# **Master of Science in Digital Design**

# Institutional Response to Consultant Report

March 14, 2021

The College of Architecture and Design as well as the NJIT administration are pleased to respond to the largely complimentary Consultant Report relating to the Master of Science in Digital Design (MSDD) Proposal prepared and submitted by Peter Weishar, Professor of Themed Experience and Director of Themed Experience Graduate Programs at the University of Central Florida. We thank Professor Weishar for his review of both this MSDD Program as well as the one for the related but larger Master of Fine Arts in Digital Design (MFADD) inside of which the MSDD nests. The modular and nested nature of the constituent components, from individual courses, to certificates, to intermediate MS degree, to terminal MFA degree is carefully constructed. This purposeful and consistent structure is reflected in the nearly identical comments found in the Consultant Reports reviewing each proposal and outlining opportunities for improvements in each program. They have therefore, logically, prompted similar Institutional Responses in this document for the MSDD and the one written in response to the MFADD Consultant Report.

As Professor Weishar has identified no major concerns regarding this proposal, this Institutional Response will focus primarily on Professor Weishar's helpful suggestions to strengthen our proposed MS in Digital Design. The responses are organized by the headings in the report under which the observations and suggestions are made including those preceding the final summary "Recommendations".

# **Objectives**

Describe whether or not the objectives and underlying principles of the program are sound and clearly stated.

"As the program proposal proceeds and develops, it would be beneficial to further delineate how digital delivery will be utilized to enhance the learning experience rather than convenience."

The Hillier College has a long history of leveraging digital media and computational technology in the service of design. Starting in 1985 with what was arguably the first fully digitally delivered design studio in the United States, we are now well into our fourth decade of deep inquiry into how to design using digital media. We have identified and successfully developed the "intimate space of instruction" when virtualizing the classroom and studio.

We have been remotely educating design students for 12 months under the forced educational experiment necessitated by COVID-19. During this time, we have seen an increase in both quality and quantity of student output using remote learning on robust, student-owned, workstations throughout significant parts of our curriculum. Provided students have high powered graphics processing and an array of large screen display at a reasonable cost, high quality and convenient remote digital delivery is

not geographically constrained. The "low residency" descriptor used to describe the program allows for disaggregation and optimization of the component parts of the educational experience. That is to say, students only need to come to campus when there is a unique and memorable physical or social experience that leverages specialized shops, labs, or physical group instruction. Carefully curated and constructed course content that can be virtualized and delivered off campus through an NJIT portal will only enhance learning. Rapidly evolving and increasingly ubiquitous VR and AR technological interfaces will also play a part in bridging optimal physical and virtual learning experiences in design (and in many other disciplines). The University has also recently secured a three-year \$385 K grant from the Martinson Family Foundation for a program that will be known as VITAL@NJIT — Virtual, Immersive, Technologically Augmented Learning. This program will provide faculty training in novel classroom technologies such as artificial intelligence, augmented reality and virtual reality, with the goal of enhancing student-instructor interactions in both traditional and online learning environments. This program is expected to yield benefits for the proposed MSDD (and MFADD) program.

# **Need for Program**

### Student demand

"[Students] expressed concern with possible redundancy in the curriculum."

Currently, the 120 credit undergraduate Digital Design program offers breadth with limited opportunities for depth. Many of the limited elective offerings at the undergraduate level will be offered instead at the graduate level. NJIT allows students with a sufficiently high GPA to take up to four graduate courses at undergraduate tuition rates that count toward both an undergraduate degree and graduate degree. They would do this by enrolling in NJIT's dual BS/MS Program. Much of what the current students may perceive as redundant, especially that which develops specialized disciplinary knowledge and skill, will be available to them at the graduate level only.

"There was greater interest in certificate programs"

These students can certainly benefit from the opportunity to develop specialized skills and knowledge in the graduate level courses as they earn credits towards a graduate degree. Working towards the MSDD these students will be earning certificates in one of the Digital Design concentrations, thus, adding increasing depth to their knowledge.

