Annual Assessment Report to the College 2008-2009

College:  Mike Curb College of Arts, Media, and Communications

Department:  Cinema and Television Arts

Program:

Note: Please submit report to your department chair or program coordinator and to the Associate Dean of your College. You may submit a separate report for each program which conducted assessment activities.

Liaison: Jared Rappaport

1. Overview of Annual Assessment Project(s)

1a. Assessment Process Overview:
The Department Liaison worked in direct conjunction with the Option Head of Film Production Studies to assess the Departmental SLO which states; “after having finished the course of studies, (as reflected by the curriculum in their individual option) the student will be able to: Conceptualize, produce, edit, and distribute cinema projects for both entertainment and informational purposes.”

We intended to assess both an introductory and an advanced course in the Film Production area: CTVA 250, Introduction to Film Production; and CTVA 351, Anatomy of Film Producing. We also planned to revisit the method by which the Film Production Option allows students into their option—a portfolio process. This is discussed in detail in Section 5, below.

The Department Liaison also worked with the Coordinator of our Graduate Screenwriting Program to assess the Graduate Program SLO which states: “Upon the successful completion of all requirements for the Master of Arts in Screenwriting degree, students will be able to demonstrate: An advanced ability to construct screen stories and write feature length screenplays and episodic television scripts that reflect meaningful themes, while engaging an audience.”

Assessment in Cinema and Television Arts is currently under the oversight of one person, Jared Rappaport.

March 30, 2009, prepared by Bonnie Paller
1b. Implementation and Modifications:

The assessment process went as planned.

2. Student Learning Outcome Assessment Project: Answer questions according to the individual SLO assessed this year. If you assessed an additional SLO, report in the next chart below.

2a. Which Student Learning Outcome was measured this year?

Conceptualize, produce, edit, and distribute cinema projects for both entertainment and informational purposes.

2b. What assessment instrument(s) were used to measure this SLO?

One section of CTVA 250, Fundamentals of Film Production, was selected for assessment. The instructor assigned the following, which was collected and assessed:

- **Entrance exam**, administered at the beginning of the semester, before any instruction. Each student answered 50 multiple-choice questions (100 total points), which were assessed using the Scantron grading tool.

- **Exit Exam**, administered at the end of the semester, after all instruction had been delivered. The multiple-choice questions were exactly the same as those asked on the entrance exam (100 total points), which were assessed using the Scantron grading tool.

In addition, toward the end of the semester, each participant assessed was required to shoot a 1 roll 16mm camera and film editing exercise designed to create a multiple cutting on motion sequence. A rubric system with 100 total possible points was used to assess the effectiveness of the exercise.

Additionally, one section (only one section exists) of CTVA 351, Anatomy of Film Producing, was selected for assessment. The instructor
assigned the following, which was collected and assessed:

**Entrance exam**, administered at the beginning of the semester, before any instruction. Each student answered 50 multiple-choice questions (100 total points), which were assessed using the Scantron grading tool.

**Exit Exam**, administered at the end of the semester, after all instruction had been delivered. The multiple-choice questions were exactly the same as those asked on the entrance exam (100 total points), which were assessed using the Scantron grading tool.

2c. Describe the participants sampled to assess this SLO:

**CTVA 250, Fundamentals Of Film Production**, is an introductory course in film production. It focuses on the introduction to; cinematic elements, production techniques & equipment, idea & vocabulary development, communication using images and sound, esthetics, and criticism. The course educates students in the creative and technical complexities of the film medium while a working knowledge of camera, lighting, writing, editing, directing, and sound is acquired. The students sampled take this course as an entrance to the CTVA Film Production Option. There are twenty participants (which is the class size) used in the assessment. It is assumed that those taking this entry level course have limited or no film production experience. This makes it a perfect course to assess. We chose a random section taught by lecturer Richard Ollis, MW 8:00AM-10:45AM.

**CTVA 351, Anatomy Of Film Producing**, is an introductory course in business management for independent film production. The course focuses on basic business procedures and the development of entrepreneurial skills. It covers; management of the independent project, financing for film projects, budgeting, distribution, legal matters as they relate to film production, and the structures & practices of the industry as it relates to the independent film producer/director.

