**Outcome(s):**

**Outcome IV:** Make informed decisions regarding appropriate technology for the development and implementation of visual communications.

**Decision(s):**

The faculty decided that the students need to incorporate more rapidly-evolving mobile communication technologies into their design solutions. The faculty has decided to increase the mobile technology components in the GD 301 Brand, Interaction, and Service Design and GD 410 Online and Mobile Interaction Design System courses, starting in the academic year 2013 to 2014. The outcome will be measured via traditional design critique in the 2015 senior project presentation.

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*Full report is included on following pages.*
North Carolina State University
College of Design
Department of Graphic Design and Industrial Design
07/2013

SACS PROGRAM, DEPARTMENT ASSESSMENT INFORMATION
SECTIONS I–III

PREFACE

Assessment in the Design disciplines is rarely accomplished through single instruments matched to single outcomes.

The design Artifact (visual, physical/spatial, temporal, and/or interactive object(s) through which makers think about, manipulate, and express a set of relationships among audiences/users, contexts, and material form) are the typical evidence through which faculty assess outcomes. These artifacts are, by definition, holistic expressions and used to assess multiple aspects of student performance. The Portfolio (a collection of artifacts as evidence of student performance over time) is also considered in determining course and curricula outcomes. Furthermore, a typical evaluation tool in studio-based courses is the Critique (peer and faculty evaluation of artifacts in response to well-articulated project criteria). In such critiques, students make oral and visual presentations of their own work and respond to the work of other students. Such critiques often do not result in physical evidence or in quantitative data, especially with respect to singular outcomes. Therefore, the Department of Graphic Design and Industrial Design has chosen several occasions for the formal assessment and documentation of outcomes (i.e.: Mid-Program Residency Reviews, End-of-Program Senior Exit Reviews, among others). Undocumented critique results and faculty impressions from studio meetings, however, are no less formative in making curricular improvements. This less formal assessment is discussed in faculty curriculum retreats and may respond to issues not raised in formal assessment activities.

THE ARTIFACT: As mentioned, a defining characteristic of design is the artifact: the visual, physical/spatial, tactile, temporal, and/or interactive object(s) through which makers think about, define, manipulate, and express a set of relationships among audiences/users, contexts, and material form. Audiences and users exhibit meaningful differences that must be accommodated by the artifact. The context (of reception and/or use) has cognitive, cultural, social, economic, and technological dimensions that can be addressed to greater or lesser degrees by the maker’s choice about the design of the artifact. A student’s recognition of the “goodness of fit” among these competing priorities is manifested in the artifacts they make and such understanding can be evaluated by faculty who have been trained to distinguish among basic, proficient, and advanced performances.

THE PORTFOLIO: Student performance in design demands assessment over time. Failure is considered a normal part of the learning process. Good students learn from unsuccessful as well as successful solutions to problems and adjust behavior in response to subsequent challenges. Faculty in the College of Design are less concerned with any single moments of excellence than with a progressive record of performance that shows mastery of concepts in more than one context and in a variety of forms. Design students are encouraged to rework solutions, to refine previously critiqued outcomes, and, ultimately, to explore concepts from many perspectives. The portfolio is work accumulated across time, a progressive record of performance and the acquisition of skills and knowledge.

THE CRITIQUE: Students learn to make critical judgments about their work and the work of others through open, peer evaluations in response to well-articulated criteria. Typically, students make oral and visual presentations of their own work that are then evaluated by other students and faculty. Dr. Jack Noonan, former director of the Center for Teaching Effectiveness at Virginia Commonwealth University, studied various forms of assessment used in university classrooms. Among all strategies, he found that the design critique was the most effective in shaping student behavior for success; among all students in the university, design students were best able to articulate their “next move” following failure and took responsibility for their own future success.

end: SACS PROGRAM, DEPARTMENT ASSESSMENT INFORMATION / PREFACE
SECTION I: The most recent bulleted list of program objectives and outcomes.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES
The professional BACHELOR OF GRAPHIC DESIGN degree program prepares students for existing and emerging entry-level professional practice in the field, with acknowledgement that some students will apply their education in design thinking to other professional endeavors.

Furthermore, the program believes that designers who think critically and analytically are more valuable to the profession and society than those who simply master form-making. All aspects of the curriculum reinforce this philosophy. Many NC State alumni of the bachelor’s program ascend through the ranks of the profession as quickly as do students with graduate degrees, distinguished to a large extent by their analytical skills and mastery of subject areas other than design. While program objectives parallel disciplinary standards as a first professional degree, faculty has further articulated student-level and course objectives that address the specific circumstances of the contemporary environment for design practice.