# **Resources to Support the Program**

"The fact that the library branch is located within the same building will undoubtedly ensure greater usage by the graduate students. In addition, the library has ample meeting spaces as well as spaces for students and faculty to congregate and work. This will lead to greater usage and sense of community while students are on campus."

It is important to note that while the Littman Library facility offers a noteworthy physical experience for both students and faculty, the library staff also provide substantial support in the promotion and distribution of digital assets in the curated collection. Students love the library space and the physical books, periodicals and even a wide collection of physical building and finish materials that they use in their design presentations. They also benefit from remote access to a growing collection of digital books and databases.

## **Course Development**

"There is an ambitious list of elective titles that 'will be developed'. The proposal would benefit if the list of electives had course descriptions."

As Professor Weishar notes in his final recommendations "broader faculty engagement in course syllabus development for required and proposed elective courses" is needed to optimally calibrate course specifics. The list of elective courses that could be offered fall within the purview of the faculty offering them from semester to semester.

While the proposed degree has sufficient coursework to meet all stated degree and institutional learning objectives, more electives will provide a richer array of learning experiences for students. As enrollment increases, we expect to be able to support a greater variety of elective courses which will be developed by the faculty. Those preparing the proposal did not wish to presume, dictate or constrain the specific treatment of each elective subject that, over time, will be proposed by individual faculty members. The preliminary elective list was built in consultation with some members of the faculty who will likely formally propose them when there is sufficient enrollment in the program. Once fully built out the list may include:

UI/UX Concentration

Research Methods

Interactive Media Seminar

Web Development and Interactive Web Design

Visual Interface and Information Design/Techniques of Information Visualization

**Human-Centered Interactive Design** 

AR and VR for Entertainment

Design Entrepreneurship & Marketing

Digital Production and Pipeline Management

**Animation Concentration** 

History and Theory of Animation Seminar

**Scripting for Animators** 

Life Drawing

Advanced Modeling and Rigging

Visual Interface and Information Design/Techniques of Information Visualization

**Digital Compositing** 

**Motion Graphics** 

AR and VR for Entertainment

Digital Production and Pipeline Management

Game Design and Interactivity Concentration

**Research Methods** 

Games and Players

Real-Time Environment Design

Life Drawing

Interactive Web Design

**Game Production** 

Toy Design

AR and VR for Entertainment
Design Entrepreneurship & Marketing
Digital Production and Pipeline Management

"The proposal states that 'Much of the technical and creative content for all courses has been developed at the undergraduate level'. While it is certainly an advantage for an institution to have undergraduate and graduate in the same discipline, extra care should be taken to clearly delineate the differentiation between the undergraduate and graduate experience."

The primary differentiator between an undergraduate and graduate Digital Design degree experience is in the depth of exploring a particular theme or subject. The 15 credits of *Digital Arts* coursework are the closest in content and treatment between the undergraduate and proposed graduate curricula. This is intentional since the same firm foundation is required in both. The majority of graduate coursework, however, is differentiated by the specialized knowledge and skills students will gain upon successful completion.

"The aspirational institutions mentioned above: Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD), and University of Southern California (USC), all have a more robust animation curriculum that delves into context through history of animation and cinema, movement, life drawing throughout the course of study as well as extensive coursework in storytelling, and aesthetics. The MSDD covers many of these elements, but not with the same depth and breadth as the other programs."

As we move to develop the elective coursework listed above we expect to increase the depth of specialized treatment in the three advanced concentrations, thereby closing the gap between our offerings and the mature graduate programs in our list of aspirational institutions.

#### **Student Enrollment**

"The projected enrollment of a significant number of working professionals and teachers will most probably mean a number of students will opt to become part time students. This will put some strain on course scheduling early in the program when the smaller, more spread out, cohort dictates limited course offerings."

