

# Annual Program Report 2022-2023

The report(s) should be inclusive of all levels, degrees (i.e. certificates, bachelor’s and master’s), modalities and locations.

Department: **Communications Media**

Department Chair: **Jeff Warmouth**

Department Assessment Committee Contact: **Randy Howe**

*This document is to be kept in the department and an electronic file is due to the AVP of Institutional Research and Planning by June 1, 2023.*

## Section I: Program Assessment (please complete this section for each program in your department)

Program: Game Design, B.S.

### A. Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) (Educational Objectives)

#### I. List of PLOs and the timeline for assessment

PLO #	PLO – Stated in assessable terms	Where are the learning outcomes for this level/program published? (Please specify) Include URLs where appropriate.	Timing of assessment (annual, semester, bi-annual, etc.)	When was the last assessment of the PLO completed?
1	Analytical understanding of games, gameplay, and game design	The six program learning outcomes (PLOs) are listed on the university catalog website under <a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/game-design-bs">Game Design, BS</a> , which is linked to this URL, <a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/game-design-bs">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/game-design-bs</a>	Formative assessments for each PLO occur in individual courses. A summative assessment occurs in each student’s 4th year, during portfolio review.	
2	Foundations in visual art and creative writing			
3	Principles of game logic and programming			
4	Industry-standard game engines and software			
5	Team-based iterative design process			

6	Games as media of communication and aesthetic expression			
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II. **PLO Assessment** (Please report on the PLOs assessed and/or reviewed this year. Programs should be assessing at least one each year.) Using the table below, list and briefly describe the **direct method(s)** used to collect information assessing whether students are learning the core sets of knowledge (K), skills (S) and attitudes (A) identified as essential.

PLO # (from above)	Assessment description (exam, observation, national standardized exam, oral presentation with rubric, etc.)	When assessment was administered in student program (internship, 4 <sup>th</sup> year, 1 <sup>st</sup> year, etc.)	To which students were assessments administered (all, only a sample, etc.)	What is the target set for the PLO? (criteria for success)	Reflection on the results: How was the “loop closed”?
1 - 6	Portfolio review with rubric.	4th year	All	An average rating of “Acceptable” or higher.	All students must present a portfolio of their work and meet the target set for the PLO in order to be approved to register for their capstone course: COMM 4880 Internship or GAME 4100 Game Studio. Students who do not meet the PLO target must revise their portfolio and repeat their portfolio review.

*You may use this comment box to provide any additional information, if applicable:*

Game Design will establish an assessment plan and update PLOs in AY 2024.

**Summary of Findings:** Briefly summarize the results of the PLO assessments reported in Section II above combined with other relevant evidence gathered and show how these are being reviewed/discussed. How are you “closing the loop”?

Reflection Prompt	Narrative Response
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<p><b>Other than GPA, what data/ evidence is used to determine that graduates have achieved the stated outcomes for the degree? (e.g., capstone course, portfolio review, licensure examination)</b></p>	<p>All students are required to pass a portfolio defense prior to their capstone course: COMM 4880 Internship or GAME 4100 Game Studio. Students who complete COMM 4880 are assessed by the Internship Supervisor using the Communications Media Department's Internship Appraisal Form, which is shared with the Game Design faculty.</p> <p>Students who complete GAME 4100 are reviewed by their peers using a numerical scale with written comments. In addition, they self-assess through the Game Studio Postmortem Report, a written self-reflection of the capstone semester as well as their experience in the Game Design program and the curriculum. These are shared among the Game Design faculty, but so far we have not done any formal assessment based on the data.</p> <p>It may be helpful to create a Game Studio Appraisal Form for faculty to complete, to work in parallel to the Internship Appraisal Form. It would also be possible to retroactively complete these for our students who have completed Game Studio.</p>
<p><b>Who interprets the evidence? What is the process? (e.g. annually by the curriculum committee)</b></p>	<p>Student portfolios are reviewed by Game Design faculty members. Students seeking COMM 4880 Internship are also reviewed by the Internship Director.</p> <p>Game Design faculty regularly discuss the results of the portfolio reviews, and students' preparation for and performance in GAME 4100 Game Studio.</p> <p>GAME 4100's Postmortem Reports and Peer Reviews are reviewed by the Game Design faculty team-teaching the course, and are periodically reviewed &amp; discussed by all Game faculty.</p>
<p><b>What changes have been made as a result of using the data/evidence? (close the loop)</b></p>	<p>All of these assessments provide important data used to revise and update the curriculum.</p> <p>Based on continuing student desire to create 2D games (about 20% of our students – and capstone projects – have been 2D vs. 3D games), we created a new course: 2D Game Development, which passed through AUC.</p>

