VCT Advisory Meeting

December 8, 2008

Committee Members Present: Daniela Birch, Betty Haggeman, Bob Brazeal, Charla Reid, Michael Ellsworth, Dave Riensche, Ann Warman, Don Low, Brendon Olson, Brad Hutcheson, Chuck Schultz.

Faculty and Other Staff Present: Bruce Amstutz, Christine Shafner, Bob Hutchinson, Al Yates, Jim Reddin, Chuck Schultz, Mary Bonar, Norma Goldstein.

Christine Shafner introduced Charla Reid as Chair for the year.

Introductions were made around the table and then Charla began the meeting.

**Agenda item #2**, A conversation on the Graphic Design industry. Advisory committee’s perspectives on the industry and their role in industry today:

Each designer was asked to describe the kinds of work they did on a daily basis in their company, the skills sets that this work required, and the impact of the current economy on their business.

Brad Hutcheson describes his company as interactive design and gaming and is not experiencing any noticeable downturns yet. He feels a BA and MA are not necessary until a person is working at the management level. The interactive design industry is “skill based,” but the principles are important – not much different from print graphics. There seems to be a split between Math/Science (programming) vs. creative education. He feels it is better to have some of the programming background than none at all.

Bob Brazeal talked about his print company. They have a graphic designer, but their primary role is in preflighting projects to see if they are printable (vs. creating that work). Fifty percent is done doing during prepress in the way of fixing client files. He suggests that being proficient in Adobe suite products technically is important, in addition to design skills. His company also creates and supports variable data and forms. Seventy to eighty percent of their received work may not be directly printable because of the built-in printing problems. He feels that a print operator needs to be an experienced graphic designer or vice versa. They also do digital and offset printing.

Michael Ellsworth is the owner of a small graphic design shop whose main business is designing websites (blogs) and advertisements. His graphic designers focus on the projects that come in. He does a lot of research on the web finding vendors and best
pricing. Most of their work entails promotions and proposals. His graphic designers need to have a broad knowledge base. The trend is for more work on the web and then creating collateral materials that help web sites. When they do this they usually take it up a notch and give more options to their clients. When hiring, he looks for individuals who are creative and have their own style. Employees need to show proficiency in their web work including Adobe Flash. Currently, work creating web banners has shot up significantly.

Brendan Olson has been in the gaming business since 1999. He keeps busy with continuing education and feels that doing lots of projects to keep his mind active. He believes designers need to manage creative development and have a versatile skill base. A game designer needs to have a broad spectrum of education, including gaming, coding and programming and hybrid skills. They must be able to be cross-functional, have the major skills and be able to work in teams and use their knowledge together. For success one must have foundation skills and concepts in multiple programs and not in just one particular program. He also indicated that the younger gaming generation is more knowledgeable than the older generation. The younger generation learns to understand and explore. Boyden also spoke about the hybrid nature of the work in gaming and mentioned that a background in math and science is important.

Dave Riensche is an art director. He understands the development of the process but does not do the work. The designers in his shop use the tools within Adobe Photoshop to develop and refine their work. He indicates that knowing print and press is important in all areas. He also mentions the importance of laying out text properly.

Lunch Break

Ann Warman focuses on business development opportunities for her company. She mostly works on the computer doing research throughout the web and looking for ideas. She scans for current trends and strategies that works best for clients pursuing different options. She does what she needs to do in research and design, etc. to move to the next level of production.

Don Low partners in a large agency that is struggling in the current economy. One of their main customers is Microsoft. He states that design skills are very important. They use Flash and Silverlight. Graphic design, advertising and communication skills are necessary for a successful graphic design business. He suggested that if possible one should start in a small firm, learn to do everything and move up and expand on those skills to be successful.
Betty Haggeman has her own small business and uses the web to communicate with her clients. Her work focuses on informational design, which needs to be educational and must integrate visual design with words and concepts. She feels that it is very important in the world of art and design to understand your client for client to understand you in order to make a statement or difference. Her business does a lot of work for environmental groups and non-profit groups.

Charla joined in with a brief discussion of what she does in her work. She feels a designer must be flexible; have communication, writing, and verbal skills; and be able to participate in the give and take of teamwork. It is important not to sell one’s self short and to know what you and your project are worth.

**Agenda item #1, Approval** of minutes from last meetings. Charla distributed and then moved to approve the minutes from last meeting. All agreed.

**Agenda item #3** Revised 1-year certificates of Proficiency: Comments on and advisory board approval of the certificates. On behalf of the committee, Charla gave positive, personal feedback on the two 1-yr certificates. She then signed the internal approval form for the college.

The next meeting is scheduled for June 9, 2009 (study day).