The students sampled take this course as a required course for those accepted into the CTVA Film Production Option. There are forty-five participants (which is the class size) used in the assessment. It is assumed that those taking this course have limited or no experience in film business procedures and management. This makes it a perfect course to assess. The section is taught by Professor Nate Thomas, TH 6:00PM-8:45PM.

2d. Describe the assessment design methodology:

The students in **CTVA 250** were the same assessed at different points in their development, as was the case in **CTVA 351**.
2e. Assessment Results & Analysis of this SLO: Provide a summary of how the data were analyzed and highlight important findings from the data collected.

- We have found that the average score for those assessed on the CTVA 250 entrance exam was 32 out of 100 total points. The average score on the exit exam was 90. The average score on the film editing exercise was 89 out of a total of 100 points.

- We found that there was a great disparity of knowledge about the basics of film production from incoming film production students, many of whom had never taken film production courses before.

- Upon completion of the course, though, the students were consistently at a very high level of understanding of basic film production procedures.

- These numbers suggest quite a high degree of success in ultimately communicating the SLO in this course.

- We have found that the average score for those assessed on the CTVA 351 entrance exam was 44 out of 100 total points. The average score on the exit exam was 88.

- We found that there was a great disparity of knowledge about the basics of film business and producing procedures from students entering the course, most of whom had never taken a film business course before.

- Upon completion of the course, the students were consistently at a very high level of understanding of basic film business and producing procedures.

- These numbers again suggest a high degree of success in ultimately communicating the SLO in this course.
2f. Use of Assessment Results of this SLO:
The data suggests that the course content in CTVA 250 appears to be working to the extent that we hoped when we instituted the course. The challenge is always making sure that content is standardized from section to section when multiple sections are offered and with multiple instructors. Another challenge is to keep abreast technologically because the tools of no art change as quickly as those of film art.

We feel that the course content in CTVA 351 appears to be working to the extent that we hoped, as well. The students performed significantly better on the exit exam than they had on the entrance exam. It appears that CTVA 351 succeeds in introducing students to basic film business procedures and the topics that fall under the SLO.

That said, we are always looking, on a semester-by-semester basis, through Option Meetings with Full and Part-time Faculty members, to re-examine the information taught, and the methods by which they are taught, specifically because this aspect of communications is so affected by rapidly evolving technology.

Some programs assess multiple SLOs each year. If your program assessed an additional SLO, report the process for that individual SLO below. If you need additional SLO charts, please cut & paste the empty chart as many times as needed. If you did NOT assess another SLO, skip this section.

2a. Which Student Learning Outcome was measured this year?

We also assessed one of our Graduate Program SLOs:

Upon the successful completion of all requirements for the Master of Arts in Screenwriting degree, students will be able to demonstrate:

1. An advanced ability to construct screen stories and write feature length screenplays and episodic television scripts that reflect meaningful themes, while engaging an audience.

2b. What assessment instrument(s) were used to measure this SLO?

1. An entrance exam was given at the first class meeting of CTVA 595E. All 16 students registered in the class, at that time, took the test. The questions pertained to practices and procedures related to episodic television writing. Two of the questions were true/false;
the rest of the questions required written answers. Many of the questions required multi-part answers. Answers were marked correct or incorrect according to a pre-determined key. For multi-part questions a ½ point deduction was made if the answer was only partially correct.

2. In the middle of the semester students handed in Beat Sheets and were assessed (graded) according to a rubric.

3. At the end of the semester, the same objective exam that was given on day one, was administered. Answers were marked correct or incorrect according to the same pre-determined key. For multi-part questions a ½ point deduction was made if the answer was only partially correct.

2c. Describe the participants sampled to assess this SLO:
The one section of CTVA 595E we offered during the 2008-2009 school year was chosen to assess this SLO, which includes the writing of television scripts. We felt this was most representative of this Graduate SLO, as we continued to assess our Graduate Program. All students in this class were included in the sample.

2d. Describe the assessment design methodology: Was this SLO assessed longitudinally (same students at different points) or was a cross-sectional comparison used (comparing freshmen with seniors)? If so, describe the assessment points used. The students in CTVA 595E were the same assessed at different points in their development.