## B. Assessment Plan for Program/Department

- I. Insert the program or department Assessment Plan (This is an independent plan from what is reported in this document).
- II. Explain any changes in the assessment plan including new or revised PLOs, new assessments that the program/department plans to implement and new targets or goals set for student success.
- III. If you do not have a plan, would you like help in developing one?   X   Yes

## C. Program Review Action Plan or External action Letter/Report

*Annual Reflection/Follow-up on Action Plan from last Program Review or external accreditation (only complete the table that is appropriate for your program)*

### I. Programs that fall under Program Review:

- i. Date of most recent Review: Spring 2021
- ii. Insert the Action Plan table from your last Program Review and give any progress towards completing the tasks or achieving targets set forth in the plan.

Specific area where improvement is needed	Evidence to support the recommended change	Person(s) responsible for implementing the change	Timeline for implementation	Resources needed	Assessment Plan	Progress Made this Year
<b>Assessment</b>						
1. Work with Director of Assessment to develop an assessment plan	The program does not have a formal assessment plan. We currently have only one method of assessment - the portfolio review	Director of Assessment, Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Game Design Faculty	Complete by May 2023		Develop formal Assessment Plan	Department Chair and Game Design Coordinator met with Director of Assessment to begin the process of developing an assessment plan

2. Update Game Design Mission Statement to align with current University and School of Arts & Sciences mission statements	The Mission Statement has not been updated since the program was created in 2012	Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Game Design Faculty	Complete by May 2023		Report updated mission statement in Annual Departmental Plan Report for AY 2023	Department Chair and Program Coordinator met with Director of Assessment, started draft of a new Mission Statement
<b>Curriculum</b>						
3. Update Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and curriculum map for the Game Design Major & Minor, revising curriculum as needed	The SLOs for the Game Design program have not been updated since the program was created in 2012, and we do not have a formal curriculum map with SLOs mapped to specific courses	Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Game Design Faculty	Complete by May 2024		Report updated SLOs & curriculum map in Annual Departmental Plan Report for AY 2024	n/a
4. Collaborate with other units on campus to identify specialized or interdisciplinary paths for students, including game art, audio, and writing	Evaluator notes that the program is insular, and recommends exploring further collaborations with humanities, computer science, music, psychology, business, art, and English Studies	Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Game Design Faculty	Ongoing		Include progress report update in Annual Departmental Plan Reports	After two years of discussion, we restructured our Game Design electives to allow students to pursue more interdisciplinary work including game art & writing. More progress is needed to identify specific paths

5. Create additional Programming for Games courses as replacement or alternative for required Computer Science I & II courses	External evaluator, students, and alumni recommend that game programming courses are more effective when taught within the Game discipline, rather than from a Computer Science perspective	Program Coordinator, Game Design Faculty, Department Curriculum Committee	Complete by May 2024	Faculty with experience with game programming & technical game development	Include progress report update in Annual Departmental Plan Reports	We removed Computer Science II as a required GenEd course. Due to understaffing, we have been unable to develop additional programming for games courses, or even to teach the Game Programming course that is cross listed with Computer Science
6. Implement Game Jams into the core curriculum	External evaluator and faculty recommend that game jams be mandatory and incorporated into the curriculum	Program Coordinator, Game Design Faculty	Ongoing		Include progress report update in Annual Departmental Plan Reports	
<b>Faculty</b>						
7. Hire a 6th tenure track faculty member with experience in technical game development and game programming	We are still 1 faculty member short, based on our enrollment. Students, faculty, and external evaluator note the lack of support for students interested in programming & technical concerns	Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Game Design Faculty	Complete by May 2023	Tenure-track hire	Include progress report update in Annual Departmental Plan Reports	We were able to hire a temp faculty member with some experience in technical game development to begin in AY24, but this primarily serves to offset the move of one tenure-track faculty to the Department Chair role.
<b>Diversity</b>						

