

Annual Instructional Photo Program Review for 2014-15

1. Program Summary Section

- **Have there been any changes in this program over the last years which have had a significant impact on the program's goals and/or effectiveness? If so, please explain the changes that have occurred and how the changes have impacted the program.**

Photography stands out as the first widely disseminated visual means of communication in our culture at-large and occupies a position of vital importance for visual literacy in our increasingly image mediated world. Merced College unilaterally revised the 2014-16 Strategic Plan to reflect a more broad-minded approach to incorporating all constituent groups into the college's planning process. Accordingly, Objective 1.1 states that the college will "Provide students with support systems, programs, and development opportunities that maximize success." Faculty spearheaded the effort to put these guiding principles into practice by completely revising all of the Photography curriculum for the AA and Certificate to enable student matriculation and successful and timely progress through the program. The Photography discipline attracts students due to their innate passion for the subject matter at hand in a manner similar to the Art, Music and Theater programs at Merced College.

Fortunately, the photo program enjoyed a long and well-supported history at Merced College thanks to the nearly thirty-year efforts of full-timer Alan Beymer. When Beymer chose to retire following his lengthy educational and high profile photography career (his radio show program detailing working highlights, produced in-conjunction with the Merced Sun Star artists' broadcasting feature, is still available online), the replacement position remained in-flux. Despite the nearly eight-year timespan that has elapsed since Beymer's retirement, supported by continual proposals seeking a replacement photography position on a yearly basis, the photography program (AA and Certificate) still lacks a full-time faculty member. Digital Media Faculty attended the annual Hiring Prioritization process ranking meeting in late October to advocate on-behalf of a replacement Photography position, which received a ranking of eighteen campus-wide for 2014-15.

Merced College continually benefits by offering several sections of Alan Beymer's Digital Camera Basics Course, developed in 2007 around the time of his

retirement, which addresses the increasingly digitally mediated world in which we find ourselves. Digital Media faculty rewrote the Digital Camera Basics class with a more contemporary title (Intro. to the Digital Camera) in-keeping with recently released C-ID course outlines to align with the statewide Cal-State generated curriculum standards. Besides the one initial digital course offering, many photography classes languished or went unscheduled after Beymer's retirement due to outdated or missing equipment. Prior equipment overhauls and sales left the Photo area without crucial view cameras or color enlargers that underscored course content in previous core classes (Photo 30 Introduction to Color Photography Laboratory (last offered in 2006-07), and Photo 31 Basic View Camera). The Academic Senate of Merced College approved a 2013-14 motion to completely remove the Journalism course offerings college-wide, thereby rendering several of the courses (Journalism 32: Newspaper Staff, for example) listed within the Photography major inactive. Journalism provided principle course offerings for Photography elective credit during Beymer's time when the program, along with Photography, could remain actively updated thanks to Beymer's photojournalism background. The overhaul and removal of many formerly active programs such as Journalism during this past academic year suggest a crucial turning-point in Photography's continual existence.

Newly developed regulations necessitate that programs remain current with Title V standards and effective course content or they will lapse into inactive status. Art faculty members work with students to cobble together photo course equivalents for matriculation purposes, but newly developed program viability regulations developed by California Community College leaders will disallow substitutions in the near future. Based on the need to support Photography as a viable and vital program that students continually pursue and succeed in attaining degree-wise, faculty and administrative collaborations in prior years hence formed a basis for overhauling the AA and Certificate this current calendar year. Fortunately, the Digital Media Faculty member's effort to innovate and rewrite all of the Photo curriculum succeeded and all of the curriculum now enjoys up-to-date status. Recently, the Photo 49 Independent Study course received a renewal of its Title V status and passed through the curriculum committee with ease, allowing the Photo Program to attain one-hundred percent curriculum compliance. The sole one-unit Photography Independent Study course may need to get revisited in the near future. Faculty need to ensure that students may undertake multiple experiences with Independent Study

as permitted by several single enrollment exemption clauses in the Chancellor's Office curriculum handbook.

