**Minutes of the Game Development Program
Advisory Committee Meeting: Fall 2023**

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Date: December 12, 2023
Time: 7:00pm (Pacific time)
Place: Online conference via Zoom; Zoom Meeting ID is: 129 370 314

Members in Attendance:

- Shawn Nelson
- Eric B. Vogel
- Morgan Wren
- Ellen Lanzone (proxy for Paul Yan)

Members Absent:

- Paul Yan

Faculty, Staff, and Administrators in Attendance:

- None

Was there a quorum?

- Yes

Transcript:

Ethan Wilde:
Welcome back, everybody. It's been about a year since we last met. Our meetings are down to annual meetings, for now. Glad to see so many people turning out tonight for our annual advisory meeting. I sent out a very tiny agenda. But one of the main goals of these meetings is to hear from all of you. About what's going on in in your worlds and in your relationship with the world of games. we have a really diverse and interesting group of participants in our in our meeting, in our team, we've got a folks representing video games. Traditional analog board games, technology, providers. a whole diversity of people. And so, I'm going to go ahead and call the meeting to order and invite everybody to say Hello! I got our kind of roster slide up. Maybe we'll just go down the roster and welcome, Shawn! I think you might be muted, sir. or maybe you're your mic is acting weird.

Shawn Nelson:
My name's Shawn Nelson. I have a background in video games. You can see, I worked at 2K. And 30 First Union and Cloud Chamber as well as EA and Lucasarts and Planet Moon and Shiny, and all sorts of stuff. And now I'm here.

Ethan Wilde:
Fantastic. We're glad to have your company and your expertise.

Eric Vogel:
So, I'm Eric. I'm a psychology professor at California, North State University now, and I design board games as a sideline some psychotherapeutic board games and also board games just for the hobby game industry. My affiliation is with the Forge Next Agency.

Morgan Wren:
I'm with Nvidia. It's a nice place to be working on the software side, because it feels like we're a well-funded startup. And our investors are continuing to make money. That is a good way to think about it. I like that. And for others who maybe haven't met me before formerly of Super Giant Games. And briefly, Zynga and Area Code games.

Ethan Wilde:
Glad to have you, Morgan. Paul couldn't make it tonight. So, we're joined tonight by Dr. Ellen Lanzone, who's a proxy for Paul. Welcome, Ellen!

Dr. Ellen Lanzone:
Hi, everyone glad to be with you all.

Ethan Wilde:
Thanks for being here, and we also have a special guest tonight. Sean shared contact information for Mr. Tim Lynch, and he's joining us tonight. Tim, can you give us a brief introduction? We're so glad to have you with us.

Tim Lynch:
Thanks. Hi, everyone. Yeah. So, I've been working at 2K Games. That's similar to Sean and I've been there for let's see, about 8 years or so. And then a long time ago, I attended some courses at SRJC.

I'm part of a core services platform team and we provide network services for games, since 2K is a game publisher. We've got o have network core and services. Identity. You know, telemetry, meta, gaming kind of stuff, leader boards, things like that. Some commerce integrations, that type of stuff. I'm a software developer and a devops engineer. I'm working between the business logic and the silicon.

Shawn is the coach of the high local high school mountain bike team, and my daughter was got into mountain biking when she was in high school, and II bike, too. So, I joined. And the team is it, you know, supporting that, and then found out that sure enough, Shawn, you know, intersects with me at 2K.

Ethan Wilde:
No kidding full circle. That's great. Glad to have you here.

I've got a handful of announcements to share. And then I'd like to open up the floor and would love to hear from each and any of you about developments in your world since we last saw each other a year ago. Since we saw each other together last year, I'm very happy to share that the students in the program have really come together. I'm not sure what did it. Maybe it was the COVID pandemic, but something has brought the sense of urgency, of connecting together with students that has really been noticeable to me in the last couple of years. Previously we had fits and starts trying to bootstrap a student-run Game Development Club on campus. We now have a very active club with about 30 to 40 students that are engaged in it. They've been building games together. They've been sponsoring events.

