

Annual Departmental Report 2021-2022

Program Information

Program/Department: B.S. in Game Design

Department Chair: Mary Baker

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 & Planning by June 1, 2022.

A. Departmental Special Section for AY21-22

Department Lessons Learned and Accomplishments

In AY22, the Game Design major completed the Action Plan for its first program review. To date, the program has already made progress on Action Item 6: *Implement Game Jams into the core curriculum* by running a required Fall Game Jam in October, and serving as a host site for the Global Game Jam in January 2022. The program also made progress on Action Item 11: *Develop partnership with MassDigi for industry advice, guidance, career and internship opportunities for students*. The Massachusetts Digital Games Institute (MassDigi) is a collaboration among academia, state government, and industry aimed at fostering growth of the innovation economy in the Commonwealth. In Summer 2021, The University recommended and funded participation for two students to attend MassDIGI's Experience Program (XP), an 11-week virtual internship program in which students worked with teams of students from other schools to design, develop, and publish mobile games. Both of them continued to work on those projects in Fall 2021, along with 8 other FSU students, through MassDIGI's DigiStudio, in which students work in teams to iterate and improve those live published games. Several of these students earned Field Study credit for their experience. The Game Design program returned to in-person learning for the Game Studio Capstone, and again worked with developers from Rockstar New England as mentors to help guide student teams to create successful games; all three games from AY21-22 were published, and showcased at end-of-semester postmortem presentations. Finally, the Game Design program collaborated with the Nursing department on a grant proposal for the Elaine Nipcon Murien Foundation on a five-year initiative to establish an interdisciplinary simulation laboratory to support the Nursing curriculum. As a first step in this collaboration, Game Design students in the Virtual Reality Development class developed a prototype/proof of concept training app for the Nursing simulation lab in the Spring 2022 semester.

B. 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 | https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/game-design-bs | Formative assessments for each PLO occur in individual courses. A summative assessment occurs in each student's 4 th year, during portfolio review. | Spring 2022 |
| 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 | | | |

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 th year, 1 st 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. | 4 th 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. |
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You may use this comment box to provide any additional information, if applicable:

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 |
|---|--|
| <p>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)</p> | <p>All students are required to pass a portfolio defense prior to their capstone course.</p> |
| <p>Who interprets the evidence? What is the process? (e.g. annually by the curriculum committee)</p> | <p>Student portfolios are reviewed by at least one Game Design faculty member and the Internship Director.</p> |
| <p>What changes have been made as a result of using the data/evidence? (close the loop)</p> | <p>Portfolio reviews provide important data used to revise and update the curriculum.</p> |

C. Assessment Plan for Program/Department

- I. Insert the program or department Assessment Plan
- 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?

Yes

D. Program Review Action Plan or External Accreditation 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.

The Action Plan from the most recent Program Review was completed in January 2022. It is attached at the end of this report.

| 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 |
|---|--|---|-----------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
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- 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?

Yes

II. Programs with external Accreditation:

- i. Professional, specialized, State, or programmatic accreditations currently held by the program/department.
- ii. Date of most recent accreditation action by each listed agency.
- iii. Date and nature of next review and type of review.

| List key issues for continuing accreditation identified in accreditation action letter or report. | Key performance indicators as required by agency or selected by program (licensure, board or bar pass rates; employment rates, etc.)(If required.) | Update on fulfilling the action letter/report or on meeting the key performance indicators. |
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E. Departmental Strategic Initiatives

| Accomplished Initiatives AY 21-22 <small>Add more rows as needed</small> | Corresponding Strategic Plan Goal & Strategy <small>Goal # followed by Strategy # ex: 1.3</small> | Indicate if a Diversity, Equity and Inclusiveness (DEI) Goal |
|---|---|---|
| Completed Program Review Final Action Plan. | Goal 5, Strategy 5.2 | |
| Offered students in Game Studio capstone course professional networking and mentorship opportunities through partnership with Rockstar Games | Goal 1, Strategy 1.2 | |
| Virtual Reality Development course collaboration to create prototype/proof of concept training app for Nursing department simulation lab | Goal 1, Strategy 1.3 | |
| Hosted 3rd annual Fall Game Jam in Fall 2021, required for all Game Design students, and served as host site for Global Game Jam in Spring 2022 | Goal 3, Strategy 3.6 | |
| Visions: honors exhibition of student work from the Communications Media department, including alumni panel | Goal 3, Strategy 3.6 | |
| Multiple faculty members awarded MSCA Professional Development Funds for professional development courses and research/creative practice projects | Goal 4, Strategy 4.4 | |
| Monthly department Admissions tours and participated in shadow program for accepted students. Faculty participation in Open Houses in Fall 2021 and Future Falcon Day in Spring 2022. | Goal 5, Strategy 5.3 | |

| Planned Initiatives for AY 22-23 <small>Add more rows as needed</small> | Associated Strategic Plan Goal & Strategy <small>Goal # followed by Strategy # ex: 1.3</small> | Indicate if a Diversity, Equity and Inclusiveness (DEI) Goal |
|---|--|---|
| Update Game Design Mission Statement to align with current University and School of Arts & Sciences mission statements | Goal 1, Strategies 1.1 and 1.2 | |
| 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, and to outreach to high schools and technical schools | Goal 5, Strategy 5.3 | |

F. Departmental Reflection:

Take this section to reflect on--

- 1) *Initiatives that you may be considering for 22-23 academic year that you did not already capture above.*

- 2) *Any other thoughts or information that you would like to share.*

**Game Design Program Review
Action Plan in Table Format
Jan 6, 2022**

| 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 |
|---|---|--|-----------------------------|------------------|---|
| Assessment | | | | | |
| 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 |
| 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 |
| Curriculum | | | | | |
| 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 |
| 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 | Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Game Design Faculty | Ongoing | | Include progress report update in Annual Departmental Plan Reports |
| 5. Create additional Programming for Games courses as replacement or alternative for required Computer Science I & II courses | The 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 | | Include progress report update in Annual Departmental Plan Reports |

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|---|---|--|--|--|---|
| 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 |
| Faculty | | | | | |
| 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 | | Include progress report update in Annual Departmental Plan Reports |
| Diversity | | | | | |
| 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 |
| Professionalization | | | | | |
| 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 |
| 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 a MassDIGI would bring to the program and the University | Program Coordinator, Game Design Faculty | Ongoing. We have begun working with them to host students for Summer XP and DigiStudio programs, and plan to continue collaboration. | | Include progress report update in Annual Departmental Plan Reports |
| Student Support | | | | | |
| 12. Provide additional portfolio support for students by creating a dedicated course or | Evaluator, faculty, and students report that students need more support and scaffolding | Program Coordinator, Game Design Faculty | Ongoing | | Include progress report update in Annual Departmental Plan |

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|---|---|--|---------|--|--|
| incorporating portfolio development and feedback into core curriculum | to develop portfolios that will serve them in a professional capacity. | | | | Reports |
| 13. Work with Career Services Center to develop a comprehensive Career Development support plan for students starting in 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 |
| 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 |