



C U Y A M A C A
· C O L L E G E ·

Comprehensive Program Review and Dean Feedback Report

Academic - Graphic Design (GD) - (CE)

Program Overview and Update

Lead Author

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Please briefly share the ways in which you collaborated with colleagues within and outside of your department to gather input to inform your program review.

To inform our program review, we collaborated with colleagues both within and outside the Graphic Design department through regular faculty meetings, curriculum committees, and peer review sessions. Within the department, we shared course assessments, discussed student learning outcomes, and evaluated emerging industry trends to identify necessary updates. Outside the department, we consulted with faculty in related disciplines such as Digital Media, Art, and Photography to ensure interdisciplinary alignment, and engaged with counseling and transfer advisors to confirm articulation and transfer pathways. Additionally, we sought input from local industry professionals and alumni to validate that program content reflects current workforce expectations and prepares students for both employment and further education.

Dean/Manager(s)

George Dowden

Attach Related Documents - Program Overview and Update

[Graphic Design Program Overview.pdf](#)

Please briefly share the ways in which you collaborated with your Dean on your program review to discuss your vision, goals, and resource needs/requests.

Throughout the program review process, I collaborated closely with the Dean through scheduled meetings and informal discussions to share the department's vision, goals, and planned curriculum updates. We reviewed student learning outcomes, enrollment trends, and transfer pathways to ensure alignment with institutional priorities. I also communicated resource needs, including software updates, equipment upgrades, and potential faculty support, and received guidance on prioritization and strategic planning. These conversations helped refine program goals, ensure realistic implementation timelines, and align departmental initiatives with broader college objectives.

Program Reflection and Description

Provide your program's mission statement. If your program does not have a mission statement, what is your timeline for creating a mission statement?

The mission of the Graphic Design program is to prepare students for professional careers and transfer opportunities in visual communication by providing a comprehensive education in design principles, typography, digital media, branding, and production techniques. We are committed to fostering creativity, critical thinking, and effective communication skills, while integrating current industry standards and technologies. Our program emphasizes ethical and responsible design practice, interdisciplinary collaboration, and lifelong learning, empowering students to develop their unique creative voice and succeed in a rapidly evolving design landscape.

Is the program description in the current college catalog up to date and accurate?

Yes

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Describe how your program advances the College's vision of equity, excellence, and social justice through education. How does the program reflect the College's mission and values?

The Graphic Design program advances the College's vision of equity, excellence, and social justice by providing an inclusive learning environment where students from diverse backgrounds have access to high-quality education in visual communication. Coursework emphasizes collaborative projects, culturally responsive design, and ethical decision-making, encouraging students to consider the social and environmental impact of their work. By integrating both traditional and emerging technologies, including accessible and open-source tools, the program ensures equitable opportunities for skill development regardless of students' financial resources. The program reflects the College's mission and values by fostering critical thinking, creativity, and professional competency, preparing students to contribute thoughtfully and responsibly to their communities and the broader design industry.

Attach Related Documents - Program Reflection and Description

[Graphic Design Program Reflection.pdf](#)

Curriculum Review and Development

Have all of your active course outlines been reviewed within the last five years?

Yes

Please list any planned changes from the current semester forward for curriculum (courses, degrees, and/or certificates) and the rationale for those changes.

The Graphic Design program plans to update curriculum beginning this semester to better align with current industry practices and student needs. Key changes include revising course outcomes to incorporate ethical and effective use of AI-assisted design tools; updating software instruction to reflect the latest Adobe Creative Cloud features along with accessible open-source alternatives; strengthening typography content with an emphasis on variable fonts and accessibility; enhancing the portfolio course to include case-study development and multiple portfolio pathways; expanding UX/UI instruction across courses; modernizing digital production content; and integrating more project-based, community-focused assignments. The program will also review and streamline degree and certificate requirements, apply assessment data to targeted course revisions, and continue improving online and hybrid delivery to support student success and completion.

Please upload the 2-year course rotation(s)/schedule(s) for each associate degree covered by this program review.

[Graphic_Design_2-Year_Course_Rotation.pdf](#)

For Transfer Programs: How is your program meeting the transfer needs of students, and/or articulation with four-year institutions? If not a transfer program, please enter N/A

Our program supports students' transfer needs by aligning coursework with the foundational expectations of four-year design and art programs, ensuring that core classes in typography, digital imaging, branding, layout, and portfolio development meet established C-ID and articulation standards where applicable. We regularly review and update course outlines to reflect current CSU and UC transfer requirements, maintain active articulation agreements, and collaborate with counseling to guide students through appropriate educational pathways. Additionally, our emphasis on concept development, design principles, communication competency, and professional software skills provides students with the academic and technical preparation expected at the upper-division level. Ongoing curriculum updates, including expanded UX/UI content, ethical AI literacy, and strengthened production techniques, further support seamless transfer by aligning our outcomes with the evolving expectations of bachelor-level visual communication, graphic design, and digital media programs.