It's really great to see. They they're very active in their Discord world, which is the space where a lot of these folks like to hang out. I lurk on their Discord. I have a screenshot here to show you that just today they posted up an exhibition thread so they can share with each other their work for the semester. They've been very active. I expect I'm going to see some of them tomorrow night. Because we're having a pretty exciting event tomorrow night. Something we talked about when we met last year was the arrival of instruction in the field of virtual production, bringing game engines and film and television together. The JC is one of the six founding members of RVPA, a regional collaboration between ourselves and five other community colleges in the Bay area known as the Regional Virtual Production Academy. It started about the summer before last as an idea with some of us, and we worked and got some support from the Regional Bay Area Consortium of Community Colleges (BACCC). Then with all of your help we were able to get approval last year for a fundamental certificate that includes an introductory set of courses, some basic curriculum. That came online just this semester. Tomorrow, myself and some other colleagues and students are coming together in our Santa Rosa campus' Doyle Library to have a launch party for the arrival of virtual production on campus. We've got some pizza. We're going to do some demos, and we've got a pretty cool guest speaker who's kind of dovetailing into our game program speaking series. Our speaker, Konstantine Wilms, is the leader of virtual production for Amazon Web Services. He's actually got a VP studio in downtown San Francisco. I got a chance to visit him there, on the eighteenth floor of a high-rise on Market Street in San Francisco. He's got a small LED volume, and they're doing industrials and stuff for Amazon there with virtual production. Konstantine is going to join us remotely as part of our party, in the closing hour, to share his perspectives on virtual production.

This is another chance to just note that we were able to successfully pull off another speaking series. We had four speakers in the Game Views series this year. At the start of the fall term, we had another colleague from the JC who teaches a class on audio and music for games, Len Haynes. For me, what really thrilled me, was we had Warren Davis, who was the creator of Q*bert. Warren is a really eloquent gentlemen, and a brilliant raconteur and storyteller who came to tell everybody about what it was like in the heyday of coin-operated video game development. He described getting thrown into a room with a bunch of geeks in Chicago, by Bally-Midway. They basically just let them run loose and make up games. And then we had a visit from the Director of the School of Game Development at San Francisco's Academy of Art University, talking about opportunities to go into a four-year degree program. And then we've got Mr. Kon Wilms coming in tomorrow night as our spotlight speaker for our party in the library. So that's going to be a lot of fun. If anybody likes retro games, please feel free to check out Warren Davis' talk. I've got the link here, I'll throw it into the text chat… It's pretty interesting to hear him.

Shawn Nelson:
Talk about the freedom they had to do what they wanted to do. Certainly, Ethan, you should mention that even if the people don't show up for the party, they can still log on online and watch the talk.

Ethan Wilde:
Thank you. That's exactly right. Our speaking series is totally remote. Let me let me pop this Zoom link in there, too. So, if you got time in your calendar tomorrow evening, and you want to hear from Kon Wilms about virtual production, here's the Zoom link for that session. It starts at 6:30pm tomorrow. Last, but not least, I want to give a big shout out to some students in this semester's introduction to game coding class. Tiffany Ann and Hans whipped out a really cool 2D game, called "Keiko's Housekeeping Service," which is kind of a grinder of a game. You have to make beds and pick up trash. It was novel enough that they got spotlighted on the simmer.io site as an Editor's Pick! So that was really sweet. Tiffany is going to be at tomorrow night's event, demoing the game. It's actually quite a bit of fun. So, students are doing stuff. I like to see that. It's a good sign.

I would love to open up the floor. I really would appreciate if each of you wouldn't mind sharing what's been going on in your world. What you've been thinking about related to games, video games or analog games. Our program needs your perspective. Otherwise, we're sitting here with blinders on and don't really know what's going on out in the world that well. Let me pick on somebody to start. Maybe we could start with Eric? Could we start with you because you have the distinction of being an active creator of games? And you're outside the digital space. So I think we have some extra respect for your efforts.

Eric Vogel:
Honestly, I haven't been that active lately. I have one game in the pipeline right now that I'm not even that excited about it. Aside from that, I really haven't designed anything in a while. It's partly just changes going on in my life with a job change in my day job. But also, the board game industry has really kind of been going through a thing since 2020 and the direction that it's moving. It's not contracting exactly. What's popular isn't very in sync with what I like to do. What's popular right now are things that are either super light or very heavy games. I try to design medium games for the most part. For the last few years, everything I designed my agent keeps trying to turn into something else. I haven't enjoyed that process very much. So I've been a little out of touch. I'm also not very excited with what's popular thematically in the board game industry right now, which is basically games that preferably don't involve human beings. Games about animals are popular. It seems to me that people have a really strong aversion to anything like conflict in board games right now. That seems to be a hard thing to sell. Also a real aversion to historical themes. Even science fiction and fantasy themes are somewhat down in popularity. So games about things like animals or parks are in vogue. What else has been popular lately? Games about hospitals? That's kind of what's seems to be of interest. So, I've had my agent change my last railroad game I designed. He decided to turn it into a game about beavers building dams, which I went along with. But I just don't know. There's something about this as a psychologist. Something about this aversion to board games with people in it that I don't think reflects anything very psychologically healthy about the human race. Perhaps reflecting a kind of self-hatred, I think. Either that or the latest generation are all just furries at heart. I don't really know.

