



Memorandum of Understanding

This MOU has been read and approved by:

Department Chair: David Waldman Date: 2/12/2025
David Waldman

Dean, College of the Arts : Royce W. Smith Date: 2/12/2025
Royce W. Smith

Interim Vice Provost Academic Programs: Pei-Fang Hung Date: 2/12/2025
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Program Review Summary Memorandum of Understanding

Department of Cinematic Arts
College of The Arts
February 2025

This document serves as a summary of the Program Review findings and a Memorandum of Understanding outlining the consensus reached by the Department of Cinematic Arts, the College of The Arts, and the Division of Academic Affairs, based on the recently conducted program review (self-study in June 2023, external site visit in November 2024, and final external reviewer report December 2024). This MOU describes the goals to be achieved and the actions to be undertaken by all parties to this MOU during the next program review cycle. Progress toward goals is to be addressed in an annual report.

The Department of Film and Electronic Arts changed its name to the Department of Cinematic Arts in AY 2023-2024. The department offers a BA in Cinematic Arts with concentrations in directing, producing, cinematography, postproduction, screenwriting, documentary production, and critical studies. The program provides students with a comprehensive foundation in cinema history, theory and criticism, visual and written storytelling, and film production skills. In addition, the department recently developed a self-support certificate program in “Screenwriting Essentials” that is offered through College of Professional and Continuing Education (CPaCE). The Certificate Program is an online course designed to impart a fundamental understanding of screenplay writing.

This department was previously reviewed in 2017 with a MOU in 2020. It was recommended for the department to: 1) develop and implement a formal assessment procedure; 2) post their mission and PLOs on the website; 3) Explore and broaden relationships with the film and television industry; 4) revise curriculum to balance course offerings; 5&7) purchase and maintain equipment essential for teaching; 6) work with the College and Academic Affairs to replace or rebuild facilities that pose health and safety risks and provide adequate space to teach; and, 8) develop a hiring plan for faculty and support staff. The department has made significant progress in all recommended areas. Notably, a major renovation of the department’s primary building provided discipline-specific facilities that meet the needs of our students and allow the Department of Cinematic Arts to grow.

Resources reviewed for the report:

1. Self-study 2023
2. Self-study Addendum 2024
3. External review 2024
4. MOU 2020
5. Department of Cinematic Arts website



Strengths Identified in the Reports

- **Curriculum (common core courses):** In line with the Executive Order 1071, the department revised its curriculum, which was implemented in Fall 2024. Under the new curriculum, students share 33 units of foundational studies with the remaining 21 units of the 54-unit major designated for focus on their chosen discipline. As part of this revision, the Options in Narrative Production and Theory and Practice have been discontinued. These changes align the program more closely with current trends and needs in the field, ensuring that graduates are well-prepared to enter the workforce.
- **Curriculum (addition of CINE100):** CINE100 Orientation to Cinematic Arts provides an introduction to the campus, the academic study of cinema, and the department while upper-division courses offer students more opportunities to deepen their critical studies, writing skills, and production skills.
- **Curriculum (promote cross-disciplinary collaboration):** To emphasize ethical and collaborative work (PLO #5), the department has created opportunities for cross-disciplinary collaboration. For example, CINE 385: Collaborative Script Development allows students from different disciplines to jointly develop scripts, and CINE 422 Production Workshop II & CINE 424 Production Workshop III encourage teamwork among students from various cinematic disciplines.
- **DEI:** In response to changes in the discipline and broader societal trends, changes have been made to be more inclusive. This includes modifying the films they show in class to reflect greater ethnic and gender diversity and promoting parity in faculty and in-class exercises. The department has also initiated an Inclusivity Across All Media (IAAM) committee to focus on addressing DEI in the curriculum and the broader film industry. Additionally, the department has partnered closely with BMAC and ATS in a pilot program to add captions to student films. These partnerships have proved invaluable in providing the necessary accommodations for students with accessibility needs, particularly as they navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by Cinematic Arts' technology-heavy curriculum.
- **Enrollment:** The department has a steady FTES and student headcount overtime, with most recent data showing Fall 2023 at 336.3 FTES and 727 student headcounts. Data about Fall 2024 FTEs (530.1) was shared with the reviewers in a self-study addendum. The student headcount has increased from 607 in Fall 2015 to 827 in Fall 2024. The percentage of students enrolling within the major has also increased from 86.3% in Fall 2016 to 95.9% in Fall 2023.
- **Time to Degree:** The average time to degree and average total units earned for first-time, first-year students have decreased over the review period, with most students now graduating in 4.1 years and earning 123.9 units.
- **Graduation Rates:** The 2-year transfer graduation rates increased from 66.7% to 76.9%, with a peak of 79.7% for the Fall 2017 cohort. This is a significant improvement, with the department performing above the university average and benchmarks. The recently streamlined curriculum should help students graduate in a more timely manner.