Increasing numbers of students (please refer to the attached document subsumed within the appendices) seek and obtain the core Merced College Photography course sequence on a yearly basis. The 2013-14 school year, our most recent sample for which data has been correlated from the Clearinghouse database, heralded the largest population (one-hundred and twelve students) to take the core photography coursework and continue their photographic studies elsewhere within the nationwide public or private four-year college system. Student demand remains palpable and strong which bodes well for Photography's resurgence as aided by our newly implemented coursework which gained active status in Fall 2014. Early in the previous school year another regulation came into existence by emphasizing that art-related courses take on larger "family" designations. Simultaneously, the TMC and locally implemented AA-T degrees necessitate that courses align with statewide descriptors to implement the AA-T's in a timely manner. All of the aforementioned curricular overhauls indicate the reasoning behind Digital Media faculty rewriting Photo curriculum during the prior academic year to avoid losing Title V and other compliance standards. Demographic trends remain consistent — the majority of students encapsulate White and Hispanic young adults under the age of 24, tending toward a female majority (over fifty percent). Despite dwindling class offerings, with approximately two to three Photo classes (not including multiple sections) currently being taught each semester, the college continues to serve a high and increasing volume of Photography students each year. The college supported an Introductory Digital Camera course in the Summer of 2014, and we anticipate offering another similar class in the forthcoming Summer 2015 session.

- **Please summarize the progress the program has made on Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) assessments at the course and program level since the last review and how the findings of those assessment have been utilized to improve student learning.**

One of the CATs for Area 5 Cohort B, Alana Perlin, recently compiled the requested SLO tracking excel sheet which demonstrated that all actively offered Photo courses have undergone an authentic and sustainable assessment. Photography adjuncts enjoy support from the Art Faculty and Area 5 Cohort B CATs, Alana Perlin and

Louisa Benhissen. The Photo discipline made significant strides towards SLO compliance over the past two years. Previously, only Photo 11a Digital Camera Basics underwent an SLO assessment in 2008, around the time of Alan Beymer's departure. The assessment lacked a thorough analysis of the findings or explanation of the course benchmarks, rotational cycle, continual discussion or action plan. Currently, Photo 10a Introduction to Photography, Photo 10b Intermediate Photography, Photo 11a Introduction to the Digital Camera, and Photo 49 Independent Study in Photography have undergone at-least two cycle of in-depth data collection and assessment. Photo 10a and 11a were already assessed twice in the past couple of years. Each Photo course successfully met a benchmark of 85-90 percent of students fulfilling overall SLO expectations.

Discrepancies arose when polling intermediate Photo 10b students via a survey, an indirect method. The SLO expectation pertaining to wet lab work has become outdated and irrelevant to current course content, as supported by students indicating a low level of mastery of the darkroom content. Since the SLO expectation of darkroom work hinges on the pedagogical approach of individual faculty members, Photo 10b has been rewritten to allow for a wet-lab and digital approach to producing imagery. The classroom now supports a full suite of advanced computers acquired through a successful grant cycle initiated by the Digital Media Faculty member, which allows all of the photo curriculum to feature an explicit digital output option. However, future SLO methods of analyses will focus on direct methods rather than including the indirect student survey. Matthew Lee, the colleges' consultant throughout the accreditation process, feels that student surveys should become deemphasized. The sudden departure of our SLO coordinator, Melissa Ward, left us in the lurch as far as generating necessary forms and documentation methods. Luckily her replacement, Gabriela Garcia, has been working closely with faculty members to ensure timely completion of SLO assessments. Additional challenges arise when considering the limited historical record keeping ability of CurricUNET software. Merced College currently stands as one of the initial colleges to attempt SLO documentation through CurricUNET. Based on the inability to enter multiple updated assessments from year-to-year or acknowledge course name/title changes, CurricUNET effectively loses faculty member's prior assessments. Therefore, faculty start to feel that it's incumbent upon ourselves to bypass the limiting proprietary software and develop our own programmable methods for documentation. Matthew Lee also emphasized the importance of continual transparency in SLO documentation methods. The initial Sharepoint web-based result

for Area 5 Cohort B, developed and maintained by the Area 5 Cohort B CAT Alana Perlin, allows for better oversight to display Phases 1-4 and Cycle status in realtime.

<http://tinyurl.com/lbag9av>

Perlin will continually update the website, in-conjunction with Louisa Benhissen as the other CAT for Area 5 Cohort B, as faculty submit fully completed assessments to the CATs from semester to semester.