Ethan Wilde:
Perhaps related to the natural world under siege and disappearing? Everybody needs an animal spirit creature avatar to connect with.

Eric Vogel:
I guess so.

Ethan Wilde:
Those are fascinating observations, Eric. So, what happened to your beaver game? Is it out in the market?

Eric Vogel:
No, it hasn't found a buyer yet. The beaver theme change did not get it a buyer, so it's still making the rounds.

Ethan Wilde:
That is fascinating. When we spoke last year, you had just released a new board game.

Eric Vogel:
Yes, and it's done okay in the marketplace. For some reason, I have a habit of ending up designing the second board game for a lot of companies. Companies usually make a very big marketing push on their first game and then experiment with "Maybe we don't have to on our second game." This hasn't been great for me. So that's happened a bit around this. I went to Germany. That's why I wasn't at your last meeting. I went to Germany for the Essen Spiel game fair for the first time in support of that game. As

usual, something went wrong. I was there demoing the game. But the supply of games to sell didn't show up convention. So, I was doing a lot of that promotion for nothing. But that's happened before. It's just kind of the way the board game industry is. Totally different distribution problems. The server's not down. The shipment didn't arrive still on the boat from China, basically. But it was an interesting experience, and I managed to not get COVID miraculously. That's the silver lining. The German show is a global nexus of folks like myself. It's a pretty big gathering, but it's not like a game convention in the United States. It's publishers selling to the public. People just come to buy and maybe get a little demo. There's not a whole lot of people gaming. It was impressive to see there were publishers from all over Asia. They were small publishers from all parts of the world. But I've never seen publishers from all over. That was interesting to see. It really is a much larger, more crowded, show than the biggest conventions in the United States. I don't know if I need to go back to it, but I'm glad I went.

Ethan Wilde:
Interesting. You mentioned the Asian presence. Is there a pathway for localization of games like yours?

Eric Vogel:
Oh, to translate my games, for, like the Chinese market? The way that works is generally that publishers in different language markets will license a board game, and they'll license all of it. They'll license the art. They'll probably have it done by the same manufacturer in China. They'll just produce the edition in their language. The first publisher for Kitara did that. This most recent game has had English, French, and German editions. Then, I think, a Polish company listed for a Polish edition. It looks the same with a slightly different title and that's happened with different games of mine over the years. They'll have just an oddball one, like a game has a Portuguese edition for Brazil. One game has a simplified Chinese edition. So here and there they've had other language editions. That's how it works. Basically, co-publishers do i.t

Ethan Wilde:
Nice. Do you have any copies of your foreign editions for your personal archives?

Eric Vogel:
I have a copy of the Chinese edition of Zeppelin Attack. I've gotten copies of French editions of a couple of the games. I tried to get a copy of the Portuguese edition of Don't Turn Your Back, but it's prohibitively expensive to get things mailed in and out of Brazil in one piece. If you don't send them by top-of-the-line Federal Express, then they'll never make it to you.

Ethan Wilde:
Wow, those are some great stories, Eric. The physical reality of game and physical games. There are a lot more challenges that you have to get past. Certainly, different challenges. I like how you describe how they don't have to deal with the Apple App store.

Eric Vogel:
Exactly. There is no Google or Apple that you have to appease. You just have to juggle all the logistics of the physical world.

Ethan Wilde:
I like how the co-publishing thing works. That's really fascinating.

Now, for something completely different. Morgan, what have you been up to? What's going on out there in Nvidia Land? It seems like there's a convergence of real-time technology that is funneling through your company's platforms.