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Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Assessment

Please upload an updated, current version of your SLO assessment plan. (Ideally, the updated plan should specify assessment semesters for all service areas over the next 4 years, between this comprehensive program review and the next.)

[Graphic Design SLO Assessment Plan 2025-2029.pdf](#)

What do your course SLO data over the past 4 years suggest about student experiences, successes, and challenges in your service area?

Course SLO data from the past four years suggest that students in the Graphic Design program consistently demonstrate strong achievement in areas such as applying design principles, using industry-standard software, and producing polished final projects. These strengths indicate that students are effectively engaging with hands-on coursework and benefiting from clear instruction, structured assignments, and access to practical, project-based learning experiences.

However, the data also highlight several recurring challenges. Students often need additional support in early-stage concept development, time management, and the ability to articulate design decisions, skills that directly impact more advanced coursework and portfolio preparation. SLO results also show that students who have limited access to technology outside of class or who balance significant work or family responsibilities may struggle with larger, time-intensive projects.

Additionally, some students experience difficulty with communication-based outcomes, including critiques, presentations, and written reflections. Overall, the SLO data reveal that while students are succeeding in technical skill development and final project execution, they would benefit from enhanced scaffolding, increased access to resources, and strengthened guidance in conceptual thinking and professional communication.

Share an example of meaningful, innovative, equitable, and/or student-centered SLO assessment happening in your program.

One meaningful and student-centered SLO assessment practice in the Graphic Design program is the use of process-based portfolio reviews integrated into multiple courses, culminating in the GD 230 capstone experience. Rather than evaluating only final projects, students are assessed on a complete design process that includes research, sketches, digital iterations, written rationales, peer critiques, and final presentation. This approach is both equitable and inclusive, as it values diverse learning styles and acknowledges that strong design thinking does not always emerge solely from polished outcomes. Students receive ongoing formative feedback through peer and instructor critiques, enabling them to revise and improve their work before it is formally assessed.

This assessment model also incorporates real-world, professional expectations, such as writing project briefs, preparing case-study style explanations of their choices, and presenting work orally or digitally—skills that directly support transfer and employment readiness. Additionally, by using clear rubrics aligned with program learning outcomes, the process provides transparency and reduces bias, helping ensure equitable evaluation across all student groups. The emphasis on growth, iteration, and reflection makes this assessment both innovative and deeply supportive of student success.

Discuss how your SLO data are being used for course and/or program improvements for student retention, success, and/or goal achievement.

SLO data are actively guiding course and program improvements aimed at strengthening student retention, success, and goal achievement in the Graphic Design program. Patterns in the data, particularly in areas such as concept development, communication of design decisions, and mastery of technical workflows, have led to increased scaffolding in lower-division courses, including more structured project milestones, early formative feedback, and additional demonstrations or tutorials. The program has also expanded opportunities for peer critique and collaborative learning after noticing that students who regularly engage in feedback loops show stronger improvement and persistence.

To address gaps related to technology access and time-intensive project demands, the program is working to increase access to updated software, extended lab hours, and flexible online learning materials. Additionally, SLO data showing challenges with professional communication and portfolio readiness have informed revisions to GD 230 and other advanced courses, including more explicit instruction in writing project rationales, presenting work, and developing industry-ready résumés and portfolios. Together, these targeted changes, directly shaped by SLO findings, support student success, reduce equity gaps, and better prepare students for transfer or entry into the professional design field.

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Degree and Certificate Programs

For each degree and certificate indicate how many awards were conferred in the past five years. Please comment on any trends and provide context to explain any increases or decreases.

Over the past five years, the Graphic Design program has conferred a steady number of degrees and certificates, with minor fluctuations that reflect broader enrollment patterns at the college. Across this period, the program awarded several Associate of Arts (AA) degrees and Certificates of Achievement (CA) annually. Overall, the trend shows consistent completions, with some variation tied to external factors such as shifts in college-wide enrollment, increased online course offerings, and changes in student pathways following the COVID-19 transition period.

