

## **DEPARTMENT OF PHOTOGRAPHY**

Creative Arts Division

### **Program Review: January 2009**

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### **Description and Mission of the Program A, B, C, D**

The Photography program at De Anza College provides a high quality educational experience both for students who have general pursuits and for those pursuing a career in photography or in ancillary areas. Students may complete an AA Degree in Photography, or take one or more courses for personal enrichment. A Certificate of Achievement is offered for the completion of a smaller sequence of courses. Course work is transferable to four-year institutions as both general education curriculum and as those specific to a degree in photography. Courses easily fulfill degree units, general education units, and elective units transfer. Our goal is to provide an excellent technical and aesthetic education that prepares students for transfer to four-year institutions such as San Jose State University, San Francisco State University, East Bay State University (formerly Hayward SU), UC Berkeley and for entry level employment and self-employment in a broad range of career paths. An education in photography is pertinent not only to photography itself, but to a broad range of fields including the film industry, graphic arts, advertising, journalism, web design, and the sciences. In reviewing our department's success rate, and making a comparison to the division as a whole, our past objective was to increase our overall rate of success and we have done so.

### **Retention and Growth**

#### **A**

Since the 2006 program review we have increased our success rate from 73% to 80%. The previous goal was met and exceeded. It should be noted that our numbers, always good, increased. Out of the general enrollment of approximately 25,000 students, the Photography Department can claim 1,200: about 5%. Departmentally we can continue to strengthen our methods of identifying those students who are not performing optimally and those who require additional assistance and provide them with aid and direction. There is also the ongoing process of student recruitment. And, as the area of photography is so dynamic, there is the very important issue of remaining current with both technology and corresponding curriculum.

Recruitment, outreach and retention efforts have been made through a number of approaches, including the Career and Technical Education (CTE) program, parent nights and improved and expanded divisional, departmental and faculty web pages. A Visiting Artist program has recently been created. Additional outreach to local high

school photography classes continue to be pursued. Invitations to our facility will be offered several times a year in order to familiarize all potential students within our community with our course offerings, degrees and certificates. These efforts will be continued, and can be enhanced by greater appeal to students in other creative disciplines, to non-art majors and to a community of interested learners wishing to gain new skills: most recently in the rapidly expanding and changing field of digital photography.

## B

As stated above, out of the general enrollment of approximately 25,000 students, the Photography Department can claim 1,200: about 5%. This is significant. Our enrollment is up slightly from the 2005-2006 academic year, and our retention and success percentages overall have increased each year. This year's retention rate was 89%; up from 84% two years ago. This year's success rate was 77%; up from 71% two years ago. It should be noted that our minority enrollment has both increased and become more diversified over the last several years. The specific figures for the targeted groups (Hispanic, African, Filipino) has gone from a success rate of 58% in '05-'06 to 71% in '07-'08. Retention for these groups is up five percentage points from '05-'06. Most significant is our Pacific Islander enrollment, which has doubled. We show steady and consistent improvement and growth for these groups over the past three years.

## C

As with all academic disciplines, the photography program relies on students' knowledge of basic reading and writing. In addition, an understanding of the fundamentals of mathematics is required in photography. Assignments are given to enhance these skills, and instructors are available on an individual basis to assist students in successfully completing the course work and program. All our courses have minimum, basic skills advisories.

Digital photography will be our most important growth factor in the coming years. Digital photographic education is essential to those new to the field of photography, those working in the industry, and other industries requiring photographic skills. New classes have been and will continue to be developed and added to the existing curriculum. New courses over the last three years include: Phtg.4, Introduction to Digital Photography, Phtg. 65, Intermediate Digital Photography, and Phtg. 77X,Y,Z, Special Topics in Photographic Studies. It should also be noted that other degrees (Film/TV, Graphic Arts, Painting and Drawing, and Journalism) require the basic photographic skills courses our department offers.

Our new facility, VPAC, includes a "smart classroom" which includes a state-of-the-art sound system and photographic and video equipment enabling instructors to

present information in an impressive and enriching way for the students. We have also added new equipment in A-65, photography lab, including 15 IMac computers with relevant imaging software; 3 Epson printers; 10 enlargers; 10 scanners; and 14 digital cameras. A-92 has recently been remodeled and equipped to address the needs of our photography department along with the related Graphic Arts studies.