Morgan Wren:
Yeah, for sure. First, Eric, you got me thinking about an anecdote. My partner went and participated in a live-action theater piece, where the audience is supposed to ultimately decide the fate of the

characters. It's like this morality tale. All about agency and health and all these things. And at the end of it they ultimately were like, well, "we think that the character should make the decision for herself." Before COVID, no one had a problem telling the characters "this is what you will do. This is your fate. These are the results of our investigations, what we think should happen." Now everyone leaves it up to the character. Ultimately, we think it should come down to A or B, and you should decide. Which is a very interesting thing. I feel like board games maybe have a similar thing. Now, when you're face-to-face with someone, people are avoiding games with conflict. Feels like it's very much about being face-to-face. People are avoiding conflict. Meanwhile, Balders Gate is winning game of the year awards and is a game all about conflict and resolving conflict and deciding the fate of myriad characters. So maybe it really is a face-to-face thing?

Eric Vogel:
Coming out of COVID, it's hard to say. I don't know how similar the two audiences are, either. I play both. I like to thank the people who enjoy physical and video games.

Morgan Wren:
Absolutely. A lot to dig into there with the psychology of the world now. Oh, it's so true. The way people interact is really different. Moving onto Nvidia. It's been interesting to see the emergence of generative AI ("Gen AI") stuff. We're still really trying to figure out ways to implement it into products. We make workflows around the world. I think the most interesting thing, which I haven't been involved directly in, but I've seen kind of emerge, is called RTX Remix. So, this is a mod platform that allows you to inject a RTX runtime into old games. It's allowing folks to easily "up-res" games and take advantage of RTX power. You can get notified of when it releases. I can't share much more than it exists, and it's being worked on, but I think it's pretty exciting. I believe that there is a Portal Half-Life 2 being worked on, the Portal Prelude, which was a fan-made mod, but we've proven it out with a bunch of old games. So, it's pretty exciting to see that with a bit of AI backing you can remake a game into something with a modern look and feel pretty easily.

Ethan Wilde:
That's amazing. Thank you for sharing that. That is a great example. So that's something that you are coming across in your in your work there?

Morgan Wren:
Yep, it's something that peaks my interest. I make sure I'm on email threads about it. I can check in every once in a while and see what's going on. It's exciting. I've been focused more on working with the devops team. We are working still on Omniverse which is a way to take many Three-D formats and convert to Universal Scene Descriptor (USD), which is Pixar's open source file format. We have programs, applications, and an SDK that allow you to work with USD to do things like DCC apps would. We're working towards building connectors with other tools. So, we can bring in more and more workflows that are industry standard but aggregate larger data sets like Point Cloud and make it easy to visualize and manipulate them. There's now a USD consortium around the world to build it as a real standard, kind of like a Web standard.

Ethan Wilde:
Wow, you're at the nexus of a huge amount of really amazing technical innovations that are having a huge impact. Not just on games. My son is in an undergraduate architecture program and architecture is getting blown up between your hardware and Epic's Unreal Engine and the offshoots from Unreal Engine. They have a spin-off app called Twin Motion that all the architecture students do to use to make these amazing real time rendered walkthroughs. Last year I don't know what compelled me, but I jumped in and registered to the Nvidia GTC. It was all online last year. This is something I wanted to share with everybody. If you're looking for a portal onto some of the outrageous revolutions that are coming from generative AI developments around Morgan's company's hardware and software

developments and other partners, the GTC event is a mind blower. Every profession that has any involvement with computers is finding all of these new applications and uses for real-time stuff. That's some of the basic backbones of virtual production technology.

Morgan Wren:
I think GTC this year will be hybrid, too. I think it's in based in Santa Clara. If people want to make the trek, it'll be hybrid. It includes tons of tons of cool classes and presentations. It takes up a huge swath of the day for multiple days, because it's all global. So, there's people on different time zones. There is often too much for me to review, like just the stuff and the people I work with. I don't have time to watch all your sessions. Sorry, guys.

We've shown some stuff at SIGGRAPH. A team I worked with briefly made a text-to-material tool within Omniverse. It uses Gen AI to take a text input and make a material that could be mapped to 3D objects. A lot of work is being done in the generation of objects. That's like the trickiest thing to solve for, taking a 2D image or text and coming up with a compelling 3D object with realistic geometry. But researchers around the world are working on the problem. So, I think progress will be made very rapidly.

Ethan Wilde:
That's a mind-blowing realm for generative AI, once it can work in in 3 dimensional space, generatively. You guys will master that transformation you were describing before you know it. They already have procedural worlds. But this is going to be like a whole other level of potential for video games with super sophisticated AI models to generate outrageous fake realities, right?

Morgan Wren:
Yep. Let alone, you know, dialogue and facial animations. That's the level it feels like we're at now. But soon entire characters will be born from nothing, with personalities, etc., and worlds being built with those characters. it keeps expanding outwards. Yeah.