8. Plan and implement a Climate Survey for students in the program, and facilitate follow-up dialogue	Students and external evaluator report concerns about the climate in the Game Design program	Program Coordinator, Game Design Faculty	Complete by May 2023		Include progress report update in Annual Departmental Plan Report for AY 2023	
9. Work with Admissions to draft & implement a Diversity Initiative, and to outreach to high schools & technical schools	Evaluator, faculty, and students note that our gender diversity should be strengthened	Admissions Director, Department Chair, Program Coordinator	Complete by May 2023		Include progress report update in Annual Departmental Plan Report for AY 2023	Department Chair met with Admissions Director in Spring 2023 to discuss Diversity Initiative. We identified ideas to implement in Fall 2023, potentially including an event and/or publication that showcases the contributions of female students & alumni, to be distributed to high schools & technical schools.
<b>Professionalization</b>						
10. Create an External Industry Advisory Board	We have never held a formal External Advisory Board, though this was initially part of our program plan	Program Coordinator, Game Design Faculty	Complete by May 2024		Include progress report update in Annual Departmental Plan Report for AY 2024	We have identified External Industry Advisory Board members, with plans to meet in Fall 2023

11. Develop partnership with MassDIGI for industry advice, guidance, career and internship opportunities for students	Evaluator, faculty, and University Provost & President have all noted the value that MassDIGI would bring to the program and the University	Program Coordinator, Game Design Faculty	Ongoing		Include progress report update in Annual Departmental Plan Reports	We have worked with MassDIGI to host students for DigiStudio, Summer Innovation Program, and Experience Program. We plan to work with them to further develop programs
<b>Student Support</b>						
12. Provide additional portfolio support for students by creating a dedicated course or incorporating portfolio development and feedback into core curriculum	Evaluator, faculty, and students report that students need more support and scaffolding to develop portfolios that will serve them in a professional capacity	Program Coordinator, Game Design Faculty	Ongoing		Include progress report update in Annual Departmental Plan Reports	Portfolio development is now a required assignment in our core class GAME 3000 Game Design Workshop. We will work to incorporate further development in later core classes.
13. Work with Career Services Center to develop a comprehensive Career Development support plan for students starting in the first year	Evaluator and students note the lack of support for students developing resumes & portfolios, or seeking summer internships or post-graduate employment	Career Services Director, Program Coordinator, Game Design Faculty	Ongoing		Include progress report update in Annual Departmental Plan Reports	We have begun working with Career Services to create resume & portfolio guides tailored to Game Design students. We will expand this to a more comprehensive Career Development support plan
14. Work with Library to develop resources to support the program	Evaluator recommends that we collaborate with the Library to develop resources to aid student and faculty research	Library Director, Program Coordinator, Game Design Faculty	Ongoing		Include progress report update in Annual Departmental Plan Reports	

iii. If you do not have an action plan, would you like help in developing one based on your last program review and needs of the program?



## Section II - Departmental Outcomes

### A. Departmental Strategic Initiatives

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Accomplished Initiatives AY22-23</b> Add more rows as needed</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Corresponding Strategic Plan Goal &amp; Strategy</b> Goal # followed by Strategy # ex: 1.3</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Indicate (X) if a Diversity, Equity and Inclusiveness (DEI) Goal</b></p>
<p>Successfully hired a Visiting Assistant Professor of Game Design to start in FY24. Approved to begin a search for a new tenure-track Game Design faculty to replace Les Nelken, who will retire at the end of FY24.</p>		
<p>Created initial draft of Mission Statement: The mission of the Game Design program is to educate young game professionals by mentoring them in technical and aesthetic aspects of development, cultivating a maker-based approach in which students work individually and in teams to build proficiencies in professional tools, create original published games, and develop portfolios showcasing their skills and readiness for careers in games &amp; interactive media.</p>		
<p>Adjusted Electives structure in our curriculum to streamline, provide flexibility, prioritize more relevant courses, and help facilitate minors.</p>	<p>Goal One. This addition forges innovative paths to knowledge acquisition, career readiness, social mobility, and lifelong learning.</p>	
<p>Created a new course in 2D Game Development, based on continuing student interest</p>	<p>Goal One. This addition forges innovative paths to knowledge acquisition, career readiness, social mobility, and lifelong learning.</p>	