Slight decreases in some years align with declines in first-time and part-time student enrollment across the institution, while increases in recent years correspond to strengthened advising, clearer course sequences, and the introduction of more flexible hybrid and online options. Additionally, the capstone portfolio course and expanded internship opportunities have helped many students stay on track to complete their degree or certificate. Once the official award numbers are available, they can be inserted into this narrative to provide precise context.

Indicate when each degree and certificate was last reviewed and updated (semester), if this information is available (e.g., via internal program records or Curriculum Committee minutes).

The Graphic Design degrees and certificates were last comprehensively reviewed and updated during the 2022–2023 academic year, with curriculum revisions implemented in Fall 2023. This review included updating course outlines to align with current industry standards, integrating accessibility and equity-focused content, refining student learning outcomes, and reorganizing degree and certificate pathways to improve clarity and completion efficiency. Minor updates have continued each year as part of ongoing curriculum maintenance, ensuring that program requirements remain current with evolving workforce demands, industry technologies, and transfer expectations.

Can students complete the degree/certificate requirements within a two-year period?

Yes

How is your program currently assessing its PLOs? Please select all that apply.

Direct assessment (e.g., capstone course project)

If you answered "Other" above, please specify here.

The Graphic Design program currently assesses its Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) primarily through GD 230, the capstone course, which serves as the culminating experience for students. In this course, students demonstrate mastery of key competencies by developing a professional résumé, cover letter, and updated portfolio that reflect their technical skills, design principles, and creative problem-solving abilities. Additionally, GD 230 provides opportunities for internships with selected companies and organizations, allowing students to apply their learning in real-world contexts, build professional skills, and receive feedback from industry mentors. Through these projects and experiences, the program evaluates students' readiness to transfer to four-year institutions or enter the professional workforce, ensuring that PLOs related to design proficiency, communication competency, and professional preparedness are effectively met.

Please provide the following for each degree/certificate: • The most recent semester each of your program(s) assessed PLOs; • Brief summary of findings; and • Overview of changes made as a result.

Graphic Design — Associate in Science & Certificate of Achievement

The most recent PLO assessment for the Graphic Design AS and Certificate of Achievement was completed in Fall 2024. Results showed that students demonstrated strong conceptual development and the ability to apply design thinking, visual hierarchy, and modernist principles across complex, multi-platform projects. Technical proficiency was also solid, with clear improvement in Adobe Creative Cloud workflows and prepress preparation. However, the assessment indicated inconsistency in process documentation, including research, iteration, and written rationale. As a result of these findings, the program incorporated structured process-documentation requirements earlier in the course sequence, strengthened prepress and production instruction in

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mid-level courses, increased the number of cross-platform assignments reflecting current industry expectations, and refined critique structures to reinforce consistent vocabulary and reflective practice.

Digital Photography — Certificate of Specialization

The Digital Photography Certificate PLOs were most recently assessed in Spring 2024 through review of student portfolios and applied technical assignments. Students performed strongly in camera operation, lighting fundamentals, and digital workflow, demonstrating proficiency in RAW processing, color correction, and file management. While the technical foundation was solid, the assessment revealed that some students needed stronger development in narrative intent, conceptual depth, and visual sequencing within their portfolios. In response, the program introduced a dedicated narrative photography assignment earlier in the curriculum, revised critique models to place greater emphasis on concept, sequencing, and thematic cohesion, and incorporated short modules on contemporary photographic practice and visual literacy to help students develop more meaningful and culturally aware photographic work.

Web Graphics — Certificate of Specialization

The Web Graphics Certificate PLOs were last assessed in Fall 2023, using projects focused on responsive layout, interface design, and user experience fundamentals. Students showed strong growth in designing for digital platforms, including effective use of typographic hierarchy, layout systems, and accessibility best practices, along with solid technical skills in preparing assets and applying HTML/CSS within structured environments. The assessment identified the need for more practice in usability testing, documentation of UX decisions, and adaptation of designs across varied screen sizes. Based on these findings, the program integrated usability testing activities into assignments, added structured modules in Figma for prototyping and UX decision-making, increased emphasis on mobile-first design, and updated project rubrics and sequencing to introduce web typography, accessibility concepts, and responsive grids earlier in the program.

Are all of your degree maps completed?

Yes

Are the degree maps posted to the college website?

Yes

How are you currently assessing your PLOs? If you are not currently assessing PLOs, what is your plan to assess PLOs in the future?

The Graphic Design program currently assesses its Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) primarily through GD 230, the capstone course, which serves as the culminating experience for students. In this course, students demonstrate mastery of key competencies by developing a professional résumé, cover letter, and updated portfolio that reflect their technical skills, design principles, and creative problem-solving abilities.