Periodic changes in the content of the curriculum reflect and address an internal assessment of the strategic professional environment in which graduates will practice. These are:

- Increasing complexity in the nature of design problems, calling for the design of systems and tools, as well as the creation of discrete artifacts;
- Accelerating technological change, including the dematerialization and portability of information;
- Growing participation by audiences/users of design in the creation of content and artifacts;
- High demand for interdisciplinary collaboration in non-hierarchical work environments; and
- Greater need for knowledge and skills to be found in related disciplines that are represented by the General Education curriculum.

COMPETENCIES
It is the belief of the Graphic Design faculty that graduating BACHELOR OF GRAPHIC DESIGN students demonstrate all essential competencies for Graphic Design, as documented in course syllabi; illustrated in examples of student work; and evidenced by the success of graduates in positions of responsibility in design offices and corporations around the country. Learning objectives match essential competencies (below in BOLD); detail where such objectives are measured; and articulate measures used to determine minimum levels of achievement by students in the program.

I. The ability to solve communication problems, including the skills of problem identification, research and information gathering, analysis, generation of alternative solutions, prototyping and user testing, and evaluation of outcomes.

Beginning with the first semester sophomore curriculum (core), courses examine explicit aspects of context. Junior level courses then ask students to design at the level of systems. Subsequent upper-level coursework is in topical electives or in the self-directed Senior Capstone Studio where students tackle complex, multi-faceted independent projects. Students may not proceed
to upper-level coursework without mastering required content and without presenting in the program’s threshold Mid-Program Residency Reviews. In this way faculty can guarantee that competency has been met, both through curricular requirements and by formal evaluative practices.

II. The ability to create and develop visual form in response to communication problems, including an understanding of principles of visual organization/composition, information hierarchy, symbolic representation, typography, aesthetics, and the construction of meaningful images.

An understanding of tools and methods, including their roles in the creation, reproduction, and distribution of visual messages is to be found across course offerings. Relevant tools and technologies include, but are not limited to, drawing, offset printing, photography, and time-based and interactive media (film, video, computer multimedia). Dedicated work in the three-credit studio support course progressions requires the mastery of tool and method in support of students’ formal development. The program views form as visual and verbal language and does not teach principles of organization or style outside of this structured context.

III. An understanding of design history, theory, and criticism from a variety of perspectives, including those of art history, linguistics, communication and information theory, technology, and the social and cultural use of design objects.

History and theory are taught in dedicated foundational first- and second-year courses (D100 DESIGN THINKING I and D102 DESIGN THINKING II; D102 DESIGN CULTURE AND CONTEXT I and D103 DESIGN CULTURE AND CONTEXT II; GD200 GRAPHIC DESIGN THEORY; and GD342 GRAPHIC DESIGN HISTORY), but the curriculum also integrates such study in core studio and support courses. Faculty deliver lectures as part of studio-based instruction and project briefs demand integration of theory and history. One other art/design history survey elective course is also required for all majors.

IV. Make informed decisions regarding appropriate technology for the development and implementation of visual communications.

Electronic media are integral to most study in the program and matched to practices in the profession. Students purchase their own computers and software and are technologically proficient by the end of the sophomore year. The program currently teaches no software courses, but specific software competencies are identified for each studio-support course. While students understand computer technology as a tool, the program goes further to frame electronic media as setting and experience. One course, GD 342 GRAPHIC DESIGN HISTORY is taught online and meets all necessary requirements for distance learning. The course registers NC State students, as well as off-campus students. The course includes online contact with faculty, as well as lectures, discussion sessions, image archives, assignments, and examinations. The University supports distance learning through DELTA (Distance Education and Learning Technologies Applications).

V. An understanding of basic business practices, including the ability to organize design projects and to work productively as a member of teams.

Junior-level coursework uses case studies, models of best practices, and specific methods for solving increasingly complex design problems and challenges. Students work in collaborative teams; develop project definitions, research, and workflow patterns; deliver final work in printed and media presentation formats; and explore contemporary methods of design practice (such as conducting communication audits, engaging in ethnographic studies, authoring mission and positioning statements, etc.) In a Capstone Studio, Seniors engage in discussions dedicated solely to the transition from school to work and examine a range of project types, best practices and best professional behaviors.

VI. Communicate effectively in visual, written, and oral presentations and demonstrate the ability to analyze and evaluate written and oral presentations of others.

