

Program Review Evaluation Team Report

Overview/Introductory Statement

The Program Review Evaluation Team was assembled as part of WSU's Business/Multimedia Program self-study. The team consists of members involved in education, instructional design, and the multimedia industry. The committee was charged with reviewing the content of the Business/Multimedia program, the resources available to the program, the strengths and weaknesses of the program, and evidence of student learning. The committee was also asked to note any concerns or recommendations for the program.

Program Strengths

The Network Technology and Business Multimedia program at Weber State University demonstrates strengths in many areas across all of the standards.

Standard A – Mission Statement

- The mission statement defines the outcomes of the program, and supports the mission statement of the College of Applied Science and Technology, as well as the mission of Weber State University.

Standard B – Curriculum

- The curriculum for the Multimedia degree is consistent with the program's mission to provide excellent education, academic programs, research, and service. Course curriculum is determined through faculty planning and review of exit interviews, internship evaluations, student teaching evaluations, advisory committee recommendations, and regular feedback gathered from the industry.

Standard C – Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment

- Student learning outcomes and assessment was rated the highest of all the standards, with strengths in every element. Learning outcomes support the mission and goals of the program, and are directly linked to curriculum and overarching goals. Assessment measures are clearly defined, and outcomes are measured, reviewed, and published in an annual program report. Faculty members meet regularly to review assessments and feedback and set goals to further develop the program. Program change is driven by feedback from the advisory board, employers, and other external community members and industry experts. Student outcomes are evaluated every semester through exams, project work, portfolio building, and feedback from employers. Regular reports on learning outcomes are available, and review of these reports, as well as feedback from the community and industry is used to improve and further develop the program. Students of this program report that the projects, hands-on experience, class sizes, and skills learned help them feel strongly prepared for the workforce. All students interviewed report that they would strongly recommend this program to a friend.

- The yearly program assessment report published by the department outlines the outcome assessments, changes, and goals that were evaluated and implemented due to recommendations made in previous reviews (Standards C and H).

Standard D – Academic Advising

- Concerning academic advising, students interviewed reported that they received adequate assistance in seeking placement in internships, employment, or graduate school. Students are advised individually by faculty members. Those interviewed reported an 80% placement rate for students graduating from this program.

Standard E – Faculty

- Too small a faculty size was a major concern expressed by all who were interviewed; however, faculty composition, qualifications, and professional development were all rated very highly. Faculty of this program are required to meet the academic qualifications of having obtained a master's degree, and are encouraged to participate in professional development activities such as research, trainings, and conferences. All faculty members must set yearly goals, and are evaluated by students of the program each semester. A peer review of all faculty members occurs every three years. All evaluations are reviewed by the department chair and areas of concern are discussed with faculty. Students from this program report without dissent that faculty and staff of this program are knowledgeable, strongly skilled, helpful, and available. All faculty are active in professional organizations.

Standard F – Program Support

- One of the strongest elements of the NMT major is program support. The Dean and department chair are involved in selecting support staff. The facilities, equipment, and labs are readily available, up-to-date, and meet the needs of the faculty and students in the program. Hardware and software are kept up-to-date and renewed on a regular schedule.

Standard G – Relationships with External Communities

- This program has excellent relationships with external communities. The program's advisory committee and internship program allow for students and faculty to meet with and receive feedback from members active in the multimedia and technology industries on a regular basis. Relationships, roles, and contributions to the program are clearly defined and documented. The advisory committee (consisting of community members, program alumni, and industry experts) meets yearly, and minutes from these meetings are made available.

Program Challenges

The Program Review Evaluation Team identified the following areas of concern:

Standard A – Mission Statement

- None

Standard B – Curriculum

- The program should be able to demonstrate that there is an appropriate allocation of resources for curriculum delivery that is consistent with the mission of the program, the number of graduates, and the number of major/minor and general education SCHs produced.
 - The Team felt that while the program is able to demonstrate an appropriate level of allocation of resources in regards to equipment and software, the human resource factor is an area in need of additional resources. Faculty are overloaded with teaching responsibilities and do not have time to devote to other areas that could benefit the program such as recruitment, advising, scholarship fundraising and community outreach.
- Courses to support the major/minor/general education/service programs are offered on a regular basis to ensure students are able to complete graduation requirements in a timely manner.
 - The Team sees strength in the availability of the general education courses, but feels there is need for additional course availability of some of the other courses. Specifically the courses that are only offered once every few semesters or once a year. Creative delivery modes should be considered.

Student C – Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment

- None

Standard D – Academic Advising

- The program has a clearly defined strategy for advising their major/minor, or BIS students that is continually assessed for its effectiveness.
- Students receive appropriate assistance in planning their individual programs of study
 - While the Team recognized there has been some improvement in the area of Academic Advising, this area was mentioned a few times by interviewed students. The Team suggests providing students a recommended order for course completion, and encourage students to meet with an advisor early on in their academic career.

Standard E – Faculty

- The program should have appropriate procedures for the orientation of new contract/adjunct faculty.

Standard F – Program Support

- The number and capabilities of the support staff are adequate to meet the mission and objectives of the program.
 - The Team recognizes the efforts that faculty and staff make to meet the needs of the students. Students indicated, however, that additional tutoring and lab hours during non-traditional times would be helpful.

Standard G – Relationships with External Communities

- None. The program has excellent relationships with external communities and should continue to build these relationships in the future.

Areas Where the Program Did Not Meet the Standards and Why

The Business/Multimedia area of NTM met or exceeded all standards.

Recommendations for Change – Suggested Changes for Meeting Standards

In general, the Business/Multimedia program of NTM is well equipped with up-to-date hardware, software and impressive facilities. Students feel well served and faculty/staff are grateful for these excellent resources. Students in the multimedia track enjoy the attention and help they receive from faculty and staff. However, the full-time faculty to adjunct ratio seems to be out of balance in favor of the adjuncts. While the adjunct faculty seems to do a stellar job at teaching, they do not typically participate in additional duties like advising or serving on university/department committees. The burdens of these types of duties fall exclusively to the full-time faculty who are often struggling to keep up with load and over-load courses being taught. As a consequence services like advising seem to suffer. One student mentioned that they had yet to meet with an advisor in the program even though they were completing their first year. Another area of concern mentioned by students relates to course offerings. They seemed to feel that some of the classes required for a major/minor were not offered frequently enough during the year. Students also express interest in extended lab hours and subject specific tutors.

As was mentioned, NTM has a large number of adjunct faculty teaching in the department. Every adjunct our group spoke with spoke highly in almost every way of the program, faculty and students. There was, however, one area that each adjunct felt needed some additional attention. A more comprehensive orientation to the department and program as well as ongoing support and information regarding teaching assignments, workloads and instruction would be appreciated.

The team's final observation pertains to department/program branding. In meetings with the Dean, the students, the advisory board members, and other WSU faculty concerns regarding branding consistently came up. It is possible that this issue has been resolved with the recent program name change from TBE to NTM, although some of the concerns seem to run a little deeper than a name change alone may be able to address. While the team does not have specific recommendations pertaining to this issue, it wants to make sure it was on the radar as needing attention and review.

Additional recommendations and comments from the review team

Many of the students and the NTM advisory board members interviewed indicated a need for an animation course(s) to strengthen the Multimedia area of the program. Adding this area to the curriculum would greatly enhance the skills of graduates and increase their employability.