- **Include a plan for assessing the course and program SLOs that have not been assessed at this time.**

Fortunately, Photo 32 Studio Photography and Photo 34 Photo Expression, a previously required and elective course in the major (they've been rewritten to three-unit courses but haven't yet been placed on the actively offered schedule of classes), were offered in the Spring 2013 semester for the first time in years. These two classes underwent initial SLO data collection and an analysis of the findings submitted as an official report over the Spring and Fall 2013 semesters, assisted by Area 5 Cohort B CATs (Cohort Assessment Trainers). Photo 32 Studio Photography and Photo 34 Photo Expression acted as capstone classes in the Photography major. Portfolio development and interviews with industry professionals in both of these courses fulfilled absolutely all of the Program-level SLOs. After achieving an AA or certificate in Photography with the new curriculum updates, the student will have fulfilled all PLO expectations. Program-level SLOs linked to Photo 10a Basic Photography and Photo 11a Digital Camera Basics were completed and attached to this Program Review in the appendices. More elaborate SLO assessments tying all active Photography courses to Program-level expectations haven't been finalized due to the lack of a full-time Photography Instructor to oversee the process. Adjuncts possess limited free-time to undergo conversations regarding the fulfillment of Program-level SLOs. Since all of the Photo AA and Certificate curriculum underwent an overhaul has achieved active status as of Fall 2014, the ILO, PLO and SLO grid implementation will coincide with each class' initial offering in the forthcoming school years. The adjunct Photo instructors have been willing to give of themselves to foster our SLO documentation process, as supported by CATs to develop the associated written portion. Since each course must undergo an assessment at-least twice in a five-year period, faculty and CATs will collaborate to create new Photo SLO assessment reports for the courses currently offered within the schedule of classes.

- **Please summarize any changes in retention, success, productivity, or other relevant data that have occurred since completion of the last planning document, whether a comprehensive review or annual planning document.**

Please reference our attached Photo Hiring Request data spanning the years 2006-2014. The data for the current year reflects differing breakdowns from the Comprehensive Program Review as the numbers have been re-tabulated due to updates from research. Productivity continually decreased as course offerings were scaled back and reduced, excepting 2011-12 when productivity rates exceeded 2006-07 levels. Consistent with the previous year's Comprehensive Program review, success-rates fall slightly behind retention numbers. Retention averages eighty percent over the subsequent years prior to 2014, reaching a peak of eighty-five percent in 2009-10 and holding steady at eighty percent thereafter. The high-level of retention in Photography courses outperforms or matches the district average of eighty-three percent in 2011. These numbers correlate to Photo transfer statistics derived from the Clearinghouse Database during 2014. When tabulating a Clearinghouse data inquiry with research, an average of 112 Photography students transferred to four-year institutions upon completing an AA, Certificate, or the general sequence of five introductory Photo courses during the 2013-14 academic year. The overwhelmingly positive transfer and retention rates suggest a continually high demand for the Merced College Photography department. Despite limited course offerings in the Photography discipline, three students achieved an AA degree and one student earned a Certificate during the 2012-13 year and one additional student matriculated with an AA degree in 2013-14.

- **Other: If there is anything else you would like to be considered in the annual planning document, please describe it here.**

Please include a specific section to explicitly state the discipline's ratio of Full-time to Part-time faculty.

2. Planning Goals Section:

- **Provide a status update on the 5-year Planning Goals identified in the most recent comprehensive program review.**

The Photo department previously contended with reduced offerings due to outdated course outlines. Fortunately, as of Fall 2014, all of the Photo curriculum has been vitally rewritten or created anew to allow for students to matriculate through their chosen AA or Certificate course-of-study. We're eagerly awaiting the new curriculum being offered and placed in a forthcoming Schedule of Classes. Intermediate Photography is fortunately being taught this next Fall 2015 semester to enable students to graduate, although it (Photo 10b) was removed from the Spring 2013 schedule after it ran successfully for the Fall 2011 and Spring 2012 semesters. Fortunately, Digital Camera Basics (Photo 11a) enjoyed one daytime section and an additional nighttime meeting time for Spring 2013 (a night and day rotation has been kept consistent with meeting times from previous years) and maintained two daytime sections in Spring 2014 semester. The revamped Introduction to Digital Photography class enjoys a nighttime and daytime offering during the current Spring 2015 term. Studio Photography (Photo 32) and Photo Expressions (Photo 34) were offered concurrently for the first time in years during Spring 2013 in-order to better enable students to matriculate through the program. The yearly Photo Faculty Replacement position request for Alan Beymer's position to get filled, presented to the Hiring Committee in October 2014, experienced a ranking of eighteen campus-wide for the next 2015-16 academic year.

- **Is the program on target to meet the most recent 5 Year Planning Goals?**

We'll keep producing a conscientiously researched and thoroughly compiled Photo Replacement Position packet on an Annual basis to present to the Hiring Committee.

