

Implementation Plan

1. Cover memo

Department of Cinema Year of appraisal 2015

To: Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning
From: Faculty Dean
Faculty of: Fine Arts
Date: June 21, 2017

Please find enclosed the finalized Implementation Plan for the Department cited above as part of the academic program appraisals process. This Plan was duly discussed with:

- The Department Chair
- The Dean of Graduate Studies (if applicable)

As mentioned in the Concordia University Academic Program Appraisals Manual, 5th edition revised, the Faculty and Department will follow-up on this Plan in two years, when prompted by your office.

Sincerely,

Faculty Dean's name Rebecca Duclos

Faculty Dean's signature 

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2. Summary

The Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema hosts three distinct but interrelated programs of study: Film Animation, Film Production and Film Studies. Each of these three major areas offers a BFA. The Film Studies area also offers a joint undergraduate major with Art History, as well as an MA in Film Studies, and a PhD in Film and Moving Image Studies. An MFA in Film Production is offered collaboratively with the Department of Studio Arts. Collectively, the programs aim to graduate filmmakers, film animators, and scholars who have a rich appreciation of the artistic and cultural potential of the medium, and also of its history and traditions.

All undergraduate programs offer core courses, elective courses, lectures by visiting specialists, independent studies and professional internships assuring continuous contact with working professionals in the arts community. The BFA in Film Studies prepares graduates for professions as critics, arts administrators, educators, archivists and curators within the regional, national and international communities. The BFA Film Animation and the BFA Film Production are studio programs that address practical and creative aspects of filmmaking, with the goal of providing a solid foundation for research and discovery to facilitate students' articulation of their unique artistic personality. Students enrolled in studio programs are required to take a designated number of courses in Film Studies, rounding out their practical training with a grounding in theory and history. Graduate programs offer advanced study on a range of issues related to film and moving images, offering engaged and direct contact with leading scholars at the forefront of their fields. The School aims to create engaged citizens imbued with the creative and critical capacities to bring the unique qualities of cinema and its related forms into fuller dialogue with the complex dynamics of the contemporary world.

One of the biggest strengths of the School is its faculty members. With diverse interests, faculty members across the school's programs are high achieving, with successful granting and publishing records, innovative research profiles and international reputations. Research and creative practice by faculty are an essential part of the school's mission, which transforms pedagogy across all programs. Teaching covers a varied range of curricular interests, philosophies, pedagogical expertise, and methods, and successfully balances writing and visual forms. Another strength of the School is its facilities. Having made the switch from analog to digital in 2012 the school offers its students access to cutting edge technologies, allowing animation and production students to produce a large number of short films as part of their program.

Key Recommendations

In order to build on the School's strengths and to address some of the challenges, and as an accompaniment to the recommendations made by the DAC, the EE, and the UAC, the dean's office offers the following specific recommendations. Key points are outlined below – and all are outlined in the table on the following pages.

Broadly, the three program areas should seek to work more closely together. Whether this is in the form of more curricular experiments, like "The Vernacular Auteur" course piloted in 2016; or in administrative matters, like prioritizing hiring requests; or in facilities management, like creating a policy for fair and transparent access to equipment, the department should be thinking long-

term about what is good for the whole. As the School makes more decisions collectively, it will then increase its capacity to collaborate on new initiatives or to lobby for support if needed. The effectiveness and efficiency of the department will grow as a result.

The School should take advantage of the resources available at the university and within the Faculty to increase program visibility and recognition. For example, the department might consider the following: working with University Communication Services and the Faculty's Communications Advisor Andy Murdoch to optimize the website, including embedding video content; reaching out to the Office of Student Recruitment and the Faculty's Student Recruitment Officer, Heather Gagnon to develop new strategies and initiatives; maintaining contact with recent graduates and renewing relationships with older alumni, in collaboration with the Faculty's Principal Director of Development Peggy Killeen. These relationships enhance the School's reputation as well as broaden the base of student support.

There are a number of curriculum projects to work on. In terms of opportunities to support cross-disciplinary studies, the department has recently prioritized a hire for the Major in Art History and Film Studies. As many Fine Arts departments offer courses focusing on sound – both theoretical and technical aspects – there may be ways to collaborate on these courses, benefitting students, faculty, and multiple departments. The Film Animation program has completed an extensive curricular revision, and the area of Film Production is now embarking on a revision of its curriculum and teaching methods in the aftermath of the shift to digital equipment. Further, the department should consider moving the MFA in Film Production from the department of Studio Arts to the School of Cinema, as it begins to also investigate opening an MFA in Film Animation option alongside it. All of these actions should be considered holistically and done in consultation with and the support of faculty members, administrators, technical staff, and the office of the dean.

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3. Recommendations

The Faculty Dean is invited to include a numbered list of recommendations for improvement, as well as a rationale and implementation schedule (an Excel spreadsheet is also available by request to the Appraisal Coordinator).