Ethan Wilde:
Some people, I think, have dystopian views of some of the AI stuff. But I think the way it's going to influence games is going to be breathtaking. Already the convergence between game and film blows my mind with virtual production techniques. Now, content generation with AI is going to create these new kinds of experiences. I don't know where the edges of film and game are going to be defined. There's going to be a real bleed between filmic experiences that are gamified, that have AI personalities in them. Maybe you see these personalities in a scripted form, like on streaming services, and then you play with them in some game format. Crossover between game and film was already there for so long.

Morgan Wren:
But it is going to get outrageous.

Ethan Wilde:
That's fun. I hope you're having a good time doing all this stuff. It seems like you're at the nexus of a lot of bleeding edge stuff.

Morgan Wren:
It's easy to forget that how cool it is sometimes. It moves so fast and it's challenging. But yeah, it's fun to see all these things come to life.

Ethan Wilde:
When I think about all the stuff that you're doing, it reminds me of a conference last spring in New York: the Real Time Society's Real Time Conference. Metaphysic was there demonstrating their synthetic mask technology where they basically are running real-time motion capture and rigging of AI-generated models. This lets live actors use an AI-generated model of some famous person as their performance mask, which is a mind blower.

Morgan Wren:
I know. I've worked with connectors we have with Reallusion. There's another company doing live rigging with just a just a laptop camera feeding into USD. You can do live performance with anything. And, as you know, network bandwidth increases around the world. And it's all in real-time and on the Web, which is crazy when you start seeing it with near 10 ms latency.

Ethan Wilde:
Yeah, that's a different way to deliver entertainment and experiences. That's wild.

Shawn Nelson:
We're going to do some of that tomorrow night. We're going to do some meta-human stuff.

Morgan Wren:
That'll be fun. That's awesome.

Ethan Wilde:
Tell us more about what you are going to do tomorrow, Shawn.

Shawn Nelson:
I am just going to set up Unreal with their Metahuman Creator tool, which is like a very realistic looking person. In fact, you can create your own. You can take your own face and scan it, and then turn that into a metahuman very easily. I don't know if we're going to do that. But we're definitely going to capture. They have a system that allows you to use your phone, your iPhone only not on android yet, to capture data. You basically puppet the character in real time, and it's not just it's not just mouth moving and stuff. It's eyebrows and cheeks and all the muscles in your face, and your tongue and all sorts of stuff. It's instantaneous. You don't have to do anything. You just turn on your phone and point it at the bring in your character, and it just works or like this one they're showing here. You can scan your face, you scan the left, and you can scan the right and scan it forward, and then that is put into a base digital puppet. That digital puppet then can match your face. Then you can add hair and stuff to it. And then you can utilized digital remote mocap with it from your phone. If you want you can go in, they have an avatar creator where you can just go in and create whatever avatar you want. With sliders. It's pretty cool technology.

Ethan Wilde:
Look at all these control points that are mapping via animation.

Shawn Nelson:
But all that stuff captures all by itself. Which is great hooked up, so it automatically moves. You can't really animate the tongue. Well, apparently, it's a huge problem out of your mouth. But yeah, the tongue is motion synced up to the audio. It performs the phonemes. And so, if you do a T or something where you put your tongue on the top of your mouth, it figures that out and does it for you. It's pretty neat. I've not seen them used anywhere in anything real. But it's really cool technology.

Morgan Wren:
Hair rendering hair and tongues are the final frontier.

Ethan Wilde:
That is so cool. Well, everybody's going to be stoked at the party to see you doing that. That's cool. We have got a big screen to put it up on.

Shawn Nelson:
Cool. Well, my hope is that I can just point my camera out, and people can come and talk at my phone

and then make the puppet move up on the screen. I think that would make people happy that they could perform. We'll put pull up different characters.

Ethan Wilde:
That's so cool. I'm glad I'm going to be there. This is going to be fun.

Shawn Nelson:
Yeah, I'm looking forward to it.

I just did training with a Pixotope which is another virtual production company. They do a lot of stuff. Pixotope is a company that does all the stuff for the Weather Channel and KPIX. They're an up-and-coming sort of company. But they're grounded in virtual production. In real time, they take real people and put them into virtual backgrounds. It is their specialty, although they did it the other way on the virtual singer, where they did virtual people in a real time place, so they can obviously do both ways. Then they do a little bit of the rear screen projections sort of stuff. They certainly can set that up. But they don't really teach it, because not everybody has, you know, a 500-screen virtual wall in their backyard.

