

**Graphic Design Advisory Committee Meeting**  
**11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**  
**Wednesday, May 6, 2026**  
**Remote Via Zoom**

**MINUTES of May 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

**Members in Attendance:** Zack Darling, Josh Porter, Laurel Gregory

**Members Absent:** Josh Talbot

**Staff in Attendance:** Carrie Brady, Kendra Morning, Rachel Smith, Summer Winston

**Invited Guests:** none

Was there a quorum  Yes  No

**1. Call to Order**

Zack Darling called the meeting to order at 11:33a.m. Laurel Gregory was confirmed as the industry co-chair.

**2. Public/Industry Comments – None**

**3. Industry Update**

Committee members discussed industry trends and the skills expected of future design hires, particularly in relation to AI, evolving design tools, and workforce readiness. Zack opened the conversation by asking what technical and soft skills are now considered essential for freelancers and entry-level designers, as well as what foundational skills remain important beyond AI.

- Zack - Shared that, in his experience, 2D and 3D design skills are increasingly intertwined, particularly through AI-assisted rendering tools and software such as Blender. He emphasized the growing importance of AI literacy when hiring developers and designers.
- Josh – Highlighted the importance of prompt engineering, communication skills, and adapting to AI workflows while maintaining strong creative fundamentals. He compared AI's impact to the introduction of Photoshop and stressed that human creativity and conceptual thinking remain essential.
- Zack – Noted that employers may now ask candidates about their experience with AI plugins and AI-assisted workflows within Adobe products.
- Laurel – Emphasized that students should understand both how to effectively use AI and when not to rely on it, ensuring that AI supports rather than replaces thoughtful creative work.
- Josh – Stressed the importance of design fundamentals, terminology, data management, file organization, and understanding the origins of design processes and tools.
- Zack – Emphasized that AI skills should supplement, not replace, core competencies such as typography, UI/UX, pre-press, and production knowledge.

Committee members also discussed ethical AI use, transparency with clients and instructors, copyright concerns related to AI-generated assets, and the need to educate students and clients about licensing and intellectual property issues.

Kendra raised concerns about the decline of traditional entry-level jobs and asked how students can be prepared for more independent, higher-level creative work.

- Josh – Suggested that programs should better prepare students for freelance and gig-based careers by encouraging students to approach themselves as businesses and brands from the beginning.
- Zack – Stated that Adobe remains the dominant design platform despite growing competition from tools such as the Affinity suite. He noted that while some designers resent Adobe’s high subscription costs, long-time users often remain loyal due to familiarity with the software. He also mentioned Canva’s growing popularity, particularly among newer designers, as a significant competitor in the design space.
- Laurel – Shared that she initially viewed Canva as too basic and template-based but now finds it useful and more advanced. She also noted that Canva works best when users customize designs rather than rely solely on templates, and stated that it is an important tool for creating content for social media platforms.

#### **4. Curriculum Update – Evaluation and Recommendation**

Summer reported that no curriculum changes had been made since the previous advisory meeting. Kendra added that new course proposals and course revisions have not been approved due to a prolonged transition to a new student information system, which has effectively frozen curriculum changes for nearly a year. The committee expressed frustration with the delay and hoped the issue would be resolved over the summer so proposed changes could move forward. Members also expressed concern that the delay is especially problematic given the rapid pace of AI developments, noting that it risks making the curriculum outdated.

Summer presented a proposed overhaul of the graphic design curriculum, noting that the program has not been substantially updated in approximately eight years. They explained that the revision process is guided by questions about what skills will make designers “irreplaceable” in 2028, what foundational skills remain timeless, and how to prepare students for a shrinking entry-level job market. Summer emphasized the importance of balancing technical design skills with strategic thinking, professional intelligence, and creative leadership development.

Summer shared several proposed curriculum revisions and new courses. Proposed updates included integrating AI literacy, ethics, and workflow considerations into introductory and history courses; revising color theory to include AI-assisted color auditing and palette development; and merging typography and layout design while incorporating logo development and branding foundations. Summer also proposed new courses focused on visual thinking and design strategy, systems thinking and brand development, AI tools for designers, motion and interactive design, design ethics and social responsibility, and a capstone course centered on real-world client projects. In addition, Summer proposed revisions to the professional portfolio and creative business courses to better prepare students for freelance work, studio practice, client management, and creative leadership roles. Committee members provided the following feedback:

- Zack – Recommended renaming the “History of Graphic Design” course to “History and Future of Graphic Design” and emphasized the importance of integrating messaging, strategy, typography, branding, and systems thinking throughout the curriculum. He also shared recommendations for AI tools and platforms, including Chat GPT Image, Nano Banana, and OpenArt.ai.

- Josh – Suggested distributing the curriculum proposal as a PDF for more detailed written feedback and reinforced the importance of balancing lecture with hands-on lab work. He also stressed that designers increasingly serve as business builders and strategists, not just visual creators.
- Laurel – Supported the emphasis on strategy, communication, and professional presentation skills, and highlighted the importance of helping students articulate their process and creative rationale.

Additionally, Summer proposed structural changes to some courses, recommending a shift from a lecture-only format to a combined lecture/lab structure to allow more time for hands-on learning, individualized feedback, and skill development. They explained that the current structure of some courses is difficult to sustain and limits the amount of personalized instruction students can receive.

- Josh – Shared that shorter lecture paired with extended lab sessions had been effective in his own educational experience.
- Zack – Noted that similar formats in other courses had worked well and acknowledged the heavy workload involved in managing multiple classes.

A brief discussion took place about enrollment trends and workforce preparation. Summer reported that enrollment has stabilized following post-pandemic declines and suggested that economic uncertainty may drive more students back to school for career retraining. They stressed that students should be prepared not only for traditional employment but also for freelance and independent creative work, while continuing to develop collaboration and community-building skills.

- Zack – Emphasized that strategy and messaging are what distinguish designers in the workforce.
- Josh - Noted that designers often help build the core identity and communication structure of businesses.

Summer stated that they would email the curriculum proposal to committee members for additional feedback and requested formal support from the committee for both the curriculum revisions and the proposed lecture/lab structure changes. All committee members expressed strong support for the direction of the revisions and indicated interest in meeting more frequently, potentially once per semester.

## **5. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 12:43pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carrie Brady, Administrative Assistant  
Computer Studies Department