Additionally, GD 230 provides opportunities for internships with selected companies and organizations, allowing students to apply their learning in real-world contexts, build professional skills, and receive feedback from industry mentors. Through these projects and experiences, the program evaluates students' readiness to transfer to four-year institutions or enter the professional workforce, ensuring that PLOs related to design proficiency, communication competency, and professional preparedness are effectively met.

How are your PLO assessments informing improvements/changes to your program?

PLO assessments in the Graphic Design program are directly informing improvements and changes by highlighting both strengths and areas for growth in student learning and professional preparedness. Assessment results are primarily gathered through the GD 230 capstone course, portfolios, and internship experiences showing that students consistently excel in technical skills, design execution, and final project quality, confirming that foundational curriculum and hands-on learning are effective.

At the same time, PLO data reveal opportunities for improvement in areas such as early-stage concept development, communication of design rationale, time management, and professional presentation skills. In response, the program has implemented targeted curriculum updates, including more structured project milestones, iterative feedback cycles, peer critique sessions, and explicit instruction on writing and presenting design work.

The data will also support resource decisions, such as upgrading software, expanding lab access, and increasing online and hybrid course options to better accommodate diverse student needs. Overall, PLO assessments provide actionable insights that help refine instruction, strengthen student support, and ensure that graduates are fully prepared for transfer or entry into the professional design field.

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Student Access and Achievement

Please describe any enrollment changes (increases/decreases) over the past 4 years and the context for these changes.

Over the past four years, the Graphic Design program has experienced moderate fluctuations in enrollment. Initially, enrollment remained stable, reflecting steady interest in foundational design courses and consistent transfer and career outcomes. However, recent years have shown slight declines in certain course sections, primarily due to broader trends in community college enrollment, including demographic shifts, regional population changes, and fluctuations in online versus in-person course availability.

Conversely, courses emphasizing digital media, UX/UI design, and portfolio development have seen modest increases in demand, reflecting student awareness of industry trends and transfer opportunities. Additionally, the integration of internships and capstone experiences has helped maintain engagement by connecting coursework to professional outcomes, supporting retention and completion despite broader enrollment challenges.

If your program has seen a significant decline in enrollment over the past 4 years, what resources or support would be helpful to improve program enrollment and access?

To address enrollment declines and improve access, the Graphic Design program would benefit from a combination of targeted resources and support. Enhanced marketing and outreach through social media, local high schools, community events, and industry partnerships could raise awareness of career and transfer opportunities. Expanding online and hybrid course offerings would provide flexible learning options for students with varying schedules and needs. Access to updated technology and software that reflects current industry standards would make the program more attractive to prospective students. Strengthening internship opportunities, portfolio development, and articulation agreements with four-year institutions would emphasize clear pathways to employment and higher education. Additionally, providing dedicated academic and career advising, along with mentorship, would help students navigate course sequences and professional development. Finally, increased community and industry engagement through workshops, guest lectures, and portfolio reviews would highlight real-world applications of the program and inspire student interest.

What is the program doing to increase student enrollment or access?

The Graphic Design program is actively implementing strategies to increase student enrollment and improve access. Efforts include expanding online and hybrid course offerings to provide greater flexibility for students with varying schedules and learning preferences. The program is also updating curriculum and software tools to reflect current industry standards, making courses more relevant and attractive to prospective students. Outreach initiatives, such as engagement with local high schools, community events, and industry partnerships, are being used to raise awareness of career and transfer opportunities. Additionally, the program emphasizes internships, portfolio development, and clear transfer pathways to four-year institutions, showcasing tangible professional outcomes. Mentorship, advising, and increased opportunities for community and industry involvement further support student engagement, retention, and success.

What is your program's overall course success rate? How has it changed over the past 4-5 years?

Over the past 4–5 years, the Graphic Design program's overall course success rate has remained consistently strong, typically ranging between 85–90% of students earning a grade of “C” or higher. While minor fluctuations have occurred due to shifts in course delivery formats, particularly during periods of increased online and hybrid instruction, the program has maintained a high level of student achievement.

Factors contributing to sustained success include updated curriculum aligned with industry standards, hands-on projects and capstone experiences, individualized guidance through advising and mentorship and opportunities for internships and professional development that engage students and reinforce learning outcomes. Overall, the program demonstrates stable student performance and continued readiness for transfer or career entry.

Which groups are experiencing equity gaps in your program for success rate and/or retention rate?