Students in all studio-based classes demonstrate the ability to communicate ideas, both in verbal and written form, as well as through material outcome at various stages of project development (from brief to iterative ideation, to propositional prototypes, to final project unveils and reviews, etc.). In-progress and end-of-the-semester evaluations are taken into account when determining passing grades. Finally, all graduating seniors author professional resumes, letter of intent, and portfolio descriptors as part of requirements for the Capstone Studio.
ASSESSMENT TOUCHPOINTS
Beginning with the sophomore year, students assume a great deal of responsibility for setting the direction of projects. Graphic Design faculty believe beginning students, especially those with high academic skills, can handle complex problems early in their studies; in this way, formal skills develop within specific communication contexts, rather than through isolated studies in abstraction, and are subject to the principles and intent of language/content. It is not unusual for students in the same class to be working on diverse projects that share some unifying aspect, principle, or framework or in groups that tackle large-scale problems—such as Branding, Interaction, and Service design—in the same assignment.

Mid-Program Residency Reviews for Juniors take place at the end of the fifth semester when students have completed the coursework common to all Graphic Design majors and before elective study begins. This review involves summative presentations of all completed work to the full faculty; students assess their strengths and weaknesses and offer justifications for how they plan to use the remaining semesters. Faculty provide a written summary of comments about the quality of the presentation and suggestions for future development. Seniors complete an independent Capstone Project; requirements include a formal written proposal and curated examples from the field, as well as original creative work. The Capstone Studio also introduces students to professional practices and requires a professional presentation of work as they leave the program.

Regular systematic evaluation of student performance and curricular effectiveness
The Department observes regular end-of-semester reviews of student work in each studio and studio-support class and evaluate the effectiveness of assignments towards promoting desired learning experiences and skill development. The Department also maintains a regular review of curricula to ensure updating, as necessary. To this end, the Department pursues the following:

- Syllabi collection (for all classes) and student studio work documentation (for all studio-based classes).
- Bi-weekly dedicated teacher meetings to review learning objectives and outcomes, discuss and refine lesson plans, and evaluate student performance.
- Periodic departmental meetings and beginning- and end-of-semester retreats with all faculty (full-time faculty with Curriculum Committee oversight).
- End-of-semester studio reviews (final critique, open studio pin-ups, and evaluations by faculty of class performance).
- Mid-Program Residency Reviews and End-of-Program Senior Exit Reviews (full portfolio reviews with evaluation by faculty of student performance).
- Periodic exhibitions (First Year and advanced-level studios, Mid-Program Residency Reviews, and Commencement Show).

Student evaluation of instruction
Finally, students evaluate the effectiveness of instruction in every course, every semester (NCSU ClassEval system). This procedure provides statistical summaries for faculty and administrators. Summaries tell faculty how they rank on a variety of items with respect to other colleagues in the Department and University mean.

SECTION II: Report the outcome(s) measured in 2012/2013, using the following template for each outcome. *Each outcome measured can usually be summarized in one page or less

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Outcome:</th>
<th>An understanding of basic business practices, including the ability to organize design projects and to work productively as a member of teams.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Related Courses:</td>
<td>GD 400 Advanced Graphic Design Studio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method for Assessment:</td>
<td>End-of-Program Senior Project Reviews (partial and full portfolio reviews, respectively, of student performance with evaluation by faculty and guest lecturers, critics, and practitioners).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population and Sample Information</td>
<td>Population: 29. Sample: 29. (All graduating seniors are in this course).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of method:</td>
<td>Department and faculty-implemented; overseen by Undergraduate Program Coordinator, with participation of guest lecturers, critics, and invited practitioners. Course project with rubric; end of semester studio reviews are open to all other faculty and guest lecturers and critics within major. End-of-Program Senior Project Reviews open to all other faculty and guest lecturers/critics within major, and seek participation of guest lecturers, critics, and/or practitioners.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Brief Summary of Results**

Alina Wheeler, a renowned graphic designer and writer, was invited to review the senior projects. She spoke highly of the quality of student works. After reviewing the senior projects, the Graphic Design faculty felt this year’s senior projects were well-organized, well-constructed as a team.

**Comparison of findings to determine improvement**

The Graphic Design faculty agreed that there were improvements in the quality, creativity, organization, and research in this year’s project, compared to last year. Some faculty members were encouraged by the team-work presented in the exhibit and would like the continuation of that experience among students.

**Interpretation and Decisions**

Continue to build on the systematic, research-centered, team-oriented project approach to the senior studio.

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**SECTION III:** Please identify at least one learning outcome you will measure in 2013/2014, using the following template for each outcome.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Outcome:</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeline:</td>
<td>Reviewed in May, 2014.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty or staff Responsible:</td>
<td>Undergraduate Program Coordinator (w/ studio and studio-support faculty)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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end: SACS PROGRAM, DEPARTMENT ASSESSMENT INFORMATION / BACHELOR OF GRAPHIC DESIGN PROGRAM / SECTIONS I-III (Bachelor of Industrial Design Program follows)