Created a new Topics course: Story-Driven Games, to explore student interest in additional courses that focus on story/narrative design for games		
Created a new Topics course: Traditional Art Foundations for Game Development, to explore student interest – and faculty observation – that students who self-identify as game artists need stronger traditional art foundations		
Removed Computer Science II as a required course, moving it instead into our Electives		
Offered students in Game Studio capstone course professional networking and mentorship opportunities through partnership with Rockstar Games	Goal One	
Hosted 4th annual Fall Game Jam in Fall 2022, required for all Game Design students, and served as host site for Global Game Jam in Spring 2023	Goal 3, Strategy 3.6	
Visions: honors exhibition of student work from the Communications Media department	Goal 3, Strategy 3.6	
Faculty members awarded MSCA Professional Development Funds for professional development courses and research/creative practice projects	Goal 4, Strategy 4.4	
Ran monthly department Admissions tours and participated in shadow program for accepted students. Faculty planned and participated in 3 Open Houses in Fall 2022 and 2 Future Falcon Days in Spring 2023		
In collaboration with the Admissions Director, we planned and ran <i>Comm Media in Action</i> , a new hands-on event for admitted students in April 2023.		

<p align="center"><b>Planned Initiatives for AY 23-24</b> Add more rows as needed</p>	<p align="center"><b>Associated Strategic Plan Goal &amp; Strategy</b> Goal # followed by Strategy # ex: 1.3</p>	<p align="center"><b>Indicate (X) if a Diversity, Equity and Inclusiveness (DEI) Goal</b></p>
<p>Through the newly formed Department Assessment Committee, establish a Game Design Assessment Plan that is accepted by the Department.</p>	<p>Goal One. This addition should help us to forge innovative paths to knowledge acquisition, career readiness, social mobility, and lifelong learning.</p>	
<p>Finalize Game Design Mission Statement draft, to align with current University and School of Arts &amp; Sciences mission statements</p>	<p>Goal 1, Strategies 1.1 and 1.2</p>	
<p>Hire a 6th tenure track faculty member with experience in technical game development and programming</p>		
<p>Update Game Design Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)</p>	<p>Goal One. This addition should help us to forge innovative paths to knowledge acquisition, career readiness, social mobility, and lifelong learning.</p>	
<p>Update Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and curriculum map for the Game Design Major &amp; Minor, revising curriculum as needed</p>	<p>Goal One. This addition should help us to forge innovative paths to knowledge acquisition, career readiness, social mobility, and lifelong learning.</p>	
<p>Create additional Programming for Games courses as replacement or alternative for required Computer Science I &amp; II courses</p>	<p>Goal One. This addition should help us to forge innovative paths to knowledge acquisition, career readiness, social mobility, and lifelong learning.</p>	
<p>Create a formal agreement for our External Industry Advisory Board, and plan &amp; run our first meeting in Fall 2023</p>		

Plan and implement a Climate Survey for students in the program, and facilitate follow-up dialogue	Goal 2, Strategy 2.1	
Work with Admissions to draft and implement a Diversity Initiative, to potentially include an event and/or publication that showcases the contributions of our female students & alumni, to be distributed to high schools & technical schools.	Goal 5, Strategy 5.3	X
Work with Admissions to outreach to high schools and technical schools		
Renew our participation at PAX East and other conferences, festivals, and networking events, which we halted at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic		
Work with Career Services Center to develop a comprehensive Career Development support plan for students starting in the first year		

## B. Departmental Accomplishments and Reflection:

*Take this section to reflect on--*

1. *22-23 Accomplishments not captured above*
2. *Initiatives that you may be considering for 23-24 academic year that you did not already capture above*
3. *Any other thoughts or information that you would like to share*

This has been a challenging year for Game Design. In the past year, the program has been severely understaffed due to faculty on Sabbatical and other leave, and to Jeff Warmouth assuming the role of Department Chair in January 2023. In Spring 2023, we had only 3 full-time Game Design faculty, with a new Department Chair mid-year and two shifts in Program Coordinator, which resulted in us running only 15 sections of Game Design courses (the fewest taught in one semester since 2015), with 3 of these taught by a remote adjunct professor.

As a result, we have not been able to devote the necessary time and energy into assessment activities, and there are several 2023 goals that we were not able to meet. We plan to catch up in AY 2024.

The Department Chair and Program Coordinator began a draft of updated PLOs (see below) but they were not edited or approved by Game Design faculty or the Assessment Director.

- The student will be able to apply elements of game design to the creation of original games
- The student will be able to demonstrate competency with industry-standard software
- The student will be able to demonstrate principles of game logic and programming
- The student will be able to effectively collaborate on team-based projects
- The student will be able to create individual games
- The student will be able to create a portfolio of published games, developed individually and with teams
- Students should be able to discuss their meaningful contributions to team-based projects
- Students will be able to apply and demonstrate current industry best practices in the creation of games