Evaluation Report for Program Review Face to Face Meeting University of Wisconsin-Whitewater: Media Arts & Game Development (BA, BS) Majors and Minors, 2021-2022

Date: 2/28/2022

In attendance: Provost John Chenoweth; Dean Eileen Hayes; Associate Dean and A&R Review Team Member Robert Mertens, Department Chair/Program Coordinator Jeff Herriott; faculty and staff in the Media Arts & Game Development program Bill Miller, Xiaohong Zhang, Nick Hwang, Communication Chair Kathy Brady; Audit & Review Team Chair Hephzibah Kumpaty; Assessment Representative Katy Casey

Overview of review team evaluation, program comments:

This is a large interdisciplinary professional program connecting three major departments from two different colleges; Arts and Communications and Letters and Sciences. The MAGD is an attractive major to students as it collaborates with communications, computer science and Arts & Design departments serving over 170 majors and 60 minors. The field seems poised only for more growth, given recent developments in the "metaverse" and the continued growth of gaming in various platforms and areas. The program coordinator and faculty seem committed and engaged while dealing with substantial challenges. The program has been intentional about advising, particularly by incorporating a significant faculty advising component. The program has engaged in innovative activities to address needs/interests, and prepare professionals, in the field: such as the recommendation to prepare students in a discipline in addition to game development. The program addressed this by creating a technology minor to pair with computer science, and is working on a BFA in Media Art.

Discussion of Review Team's evaluation:

1 – Program Identity: If students are not able to get hired in the field, then what sort of changes are envisioned to help them become more competitive? A program like this needs to be nimble and responsive to a fast-paced and evolving field. How are you making use of the advisory board and alumni?

a) The BA program is a liberal arts program that provides students opportunities to explore professions in media arts and gaming. The BFA program has a professional focus. The department tries to address the needs of all students interested in media and gaming, which they recognize is ambitious. Through advising and coursework, students often pick a focus and can align courses within their major, and minor, to meet their interests.

b) Initially, students struggle to understand professions aligned with their gaming interests and the workload associated with working in the industry. The students who seek internship-type experience tend to perform well and secure employment. Most students do get hired upon graduation, and their career options are vast.

c) One challenge noted by the program is that they do not have a physical space associated with the

program- most instructors and lab spaces are spread across campus. Program Coordinator Jeff Herriott is working to address this issue.

d) The program plans to reconvene the advisory board as early as fall 2022. The alumni base is growing, and they look forward to tapping into alumni expertise.

2 – Assessment: There was not an explicit timeline, but faculty discuss which SLOs will be assessed each year. Clearly articulate and provide specific, tangible examples of data collection along with assessment tools.

a) Based on the discussion, it appears the program has a process in place that may not have been fully documented in the self-study. The program explained reviewing SLOs on a cycle based on the program and/or curricular needs. Due to the rapid changes in the industry, curriculum changes are often made before SLO data can be fully analyzed. The instructional staff find value in advisory board feedback, and feedback from external reviewers at the Media Expo each year. Specific examples of changes based on Expo feedback was described.

b) The program was also encouraged to look into the use of surveys to evaluate students understanding of content related to the program SLOs.

3 – Collaboration: Discuss briefly how the program collaborates and supports other academic programs across the College and/or University.

a) The program supports other programs such as Communication and Computer Science.

4 – Staffing and financial support: Adequate personnel, student help, services and supplies

a) There has been consistency in program staffing the past couple years.

5 – New Major: Development of a BFA as the logical next step? Did all faculty agree on this vision?

a) The program plan to make creating the new major a priority in the coming years.

Recommended Actions:

Recommended Action #1

The program is encouraged to pursue plans to offer MAGD-BFA degree. Work with College and University leadership to find an institutional home for the program, resolve staffing issues and sustainable financial support. *See section VII. B) Student Resources for detailed feedback to address this item.

Recommended Action #2

Continue work on SLO tracking and summarizing data in the assessment plan. Articulate/provide specific, tangible examples of data collection along with assessment tool that aligns to each SLO. Share revised assessment plan and findings in your next report. *See section V. Assessment of Student Learning for detailed feedback to address this item.

Recommended Action #3

Continue work with College leadership to secure necessary technological resources for the discipline. In addition, identify a student space to support community among majors and showcase the work of this program. *See section VII. B. Student Resources for detailed feedback to address this item.

Recommended Action #4

Continue diversity efforts to recruit and retain underrepresented students in the major. *See section VI. A) Trend Data for detailed feedback to address this item.

Recommended Action #5

Improve work on tracking graduates (job placement); Collect more targeted data from alumni on the value of the program. *See section VI. B) Demand for Graduates for detailed feedback to address this item.

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, 2029, and to the Assessment Office on August 1, 2029

For a copy of the full evaluation report and detailed comments, please reach out to the assessment office: assessment@uww.edu.