- **Faculty:** The department has made strategic full-time faculty hires which have positively impacted their Student/Faculty ratios (SFRs). As of Fall 2021, the department had 10 tenured and tenure-track faculty, alongside 28 lecturer faculty. At that time, the student-to-faculty ratio stood at 29.5:1, based on FTEFs for both T/TT faculty and lecturers. By Fall 2023, this ratio had improved to 27.7:1. This balance has been key to ensuring an optimal learning environment that facilitates student engagement and individualized attention. In addition to their teaching duties, faculty members also serve as mentors, advisors, and collaborators.
- **High Impact Practices (HIPs):** The department participates in Beach XP and has added a first-year experience to their curriculum. They promote internships through their CINE 492 Internship course. The department requires a capstone course for every subdiscipline.
- **Facilities:** As noted in the 2020 MOU follow-up, the department has renovated the UTC Building with upgrades that will house a new 2400 sq ft sound stage and add a new equipment room on the first floor. They have also updated 2 computer labs.

Concerns Noted in the Reports:

- **Staff:** Although the college and department addressed recommendations for faculty hiring from the last MOU, there has been no additional staff hiring over the review period. The reviewers report that “Cinematic Arts is alarmingly understaffed, creating huge safety and efficiency issues for the students and department.” Staff play a pivotal role in the department, such as administrative support, coordinating film production activities, providing technical assistance, and engaging in other discipline-related activities.

Opportunities for Development noted in the reports:

- **Assessment:** The department has clearly identified Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) on their website. They completed an extensive assessment of PLO #4: “*Utilize cinematic language to communicate themes, emotions, and points of view to an audience*” by analyzing artifacts across one (1) lower-division and one (1) upper-division courses in AY 2022-23. Based on their analysis of results, they closed the loop by making some curricular changes. The department has the opportunity to continue this work to assess all the other PLOs throughout the next review period.
- **Curriculum:** Improving the consistency of course content across sections by establishing “TT/T track heads” for each track in the new curriculum. These track heads will ensure consistency across sections and serve as the point of contact for students in their track.
- **Graduation Rates:** The first time, first year (FTFY) graduation rates are significantly better than the previous review period, although they trended downward over the current review period. Four-year rates decreased from 43.9% in cohorts starting in 2013 to 35.1% in cohorts starting in 2018 (with a high of 58.7% in 2015).
- **DFW Rates:** The department notes that CINE/FEA 486: Alternative Media has a high DFW rate with an average of 16.4% (ranges from 8.7% to 28.57% between Fall 2015 and



Spring 2023). Since this is a writing-intensive capstone course, the department is working on developing strategies to support students meet the rigorous expectations of the course. This includes providing additional writing support and offering more writing practice earlier in the curriculum.

- **Faculty:** While the number of students has increased by 12% between 2022 and 2024, the number of full-time faculty has decreased by 17% during the same period. As a result, the full-time faculty-to-student ratio has declined from 1:60 in 2022 to 1:80 in 2024. Hiring additional faculty should be considered.
- **Facilities:** The department requires an additional screening room, ideally one that can accommodate 100 students for large lecture classes. It should be equipped with a high-quality DCP digital projector, a large, luminous screen, and 7.1 surround sound speakers. Additional recommendations, as resources allow, may include a mixing and color correction space for audio mixing and color grading of final projects, as well as a loading dock (which the reviewers recommend prioritizing for safety reasons).

Recommendations:

It is therefore agreed that the Department of Cinematic Arts will collaborate with the College of The Arts and Division of Academic Affairs to:

1. A new comprehensive assessment plan is needed to evaluate the efficacy of the new curriculum. Provide an annual assessment report (due June 1) including progress made towards the actions agreed to in this MOU to the COTA dean, the Vice Provost for Academic Programs, and the Coordinators for Program Review and Assessment. The review cycle will be from 2023-2030. A comprehensive self-study will be due June 2030 for 2030-2031 Academic Year program review process.
2. Continue to track and analyze student success data as the recent data was not available during this review period.
3. Analyze efforts recently implemented to reduce DFW rates in CINE/FEA 486 and close the loop with any findings.
4. Develop a hiring plan for faculty and staff as resources allow.
5. Work with the College of The Arts and Division of Academic Affairs to address and prioritize facility concerns related to health and safety risks.

This MOU has been read and approved by.

Chair, Cinematic Arts: David Waldman

Dean, College of the Arts: Royce Smith

Interim Vice Provost of Academic Programs: Pei-Fang Hung

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