3D Animation and Visual Effects
Advisory Committee Meeting
May 21, 2010

In order to provide better program input, advisory committee members had earlier requested students present their work. Therefore, the meeting started with student presentations. Following the presentations, a brief meeting was conducted and members were asked to provide input related to the following areas.

What is your opinion of allowing students a "creative license" to complete personal projects, contests, etc., vs. asking students to complete an outline of learning resources designed to cover specific learning goals, followed by a project with specified guidelines?

- Creativity is great, but students must meet the needs of the clients. Consider having students enter the SkillsUSA 3D Animation Contest.

- Doing freelance, I always try to make sure paid projects are done first. Of course contests help a student stretch their skills, usually to reach the next level if they hope to win, and also keep them interested in advancement. I believe one personal project/contest per semester sounds like plenty, however.

- It is important that specific areas and competencies be worked on. Also, any student entering the workplace is not going to be given total "creative license". There will be protocols, processes, and in place workflows that will have to be conformed to.

- It is important to focus on a desired outcome since when they go to work the client is key in the design process.

- Although creative license is good in this industry, I have found I am directed 99% of the time. Very rarely do I have clients who don't have specific goals they want accomplished, so I think it is good to learn how to take direction and run with it.

- Creatives are free spirits, but need to be contained. You must limit the amount of personal work. Learning new skills should be the focus. Personal exploration is healthy to maintain creativity, however.

- This industry is a very "conformist" environment; this type of training typically attracts "non-conformist" students. They need to learn to conform.

What emerging trends should the program be preparing to address in the curriculum?

- Adobe CS5 has many features that will extend what is possible and students need to know this new software.

- O3D or equivalent online 3D interactive streaming software, used for games and 3D training.

- Stereoscopic 3D – everybody at NAB had something to do with 3D. Bigger buzz than HDTV when it first appeared at NAB 15 – 16 years ago.

- Flash may be passé in just a few years – when it disappears as a standard on the Web, (which is the direction it appears to be going.) It will most likely phase out elsewhere as well.

- ZBrush, Matchmove, Nuke

- In the architectural field we are starting to use Revit for everything. Architects are able to get a rendering as well as a final plan.

- Jobs are hard to find.

What is the value of social networking as it pertains to the 3D industry?

- Social networking is great for networking and promoting oneself. Some tutorial sites are now on Twitter and Facebook, such as Smashing Magazine.

- It is always good to have a selection of resources you can access when you get stuck on a project. It is also a good way to stay up on current trends, you just have to make sure it doesn't take too much time.

- Important. Helps keep a person abreast of new technologies and developments. Forums and groups such as Creativecow.net or LinkedIn.com are valuable learning assets.

- It is important, but not as important as good solid skills in the area. A focus of mastery in an area is a huge plus.

- Having learned everything I know on my own, I rely heavily on forums.

- The best thing you can do to market yourself is to be social. Do at least something.

Additional Suggestions/Comments:

- Students need projects where they all create all objects, materials and such on their own. I suggest you have them complete a tutorial and then create an original piece that uses all the same tools and techniques as the tutorial.

- I liked seeing the presentations, it gave me a good idea of where the students really are.

- Gnomon workshop is a good resource and area for contests if you don't already use it.

- Make sure demo reels are clean. No missing polygons in models, etc.

Additions/Deletions from curriculum:

- Might consider Adobe Premiere Pro in your curriculum.

- For 3D – more camera work, lighting and rendering options, and texturing where applicable.

- Need to keep an eye on Final Cut Pro. Bad rumor is that Apple is going to dumb it down and make it more prosumer/consumer and concentrate less and less on professional needs. Might need to look at Premiere Pro or Avid if this trend develops.

- I think you've got it covered. Possibly include plug-ins, in addition to the software, and perhaps an advanced 3D tracking software. Rendering efficiency.

Top 3 technical skills/software apps a student should know.

- Design & Creativity skills and drawing/sketching

- Communication skills and presentation skills

- Learn the **principles** – the software is just a tool.

- Layout a must – integrated with Photoshop. Framing things, (how to balance and weight)

- ActionScript – 3 suggestions

- Photoshop – 4 suggestions, including one "a must have skill"

- After Effects – 3 suggestions

- Maya – 2 suggestions

- Revit

- Motion Graphics

- Time management/time tracking – creatives are usually left on their own.

Advice/Suggestions you would offer to students training in this area, preparing for work.

- No matter how much technical skill you have, you still need creativity and design skills to get the job.

- Time management is key. Most real projects, at least in the 3D and animation field, have very limited time frames. Need to learn techniques to get the most bang for your buck. (The same can be said for your time in the classroom.)

- Learn as much as possible about general principles and doctrines, but specialize in areas you are good at.

- Work hard and focus on the art. At the end of the day it is about how the content looks and how well it can be passed on to the next artist.

- Make sure you are able to take direction from a client. Make sure you can portray back to them exactly what they are going to get. Pay attention to detail!

- Be confident.