

## Fall 2017 Program Assessment Report

**Program:** Visual Media

**Committee:** Adam Davis, Jo Meuris, Amanda Farrar

<b>Institutional Mission</b>
<p>At Nevada State College, excellence fosters opportunity. Excellence in teaching leads to innovative, technology-rich learning opportunities that promote the acquisition of interdisciplinary knowledge and skills. Quality, affordable four-year degree programs open the door to career success and enhanced quality of life for a diverse population of students. Our graduates, in turn, foster the greatest opportunity the promise of a stronger community and a better future for all of Nevada.</p>
<b>Question/Topic Addressed</b>
<p>How can students make better use of film festivals? Are students submitting to them, and if not, why? What attitudes prevail among students regarding film festivals? What might the department do to support student festival use and submissions?</p> <p>Film festivals are a valuable way for students to promote their work, bolster their resumes, and make industry connections, but only a small percentage of Visual Media students submit. This study attempts to evaluate student attitudes toward submitting, identifying barriers, and proposing ways to help students make better use of the festival system.</p>
<b>Items Assessed</b>
<p>The committee evaluated recent use of film festivals by students, and gathered additional data through a survey sent to Visual Media students. The committee also examined various local, regional, and national or international film festivals online, and brought forth anecdotal evidence of festival use and benefits from committee members, in regard to both NSC and other institutions.</p>
<b>Means of Assessment</b>

In the summer of 2016, the Vice Provost for Academic Innovation & Student Success hosted a five-day Program Improvement Institute, where representatives from several programs met and developed:

1. A five-year assessment schedule, outlining the outcomes to be assessed each year;
2. Program standards, detailing the required content of each program at various levels of mastery;
3. A degree map, linking the overall program outcomes with the outcomes of specific classes.

Based on this assessment schedule, in even years, assessment will focus on student artifacts, directly measuring student mastery of outcomes (as well as value added). In odd years, assessment emphasizes program improvement, with specific questions or topics assigned for each year through 2021.

A total of 16 students responded to the survey, which accounts for about one-third of active Visual Media majors.

## Results

### **Successes**

Three students who sent their films to multiple festivals account for the majority of the total selections and awards for the Visual Media program, and demonstrate that selections and awards are possible (even without highly professional films).

### **Survey**

Two thirds have attended at least one festival. 38% have submitted, with about half of those rejected and a third of those winning an award. Largest barrier is confidence, but knowledge of festivals and submission costs also registered. Students generally felt that festivals are important for their career (81% very or moderately important).

### **Festival Trips**

A bi-annual trip to the Sundance Film Festival, along with other informal festival outings (Nevada Women's Film Festival, Dam Short Film Festival, Las Vegas Film Festival) have helped increase awareness of festivals overall, but may also contribute to lack of confidence when students compare their work to others.

## Recommendations to Improve Program

### **Student Confidence**

Students seem concerned that their work isn't good enough for festivals. More could be done to assuage these fears (and evidence supports the potential for success). Possibilities include showing past winners in class sessions or workshops, and targeting strong films/filmmakers individually with encouragement to submit.

### **Information and Guidance**

More could be done to guide students toward festivals that are a good fit for their projects, and to inform them about due dates and submission processes. Students might also be made aware of festivals earlier (where information and outings are present, they tend to be toward the latter end of students' career), and prepared earlier and better for the submission process. More class time or workshops might also be dedicated to elucidating the benefits of festivals (or a class dedicated to film festivals).

### **Cost**

Festival fees can range from \$20-50 or more, and this presents a hardship for some students, especially as a solid festival run depends on entry into multiple festivals. Can the department, school, or donors help to alleviate some of these costs? What system might be put into place to distribute funds and manage their use? Moving forward, we will explore funding possibilities and disbursement strategies (e.g. small, equal distribution to all students who wish to claim it; award or 'scholarship' funds for standout films or filmmakers; or a single pot with first come, first served priorities).

### **Highlighting Student Achievements**

Festival wins and selections are highlighted on social media, but more could be done.

*Action: Examples of festival submissions and awards were collected as part of a highlight section on the nsccreates.com website, and can be found at the following link:*

<http://nsccreates.weebly.com/festivals-and-awards.html>