In identifying both external and internal undergraduate certificate seekers and building a platform for each to take the same courses simultaneously, we believe we can build sufficient enrollment in each course. The key will be in our ability to adequately market and advertise to the external audience. A digital marketing plan has been prepared and marketing of the certificates which are constituents to MSDD is expected to start in the immediate future.

## Faculty

"The Hillier College of Architecture and Design also lists a well-qualified and diverse group of adjunct faculty. The majority of adjuncts do not have bios and education listed on the NJIT website

making it necessary to web search almost all of those listed. With such a well-qualified and diverse group, it would serve the college well to list basic backgrounds for the adjunct faculty on the site."

We continue to build our capacity to add helpful and relevant information to our website. We will add this biographical background information to our adjunct profiles. These adjunct profiles will be added to our website prior to the start of this coming Fall '21 semester.

## **Assessment**

The secondary measures such as job placement have too many variables due to economic shifts. For example, academic programs are no less effective during the COVID-19 economic downturn. Placement as a secondary measure would need to be comparative of similar institutions and programs in the same geographic region.

This is a helpful observation. We will be mindful of these qualitative and quantitative categorical distinctions when performing evaluative assessment diagnostics.

## Recommendations

As stated earlier, there are no serious concerns regarding this proposal and most recommendations below should be viewed as suggestions for enhancement rather than solutions for serious deficiencies. This is an excellent proposal and NJIT has shown it has the academic integrity, rigor, facilities, staff, faculty, and leadership to support a thriving MS in Digital Design.

### 1. Facilities

"...Digital Design students, especially those concentrating in animation, will require a screening room with a high-resolution, large-scale screen. The Weston Lecture Hall [2] with its capacity of about 50 is a good size. There appears to be an effort made to provide acceptable sound. However, the 70" screen currently installed will not be useful for critique and viewing of portfolio pieces. The venue would need a significantly larger screen or projection surface with at least 4k resolution."

This same issue was noted by some faculty during the walkthrough of the newly refurbished space in Weston Lecture Hall 2. While everyone is extremely pleased with the final outcome, this was a deficiency that can be fairly easily remedied by the addition of either a larger high resolution screen or projector. An edge-to-edge screen in that fairly small lecture hall would also be an attraction for people to want to come to campus for a more immersive group experience.

"The high-end computer lab in place is excellent. The 16 workstations with dual monitors and fast CPUs emulate a professional working environment and undoubtedly proves to be a useful and popular venue. As the MS develops and expands, as noted in the proposal, there will be a need for a second similarly equipped lab. Graduate students in digital design will spend an inordinate amount of time in such a lab. The most successful graduate digital labs organize the workstations into clusters of three to five computers to facilitate collaboration rather than a layout of rows of computers."

This lab may or may not be a priority in the short to mid-term depending on how successfully we are able to provide virtual high powered graphics computation to students anywhere. The low residency option in this degree will likely lower the demands on these types of facilities but as the program grows, it will benefit from the capacity to host lab based classes to help in physical group experiences.

"While not imperative, NJIT may consider creating a VR/AR lab space with something similar to a CAVE system that incorporates 270-degree projection, surround sound, and motion sensors. This kind of virtual space facilitates a shared VR experience and has proven useful for pre-visualization and immersive interactive experience. NJIT has faculty with profound expertise in VR space. The MSDD can leverage that knowledge and experience to create a VR space. Students in UI/UX, Gaming and animation will most probably utilize similar spaces as they progress into professional careers."

This is an excellent suggestion. This is an example of a physical facility that can create a truly memorable interactive and immersive instructional experience. It is also one that is inherently social and engaging. We are currently evaluating our space usage in our main campus facility and will add this to our 5 year development plan.

## 2. Industry Engagement

"The close proximity to one of the international centers for art and design gives NJIT a significant advantage over most institutions with Digital Design programs. This proximity, naturally, is part of the impetus for this proposal. It would be to the advantage of the program to create industry advisory councils for each of the concentrations in Digital Design. These councils would be in addition to the College Advisory Board. A council consisting of 5-8 prominent chief creative officers and principals of major design and animation firms in the area would help the MSDD by raising the profile of the program, helping the program to recognize and adapt to industry trends, place graduates, help recruit and provide high-level adjunct instructors, review student work, recruit potential donors, and increase student satisfaction.