Recommendations	Prioritized timeline for completion	Responsibility	Dean's comments and resource implications
<p>1. Once staffing is stable and the curriculum review of Film Production is complete, the School should undertake department-wide review of its technical staffing structures and processes.</p> <p>Rationale: Concerns were expressed in the DAC, by the EEs, and the UAC who wrote that "an administrative audit and optimization exercise would be very timely."</p>		<p>Chair; Department Administrator; Director of Administration</p>	<p>The Dean's Office continues to work closely with the department of Cinema to address and support technical staffing needs.</p>
<p>2. The department is encouraged to reconsider the EEs' recommendation that the department limit the number of PhD-only courses, and encourage MA and PhD students to register in the same classes. Joint MA and PhD seminars should be considered.</p> <p>Rationale: Undergraduate students would greatly benefit by an increase in the number of full-time professors teaching some core content. This is particularly true when big curriculum changes have been made and are being implemented.</p>			
<p>3. Foster collegiality and opportunities for teaching collaboration among faculty across program areas, options include a departmental retreat where a collective</p>		<p>Chair, area heads, GPDs</p>	

<p>prioritization of departmental objectives could be completed</p>			
<p>Rationale: The three program areas housed in the School of Cinema should work more closely together. The new course “The Vernacular Auteur” is a positive first step.</p>			
<p>4. Research possibilities for interdisciplinary studies with other cognate fields at CU, including CISSC; better integrate Art History and Film Studies Major students in the life of the department; propose interdisciplinary opportunities within the School and with external partners</p>		<p>Departmental Curriculum Committee; Area Heads; AD Academic Affairs</p>	
<p>Rationale: All areas have expressed growing interest in interdisciplinary work.</p>			
<p>5. Continue the review of Film Production curriculum in collaboration with curriculum development experts in the office of the provost to better incorporate the increase in training required by digital technologies. The Film Animation area has completed an important curricular revision since the appraisal was begun.</p>		<p>Department Curriculum Committee; Area Head; AD Academic Affairs</p>	
<p>Rationale: More effort must be made to include theory and history in the Film Production curriculum. As well, the needs introduced by the integration of digital technologies into the area should be reflected in the curriculum.</p>			
<p>6. Research sound courses across the Faculty to explore opportunities for cross-listing or other forms of collaboration.</p>		<p>Chair; Area Heads; AD Academic Affairs</p>	
<p>Rationale: Many departments offer courses on sound – sharing courses will increase interdisciplinarity and potentially allowing for other topics courses to be offered.</p>			

<p>7. Investigate the possibility of housing the MFA in Film Production in the School of Cinema. The office of the dean recommends forming a working group consisting of the chair, faculty from animation and production areas, the option coordinators and a representative from the technical staff to discuss the reorganization of the existing MFA in Production. Reach out to the CTL and the curriculum experts to see what support is possible.</p>		<p>DCC; GPD; Chair; faculty members; option coordinators, technical staff, AD Academic Affairs</p>	
<p>Rationale: It makes more sense curricularly and administratively to house the growing MFA in Film Production with the other cinema programs.</p>			
<p>8. Investigate the possibility of opening an MFA in Film Animation within the Department of Studio Arts. Similarly form a working group as for the MFA in Film Production and reach out to the CTL and its curriculum experts.</p>		<p>DCC; GPD; Chair; faculty members; option coordinators, technical staff, AD Academic Affairs</p>	<p>The School of Cinema and Department of Studio Arts could prioritize a tenure-track hire across the animation and production, or animation and studio areas, for example, to meet the needs of the new program.</p>
<p>While the MFA in Film Production is ready to move to the School of Cinema, it would be better for the new MFA, concentration in Film Animation to launch in the Department of Studio Arts. The new MFA concentration in Animation is supported by the EEs, the UAC, and the office of the dean.</p>			
<p>9. Discuss with SGS ways to reduce the time to completion for MA Film Studies students. Consider a fast-track option for MA student qualified for PhD application.</p>		<p>Chair; GPD; AD Academic Programs and Development; Manager, Academic Programs and</p>	

		Development; AD, Academic Affairs	
<p>Rationale: MA Film Studies students currently take longer than the allocated two years to complete. A fast-track option could improve the MA retention rate as well as the application numbers for the PhD.</p>			
<p>10. Improve management of student internships; consult with other programs with successful internship structures and processes, like Art Education.</p>		Area head; Department Administrator	
<p>Rationale: Internships are currently being organized on an ad hoc basis, and often through the students themselves finding placements. More stability in this area would lead to improved relationships with community partners and reduced administrative work.</p>			
<p>11. Recruitment and Communications – Increase program visibility and recognition. Reassess program strength and distinctiveness. Consult with the OSR, and Heather Gagnon, Recruitment Officer; and UCS, and Andy Murdoch, Communications Advisor, to maximize the potential of the current web platform including video hosting; as well as to strategize future recruitment initiatives.</p>		Chair; Area heads; GPDs	Consult with Fine Arts Student Recruitment Officer, Communications Advisor, and Principal Director of Development
<p>Rationale: These are university resources that the department should be using to support its activities, in particular increasing applications, acceptances, and registrations.</p>			
<p>12. Advancement and Alumni Relations - Consult with AAR regarding communications with Alumni and potential for broadening the base of alumni support. Investigate the possibility of maintaining a current list of Cinema alumni.</p>			

<p>Rationale: This is a university resource that the department should be using. Alumni could play an even more critical role in the life of the department.</p>			
<p>13. Increase research activity by advocating for support from OVRGS; provide training to faculty members in new technical advances in the field from technical staff; encourage and support a research culture in Film Production; work with SGS to set up tool to identify colleagues working in cognate fields, perhaps in consultation with CISSC, facilitating partnerships; share research successes and initiatives on the website</p>		<p>Chair; GPDs; AD Research</p>	
<p>Rationale: Support from the OVRGS, collaboration with CISSC, upgrading training, and building partnerships could increase the number of grants awarded.</p>			
<p>14. The office of the dean recommends that the school as a whole should update its refresh and renew equipment policies for undergraduate and graduate programs. An assessment of the amount and availability of equipment tied to the MFA program via the CDA should be performed. The department should also create and consistently implement a fair and transparent policy governing access to equipment.</p>		<p>Chair; Technical Officer; AD, Planning & Facilities</p>	
<p>Rationale: Equipment is in danger of becoming outdated in light of the shift to a paperless workflow in animation, as well as the regular obsolescence of technology.</p>			