

**Department of Cinema and Television Arts
(CTVA) California State University, Fullerton
2024**

**Program Performance Review
Bachelor of Arts degree, Cinema and
Television Arts
Master of Fine Arts degree, Screenwriting**

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Section 1: CTVA Self Study

Section 2: External Review

Section 3: CTVA Chair's Comments

Chair's response to outside Program Performance Report

First, let me thank the committee for their diligent and comprehensive external review of our department. Per the University requirements I shared this review as well as the self-study review with all full-time CTVA faculty. Their comments and points-of view are represented in this response,

The committee gave high marks to our faculty, and I think it is worth repeating their opening comments.

“The CTVA Department very clearly houses a faculty, administration and staff that is dedicated to providing a learning environment and instructional flexibility that allows its student body to explore and experience the best artistic practices and range of career opportunities in the screen industry. There is also a strong ethic within the faculty to not overlook or skimp on the foundational standards and conventions of visual storytelling. We were pleased to note that the faculty also bring diversity to their teaching along with wide industry experience and artistic currency, which is vital in a rapidly evolving trade.”

The first area the committee reviewed was Facilities. Again, I offer their own summary.

“Facilities were a major focus of the external 2016 program review. It appears that little has changed in the 8 years since that evaluation. The department – its students and staff – remain underserved by woefully inadequate space and equipment with which to make themselves competitive in today's content creation marketplace.”

Without question the four areas within Facilities called out by the committee; Studio Space; Equipment Room; Access to Facilities; A Proper Projection Space /Screening Room point to CTVA's biggest challenge in meeting the needs of current and future students. The

committee's finding in this area is certainly not news to myself or my colleagues. A prior administration (Jose Cruz/Danny Kim) funded the production of a video presentation to elicit donors to support a new building to address these issues. My personal efforts in this endeavor were halted with the pandemic and unfortunately the prior Dean showed no interest in promoting any efforts for CTVA to grow its production courses.

The second area the committee reviewed was Curriculum. Overall, they felt good about our curriculum, stating *"This committee finds that the CTVA curricular goals and mission align well with those of similar cinema and television schools."* The committee also noted that many students have a great interest in working on productions and suggested we find ways to bring them into production courses earlier in their tenure.

"A 'ramp-up' class at the 100 or 200 level would serve to bring students into CTVA 325 at similar levels of experience and bring eager first and second-year students into production earlier, where they could gain experience and possibly crew on upper-division projects. A lower-division class like this could also serve to cover production safety, best practices, and ethics in production, thus further emphasizing the departmental commitments to these goals."

The committee also recommended looking at making CTVA 300 as a 100 or 200 level course, citing *"completion of this class at the lower division and the opportunity for articulation with Community College programs will help to get the students making films sooner."* We happen to agree with the impetus of this idea and have been encouraging freshman students to enroll in this course in either their second or third semester. We do not want to articulate the course because we feel our approach is beyond what a JC would use in teaching this material.

The committee also wrote, *"The addition of more curriculum in the foundational classes in Game creation and creating study in new*

technology like AI and Virtual Production would help to keep the material current and relevant as well as expand the application of the foundational production and screenwriting curriculum.”

We couldn't agree more. Next semester we are teaching our second video game course and faculty are developing courses for how to write scripts for games. AI is incredibly important, and we are just beginning to think about how we want to weave AI into our curriculum.

Finally, the committee acknowledged the impact of students losing access to the Feature Film course in Spring 2024.

“As articulated in the 2024 self-study, the loss of the feature film project in the recent academic cycle due to funding and college-level commitments in other directions is a major loss for the talented students that we met in our tour of the department. The inability of the college to allocate IRA and Golden Globe Foundation monies to their promised objectives is lamentable. It is imperative that the University solve these problems so that students can again take advantage of this unique high-impact offering.”

The Feature film course, CTVA 347-348-349 was developed by Professor Robert Davis and is, as far as we know, the only undergraduate feature film course taught in the United States. Working on a micro-budget of \$250,000 raised by grants from IRA and the Golden Globes Foundation (Formerly the Hollywood Foreign Press Association) this experience is truly one-of a kind. Students work side by side with professionals in producing the feature film and are credited on the film for their work. The simple fact is that it is virtually impossible to get a college internship on an actual movie production. With this series of three courses, preproduction, production, and postproduction Professor Davis has created as high an impact course as can be imagined. The CTVA faculty looks forward to many more Feature Films from this program.

In terms of faculty the committee lauded the diversity of the faculty specifically noting Professors, Sparks, Hargraves, Yong and Longueira Borrego. They also identified a faculty rich in industry experience and scholarly accomplishments, *“with a commitment to provide students a solid foundation in the screen arts.”*

When it came to faculty identifying their chief issues it was the 4 and 4 course loads and the semester after semester problem students have with access to production and postproduction facilities, after hours and on weekends.

Student Assessment and Advisement: The committee met with a small cohort of seniors “and all were complimentary of the effectiveness of the faculty and curriculum and preparing them for their future in the screen industry.” Unfortunately, *“they expressed similar frustrations as faculty about the quality and narrow access of production which was a recurring theme.”*

In terms of advisement these students wanted more one on one with individual faculty. The self-study referenced the success we had when Professor Monti held that position, accomplished with a course release. Whether it be Professor Monti or someone else we will give this issue serious consideration.

The final two pages of the report, Strategic Departmental Organization & Location, lay out a case for the University to move the Department of Cinema and Television Arts to the College of the Arts.

“...the needs of cinema do not fit neatly into the larger criteria of an expansive communications curriculum...it is a round peg in a square hole. With a diverse and passionate faculty, CTVA wants to support its students with an education that is on par with or better than their peer institutions.

The report goes on, pinpointing a significant issue plaguing CTVA, that being a lack of adequate funding for a program that aspires to be the best public university operating in the shadow of Hollywood to educate the next generation of diverse filmmakers. In their exact words, “...because of the expense of the classes focusing on production, it’s evident to the review team that the department needs support from the college to match the rigor established at other CSU schools properly. The simple answer to this issue is that CSUF’s CTVA Department belongs within the Arts.”

“This synergy would improve the quality of education and rigor for not only CTVA but also for the arts as well. Screenwriting, for example, would dramatically expand the possibilities of writing for art students (which is currently lacking in the art curriculum – particularly animation). Cinema students could study storyboarding from industry storyboard artists and collaborate with illustration students on their film projects. Photo/video art students could expand their inclination to traditional cinema while cinema students could explore experimental practices and classic lineage technology such as darkroom photo development. Music students could score film productions. Acting students could act in the films. This natural academic compatibility is a “no-brainer” win for the university: it begins to solve current issues for CTVA students, expands the possibilities of current art students, and aligns the department with the academic norm for the program level it is trying to achieve.

As demonstrated throughout this review, the most significant stressor for any film program is access to equipment, facilities, and production funds – congruently, the most significant stressor for any animation, photo, and video program is the same. Outside of increasing funding directly from the university, which is universally tricky, finding ways to work together to pool and share resources is the best way to begin to solve this issue. There is no doubt that shared resources are a core sticking point regarding creating a collaboration between art and film; no one wants to give up its resources. However, if made, this mutually beneficial collaboration would be a win for cinema and art. Students within the

College of Art could finally work together at a deep level, the curriculum would flow/mix, and as this happens, the negative stress and impact would resolve themselves.”

As Chair of CTVA I must concur with my faculty and support the committee’s closing recommendation:

“We recommend the university form a committee of faculty and administration from both colleges to explore this possible move of CTVA to the Arts.”