Since the majority of MS candidates will seek careers as practitioners in the field, it would also be advantageous to involve industry in the portfolio review process. For example, faculty could review applications for admission, at the end of the 15-credit sequence for those MS candidates who require additional courses and at mid-year for first- and second-year students. An industry review panel can evaluate portfolios at the end of each academic year. The industry review is also a valuable assessment tool and an excellent method of gauging the professionalism of student's creative work in the aggregate."

This is sound advice. As part of an ever evolving culture of continuous improvement required by many of our external design program accreditors, industry perspective and feedback is a key component in all of our professional design majors and graduate programs. We already include industry partners and experts as part of our Advisory Board, Dean's Council, and every semester in our final studio reviews. We regularly invite industry partners and alumni in to provide direct valuable commentary to students in one-on-one

and group critiques. We accept the specific recommendation offered to form a separate council consisting of 5-8 prominent chief creative officers and principals of major design and animation firms in the area. We will begin by gathering a longer list of appropriate people in consultation with the C-suite executives already serving on our Advisory Board.

# 3. Faculty

"...most faculty interviewed did not know which specific courses they might teach in the new curriculum. Most stated they were aware of the program and had been to meetings but were not familiar with course specifics. This can be remedied with broader faculty engagement in course syllabus development for required and proposed elective courses. In addition, it would be difficult to determine the requisite skill set and experience of incoming faculty without a detailed plan of which faculty will cover which courses."

The College's leadership team has recently adopted a process for course assignments and enrollment planning that project out an entire academic year. This requires the kind of advance planning and conversations that will engage faculty on both existing as well as new course offering. The deep reservoir of talent in the New York Metropolitan Area can also be utilized to help develop and keep current fully online asynchronous course work in the short term.

# Master of Fine Arts in Digital Design

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# **Objectives**

Describe whether or not the objectives and underlying principles of the program are sound and clearly stated.

"As the program proposal proceeds and develops, it would be beneficial to further delineate how digital delivery will be utilized to enhance the learning experience rather than convenience."

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We have been remotely educating design students for 12 months under the forced educational experiment necessitated by COVID-19. During this time, we have seen an increase in both quality and quantity of student output using remote learning on robust, student-owned, workstations throughout significant parts of our

curriculum. Provided students have high powered graphics processing and an array of large screen display at a reasonable cost, high quality and convenient remote digital delivery is not geographically constrained. The "low residency" descriptor used to describe the program allows for disaggregation and optimization of the component parts of the educational experience. That is to say, students only need to come to campus when there is a unique and memorable physical or social experience that leverages specialized shops, labs, or physical group instruction. Carefully curated and constructed course content that can be virtualized and delivered off campus through an NJIT portal will only enhance learning. Rapidly evolving and increasingly ubiquitous VR and AR technological interfaces will also play a part in bridging optimal physical and virtual learning experiences in design (and in many other disciplines). The University has also recently secured a threeyear \$385 K grant from the Martinson Family Foundation for a program that will be known as VITAL@NJIT — Virtual, Immersive, Technologically Augmented Learning. This program will provide faculty training in novel classroom technologies such as artificial intelligence, augmented reality and virtual reality, with the goal of enhancing student-instructor interactions in both traditional and online learning environments. This program is expected to yield benefits for the proposed MFADD (and MSDD) program.

# **Need for Program**

#### Student demand

"[Students] expressed concern with possible redundancy in the curriculum."

