

Department of Theatre and Fashion Fashion Studies Program



Advisory Committee Meeting

November 12th, 2024, 4:00pm - 6:00pm
In Person in PC 247 Fashion Classroom
SRJC Petaluma

Meeting Minutes

Quick recap

Debra Bee, a fashion and sewing teacher at Rancho Cotate High School, led a meeting with various attendees from the fashion and education sectors, discussing their backgrounds, the importance of sustainability in fashion, and plans for the fashion program. They also discussed the development of a portfolio class, the need for an updated industry contact list, and the challenges faced by students transferring to other institutions. The conversation ended with Emily expressing the need for new advisory committee members and exploring the use of a conference room with Zoom capabilities for future meetings.

Next steps

- Emily to develop a portfolio class curriculum for Spring 2026.
- Emily to work on changing Clothing Construction 1 and 2 from 2 units to 3 units each.
- Emily and Lyra to organize a natural dye workshop for design challenge participants.
- Emily to create a Google form for advisory committee members to submit industry contacts.
- Emily to set up a LinkedIn profile for the SRJC Fashion Studies program.
- Emily (with the help of others) to recruit new advisory committee members, including from the San Francisco fashion industry.
- Vanessa to look into setting up video conferencing capabilities for future advisory committee meetings.
- Emily to work on cataloging the classroom library books and setting up a checkout system.
- Emily to purchase more light pads for student use.
- Emily to consider purchasing iPads for student use in classes.
- Advisory committee members to review and update the industry contact list annually.

I. Call to Order

- At 4:17pm

II. Welcome and Introductions

- 1) Voting members: Debra Bee (Rancho Cotate High School), Steffen Kuehr (TekTailor), Andrea Kenner (Tamarind)
Absent: Jennifer Olivo, Marianne Parker, Heidi Johnson
- 2) Non-voting members: Emily Melville (SRJC), James Newman (SRJC), Lyra Bobo (SRJC), Robyn Spencer-Crompton (SRJC), Vanessa Luna (SRJC)
- 3) Guests: Lais Barone (Student), Hilary Heaviside (Designer and former SRJC faculty), Carolin Loose (Freelance Fashion Designer), Kristin Philipkoski (Fashion Journalist).

III. Local Industry Updates from Advisory Members

- Andrea: Tracking trends on sustainability--by brand, price, and integrity of the level of sustainability. Jewelry (precious stones) have increased quite a bit, as well as cotton (i.e. non-synthetics). Andrea discussed the importance of sustainability in the fashion industry, highlighting the need for brands to educate consumers about sustainable practices and the challenges of greenwashing. She also shared her experience of helping a customer find sustainable clothing for a sustainability-focused event. The group emphasized the importance of designers receiving feedback from real customers and the need for brands to consider every element of their products, from thread to buttons. Others also offered advice to students studying fashion, suggesting they focus on unique and sustainable brands. The conversation concluded by some sharing their criteria for selecting brands to feature, which includes uniqueness and a commitment to sustainability.
- Kristen: Looks for “something different” when writing for Forbes. Wants to promote brands that are doing their best effort with sustainability, focusing on quality over quantity.

IV. Conversation with FASH student Lais Barone

Lais is the president of the SRJC Fashion Club. She’s passionate about sustainability in fashion. Lais grew up thrifting with her father, to buy nice sportswear brands; she’s been very involved in the thrift scene since she was young. She’s striving to have young people invest in alterations as opposed to discarding garments. Regarding her current project: she’s hoping to create pieces to sell in the store (Launch, a thrift store in Sebastopol) that are made from scraps from the alteration business.

Program Updates

- 1) Jan 2024 Purchase of four (4) new Industrial machines: Emily shared that she had purchased four more industrial sewing machines for the classroom from Steffen Kuehr including an overlock machine, a walking foot machine, a computerized straight stitch machine, and an industrial cover stitch machine. Steffen, who was present virtually, shared that he had additional machines to sell as he is downsizing his warehouse and production facility.
- 2) Lyra Bobo Fashion Studies Fund Purchasing. Emily discussed the program's plans for spending the Lyra Bobo Fashion Studies Fund.
 1. Textiles Textbook (complete): Costs \$160/ea. so can be cost prohibitive for students. The program invested in purchasing a set to loan to students.
 2. Fashion Show Textbook (planned): Emily mentioned purchasing classroom sets of textbooks for Lara's textiles class and her Fashion Show class, aiming to reduce students' costs.
 3. Classroom Library Catalog Project (planned): Emily also talked about cataloging the classroom library's 400 volumes and setting up a checkout system. She will try to hire someone to catalog the Fashion textbooks, then manage the check-out/return for the loan program.
- 3) Collections Program returns for 2024/25: Every year more advanced students are invited to show in Fashion Show; this year, about 3-4 students will be invited. This all happens extra-curricular, so Emily is trying to work on developing a hands-on learning program.
- 4) Design Challenge Spring 2024 - Name TBD- Focus on Jacquard Fabrics: Emily also mentioned a design challenge for the spring semester, with prizes including an