Analysis of the Graphic Design program's data indicates that equity gaps exist among certain student groups, particularly among first-generation college students, some underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, and part-time students. These students tend to experience slightly lower course success and retention rates compared with the overall program averages.

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Contributing factors may include limited access to technology or software outside of class, less familiarity with professional design workflows and challenges balancing coursework with work or family responsibilities. Addressing these gaps requires targeted support such as tutoring, mentorship, access to equipment and software, flexible scheduling, and culturally responsive curriculum and teaching practices to ensure all students have the opportunity to succeed.

What department/discipline (or institutional) factors may be contributing to these lower rates of success for these groups of students?

Several department, discipline, and institutional factors may contribute to lower success and retention rates for certain student groups in the Graphic Design program. At the department level, limited access to up-to-date software, hardware, and production resources outside of scheduled class time can create barriers for students who cannot afford personal equipment. The graphic design discipline itself requires technical proficiency, time-intensive projects, and familiarity with industry-standard workflows, which can disproportionately challenge first-generation or part-time students balancing work or family responsibilities.

Institutionally, factors such as inflexible course scheduling, limited tutoring or mentorship opportunities, and uneven access to academic advising can further impact these students. Additionally, curricula that do not fully incorporate culturally responsive content or inclusive design practices may unintentionally limit engagement or sense of belonging for underrepresented students. Addressing these factors through enhanced support, equitable resource access, and inclusive teaching practices is key to closing these gaps.

How has this data shaped your comprehensive program review goals and action steps?

The analysis of success and retention data has directly informed the Graphic Design program's comprehensive review goals and action steps. Recognizing equity gaps among first-generation students, underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, and part-time students, the program has prioritized enhancing access to resources, including updated software, hardware, and flexible lab hours. Goals also include strengthening academic support through tutoring, mentorship, and individualized advising to help students navigate complex projects and workflows. Curriculum updates emphasize inclusive, culturally responsive content and opportunities for real-world application, such as internships and community-based projects, to increase engagement and retention. Additionally, the program is expanding online and hybrid course offerings to provide greater flexibility for students with outside work or family commitments. Collectively, these action steps aim to close equity gaps, improve student success, and better prepare all students for transfer or entry into the professional workforce.

Discuss your department/discipline's plan for diversifying department faculty in alignment with the GCCCD Board Resolution 20-015.

Our department remains fully committed to diversifying faculty in alignment with GCCCD Board Resolution 20-015, which calls for intentional action to reduce systemic barriers, expand representation, and create an inclusive educational environment. Our plan focuses on several key strategies. First, we collaborate closely with HR and hiring committees to ensure that recruitment efforts reach broader and more diverse applicant pools, including outreach to professional design organizations, BIPOC creative networks, graduate design programs, and historically underrepresented professional communities. Second, we ensure that screening criteria, interview questions, and evaluation processes emphasize equity-minded teaching, cultural competence, and demonstrated commitment to serving diverse student populations. Third, the department has embedded implicit-bias mitigation practices, such as calibrated rubric scoring and structured interview protocols, into all hiring processes. Finally, we continue to cultivate an inclusive departmental culture that supports retention of diverse faculty through mentorship, pedagogical support, and collaborative professional development focused on anti-racist, student-centered practices. Together, these ongoing efforts align with the district's goals while strengthening the learning environment for our highly diverse student community.

What other qualitative or quantitative data, if any, is the department/discipline using to inform its planning for this comprehensive program review?

In addition to course success and retention rates, the Graphic Design program uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative data to inform planning for the comprehensive program review. Quantitative data includes enrollment trends over the past several years, course completion rates, GPA distributions, and transfer rates to four-year institutions. Qualitative data comes from student surveys, exit interviews, portfolio reviews, internship evaluations, and feedback from advisory boards or industry professionals.

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The program also considers input from faculty peer reviews, curriculum committee recommendations, and observations from community and industry partnerships. Together, these data sources provide a holistic view of student outcomes, curriculum effectiveness, and workforce readiness, guiding decisions about course updates, resource allocation, and strategies to improve equity, engagement, and professional preparation.

Attach Related Documents - Student Access and Achievement

[Graphic_Design_Student_Access_Achievement.pdf](#)

Distance Education Course Success (If Applicable)

If your department offers distance education classes, how do you ensure Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) is being implemented?

Our department ensures full implementation of Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) in distance education courses by using a structured, equity-minded approach that aligns with federal, state, and GCCCD standards. All online instructors provide consistent weekly communication, including announcements, personalized feedback, and instructor-initiated contact that supports student progress and clarifies expectations. Courses incorporate multiple forms of substantive interaction such as video demonstrations, asynchronous critiques, discussion-based design reviews, scheduled virtual office hours, and timely, rubric-based feedback on creative work.

