

Santa Rosa Junior College
Applied Photography Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 14, 2023
12:00-1:01 pm
Remote via Zoom

Advisory Committee Members:

Erik Castro, Freelance Photographer
Rachid Dahnoun, Freelance Photographer
Genevieve Shiffrar, Freelance Photographer
Zack Sumner Schomp, Freelance Photographer

List of Faculty and Staff in Attendance:

Nick Simko, Photo Faculty and Applied Photography Certificate Program Coordinator,
Department of Art and Art History, Santa Rosa Junior College
Kerry Loewen, Dean, Arts and Humanities, Santa Rosa Junior College
Jessica Layton, Associate Faculty, Photography, Santa Rosa Junior College
Megan Rhodes, Job Developer Career/Technical/Educ/Econ/Dev, Santa Rosa Junior College

Was there a quorum: Yes

Agenda

Welcome - 5 Minutes

SRJC Applied Photography Updates - 10 minutes

- Program and Curriculum
- New Equipment Acquisition
- Student Success

Discussion: Framing Opportunities for Students - 30 minutes

- SRJC Applied Photography Mentorship Program
- Cultural Institution Opportunities for SRJC Photography Students
- Development of an SRJC Applied Photo Resource Guide

Extended Discussion Time / Q&A - 15 minutes

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There were brief introductions at the start of the meeting.

Then, Nick discussed the following updates to the SRJC Applied Photography Program:

1. Program and Curriculum

2. New Equipment Acquisition
3. Student Success

After the updates, Nick proceeded to share a series of slides that addressed important questions about the following areas:

1. SRJC Applied Photography Mentorship Program
2. Cultural Institution Opportunities for SRJC Photography Students
3. Development of an SRJC Applied Photo Resource Guide

SRJC Applied Photography Mentorship Program

- What kinds of resources would be required to set-up a mentorship program that benefits the Applied Photography Program and its students?
- Should a mentor training program be established to outline best practices while also training prospective mentors about what our students need to learn through hands-on experience?
- How might we solicit participants working in the field to share their time and expertise?

Rachid was in support of this program as was Genevieve. Rachid spoke of the benefit conversation between mentors and mentees; he suggested that students can search out mentors they want to work with. Genevieve commented that the program could be incremental and benefit from feedback from both mentors and mentees in order to enhance future iterations of the program. Matching mentors and mentees would be an important consideration, too. Erik also commented on the process of matching, as well as his own experience mentoring using different delivery methods (phone, text, email). Zack spoke to his own opportunities from internships and communities, as well as events and coffee meetings. He further suggested casting a wider net outside of Sonoma County for this program.

Cultural Institution Opportunities for SRJC Applied Photography Students

- What kinds of equipment would be needed on the SRJC Campus to approximate the museum studio environment?
- What museums, galleries, and cultural institutions in the region would be open to student interns?
- How might Applied Photo collaborate with other areas in the Art Department, and at SRJC, in order to cultivate these skills?

Jessica commented on her experience at School of the visual Arts, and how students worked alongside industry professionals to present an exhibition for credit, professional experience, and

access to mentorship. This program included exit interviews for both. Zack mentioned UC Berkeley and SFMoMA as possible resources. Genevieve asked how the program might interface cultural institutions in general. Kerry spoke to his interest in cultural technology and interactive museum installation and how adding this to the curriculum would be a long-term goal for Applied Photo. Rachid spoke about his experiences as a student being immersed in the New York City gallery scene and its impact on him. Jessica referred to local museums that might be a resource, like the Museum of Sonoma County, as well as the possibility of virtual exhibitions.

Development of an SRJC Applied Photo Resource Guide

- What key information would be of use to emerging photographers?
- How could this benefit existing students and alumni with regard to professional and personal experiences, while also serving as a tool for recruitment?
- Where would the guide be available, and who would contribute?

Genevieve spoke about how resources, content, and technology change rapidly and that there would need to be a significant commitment to keeping the content valid and relevant. Erik mentioned that such a resource would be competing with search engines like Google, and that effective resources are simple and easy-to-use. Rachid said that links and resources would need to be up-to-date, and that mentorship could fill gaps. Zack said that the same information could be included in course syllabi, and that this is the best way to keep resources current for students enrolled in classes at SRJC. Zack further mentioned that students could be involved and engage with sources, specifically by researching what they are interested in through prompts in class.

Q&A

Megan interested themselves and expressed an interest in supporting the Applied Photography Certificate Program with her expertise. Genevieve circled back to the mentorship program, which garnered the most interest from members of the Advisory Committee, suggesting a brainstorm on how to best match mentors and mentees. Erik suggested that students could look at photographer websites to get a more straight-forward take on who they might like to work with. Zack said that, after an initial event, the professional relationship between the mentor and mentee could become more dynamic. Rachid suggested a questionnaire for students to determine who their mentor might be and that students could find a connection with the work of photographers that spoke to them. Nick could reach out to tentative photographers and then those who are interested could be included on a curated list of photographer websites to be shared with students. Zack further mentioned that all of the instructions we need to be clear and express exactly what mentors and mentees would need to do.

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Nick adjourned the meeting at 1:01 pm.

Next meeting: 2024 Spring Semester, date TBD.

**Notes prepared by Nick Simko, Photo Faculty and Applied Photography Certificate
Program Coordinator**