the regular two-year program. They plan to continue their outreach to potential students through the web, the Department of Arts and the Department of Music undergraduate programs, and the public presentation of student projects, as is currently the practice.

As the Program has no dedicated faculty, it is guided by the Graduate Thesis Review Committee, which doubles as the Steering Committee for the program. As these faculty come from the Departments of Arts and Music, the program plans to continue to draw upon their expertise and the expertise of new hires in those departments. The program is advocating for a new hire in the Department of Music, someone who would have expertise in digital audio-production and composition. Likewise, in the Department of Arts, the program is advocating for a new hire with expertise in web design and significant skills in studio art. Those departments are pursuing these positions. The Department of Arts is also considering requesting a new hire in Game Design/Animation which would also be useful for the program.

In its realignment proposal, the program requests that its baseline annual budget allocation from CLASS be in line with the current allocations from the Office of Academic Programs and Graduate Studies. This budget will provide ongoing updating of technical programs and equipment for the program's technology-based curriculum. Also, the program requests that the current half-time technical support be increased to full-time and that the Administrative Support Coordinator who oversees purchasing and coordinates student contact and admissions be retained full-time.

Other resources that the program needs in the next five years include: an increase in resources to ensure that the hardware and software in the program laboratories remain relevant and current; an increase in resources for faculty travel to present their work at exhibitions and act as outreach for the program; an increase in funding for guest lecturers to enable the Program to draw on the expertise of the local technology industry; and a resources base for student exhibitions to display the work of the program and act as a draw for potential students and employers.

5. CAPR Analysis of the Program's Five Year Review

The half-time technical support for the Program continues to be a problem, as does the oversight of the technician, who spends the other half time in the CLASS technical unit. Given current economic times, it would be appropriate to formalize the management of technical support so that the program has full control over the half-time staff support currently in place. In the near future, this should be increased to full-time technical support, reporting solely to the program.

In the previous five-year review, concerns were raised about the web presence of the Program and this continues to be a concern, despite the Program's work on this issue. The website is intriguing, but, as noted by the External Reviewer, almost impossible to find. The program is working with the CSUEB web team to address this issue as they think that the most recent website revision is responsible for the current lack of web presence. The program needs the web redesign team to address the issue of broken links and hidden websites. The program also needs to make sure that the website is searchable by all major search engines and positioned to appear on the first page of search results. This problem is of special concern given the program's potential students, supporters, and employers are media and Internet savvy.

The program needs to be able to purchase, maintain, and run a large variety of technical software and hardware that may not fit into the overall CSUEB IT plan or priorities. This needs to be addressed, either through program-level funding or through some other mechanism that gives the program authority and responsibility for maintaining technology that is not standard to CSUEB.

Given that the Program plans to increase its student population, they need to develop a strong plan for recruitment and retention. The current proposal for curriculum changes and the tiered admission process should help with retention and could be used as a recruiting tool, but potential students need to know about the existence of this option. Also, as mentioned earlier, the program needs to establish a significant web presence immediately. Making use of the current public presentations of student projects would enhance recruitment only if significant outreach is developed that reaches beyond campus publicity and out to potential students, partners, and employers. Funding travel for the program to appropriate research and presentation venues, as determined by the faculty, will help with outreach. This request is included in the program plan. Currently, the program has a rough outline of a recruitment and web presence plan. This needs to be developed and implemented.

CAPR and the program agree with the External Reviewer's recommendation that an incoming Program Director be given extra release time to learn about the program administration. CAPR further suggests that there be some overlap between the current Program Director and an incoming Director. If there were an Assistant/Associate Director for the Program, s/he could "shadow" the current director. This would also help to decrease the current overload for the Director position.

6. CAPR recommendation for Continuation of Program

CAPR recommends continuation of the M.A. in Multimedia without modification.

7. Date of the Program's Next Five-Year Review

Date of next Five-Year review is academic year 2013-2014.