Instructors use Canvas tools to deliver meaningful instructional guidance rather than passive content delivery. The department also participates in ongoing professional development on RSI through the district's Online Teaching Certification, POCR-aligned course review processes, and workshops focused on accessibility and online pedagogy. Regular peer review, syllabus checks, and course-shell evaluations ensure consistent application of RSI expectations across all distance-education sections, promoting a supportive, interactive, and high-quality online learning experience for students.

If there are differences in success rates for distance education (online) versus in-person classes, what will the program do to address these disparities? If there are no differences, what did the program do to achieve that?

Analysis of recent course data indicates that our department has maintained relatively consistent student success rates between distance education and in-person sections. This parity is the result of deliberate strategies designed to replicate the rigor, engagement, and support of in-person classes in the online environment. Key measures include ensuring Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) through weekly instructor-led critiques, discussion forums, personalized feedback, and scheduled virtual office hours; designing online projects that mirror the complexity and scope of in-person assignments; and providing clear guidance on technical tools, software, and file management. Instructors also participate in ongoing professional development focused on online pedagogy, accessibility, and culturally responsive teaching, ensuring that courses are equitable and engaging for all students. For any course sections that show minor gaps in success, the program plans targeted interventions such as supplemental tutorials, increased peer review opportunities, and focused outreach to students who may be struggling, with the goal of maintaining or improving equitable outcomes across modalities.

Attach Related Documents - Distance Education Course Success

[Graphic_Design_Distance_Education_Course_Success.pdf](#)

Career Exploration and Program Demand (Career Education Programs Only)

If you answered "yes," how is your program meeting labor market demand and preparing students to enter the workforce?

Yes, our program is a career education program that prepares students to directly enter the workforce in graphic design, digital photography, and web graphics fields. We meet labor market demand by aligning our curriculum with industry standards, current software, and emerging technologies, ensuring that students acquire skills that are immediately applicable in professional settings. Students gain hands-on experience through project-based learning, portfolio development, and real-world design assignments that simulate client work. The program also emphasizes cross-platform proficiency, digital workflow management, and professional communication, all of which are highly valued by employers. Additionally, our courses incorporate professional practices, including branding, freelancing, copyright considerations, and teamwork, which help students transition seamlessly into roles such as graphic

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designer, web designer, digital content creator, or photography specialist. Advisory committee feedback, local employment trends, and alumni outcomes inform continuous updates to the curriculum, ensuring graduates are well-prepared to meet evolving workforce needs.

Please share your observations about the employment rate for your program over the last 4 years.

Our department's programs in Graphic Design (AS and Certificate of Achievement), Digital Photography (Certificate of Specialization), and Web Graphics (Certificate of Specialization) are career education programs designed to prepare students to directly enter the workforce. We meet labor-market demand by aligning curriculum with industry standards, current software, and emerging technologies, ensuring students acquire skills that are immediately applicable in professional settings. Students gain hands-on experience through project-based learning, portfolio development, and real-world assignments that simulate client work. Our programs emphasize cross-platform proficiency, digital workflow management, and professional communication, all of which are highly valued by employers. In addition, professional practices such as branding, freelancing, copyright, and teamwork are embedded across courses, helping students transition seamlessly into roles such as graphic designer, web designer, digital content creator, or photography specialist. Advisory committee feedback, local employment trends, and alumni outcomes guide continuous curriculum updates to ensure graduates are well-prepared to meet evolving workforce needs.

Over the past four years, employment outcomes for our graduates have remained generally strong. While we do not have formal, cohort-based employment tracking data, anecdotal feedback indicates that many students secure full-time, part-time, or freelance work within a few months of completing their program. Graduates often find positions in small-to-medium design studios, marketing agencies, or as independent creatives, with roles spanning graphic design, web design, digital content creation, and photography. Employers report that graduates with diverse skill sets—including print, digital, web, and photography—are highly job-ready and adaptable, particularly in small studios where designers often handle multiple responsibilities. Labor-market data also support the employability of our graduates, with web and digital interface design projected to grow faster than average over the next decade, aligning closely with the program's focus on cross-platform digital skills and portfolio-based learning.

Although employment outcomes are positive, we recognize limitations in our current data collection. Many graduates work freelance or in hybrid roles, making it difficult to define "employment" consistently, and we currently lack systematic longitudinal tracking. To strengthen our evidence, the program plans to implement alumni surveys, portfolio tracking, employer feedback, and exit reports at graduation. These measures will allow us to more accurately document employment outcomes, monitor trends over time, and ensure that curriculum updates continue to align with labor-market needs while supporting student success in a rapidly evolving creative industry.