Currently, the 120 credit undergraduate Digital Design program offers breadth with limited opportunities for depth. Many of the limited elective offerings at the undergraduate level will be offered instead at the graduate level. NJIT allows students with a sufficiently high GPA to take up to four graduate courses at undergraduate tuition rates that count toward both an undergraduate degree and graduate degree. They would do this by enrolling in NJIT's dual BS/MS Program. Much of what the current students may perceive as redundant, especially that which develops specialized disciplinary knowledge and skill, will be available to them at the graduate level only.

"There was greater interest in certificate programs"

These students can certainly benefit from the opportunity to develop specialized skills and knowledge in the graduate level courses as they earn credits towards a graduate degree. Working towards the MFADD (or nested MSDD) these students will be earning certificates in one of the Digital Design concentrations, thus, adding increasing depth to their knowledge.

# **Resources to Support the Program**

"The fact that the library branch is located within the same building will undoubtedly ensure greater usage by the graduate students. In addition, the library has ample meeting spaces as well as spaces for students and faculty to congregate and work. This will lead to greater usage and sense of community while students are on campus."

It is important to note that while the Littman Library facility offers a noteworthy physical experience for both students and faculty, the library staff also provide substantial support in the promotion and distribution of digital assets in the curated collection. Students love the library space and the physical books, periodicals and even a wide collection of physical building and finish materials that they use in their design presentations. They also benefit from remote access to a growing collection of digital books and databases.

"There are two lecture spaces and a student gallery that can be used for screening and display of student work. The large lecture room does not seem conducive to film screening. It is, however, an excellent space and can serve for visiting artists and lecturers. The smaller room has good acoustics and a reasonable sound system; however, the screen is rather diminutive for the size of the room. Students and faculty need as large a screen as possible in this space with at least a 4K resolution to view rendered images at the equivalent of film resolution for it to be used as an effective critique, screening and learning space for digital media."

This same issue was noted by some faculty during the walkthrough of the newly refurbished space in Weston Lecture Hall 2. While everyone is extremely pleased with the final outcome, this was a deficiency that can be fairly easily remedied by the addition of either a larger high resolution screen or projector. An edge-to-edge screen in that fairly small lecture hall would also be an attraction for people to want to come to campus for a more immersive group experience.

# **Course Development**

"There is an ambitious list of elective titles that 'will be developed'. The proposal would benefit if the list of electives had course descriptions."

As Professor Weishar notes in his final recommendations "broader faculty engagement in course syllabus development for required and proposed elective courses" is needed to optimally calibrate course specifics. The list of elective courses that could be offered fall within the purview of the faculty offering them from semester to semester.

While the proposed degree has sufficient coursework to meet all stated degree and institutional learning objectives, more electives will provide a richer array of learning experiences for students. As enrollment increases, we expect to be able to support a greater variety of elective courses which will be developed by the faculty. Those preparing the proposal did not wish to presume, dictate or constrain the specific treatment of each elective subject that, over time, will be proposed by individual faculty members. The preliminary elective list was built in consultation with some members of the faculty who will likely formally propose them when there is sufficient enrollment in the program. Once fully built out the list may include:

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Visual Interface and Information Design/Techniques of Information Visualization
Human-Centered Interactive Design
AR and VR for Entertainment
Design Entrepreneurship & Marketing
Digital Production and Pipeline Management

Animation Concentration

History and Theory of Animation Seminar

Scripting for Animators

Life Drawing

Advanced Modeling and Rigging

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Digital Compositing

Motion Graphics

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Digital Production and Pipeline Management

Game Design and Interactivity Concentration
Research Methods
Games and Players
Real-Time Environment Design
Life Drawing
Interactive Web Design
Game Production
Toy Design
AR and VR for Entertainment
Design Entrepreneurship & Marketing
Digital Production and Pipeline Management

# **Digital Production and Pipeline Management**

"The proposal states that 'Much of the technical and creative content for all courses has been developed at the undergraduate level'. While it is certainly an advantage for an institution to have undergraduate and graduate in the same discipline, extra care should be taken to clearly delineate the differentiation between the undergraduate and graduate experience."