- **Are the program's 5 Year Planning Goals still relevant?** YES

The Program's 5-Year Planning Goals remain consistent with the previous Comprehensive Photo Program Review.

- **Has there been a change in the priority of the program's 5 Year Planning Goals?**

Please note—the Program-level SLOs have been entirely rewritten due to the recent (February 2014) approval of degree and course updates initiated through the Curriculum Committee process. These curricular changes became effective in the Fall 2014 semester.

3. **Yearly Objectives**

Please DO NOT try to force your program objectives to match all of the 5 year planning goals for the college. Be honest and think about your goals and the goals for the college. When applicable, link your objectives to a program SLO, an Institutional SLO, and a Merced College Strategic Planning Goal. Objectives should be entered in priority order, with Objective 1 being most important. You can copy and paste the table below for each goal

Accomplish the following goals listed below with Career Tech. Education federal funding

Goal Statement 1: [Should be clearly connected to the conclusions in the Analysis of Data and Evaluation section above]

Priority	1
Objective	Hire a full-time replacement for Alan Beymer
5 year planning goal	Yes
Person responsible	Faculty, Staff, Administration, Hiring Committee
Timeline	2015-16
Resources	Faculty to prepare the Hiring Proposal packet
To which program SLOs does this goal connect?	All PLOs
To which Merced College Strategic Planning goals and/or institutional student learning	All Strategic Planning goals, especially the recently revamped 1.1 outcome

outcomes does this goal connect?

To which Merced College institutional student learning outcomes does this goal connect?

All ILOs

Goal Statement 2: [Should be clearly connected to the conclusions in the Analysis of Data and Evaluation section above]

Priority

2

Objective

Implement vital new and rewritten photography courses (place them on the schedule of classes—consistent with Photography programs at other Community Colleges),

5 year planning goal

Yes

Person responsible

Faculty, Staff, Administration

Timeline

2015-16

Resources

Faculty to teach the courses

To which program SLOs does this goal connect?

All PLOs

To which Merced College Strategic Planning goals and/or institutional student learning outcomes does this goal connect?

All Strategic Planning goals, especially the recently revamped 1.1 outcome

To which Merced College institutional student learning outcomes does this goal connect?

All ILOs

Goal Statement 3: [Should be clearly connected to the conclusions in the Analysis of Data and Evaluation section above]

Priority	3
Objective	Develop a local AA-T degree for TMC
5 year planning goal	Yes
Person responsible	Full-time Photo Faculty, Staff, Administration
Timeline	2015-16
Resources	Faculty to attend a Discipline Input Group and write the local AA-T in Photography All PLOs
To which program SLOs does this goal connect?	
To which Merced College Strategic Planning goals and/or institutional student learning outcomes does this goal connect?	All Strategic Planning goals, especially the recently revamped 1.1 outcome
To which Merced College institutional student learning outcomes does this goal connect?	All ILOs

Goal Statement 4: [Should be clearly connected to the conclusions in the Analysis of Data and Evaluation section above]

Priority	4
Objective	Maintain studio equipment, supplies and financial budget, Help hire, train, mentor and evaluate adjunct

	instructors,
	Calibrate printer inks and monitors,
	Oversee darkroom chemical mixing with Hazmat/OSHA disposal, Monitor student material fees & budget for auditing purposes
5 year planning goal	Yes
Person responsible	Full-time Photo Faculty, Staff, Administration
Timeline	2015-16
Resources	Faculty to oversee the Photography program
To which program SLOs does this goal connect?	All PLOs
To which Merced College Strategic Planning goals and/or institutional student learning outcomes does this goal connect?	All Strategic Planning goals, especially the recently revamped 1.1 outcome
To which Merced College institutional student learning outcomes does this goal connect?	All ILOs

Goal Statement 5: [Should be clearly connected to the conclusions in the Analysis of Data and Evaluation section above]

Priority	5
Objective	Work with High School instructors' 2+2 program
5 year planning goal	Yes
Person responsible	Full-time Photo Faculty, Staff, Administration
Timeline	2015-16

Resources

Faculty to oversee the Photography program

To which program SLOs does this goal connect?

All PLOs

To which Merced College Strategic Planning goals and/or institutional student learning outcomes does this goal connect?

All Strategic Planning goals, especially the recently revamped 1.1 outcome

To which Merced College institutional student learning outcomes does this goal connect?

All ILOs