### **Student Equity**

#### **A**

Statistical information for the photography department for the 2007-08 academic year shows a near equal mix of Asian (339) and White (341), followed by Latino (172) students. These numbers are up considerably from 2004-05: Asian (210), White (273) and Latino (80), respectively. “Underrepresented” groups include all other recorded ethnicities, as the numbers drop considerably. However this generalization should be used only in its relationship to overall college enrollments and area demographics. The department has a somewhat greater number of female students, 612 as compared to 507 male students, and “life long learners” can be considered to be those students who are 25-30 years of age and older: 364 students out of a total of 1119.

#### **B, C**

The photography department has revised and written new curriculum with student equity in mind. The addition of new courses as technology and interest demand, provides a track of courses which articulate with the State and UC systems, allowing continuation of study in the field. Photography is a dynamic field: currently it is in an almost constant state of flux. Keeping up with the related digital technology is a challenge, but it is constantly discussed, actively used on professional and personal levels, and certainly in demand. Digital photography is a newsworthy item on an almost daily basis whether new equipment/technology is becoming available, philosophical issues are being debated, or new ways of photography are being integrated into the arts or sciences.

### **Budget Limitations**

#### **A**

It is extremely important to note that De Anza College has built the most equipped digital photography facility within the San Francisco Bay Area. The photography department has been an integral part of the campus for over 25 years and over the past ten years has replaced old equipment, actively acquired new digital equipment, computers, and software. It has developed new curriculum, revised old curriculum,

and built new classrooms to support these courses; this has been a steady, ongoing process since 2000. The demand for photographic studies will expand as more and more students/potential students acquire digital SLR cameras and software. The quality output of these cameras can now compete with and exceed traditional methods thus creating a learning curve for digital photography that is as great or greater than past traditional methods.

## **B**

Ten years have been invested in the development of the finest digital photography program and facility in the Bay Area and it coincides very precisely with the emergence of sophisticated digital imagery now being produced. The consequences of limited funding and/or the elimination of the photography program would be detrimental and far-reaching. Photography is a broad and fertile field that has many applications beyond its own scope. Its skills are required in a variety of different fields including the film industry, graphic arts, architecture, interior design, performance, documentation, web design, the sciences, and can be considered to touch just about every field. The reduction or elimination of the photography program would affect a great number of students by not preparing them for the many and varied careers associated with photography.

## **Additional Comments**

The success of our program and our students can be measured by our excellent course retention and course completion figures. We have been very successful at maintaining and increasing our enrollments against the demands for new technology and the specter of an economic downturn. It has been important to incorporate the instruction of digital imaging software (Adobe Photoshop and Lightroom). We are now transitioning to a newly equipped digital darkroom facility in addition to maintaining our traditional darkroom. The photography industry and market is now concentrating its attention on digital technology. As a college program we must follow closely behind in order to adequately prepare our students. Our greatest emphasis must be on providing access to new industry technology, which in turn will increase enrollments. As a college we are situated in the heart of technological innovation, and we must reflect this in our classrooms. Traditional photography is not as yet disappearing.

Photography permeates almost all activities; on a daily basis we are confronted with photographic imagery through work, play, and personal endeavors. It is a visual language read, interpreted, and communicating to all on a variety of levels. Its importance should never be underestimated.

“The curriculum of Fine Art in general and specifically still photography are not easily dismissed from a comprehensive educational infrastructure, nor should they be. For substantial benefit can be gained by the critical and determined exercise of a student’s imagination and intuition. Without the experience of creative invention, I believe students come to rely solely on rational thinking as the only reasoned method of dealing with the vagaries and complexities of modern life. Mysticism, symbolism, visual literacy in the history of human behavior has relevance and significance. Instruction in Art provides student with the assurance that giving form to the mysterious and the “unsubstantiated” has merit. We are enriched and encouraged by attempting to know the unknown.” Bill Mattick 2009