The primary differentiator between an undergraduate and graduate Digital Design degree experience is in the depth of exploring a particular theme or subject. The 15 credits of *Digital Arts* coursework are the closest in content and treatment between the undergraduate and proposed graduate curricula. This is intentional since the same firm foundation is required in both. The majority of graduate coursework, however, is differentiated by the specialized knowledge and skills students will gain upon successful completion.

"The aspirational institutions mentioned above: Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD), and University of Southern California (USC), all have a more robust animation curriculum that delves into context through history of

animation and cinema, movement, life drawing throughout the course of study as well as extensive coursework in storytelling, and aesthetics. The MSDD covers many of these elements, but not with the same depth and breadth as the other programs."

As we move to develop the elective coursework listed above we expect to increase the depth of specialized treatment in the three advanced concentrations, thereby closing the gap between our offerings and the mature graduate programs in our list of aspirational institutions.

### **Student Enrollment**

"NJIT logically assumes the MS degree program will have a larger cohort of candidates than the MFA. As noted earlier, this will, lead to smaller sized studio classes in the second year of the program. Aside from that, there are no issues with potential enrollment numbers.

We are aware of this challenge to reach healthy enrollment numbers in the second and third studios of the four-studio sequence and early on; we can offer these penultimate studios with blended cohorts each working in parallel on their specialized studio content.

"The projected enrollment of a significant number of working professionals and teachers will most probably mean a number of students will opt to become part time students. This will put some strain on course scheduling early in the program when the smaller, more spread out, cohort dictates limited course offerings."

In identifying both external and internal undergraduate certificate seekers and building a platform for each to take the same courses simultaneously, we believe we can build sufficient enrollment in each course. The key will be in our ability to adequately market and advertise to the external audience. A digital marketing plan has been prepared and marketing of the certificates which are constituents to MFADD is expected to start in the immediate future.

# **Faculty**

"The Hillier College of Architecture and Design also lists a well-qualified and diverse group of adjunct faculty. The majority of adjuncts do not have bios and education listed on the NJIT website making it necessary to web search almost all of those listed. With such a well-qualified and diverse group, it would serve the college well to list basic backgrounds for the adjunct faculty on the site."

We continue to build our capacity to add helpful and relevant information to our website. We will add this biographical background information to our adjunct profiles. These adjunct profiles will be added to our website prior to the start of this coming Fall '21 semester.

#### **Assessment**

The secondary measures such as job placement have too many variables due to economic shifts. For example, academic programs are no less effective during the COVID-19 economic downturn. Placement as a secondary measure would need to be comparative of similar institutions and programs in the same geographic region.

This is a helpful observation. We will be mindful of these qualitative and quantitative categorical distinctions when performing evaluative assessment diagnostics.

#### Recommendations

As stated earlier, there are no serious concerns regarding this proposal and most recommendations below should be viewed as suggestions for enhancement rather than solutions for serious deficiencies. This is an excellent proposal and NJIT has shown it has the academic integrity, rigor, facilities, staff, faculty, and leadership to support a thriving MFA in Digital Design.

### 1. Facilities

"...Digital Design students, especially those concentrating in animation, will require a screening room with a high-resolution, large-scale screen. The Weston Lecture Hall [2] with its capacity of about 50 is a good size. There appears to be an effort made to provide acceptable sound. However, the 70" screen currently installed will not be useful for critique and viewing of portfolio pieces. The venue would need a significantly larger screen or projection surface with at least 4k resolution."

To reiterate the answer given above: this same issue was noted by some faculty during the walkthrough of the newly refurbished space in Weston Lecture Hall 2. While everyone is extremely pleased with the final outcome, this was a deficiency that can be fairly easily remedied by the addition of either a larger high resolution screen or projector. An edge-to-edge screen in that fairly small lecture hall would also be an attraction for people to want to come to campus for a more immersive group experience.

