

Department of Theatre and Fashion
Fashion Studies Program



Advisory Committee Meeting
April 4th 2025, 3:00pm - 3:00pm
Meeting held via Zoom only
([Recording of meeting here](#))

Meeting Minutes

Quick Recap

The committee discussed the upcoming fashion show, curriculum development, and program steering for the coming year, including the creation of a portfolio class and potential adjustments to the unit value of certain classes. They also discussed the need for an ADT designation, the Lyra Bobo Fashion Studies Fund, and the upcoming fashion show on May 1st. Additionally, they touched on potential collaborations, career paths of their students, and the use of technology in studios.

Next Steps:

- Emily to work on developing a portfolio class for graduating students.
- Emily to increase unit value of 70A and 70B courses to 3 units each.
- Emily to initiate conversation with Chancellor's office about establishing an ADT in apparel design.
- Emily to follow up with Kate Blackwell about unit value increase and ADT process.
- Advisory committee members to recommend potential new members to join the committee.
- Emily and Vanessa to initiate hiring committee for associate faculty this spring.
- Emily to reach out to advisory committee members for design contest judging.
- Heidi to potentially participate in future Green Living Fair events.
- Emily to connect Heidi with Lais Barone for potential collaboration.
- Emily to explore implementing projection technology for digital patterns in the classroom.
- Emily to check on existing articulation agreements with other institutions.

Was there a quorum X Yes No (if no quorum, no official business shall be performed)

I. Call to Order:

- a. Emily Melville began the meeting at 3:03 PM with welcomes, introductions, and some industry updates until two more voting members joined at 3:13 PM to achieve quorum.

II. Welcome/Introductions

- a. Voting members: Debra Bee (Fashion Design Instructor at Rancho Cotate High School), Heidi Johnson (Owner, The Wedding DeTailor), Steffen Kuehr (TekTailor Inc.), Jennifer Olivo (Jennifer Loel Designs)
- b. Absent: Mary Ann Parker (retired from Committee), Andrea Kenner

- c. Non-voting members: Emily Melville (Fashion Studies Program Coordinator), Lyra Bobo (SRJC Fashion Studies Associate Faculty), Vanessa Luna (SRJC Dean of Instruction and Enrollment Management)
- d. Guests and Administrative Staff: Melia Pavloff (SRJC Academic Affairs), Lauralyn Larsen (SRJC Internship Coordinator), Megan Rhodes (SRJC Job Developer), Mackenzie Galino (SRJC Career Counselor), Rachel Smith (SRJC Director of Workforce Programs and Career Education Grants)

III. Local Industry Updates from Advisory Members

- a. Debra Bee:
 - i. Provided an update on her high school fashion design students, 210 of whom will ultimately take at least a portion of her sewing class; mentioned increased interest in sewing classes and some students pursuing fashion design at the university level. She also has some students excited to participate as models in the SRJC Fashion Show.
- b. Heidi Johnson:
 - i. Shared that she incorporated her business this year and brought on her daughter, Violet, as a full business partner. She discussed her company's success in providing on-site clothing concierge services for luxury weddings, including their recent work at the Hearst Castle and their upcoming wedding in Saint-Tropez; an alumnus of the Fashion Studies Program, JJ, is also now working with her company as a stylist. She also shared her recent trip to Vietnam and Cambodia, where she learned about textiles and visited some silk villages. Her company is still based out of Napa in a brick-and-mortar space, but they are now stepping back from alterations for some time to focus on wedding concierge services, also referred to as “dress-cues” (these services are also more profitable than typical alterations).
 - ii. Attended a retreat hosted by [The Stitched Collective](#) based out of Connecticut, which is a trade organization for people who alter wedding gowns. She recommends getting involved in this group to any Fashion Studies students.
- c. Jennifer Olivo:
 - i. Shared she is continuing to do contract work for pattern-making and consultations to match with manufacturers if clients need it, but nothing else new to report.

IV. Old Business

- a. Program Curriculum Development: Committee voted in favor of all motions with no objections.
 - i. **Motion 1**: Emily discussed adding a portfolio class in Spring to alternate with Fashion Entrepreneurship, because students are often leaving the program without having a formal portfolio to showcase their work; the class would be modeled after comparable courses at other community colleges and would include interviewing skills, resume building, and possibly guest speakers from the industry as well as potential field trips.