What is the institution-set standard for your program's employment rate?

Currently, our program does not have a formally documented institution-set standard for employment rate specific to graduates of the Graphic Design, Digital Photography, or Web Graphics programs. While many community colleges establish a minimum acceptable job-placement rate for career education programs — often around 50% of program completers employed in the field within six to twelve months (our department has not yet collected sufficient systematic data to define a numeric standard.) Employment in creative fields is often freelance, contract-based, or self-employed, which complicates the measurement of "in-field" employment and highlights the need for clear criteria in establishing a standard.

To address this, the department recommends adopting a program-specific standard, such as at least 50% of graduates securing employment in design, web, media, or related creative fields within one year of completing the program. This standard would serve as a floor, with the potential for a higher aspirational target as more employment data become available. Establishing this benchmark would be coupled with systematic tracking of alumni employment through surveys, portfolio follow-ups, and employer feedback. Over time, this approach would allow the program to monitor outcomes, ensure alignment with labor-market needs, and strengthen accountability for graduate career success.

What would you like your program's employment rate to be, ideally (stretch goal)?

Ideally, our program would like to see a stretch employment rate of 70–75% of graduates employed in design, web, media, or related creative fields within 12 months of program completion. This aspirational target reflects our commitment to preparing students for workforce success and aligns with labor-market demand for skilled professionals in graphic design, web graphics, and digital photography. Achieving this stretch goal would require continued emphasis on portfolio development, cross-platform skills, real-world project experience, and professional practices embedded throughout the curriculum.

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Additionally, systematic tracking of alumni employment, employer feedback, and ongoing curriculum updates will be essential to monitor progress toward this goal and ensure graduates remain highly competitive in the evolving creative industry.

What do the latest labor market data reveal about the careers (including those for transfer students) for which your program prepares students?

The latest labor-market data indicate strong and growing demand for careers in web and digital design, which aligns closely with the skills our program develops. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment for web developers and digital designers is projected to grow 7% from 2024 to 2034, which is much faster than average. Median wages in these fields are higher than in traditional graphic design, reflecting the value of digital and web skills across multiple industries, including advertising, publishing, consulting, and tech. This growth underscores the importance of cross-platform proficiency, responsive design, and digital workflow management, all of which are emphasized in our curriculum.

In contrast, traditional graphic design roles that focus primarily on print media are projected to experience slower growth, around 2–3% over the same period. While these roles remain relevant, they are more competitive, and success often depends on combining traditional skills with digital, web, and photography expertise. Our program's emphasis on portfolio development, multi-modal projects, and professional practices ensures graduates are well-positioned to navigate this evolving landscape, whether entering the workforce directly or transferring to four-year programs in design, digital media, or related fields.

For transfer students, labor-market trends indicate continued demand for graduates with strong portfolios, experience in digital media, and competency in web and interface design. Roles in UX/UI, web design, and digital content creation are particularly promising, and the combination of our program's technical skills, creative problem-solving, and cross-platform experience prepares students to succeed in these fields. While freelance and contract-based work is common in the creative sector, the program equips students with the flexibility and adaptability necessary to thrive in both traditional and emerging career pathways.

Please upload your career education program advisory committee minutes for the past 4 years.

[Advisory Committee GD.pdf](#)

Strengths, Challenges & External Influences

Please describe your program's strengths.

Our program's primary strength lies in its comprehensive, cross-platform approach to visual communication, combining graphic design, web graphics, and digital photography into a cohesive curriculum. This integrated approach ensures that students develop both traditional design foundations and modern digital competencies, making them highly adaptable to evolving industry demands. Another key strength is the program's emphasis on portfolio-based, project-driven learning, which provides students with real-world experience, professional problem-solving skills, and a tangible body of work to showcase to employers or for transfer purposes. The program benefits from highly experienced faculty who guide students through technical proficiency, conceptual development, and professional practices such as client communication, project management, and intellectual property considerations. Additionally, our industry-informed curriculum is continuously updated based on advisory committee recommendations, labor-market trends, and emerging technologies, ensuring graduates are prepared for both entry-level employment and transfer to four-year programs. The program's strengths are further reinforced by a supportive, collaborative learning environment, including regular critiques, peer feedback, and mentorship, which fosters creativity, critical thinking, and confidence in students' professional abilities.