Ethan Wilde:
It's all good. I want to thank everybody for sharing. Tim, would you like to share some thoughts with us?

Tim Lynch:
Just so you know, I played video games my whole life. and until I worked in games I didn't really understand how the market works at large. It's publishing, and there's all this stuff like Eric was talking about earlier. There's a lot of consistency around publishing, trying to get work to find a buyer to publish a work. That kind of stuff works for physical games as well as for video games. That's been something that I learned getting into the games industry. I do work on the publisher side, so we see a lot of games going by. It's interesting to see the different compositions of game teams and their different predilections and things like that, and how that intersects with the type of game they're building. I didn't really understand how important it is. Echoing something Eric said earlier about the second game getting a less healthy marketing budget from the publisher. I really had no appreciation for how big of a deal the publishers' marketing efforts are, especially around market timing. It was pretty fascinating, or eye opening to me to understand getting these sequence exactly right with announcing, making your announcements at the right time and in the right social network. This can really like make or break a work, right? Nobody knows how to make a hit. So everyone keeps trying, and no one's really cracked the code yet. So it's a really interesting dynamic that I had no appreciation for as a game player. Aside from that, like on the mechanics part, for sure things are very different now than when I was playing games. There was no online, right? So there was single player, or couch co-op, or whatever. You could borrow the disk from your friend. You could rent a game system from Blockbuster and play over the weekend. So the delivery mechanism has really changed. It's really interesting to see how that changes the way games are played. You know what they mean to people with today's live services. Games are able to be really built around a seasonal episode cadence. It's really a fascinating new sort of paradigm. Those are probably my main thoughts.

Shawn Nelson:
Tim. Can you tell us a little bit about how you are set up to work for production? I know what that means, but I don't know that everybody else does. Can you tell everybody a little bit about how 2K is set up?

Tim Lynch:
I'm on the publisher side. We're doing software development. We're making network services for games. So we have a very tight working relationship with the game studios as they're developing the games. Different studios are in process with their games, and they're in different parts of their timeline,

and the games are different. But generally they all need a lot of basic network services for games these days, mostly around like player identity. Then do whatever the specifics of the games need. It's a very different life if you're working in a game studio versus working on the publisher side. On the publisher side, we're triaging various studios that are burning down on a timeline to get to market and it gets pretty intense for sure. We have to balance a bunch of them, it is make or break, and it's existential for them and at the meta-level as well for us, obviously. On the publisher side, we've put up a lot of money, and then if you bring the game to market and nothing happens, that's not a very good outcome for anyone. I'm not in directly in the game studio world. But I have a lot of contact with it, and it is interesting to see, to compare and contrast. I work with my team to manage a big build farm running a bunch of Unreal builds, and Unity builds and unit testing on dev kits and stuff like that. So I have a lot of contact with the regular work production process of the studio. But then, as well like, I have a whole bunch of just regular old Internet network services, regular HTTP load balancers, that kind of stuff. And it's something I really enjoy. This is the shape of the industry. You have these two sides of it that work collaboratively with each other.

Shawn Nelson:
Your side. That was always sort of like a resource that was always there for all the teams that needed it.

Tim Lynch:
As you know, 2K is a publisher. Their philosophy is pretty hands-off. They extend quite a lot of artistic and creative license to the studio to come up with their game. Get them to make the magic and then we try to bottle it. Different publishers have different opinions about this. Our larger focus is on in-house studios versus independent studios and things like that. So I don't have a huge amount of industry expertise. 2K is my games industry expertise. Now that I'm aware of it, I see it and read about it, and it's interesting. But I don't really have a lot of direct experience to contrast to it.

Shawn Nelson:
Not sweating it out on the front lines. Yeah, you guys, because you work on all the games instead of just one. Right? It's a little more job security.

Tim Lynch:
It gets very difficult when two games are trying to launch at about the same time, and they have different needs, and they are both actually pretty urgent for the business at large.

Shawn Nelson:
Yeah. Well, that's the other thing, right? The studio gets decide who's the preferential release as well as allocate access to that. It's really kind of an interesting place, because it when you go to 2K, it seems like all one giant company, but then, over there is sports, and over there is, you know. one of the other studios. It's very interesting to me, and then all of that is kind of bottled up under Take Two, right? They own even more companies. So Take Two is the actual stock ticker and the parent GTA. 2K is just one of Take Two's companies.

