VCT Advisory Committee Minutes –June 11, 2008

Members Present: Daniela Birch, Christine Shafner, Bob Hutchinson, Norma Goldstein, Ann Warman, Berta Lloyd, Bruce Amstutz, Jim Reddin, Andy Conrad, Guest Kevin O’Connor, Aisha Bowers, Kathie Hunt

10:40 AM – Chairperson Charla Reid is not attendance so Christine Shafner brought the meeting to order. Meeting started with Introductions around the room and then ACTION ITEM Approval of Minutes from January 25, 2008 meeting.

Transition of central printing to the VCT Print Shop under Andy Conrad’s supervision has been completed. A Copy Center is slated to open in the Pub next year. Norma also announced soon the hiring of the new Graphic Design faculty.

Christine then introduced ACTION ITEM of Job descriptions for Animation: information and discussion. Aisha Bowers was once more introduced as the media art lead at Hidden City Games. Her answers were directed towards job descriptions detailing skills set, levels that are needed for the field of 2d animation. First Aisha explained that Hidden City Games is considered part of the “casual game” market which currently markets as an expanding field. She cited that marketing shows that women represent strong markets in casual games expansion. Hidden City is among 20 companies in the Seattle area representing these online game studios, such as Carbonated Games. This would include Disney, Jet City and are either free, paid, or shareware games available on the internet. Aisha then explained that 3d games companies such as Amaze, Microsoft Xbox or Nintendo also are local. Hidden City Games was founded from Wizards of the Coast employees as well as several other large names from Amaze and Carbonated.

Hidden City games is a 2 year old company that developed Bella Sara which is a trading card game for girls 6-12 years old. Hidden City has experienced tremendous growth into 19 countries. The cards have a specific art style (important!) and are activated through codes on the web and can be purchased at Target or Blockbuster and plan to develop into full fantasy worlds for Role Playing Games.

As a Media Art lead, Aisha hires workers, and the company has about 50 media employees and continues to grow. Some are in-house, some are contract workers in house, contractors off site and also studios. Currently they have an in-house position that they have not been able to replace; the position is much like Aisha’s position and requires similar skills sets.

As to entry level skills, if the contractor is offsite – they need the equipment and software. Most importantly the most current version of Adobe CS 3, especially filters in Flash. They also need strong skills in Photoshop (Illustrator is not used much – files are too big.) They need skills in making small files.

Artists who can work in vector, but cheat and make them look bitmapped – is used in Flash. They have to know FLASH! And use Filters! They should also study the art of Bella Sara and recreate work for their portfolio in that style. Diversity of Art style in the portfolio is important otherwise. Show frame to frame, organic movement to make realistic in 2d form.

As far as animation skills:

- Drawing – perspective is very important – they need to put their drawings in a world.
• Figure drawing – animal and objects, understanding gesture and movement, and expression. (In development of Bella Sara cards, 3d video is outsourced but they do the concept sketches).
• Kinesthetic skills – movement to paper, understanding practical physics (like acceleration, squish, stretch.
• Acting is also important to understand motion and dance.
• Personalities: in this fast paced environment require independence, high communication, assertiveness, and females especially need confidence, and almost arrogance to work through the fast pace with an ability to take criticism.
• All of this takes the pressure off the art director (in working in teams) as they need to work fast, flexible and not argumentatively.

Technical skills requirements:
• Flash, (they don’t do their animations on paper first) with tablets and have to be fast.
• Filters and Actionscript 3 using templates into realistic and abstract world. They need to get into file/actionscript to find the assets for delivery.
• They need to know how to construct files in actionscript and demonstrate skills with actionscript in a really basic way.
• They need diversity of style in their portfolio and know who the company is and their style. They need to fit in immediately.
• Most importantly they need to understand history of traditional animation skills and digital skills. Photoshop skills are also important.
• They don’t have a lot of time to do story boards, but it’s a good skill to have.

[ACTION: Kathie Hunt is going to look into dance/motion/humanities classes, Mary Bonar will continue to work with Drama/Film Video for incorporation of skills and possible class integration.]

Meeting broke for lunch and during our lunch we had the opportunity to review student work. Projects from Bob Hutchinson’s drawing for animation class, projects from Christine Shafner’s Introduction to Multimedia class using Flash, and finally projects from Jim Reddin’s Digital Imaging using Photoshop were viewed. All three class demos focused on different aspects of animation and how animation is incorporated in their classes. Aisha also shared that HTML skills are not important in her area of work. Ann Warman shared that while most of her work is branding, the flash animations are not of great interest, but the web pop ups are of great use.

Adobe Design Achievement Awards: Huai-Hsien Feng’s work was introduced as a semi finalist in the Adobe Design Achievement Awards. Her illustration was sent off to New York for judging. Mary Bonar expressed pleasure at how well the ADAA system works in notifying the school, and Daniela Birch was pleased that an SCC student entered and has achieved such distinction with very competitive 4 year colleges and universities.
Kevin O’Connor was introduced as part of the art design team for Spindrift. He expressed that the experience working on Spindrift was valuable and has learned technical aspects of producing such a project.

Our Mentorship program: Bob Hutchinson introduced a continuing information note on our Mentorship program. The department again expressed our thanks in all the work that Daniela Birch does in lining up Mentors. Our students continue to see the mentorship as an invaluable experience. Bob distributed a list of our current mentors showing the diversity of our past and current mentors.

Meeting disbursed at 1:30pm. Minutes respectfully submitted by Mary Bonar