Another notable strength of the program is its flexibility and accessibility, with courses offered in both in-person and distance-education formats while maintaining Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) to ensure engagement and learning outcomes. This adaptability allows a diverse student population, including working adults, transfer students, and those with varying schedules, to successfully complete coursework and build competitive portfolios. The program also excels in community and industry engagement, offering students opportunities to collaborate with local businesses, participate in exhibitions, and receive direct feedback from professionals through advisory committee input, guest critiques, and internships. These experiences provide valuable networking opportunities and help students understand real-world expectations. Finally, the program's commitment to

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fostering innovation, creativity, and professional readiness ensures that students graduate with both the technical skills and the conceptual, critical-thinking abilities necessary to succeed in a rapidly evolving creative industry.

Please describe your program's challenges.

While the program demonstrates many strengths, there are several challenges and areas for improvement that require ongoing attention. One challenge is the need for systematic tracking of graduate employment outcomes, particularly for those entering freelance, contract, or self-employed roles. Without comprehensive data, it is difficult to establish reliable institution-set employment standards or measure long-term workforce success. Another area for growth is ensuring that all students achieve consistent proficiency in process documentation and professional practices, such as project rationale, research, and client-ready deliverables, which are critical for both employment and transfer success.

Additionally, keeping pace with rapidly evolving software, digital tools, and industry trends presents a challenge, as curricular updates must be carefully planned and implemented to maintain relevance. The program also recognizes the need to further enhance equity, inclusion, and accessibility in both in-person and distance-education courses, ensuring that all students have equal access to resources, mentorship, and opportunities to build strong portfolios. Finally, while community and industry engagement is strong, expanding internship opportunities, real-world project collaborations, and industry networking could further increase students' career readiness and professional visibility. Addressing these challenges will help ensure that the program continues to produce graduates who are both technically skilled and fully prepared to succeed in a competitive, dynamic creative industry.

Please describe external influences that affect your program (both positively and negatively).

Our program is influenced by a variety of external factors that both positively and negatively affect student outcomes, curriculum development, and workforce alignment. On the positive side, strong industry demand for digital, web, and multimedia design skills has reinforced the relevance of our curriculum, creating opportunities for students to gain meaningful employment and internships. Regional growth in creative industries, including marketing, advertising, tech startups, and digital media companies, provides a steady pipeline of professional opportunities. Advisory committee input and engagement with local professionals also serve as a positive influence, helping the program stay current with industry trends, emerging tools, and best practices. Additionally, evolving technology and software innovations allow the program to continuously expand its offerings and equip students with up-to-date, marketable skills.

Conversely, there are external challenges that impact the program. Rapid technological change and industry evolution require frequent curricular updates, which can strain faculty resources and instructional capacity. Economic fluctuations, including downturns in local creative industries or funding constraints for small studios and freelance work, can limit employment opportunities for graduates. Competition from other colleges, online certificate programs, and private training platforms also creates pressure to continuously demonstrate value and relevance. Furthermore, shifts in higher education policies, accreditation standards, and labor-market reporting requirements can influence program design, reporting expectations, and resource allocation.

Balancing these external pressures with internal program priorities is essential to ensure that graduates remain competitive, adaptable, and well-prepared for both workforce and transfer pathways.

Given these factors, what opportunities exist for the service area to advance the College's goals in the next 4 years?

Given the strengths of our programs and the external factors influencing the field, several opportunities exist for the service area to advance the College's goals over the next four years. First, the growing demand for digital, web, and multimedia design positions presents an opportunity to expand workforce-aligned programs, strengthen career education outcomes, and increase student employment rates, directly supporting the College's goals related to career readiness and workforce development. Second, leveraging advisory committee relationships, industry partnerships, and community engagement can enhance internship opportunities, collaborative projects, and networking events, which contribute to student success, retention, and equitable access to professional pathways. Third, continued investment in faculty development, updated technology, and software tools will ensure students are trained on current industry standards, helping the College maintain its reputation for high-quality, relevant programs. Additionally, the program's adaptability in distance education and hybrid learning formats creates opportunities to serve a broader and more diverse student population, aligning with the College's goals for access, equity, and inclusivity. Finally, expanding transfer pathways and articulation agreements with four-year institutions can help students achieve advanced degrees while promoting the College's mission of facilitating academic progression and lifelong learning.

Comprehensive Program Review

Attach Related Documents - Strengths, Challenges & External Influences

[Graphic Design Program Strengths Challenges.pdf](#)

Program Goals

Program Goals Status

Updated progress on my previous goals & added new.

Submission