Tim Lynch:
Now that Microsoft has taken on ActiVision, we're one of the last "pure play" game publishers. We're kind of like the biggest cause ActiVision is Microsoft.

Ethan Wilde:
Tim, your perspective of connecting with all the different studios and having all those fundamental services you provide them is pretty fascinating. It's interesting that you get to see all the different team approaches to getting a game launched at the studio level from your side. Is what they ask you to do all pretty consistent? Or do you see different styles from those different studio teams.

Tim Lynch:

Yes, studios are very different. They all have their own culture and personality. What's consistent across all is pretty high caliber engineers. It is nice to see people who are very, very invested in their efforts and also very skilled. Then for us, our goal is to make some undifferentiated stuff that is easily consumed by the studios. Because effectively there's a lot of reinventing the wheel. To the extent that you can just use some commodity thing, for some part of that, just means that you can spend more of your effort on the parts of the game that are more likely to be compelling in the market, like the story, or the character, or the art, that kind of stuff, and some of the low-level slapping of the bits, it's nice to be able to commoditize that.

Ethan Wilde:

Yeah, that's an interesting evolution. Publishers didn't used to have to worry about providing platforms. You're basically a platform provider. You're providing all these standardized services to manage network play and everything else. It sounds like.

Tim Lynch:

Yes. Certainly publishers have to get it through lot check, right? So, yeah, that's enduring. But yeah, but there's no DVD pressing anymore. Those plants are out of business. Right? Yeah. The physical media distribution is gone. And now everything is online and multiplayer. And so you need the platforms. Ten years ago you make a game and then, at the point where the publisher says, "Alright, that's enough, we have to ship it now." And the studio is saying, "no, no, no, wait, let me just fix one more thing." There's that. At some point that decision comes down and you're shipping it. And then that's it. And that just doesn't happen anymore. Now we see seasons as the whole conceit of the game, and the value experience for the player is that the game will change under you as time goes on, and people love that.

Ethan Wilde:

Yes, that's interesting.

Tim Lynch:

The games these days are really a very different way to think about what it is you're making. This is not done, and you can keep working on it.

Ethan Wilde:

It has a life after it ships. It evolves.

Tim Lynch:

Yes.

Ethan Wilde:

Alright, thank you, Tim. I hope you'll come back. We we'll meet at least once a year, but we might be able to fire up more often than that. And there are other opportunities for us to get together that I'll do my best to share.

I do have a little a little bit of committee business. On to the virtual production program. It's just launching and the planning process has continued. There's two new pathways, a certificate and an associates degree that the six schools put together, that the Bay Area Community College consortium already approved for the for the group to pursue. But as a point of consideration, and to reflect our group's process of voting on local program offerings. I wanted to ask everybody to vote on the endorsement of the two new virtual production pathways: an advanced virtual production certificate and an associates degree in virtual production. They both build on the fundamentals certificate and add some more opportunities for specialization and some deeper level of instruction. In fact, Santa Rosa, our campus doesn't offer the complete roster of courses that some of these advanced pathways offer. But because of our participation in the six-campus collaborative, we can have our students take those

courses at the other schools and still earn the certificate, through a process of articulation and an agreement that the collaborative has in place.

The two votes I would like to ask everybody to participate in tonight are: the formality of approving our last meeting's minutes that I circulated a while ago. I wonder if I could get anybody to make a motion to approve the fall meeting minutes from last year.

Eric Vogel:
I move to approve.

Ethan Wilde:
Thank you, Eric. Do I have a second?

Morgan Wren:
I second.

Ethan Wilde:
Thank you very much, Morgan. All in favor?

Group:
Aye. (Unanimous approval)

Ethan Wilde:
On the matter of the virtual production advanced certificate and the degree, if anybody has any questions about those, I do have more materials I could share. But I could also do that after the meeting. Does anybody feel comfortable making a motion to vote for the advanced certificate and degree to be available at SRJC as part of the six-campus collaborative?

Eric Vogel:
I think I would ask about that. Do you feel like they've really budgeted sufficiently to be able to keep that program current on an ongoing basis? Because it really seems like that's going to be

A tremendously moving target for them to be able to keep doing in a way that keeps on being useful. It's a problem historically that film programs have had. And it's going to be much worse with a virtual production program.

