

CAT GAME/MULTIMEDIA ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Meeting Minutes

Oct. 10, 2008

3:00 P.M. Room 407A

Those in attendance:

Akram Taghavi-Burris – Program Coordinator of Game Design and Multimedia/Professor of Computer-Aided Technology

John Helton – Department Chair of Computer-Aided Technology/Professor of Computer-Aided Technology

Doug Gregory – Professor of Computer-Aided Technology

Gary Dominguez – Supervisor of Student Computer Center/Adjunct Professor of Computer-Aided Technology

Tony Antonelli – OETA

Leonard Bogner – UCO

Margee Gaeddart – Margaret Gaeddart Art & Design, Metro Tech Instructor

Mark Nunn – ADG in Bricktown

Jerry Sparks – FAA

Charlie Ward – Student, UCO

Packets with meeting agenda, course descriptions, and degree programs were provided.

Professor Taghavi-Burris began by explaining the purpose for holding the meeting. Introductions of all those in attendance followed.

Professor Helton introduced himself and gave a listing of the courses currently provided under the CAT Program.

Professor Taghavi-Burris brought attention to the meeting packet and the overview of the degree options inside. She explained the differences between an Associate Degree and a Certificate of Mastery. She stated that the focus of the meeting would be to look at developing an Animation Degree Program from the provided courses and to discuss whether or not changes needed to be made to the curriculum at all. Time was allowed to read through the packet.

Mr. Bogner asked if 60 hours was the minimum credit hours required for an Associate Degree at OCCC. Professor Helton answered that the minimum was 60 and anything over 62 needed special permission, such as the ABET accredited CAT Program that is available.

Mr. Bogner then asked about enrollment statistics and how limited seats were.

Professor Taghavi-Burris described enrollment in her own classes and stated that 20 was the max number of seats available. Professor Helton pointed out that enrollment was up 15% for CAT from last year. Professor Gregory pointed out that as a community college, enrollment is open to all and on a first come - first serve basis.

Professor Taghavi-Burris brought up some issues regarding students being enrolled through advisement. She encouraged students to meet with a CAT faculty advisor soon after declaring their major with advisement for more details about the program.

Professor Taghavi-Burris mentioned the attempts they have made to market this new Game Design program, including high school visits. Professor Gregory and Professor Helton talked a little about what those high school visits entailed and they also described the area covered by OCCC.

Ms. Gaeddart asked about the Alliance and which schools were involved.

Professor Gregory replied that the Alliance was published and listed Moore-Norman Technology, Mid-American Technology, Francis-Tuttle Technology, and Metro Tech as the schools included in that agreement. He stated that the Office of Cooperative Alliance programs dealt entirely with the Alliance and could offer more information.

A facility tour was given.

Returning from the tour, Professor Taghavi-Burris described CATS: Computer Arts & Technology Society, the student organization. She stated that the Student President of this organization created the Oklahoma Electronic Game Expo, which the club sponsored with hopes for it to become an annual event.

Mr. Bogner asked if there would be any cooperative work between the schools dealing with graphics to go along with the CAT courses. Professor Taghavi-Burris talked about the cooperative work with graphics being handled by the GCOM department. They discussed the differences between courses that are taught by both CAT and GCOM, namely GCOM being more print-oriented rather than 3D multimedia.

Mr. Nunn brought up the importance of story-telling for any kind of animation or game development programs. He highly recommended including some kind of course that would deal with improving story-telling. Professor Taghavi-Burris recognized the need for better story-telling and also for knowledge of basic art principles. They discussed the possibility of combining two separate 8 week courses to achieve these needs.

Mr. Sparks asked if, along with story-telling, psychology might be beneficial to the program. Professor Dominguez replied that he does a lot of research with his students in his classes that could be considered psychology-related in terms of what makes a game scary, what makes players relate to characters, and what draws a player through the story. Professor Taghavi-Burris stated that many of her students had requested taking a mythology course or some kind of folk lore, which might help with the story-telling. She also discussed the need for better public speaking skills so that students understand how to market themselves and their work.

Mr. Bogner asked if all of the programs require students to put together a portfolio.

Professor Gregory answered that we are moving in that direction. Professor Helton described the Design Project course and how the resulting projects are used to help students build their portfolio. Professor Taghavi-Burris invited everyone to attend the Design Project Presentation Day on Dec. 5th and do mock interviews or give presentations of their own to help encourage the students.

Professor Gregory asked about the animation being used to help deliver a message when there is no story, for example: presenting a political or social message. They discussed the importance of concept development, educational gaming, and animated simulation in place of story-telling.

Mr. Sparks really emphasized the use of animated graphics in developing simulations like those used by the FAA. He pointed out that Microsoft was supposed to be releasing some open engine simulation software so that it could be used in designing various types of simulations.

Mr. Antonelli asked about the ability to make these degree programs versatile, providing more choices for course selections within the program. Professor Taghavi-Burris and Professor Dominguez talked about the different types of projects their students take on and how many of the tools they use are the same for several types of work. Professor Helton added that students have at least 3 hours of electives - some programs have more - so they can take a course that will focus on a specialized area of interest. Professor Taghavi-Burris said that our Game Design and Multimedia programs are mainly geared towards the graphics side and so students could take programming courses as electives in the computer science department.

Mr. Nunn, a former student, explained how his GCOM classes had given him an advantage over his Game Design peers who had not taken any GCOM classes because he understood both the computer and print sides of multimedia.

Mr. Sparks suggested that there might be some value in studying some of the animated films that have been released in the past that were heavily rooted in computer animation, such as Charlotte's Web.

Mr. Nunn asked how students showed off the skills they learned and if they were required to make a short animated movie themselves. Professor Taghavi-Burris answered that they had not yet decided what the final project would be, although they did want the project to showcase the student's newfound skills. She also talked about skills working with audio and how they are working with the film department to get students into these audio courses. The problem there is in getting CAT students into certain film courses when they do not have all the prerequisites that the film department requires.

Mr. Antonelli listed off what he felt would be necessary to make a good student portfolio, the things that employers were likely to look at, such as: character sheets showcasing modeling abilities, a short animated work by an individual and a work by a group. Mr. Nunn put emphasis on emotion study and study on body-in-motion. He talked about taking an acting class as an elective to help animators better understand what was involved in the creation of character emotion and how best to represent that. Mr. Sparks added that sound seemed to be greatly overlooked.

Professor Dominguez asked if sound was something done separately or by the animators themselves. It was an agreement that there is typically a separate sound team and so he wanted to know if a full-blown audio course would be necessary. Everyone agreed that there should be an overview at the very least to make the animators aware of how it all worked together, especially since there is so much emphasis on teamwork in the industry.

Professor Taghavi-Burris wanted to know if there was any equipment they might need in addition to the courses. Mr. Antonelli suggested After Effects and he recommended Motion Capture Technology, if possible. Ms. Gaeddart mentioned work with a 2D Cell Animation Light Box.

Professor Taghavi-Burris asked everyone to fill out the survey in their agenda packet and return it to her before leaving. She then talked about the events listed in the agenda and invited everyone to come speak or participate in them.

The meeting was then adjourned.