industrial Juki sewing machine and fabric from Bella Note. She discussed the design challenge for the upcoming fashion show, which includes incorporating natural dyes and seasonal colors. She also mentioned the possibility of using the faculty break room for a washing machine and the potential for a field trip to the Theater Arts department. (8 sets of swatches were passed around the room for attendees to see and feel). Lyra and others discussed the challenge of natural dyes to fabrics. Emily expressed a need for a workshop or consulting group on natural dyeing, as this skill is not currently taught in the spring semester.

- 5) Fashion Show scheduled for Thursday, May 1, 2025: 3rd Annual Green Living Fair/ Fashion Studies Mending Bar: Emily also talked about the 3rd annual green living fair, where they set up a mending bar and a clothing swap. She expressed interest in having more demonstrations and giving away supplies for people to mend their clothes at home.

V. Old Business

- 1) Program Curriculum Development
 1. Add Portfolio Class in Spring to alternate with Fashion Entrepreneurship
- 2) [Fashion Industry Contact List](#) - Requesting members to add contacts. Carolin and Steffen discussed the importance of maintaining a relevant and updated network, particularly on LinkedIn. One member suggested that the team could use the platform to connect with alumni and potential employers, and even create a school profile. She emphasized the value of networking and informational interviews in securing jobs. The conversation also touched on the challenges of finding jobs in the fashion industry, particularly in Sonoma County. It was proposed that the team could use their local network to help students find internships and job opportunities. The conversation ended with Steffen describing his family's business, TekTailor, which has been in the sewing industry for over 30 years and has recently added a sustainability focus.
- 3) Still working towards development of FASH AA-T
 1. FASH 70A and FASH 70B need to be 3.0 units: Currently, each of these courses are 2-units/each (comprised of 1 hr. of lecture and 3 hrs. of lab=4 hrs. total), but many transfer institutions (UCs and CSUs) require 3 units.
 2. Identify, update, and expand articulation agreements at UCs and CSUs: Emily discussed the challenges faced by students transferring from Santa Rosa Junior College to other institutions, particularly in relation to the number of units required for certain classes. She suggested increasing the number of units for certain classes to better align with transfer requirements. Emily also mentioned the need to update the certificate program and the potential for a portfolio class to cover more advanced topics. The conversation also touched on the issue of repeatability of classes and the need for more individualized attention for students. Emily also mentioned the possibility of organizing courses around specific topics for a more focused learning experience.

VI. New Business

- 1) Seeking new Advisory Committee members: Emily expressed the need for new advisory committee members due to the departure of one member and absences. She emphasized the importance of having diverse perspectives, including those from outside the education sector. James suggested inviting individuals from various industries, such as fashion and technology, to provide guidance on curriculum and job opportunities. He also mentioned the possibility of using a conference room with Zoom capabilities for meetings. The team agreed to explore these options further. Ideal possibilities would be small designers in San Francisco, and/or Athleta, Levi, Patagonia.

VII. Comments/ Wrap Up

- 1) A suggestion was made for attendees to visit Shone Farm for their events, as they have plants that may be used for dye.
- 2) “Dye Day”: There was a discussion about the first week of natural dyeing at the fiber shed, which involved using indigo and other plants for dyeing. The possibility of students harvesting their own plants for dyeing was mentioned but noted that this might not be fair for all students due to different living situations. Lyra also talked about the potential of using plants from the Petaluma campus for dyeing. She suggested that students could be required to dye their fabric on a specific day, and that they could use a high-quality fabric called Bella note for this purpose. Carolin also mentioned that some fabrics don't require a mordant for dyeing, but the color may not be as rich.

VIII. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 6:08PM.