Ethan Wilde:
I think that you make a point, Eric, especially as the practices and methods for virtual production are moving quickly. And the technology is moving really quickly. Right now, none of the schools in the collaborative are talking about making an investment in any big ticket hardware. But what they've done is foster some partnerships with some existing production studios in the Bay Area that have LED volumes. For instance, the speaker for tomorrow night's Game Views talk has offered his Amazon LED volume space for students, and another couple of studios in East Bay have offered their space as well. There's also a relationship with a very unusual entrepreneur who has created a diesel freight truck-based portable LED volume. They're calling themselves Magic Box. They basically take a portable LED studio in a trailer on the truck that unfolds into this larger space. I don't think it's a very large volume, but nonetheless. So the collaborative is talking about the opportunity to have that portable studio travel between the six campuses seasonally. That's the approach to the technology challenge. I think they're trying to avoid making what will immediately be obsolete hardware purchases and instead try and find industry partners. The collaborative has made this big effort to be very industry focused. It has a separate group of industry advisory members for the collaborative that are from specifically fields of virtual production. So I'm hopeful that we'll be able to keep it current. Part of the idea, I think, of the collaboration of the six schools was to try and muster enough collective curricular resources and faculty brain power, because this stuff is spread pretty thin at some of our schools like Santa Rosa. We're actually rather lucky, I think, to get to participate. Some of the schools have much larger programs just

by sheer student enrollment in the fields of game and animation and film than our school does. And so in large part, these two new certificates are ways to bootstrap our campus' smaller student constituency with interest in these areas onto the bigger schools to try and ride the momentum of keeping the curriculum going with enough enrollment and staying current. I think the good news is there's some nimbleness in that regard. We are working pretty closely with people in the industry that are watching it change. And so hopefully, we can keep up with this thing. But it's very true what you said, Eric.

Shawn Nelson:
The big money is in the virtual stages and the cameras. Right? Because Unreal is sort of like the base tool for most of the stuff, and that's almost free, and runs on most computers. You just need 64 gigs of free memory on your machine, and you're good to go. But the cameras right now the track and stuff are kind of the stopping point. So once they figure that stuff out, it'll be a little bit cheaper. Even with the Metahuman thing, you can now do it on your iPhone, instead of having to have a particular camera. I see it going less expensive.

Eric Vogel:
That makes sense. I think the industry partner idea sounds like a good model to work from.

Ethan Wilde:
I think it's essential for us to have a finger on the pulse of what's going on. It's fascinating how quick the pace is moving with some of this stuff.

Morgan Wren:
Is all the software you're planning on using supported with educational licenses?

Ethan Wilde:
Yes. I think we're lucky that the intersection of software tools for all the stuff still is landing in the realm where most of the publishers have free education licenses.

Morgan Wren:
Which is a great way for them to get their tools supported by the next generation.

Ethan Wilde:
That's the other cool thing. So you know, maybe I was underselling Santa Rosa. Maybe I'm sounding a little too parochial. We have a brand new STEM building coming online next semester that our virtual production class will utilize, with the freshest workstations. I wonder if anybody has any other questions? Or would you all feel comfortable making a motion to vote on the advanced certificate and the degree?

Shawn Nelson:
I'll motion to vote.

Ethan Wilde:
Thank you, Shawn. Is somebody willing to make a second?

Morgan Wren:
I'll second it.

Ethan Wilde:
All in favor?

Group:
Aye. (Unanimous approval)

Ethan Wilde:
Appreciate that. I hope I haven't kept everybody too long tonight. I really appreciate hearing from each of you who took the time to be here to really share some perspectives of what's going on in your world. I feel very lucky to have the time and attention and the thoughtfulness of each of you. It makes the process of trying to keep our students going somewhere with their interest in in the creation of games moving forward. And so any last words from anybody before we wrap for this meeting?

Actually, I'll send out some links to student game creations for the end of the semester to all of you in the next week or so. After we get final submissions on Friday from everybody at the end of the semester. The semester ends Friday as well. Thanks so much, everybody. It's always a pleasure to hear from you. Tim, I hope you'll become a regular attendee at our group. Really appreciated your perspectives tonight.

Tim Lynch:
Thanks.

Ethan Wilde:
Thanks, everybody. II hope you all have a great end of the year and holiday in the New Year. And like I said, I'll send you some links to some student games in the next week or so, so you can check out what we've been doing.

Shawn Nelson:
Thank you.

Ethan Wilde:
Have a good holiday. Thanks. Good night everybody.