"The high-end computer lab in place is excellent. The 16 workstations with dual monitors and fast CPUs emulate a professional working environment and undoubtedly proves to be a useful and popular venue. As the M[FA] develops and expands, as noted in the proposal, there will be a need for a second similarly equipped lab. Graduate students in digital design will spend an inordinate amount of time in such a lab. The most successful graduate digital labs organize the workstations into clusters of three to five computers to facilitate collaboration rather than a layout of rows of computers."

This lab may or may not be a priority in the short to mid-term depending on how successfully we are able to provide virtual high powered graphics computation to students anywhere. The low residency option in this degree will likely lower the demands on these types of facilities but as the program grows, it will benefit from the capacity to host lab based classes to help in physical group experiences.

"While not imperative, NJIT may consider creating a VR/AR lab space with something similar to a CAVE system that incorporates 270-degree projection, surround sound, and motion sensors. This kind of virtual space facilitates a shared VR experience and has proven useful for pre-visualization and immersive interactive experience. NJIT has faculty with profound expertise in VR space. The MSDD can leverage that knowledge and experience to create a VR space. Students in UI/UX, Gaming and animation will most probably utilize similar spaces as they progress into professional careers."

This is an excellent suggestion. This is an example of a physical facility that can create a truly memorable interactive and immersive instructional experience. It is also one that is inherently social and engaging. We are currently evaluating our space usage in our main campus facility and will add this to our 5 year development plan.

# 2. Industry Engagement

"The close proximity to one of the international centers for art and design gives NJIT a significant advantage over most institutions with Digital Design programs. This proximity, naturally, is part of the impetus for this proposal. It would be to the advantage of the program to create industry advisory councils for each of the concentrations in Digital Design. These councils would be in addition to the College Advisory Board. A council consisting of 5-8 prominent chief creative officers and principals of major design and animation firms in the area would help the MSDD by raising the profile of the program, helping the program to recognize and adapt to industry trends, place graduates, help recruit and provide high-level adjunct instructors, review student work, recruit potential donors, and increase student satisfaction.

There will be a percentage of MFA candidates who will choose an academic career path, however, it is probable that the majority of MFA candidates will seek careers as practitioners in the field. It would also be advantageous to involve industry in the portfolio review process. For example, faculty could review applications for admission, at the end of the 15-credit sequence for those MS candidates who require additional courses and at mid-year for first- and second-year students. An industry review panel can evaluate portfolios at the end of each academic year. The industry review is also a valuable assessment tool and an excellent method of gauging the professionalism of student's creative work in the aggregate."

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## 3. Faculty

"...most faculty interviewed did not know which specific courses they might teach in the new curriculum. Most stated they were aware of the program and had been to meetings but were not familiar with course specifics. This can be remedied with broader faculty engagement in course syllabus development for required and proposed elective courses. In addition, it would be difficult to determine the requisite skill set and experience of incoming faculty without a detailed plan of which faculty will cover which courses."

The College's leadership team has recently adopted a process for course assignments and enrollment planning that project out an entire academic year. This requires the kind of advance planning and conversations that will engage faculty on both existing as well as new course offering. The deep reservoir of talent in the New York Metropolitan Area can also be utilized to help develop and keep current fully online asynchronous course work in the short term.

#### 4. Animation Curriculum

"Since the proposed program is an MFA in Digital Design in Animation, it could be argued that this degree focuses more upon the digital and production aspects of animation rather than the more traditional character animation found in competing programs. In industry, digital production and skills are known as technical direction. Technical Directors (TD's) are the creative artists and designers who deal with lighting, editing, textures, world building, modeling and almost every aspect of CG animated film creation except for actual character animation. Almost all major studios have four to five times more TDs than animators. The recommendation here would be for NJIT to be clear in their literature and recruitment that the MFADD has a more direct path toward technical direction for digital animation rather than character animation."

We will clarify our recruitment literature and program description to reflect the strength our MFADD Animation Concentration has to produce graduates suitable to enter a technical direction until we build out our coursework in cinema, motion, screenwriting, as well as more coursework in drawing for animation.