

Georgia Film Academy
Academic Advisory Council Meeting
May 21, 2020

Steve Pearce welcomed the Academic Advisory Council to the WebEx meeting.

Tristan Denley thanked everyone for their efforts in moving to remote instruction.

Ian Feinberg acknowledged the good work that has been done on assessment.

Jeff Stepakoff noted that, as we enter the 6th year of the GFA, the state of the GFA is strong. IATSE has never seen a work stoppage at this level (97% of film/television professionals are out of work), and never has there been such demand for streaming media. The industry is developing protocols for how to work in the new environment, and the GFA is partnering with others to provide leadership. The GFA will offer an online free Covid Compliance Course on to how to work safely on set, and the course will be available widely.

He described the new period that we are entering as GFA 3.0. GFA has become the state's entertainment arts conservatory, making our expertise available to a range of populations. We will be adding esports in the fall through a partnership with Georgia State, and the new MFA program at UGA will also begin in the fall. Secondary schools, continuing education, associate programs, and bachelor programs continue as part of a total media ecosystem in the state.

There will be a reorganization of GFA leadership. Aaron Levy will focus exclusively on secondary education. Wendy Quinn Guttin will become Director of Academic Affairs. Josh Lee will be Director of Strategy and Operations.

We are planning to go back to in-person instruction in the fall, but we will be ready to pivot at a moment's notice. The GFA will be rebranding under the slogan "We Make Makers."

The members of the AAC introduced themselves and gave update on their respective institutions.

Dan Kelly discussed how GFA faculty filmed their hands-on content and made it available through online lectures. They developed policy and procedures about how to interact safely on set, and this has become the basis for the Covid Compliance Course.

Steve Pearce noted that we haven't yet had a chance to test the emergency notification system.

Jon Sizemore discussed how instructional design for fall GFA courses will follow best practices for online instruction. We are planning for a prepared response in case of a resurgence of the coronavirus, working on a hybrid model with content potentially front-loaded toward the beginning of the semester.

Wendy Quinn Guttin discussed communication with the students during the pivot to remote teaching, and she solicited best practices for texting students. We have about 250 students registered for summer, which is on the level with last summer. We are providing discs for AVID students for pickup along with kits for craft courses. She discussed measures for students checking out laptops for GFA classes.

Dan Kelly discussed how GFA 1000 courses in spring altered their instruction to plan for the culminating student productions, and once the campuses are open again, students can come back in voluntarily and shoot the productions they planned. Any GFA student who wants to come in and get hands-on experience will have that opportunity. Before any student can register for an internship, she/he will take a GFA Set Ready assessment so that we can ensure their safe behavior in production situations. He discussed plans for potentially operating fall classes where students come to GFA campuses in limited groups after having done home exercises.

We discussed the advantages of online/hybrid instruction in terms of broader access to students across the state; that students who find it difficult to reserve a whole day in their schedule for a face-to-face GFA class might be better able to take online classes; and that students taking these classes might be better prepared for working on sets observing new safety protocols.

Jon Sizemore talked about efforts to reorganize the GFA memorandum of understanding with TCSG and USG to accommodate SACSCOC and USG Legal Affairs guidance. The text has been reorganized to meet SACSCOC expectations, but there have been no substantive changes to the previous document. The document will be circulated after the meeting for signature.

SACSCOC did an on-site visit to Pinewood Studios, and they raised no concerns. The experience overall was very positive.

Wendy Quinn Guttin talked about proposed AVID course title changes to clarify the courses and their sequence for students. She talked about the assessment efforts at GFA, and she noted that assessment documentation will be distributed to partner institutions soon.

Josh Lee previewed the “We Make Makers” GFA website, which will be launched in the coming weeks. Each partner institution will create a landing page to communicate information about GFA to their students, and GFA will provide a template for these landing pages.

Jeff Stepakoff noted that there is no dedicated production soundstage facility in Savannah, which has limited the growth of their industry. GFA and its partners have put together a RFP to distribute to potential industry partners.

GFA debuted our first NEXUS courses in spring 2020, and we will continue to expand those. We will make sure we have both upper and lower level courses available for scheduling. Josh Lee noted that the esports initiative will roll out as a beta class in the fall at Georgia State, and we hope to expand that.

The MFA program at UGA will be focused on above-the-line training of professionals who can have a career staying in Georgia. We plan on moving toward a consortium model with other institutions. This fall we are planning that the proseminar class and the postproduction for MFA students could be offered in a traditional format or in a hybrid model. AVTF (audiovisual technology and film) high school teachers have been being trained at GFA, and high school teachers are being certified in AVID postproduction.

Mary Wearn volunteered to serve as Secretary for the coming year. There were no nominations for Vice-Chair. The next Academic Advisory Council meeting will be in the fall.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:21pm.