2e. Assessment Results & Analysis of this SLO: Provide a summary of how the data were analyzed and highlight important findings from the data collected.

- The average score, based on the assessment exam given at the first class meeting, was approximately 20% (4.09 correct answers out of 20).
- Beat-sheets were handed in by 13 students in the middle of the semester. The average grade was 83% (8.3 out of a possible 10 points.) Grading was based on a predetermined rubric.
- The average score, based on the assessment exam given at the end of the semester (same exam as given in the beginning), was 72.5% (14.5 correct answers out of 20).
- The evidence suggests that the majority of the students had little or no accurate knowledge regarding practices and procedures related to episodic television writing when they entered the class. An improvement of 52.5 percentage points, on the exit exam, suggests that
the students had learned quite a bit about episodic TV writing during the course of the semester.

- The average grade of 8.4 (84%) on the beat sheet represents a B- in the overall grading rubric for the class. Success on this assignment is particularly significant because of how it relates to question 19 of the assessment exam. “Imagine you have acquired a position on a writing staff, describe the process for breaking the story for your first episode.”

- None of the students (0) were able to answer that question on the entrance exam, indicating that none of the students had any knowledge whatsoever of two fundamental techniques associated with episodic TV writing; working as a group at the white board, and writing beat sheets. Some weeks later, the students were working quite well at the white board in groups and writing perfectly respectable beat sheets. An average grade of B- on these newly learned techniques must be considered a significant acquisition of knowledge. The next class assignment, beat sheet #2 showed even more improvement.

2f. Use of Assessment Results of this SLO:

Based on the findings of the assessment process, it appears that the students in this class gained a significant amount of knowledge regarding practices and procedures involved in writing episodic television; a popular form of writing that requires a unique body of knowledge and set of procedures that students are unlikely to learn in a fundamental screenwriting class.

Although a high percentage of the answers on the exit exam were correct, there was a discouraging lack of precision in the answers. Students seemed unable to succinctly articulate the knowledge they had gained, resorting to awkward or wordy answers that were correct, but not precise. In future iterations of this class we might stress the memorization or practice of specific critical definitions to ensure that students could, in the future, discuss these ideas more accurately and fluidly.

The ‘preparation for pitch meetings,’ was consistently answered incompletely on the exit exam. This is something that was covered early in the semester. We are now considering adding a mid-term exam, or some other sort of mid-term review, to refresh the student’s memories about the material covered in the first half of the semester.
3. How do your assessment activities connect with your department’s strategic plan?

Our strategic plan has been established in our Five Year Plan. We are following that plan and are on target.

4. Overall, if this year’s program assessment evidence indicates that new resources are needed in order to improve and support student learning, please discuss here.

The assessment evidence did not indicate that we needed new resources, at least in the courses that were assessed for these SLOs.

5. Other information, assessment or reflective activities not captured above.

Because there is a tremendous demand for film production courses, and because there is a limit to the number of people that can effectively be served in the Film Production Option, the portfolio process is used to identify those people who are most likely to benefit from the program at this time. The requirements for eligibility and acceptance into the Film Production Option and the complete rubric scoring guidelines and justifications are available upon request but are not included here.

A portfolio rubric is used for the purpose of attaining consistency in the review of the portfolios submitted by students applying for acceptance into the Film Production Option. This rubric will provide guidance on priorities in the review process. The portfolio review committee uses a 100 point scale for scoring the film production applicants.

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An evaluation committee of four or five members, made up of film production faculty, is assembled. The committee, which may include part-
time instructors, randomly divides the applications amongst themselves and evaluates the portfolios using the same rubric. Subsequently, all members of the committee meet and each member presents the top scoring 10% of their batch of portfolios. The natural distribution of scores is looked at, from highest to lowest. The faculty then discusses the portfolios, and selects the next semester’s class of students based on the number of seats available, starting with the highest portfolio scores.

The film portfolio has been in existence for the last 6 years. It has been successful in selecting those fit for the film production program. Some modifications have been made to insure the process reflects the many changes in the film industry; changes in style, content, and synergistic changes in technology.

6. Has someone in your program completed, submitted or published a manuscript which uses or describes assessment activities in your program? Please provide citation or discuss.

No.