

# Evaluation Report for Program Review Face to Face Meeting University of Wisconsin-Whitewater: Film Studies (BA, BS) Majors and Minors, 2024-2025

**Date:** 3/18/2025

**In Attendance:** Interim Provost Robin Fox; Dean Jason Janke (L&S); Department Chair Jonathan Ivry; Program Coordinator Donald Jellerson; faculty and staff in the Film Studies program, Erica Moulton, Janine Tobeck; other faculty and staff from the College of Letters and Sciences: Holly Wilson, Ellie Schemenauer, Anna Hajdik; Program Review Team Chair Yamin Ahmad; Program Review team members Angela Harlan; Assessment Representative Katy Casey

## Overview of review team evaluation, program comments:

Dr. Jellerson indicated that the program started 12 years ago and the program has been building upon courses ever since, with the aim of trying to tip over from a growth model mindset to one of sustainability. The program has had structural challenges associated with managing an interdisciplinary group of faculty. There have been 2 major innovations that have allowed the program to get to where it is today: (i) a course release for the coordinator each semester has allowed the coordinator to improve upon the program. Since interdisciplinary courses change each semester (with two-thirds of the program offerings being cross-listed, and as such, beholden to the learning outcomes of other programs), having dedicated time for the coordinator has allowed time to build relationships with other entities and other departments that has led to successful programming; (ii) a new position has meant that the program was able to hire Dr. Erica Moulton, which brings stability to the program. The program is trying to figure out how to capitalize on that; Dr. Tobeck is 0.5 FTE in film studies; Erica is 0.5 FTE as well. With the additional resource, the program is now best trying to figure out how to allocate that resource to help the program succeed and become sustainable.

The review team highlighted the key strengths of the program (outlined in section IX.1 below), as well as some areas for potential improvement (outlined in section IX.2). The program review team also recognized the need for dedicated classroom space that was brought up in the review.

## Discussion of Review Team's evaluation:

### 1 – How does the program advocate within the department to help others understand the needs of the program?

The Film Studies program indicated that they actively engage in ongoing advocacy within its home department by fostering collaboration and communication across multiple departmental levels. They have multiple meetings with other units—such as the Department of English—and this serves as a platform to share concerns and articulate the specific needs of the program. These efforts are supported by participation in departmental planning committees, where faculty members like Dr. Tobeck, who brings expertise in professional writing and publishing, contribute to broader curriculum discussions.

A significant structural change in the program occurred when the Department transitioned to encompass literature, writing, and film. This has enabled a more integrated approach, with diverse constituents advocating for the inclusion and visibility of Film Studies. The Program indicated that this evolution has created new opportunities for the program to position its interests alongside those of its departmental counterparts.

The Film Studies group also maintains a presence in the executive committee meetings, where long-term course planning is discussed. While the department prioritizes offering a required number of introductory English courses each semester, the Film Studies faculty advocates for what film courses can be offered afterward, making strategic decisions on a semester-by-semester basis. However, they face challenges in developing a reliable five-year plan due to the constraints of scheduling and broader departmental needs.

Although the Program indicated that they do long-term planning within its scope, these efforts often remain confined to the committee level. Interim Provost Fox encouraged the Program to share these beyond the group although there was a recognition of a need to establish clearer structures and channels for sharing this valuable work more broadly—both within the department and with key individuals such as Department Chair Ivry—so that the program’s contributions and needs are more fully understood and supported.

## 2 – Share some ideas you have on creating a long-term vision and related goals to sustain the program.

The Film Studies program is actively envisioning a future grounded in collaboration, innovation, and strategic expansion. Faculty have begun forging meaningful partnerships across campus—particularly with the College of Arts & Communication, including the Electronic Media and Film programs—to create a more practice-oriented curriculum. These collaborations are paving the way for the development of a production-focused Film Studies track, potentially leading to a comprehensive major with a stronger emphasis on filmmaking and applied media skills.

Dr. Moulton has played a central role in this vision, fostering interdisciplinary bridges and exploring ways to integrate film history, analysis, and production into a cohesive, hands-on learning experience. Productive work with faculty like Dr. Jim Meade has already yielded exciting possibilities, such as a documentary production sequence that could align with existing Communication–Electronic Media offerings. This alignment opens the door for double majors or complementary minors, reinforcing the program’s interdisciplinary strengths.

Future goals also include enhancing the program’s infrastructure with resources such as a podcast studio, in-class video editing tools, and—aspirationally—a dedicated film studio on campus. The pursuit of grants, including those in the digital humanities, will be key to turning these ambitions into realities. A shift toward grant-writing and external funding is seen as essential for long-term sustainability and growth.

Recognizing student demand in screenwriting and film production, the program aims to expand its offerings in these areas while continuing to support co-curricular engagement. Dr. Moulton’s role as

faculty advisor for *Hawk Cinema*, the student film organization, provides a strong foundation to build a culture of film appreciation through partnerships with other student groups.

Dr. Jellerson indicated that leadership development and sustainability are also priorities. Faculty are exploring ways to share leadership responsibilities, distribute workload more equitably, and mentor newer colleagues. Suggestions include rotating roles, engaging with department chairs across campus, and building flexibility into planning efforts. This approach will allow the program to evolve by leveraging university-wide expertise and maintaining alignment with institutional strengths.

The program has also demonstrated its responsiveness by creating a Queer Studies film course to support the Women's and Gender Studies program—an example of how Film Studies can serve as a vital interdisciplinary partner. Looking outward, the suggestion to explore articulation agreements with institutions like MATC offers another avenue for growth, especially given the strong course offerings at nearby technical colleges. Establishing such pipelines could bolster enrollment and further broaden the program's reach.

Overall, the long-term vision for the Film Studies program centers on collaboration, infrastructure development, curricular innovation, and leadership sustainability—all grounded in a commitment to meeting student needs and advancing the program's academic and creative mission.

## Recommended Actions:

### Recommended Action #1

Create a sustainable program structure: 1) Work within the department structure and affiliates to develop a strategic vision for where the program wants to be in 5 years' time, and use that to inform and develop short term goals for the program.

### Recommended Action #2

Consider if the program's curriculum is appropriately sized. Create a sustainable plan of course offerings that allows students to complete the program within four years.

### Recommended Action #3

Refine the assessment work of the department to include direct assessment of major aligned to program Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). In addition, the curricular map should include where all SLOs are embedded.

## Recommended Result:

Continuation with minor concerns

## Next Self-study and/or Progress Report Due Dates:

1 - Next FULL self-study will be due to the Dean on May 1, 2031 and to the Assessment Office on August 1, 2031

*For a copy of the full evaluation report and detailed comments, please reach out to the assessment office: [assessment@uww.edu](mailto:assessment@uww.edu).*