- ii. **Motion 2:** Emily proposed alternating semesters for FASH 60 (Draped Design) with a third section of 70A (Clothing Construction 1) and adding a section into the alternating rotation of a second FASH 70B in the Fall, since there have not been enough students enrolled in FASH 60 every Spring.
 - iii. **Motion 3:** Emily proposed taking a comprehensive look at the program's cap and capacity limits for make sure it all is practical and accurate.
- b. Development of FASH AA-T (Fashion Studies or Apparel Studies Associate Degree for Transfer)
 - i. **Motion 4:** Emily proposed working with curriculum planning to increase the unit value of FASH 70A and FASH 70B to 3.0 units each, which would ultimately align with CSU requirements, but will require creative planning to increase lecture time by one hour to each course.
 - ii. **Motion 5:** Emily proposed initiating a conversation with the Chancellor's Office of California Community Colleges to move the process forward of offering an AA for transfer to SRJC students.
 - 1. Update on meeting with Dr. Amy Dorie (Associate Professor and Program Director of the Apparel Design and Merchandising program at San Francisco State University, and former student of Lyra Bobo's): Dr. Dorie confirmed that the state of CA does not seem to have a program like this yet, but she is an advocate for this proposal, which would need to originate from the community college system.
 - 2. Mackenzie recommended that Emily follow up with Kate Blackwell (Articulation Specialist at SRJC) on unit value increase and the ADT process.
- c. Emily reiterated the need to seek new Advisory Committee Members and announced the newest Committee Member to be joining in the Fall 2025 semester, Dr. Giovonnae ("Vonnie") Anderson of [Software Tailoring](#).
 - i. Heidi asked if Committee members should be from a particular geographical area, and Emily responded that it's best for students when industry leaders are from the Bay Area, though Zoom options for future meetings will be important moving forward to allow flexibility and to achieve quorum.

V. New Business/Discussion

- a. Emily discussed the planning and process for a Hiring Committee to add Associate faculty to the program as backup and also to potentially take over some of the teaching. Vanessa and Emily encouraged current Committee members to encourage qualified applicants to apply:
<https://www.schooljobs.com/careers/santarosajc/adjunct?keywords=fashion>

VI. Program Updates Overview:

- a. Lyra and Emily discussed the Lyra Bobo Fashion Studies Fund, which was established with a \$10,000 donation during the previous year. How funds were used so far:

- i. Textiles textbooks and Fashion Show textbooks were purchased, which allowed students to check out the books instead of having to buy them.
 - ii. Natural Dye Workshop for Design Contest was postponed due to weather but was successfully held after Spring Break with 14 students participating
 - 1. [Dye Workshop Photos](#)
 - iii. Classroom Library Catalog Project (planned if funds allow): considering purchasing a classroom library catalog system to track books.
 - iv. Collections Program returns for 2024/25- 5 student collections
- b. Design Challenge Spring 2025 Jacquard to Dye For
 - i. Judging event scheduled April 25th 3:30-5:30pm
- c. Emily announced the SRJC student-produced Fashion Show (“Wild Metropolis”) is scheduled for May 1st, 2025 from 6:30-8:00 PM:
 - i. Will feature all garments designed and made by SRJC Fashion Studies students with volunteer models from the community.
 - ii. SRJC Theatre Arts, Costume, and Media students as well as SRJC Media Services to collaborate with production.
 - iii. Emily announced the need for judges for the Design Contest portion of the Show; the prizes for the top three winners are three top-of-the-line sewing machines.
- d. Emily announced that students participated in a Fashion Studies Mending Bar at Climate Ready Cotati on March 29th. It was a well-attended sustainability event and students repaired or fixed roughly 30 garments brought in by the community. A similar event will be coming up in October called the Green Living Fair on the SRJC campus, that Heidi is interested in participating in.
- e. Emily announced that former student, Lace Barone, just assumed ownership of a secondhand clothing store in Sebastopol called [Launch](#), so this is a good contact for any Committee members who need to sub out referrals for alterations.

VII. Comments/Wrap Up:

- a. Emily advised that the top classes needing new Associate faculty would be beginning sewing, fashion entrepreneurship, and merchandising. Committee members also discussed a need for candidates with experience in computer-aided and 3D design, along with experience using projections of digital patterns.
- b. Mackenzie asked about the typical trajectory patterns of the students in the program, and Emily explained it’s a mix of outcomes. Some students have transferred to 4-year programs, and one recently went on to the Art Institute of Chicago. Others stay locally and work in retail, in small design businesses, or they launch their own ventures. Emily herself is an alumnus of SRJC and went on to Academy of Art, and the general feedback from students who have gone on is that our program prepares students to thrive at other institutions with the preparation they have received here.

VIII. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 3:59 PM

NOTE: The next Fashion Studies Advisory Committee meeting will be held in early-mid Fall 2025, TBD.