JANET ESQUIROL. Art Director & Educator.

esquirol.co   janetesquirol.com   emailme@janetesquirol.com   917.797.0565

In April 2013 James L. Richardson, Associate Professor & Program Coordinator for the LaGuardia Community College New Media Technology program, invited Janet Esquirol to provide an external peer evaluation of the final report of LaGuardia's New Media Technology Periodic Program Review (PPR)

EVALUATOR'S BASIC BIO & CREDENTIALS:
Assistant Professor of Media Arts & Technology at City University of New York BMCC, Ms Esquirol specializes in advertising & publishing, online and off, and remains a consulting Creative Director for Sylvan Social Technology©. With multiple degrees in areas of art & technology, most recently in motion graphics and user interface design, this professor has brought unique experience to the classroom over the past decade as an adjunct professor at Parsons School of Design, Pratt Institute, SUNY FIT, AiNYC, and now as full time faculty at CUNY. She remains involved in the design world through various professional memberships, such as The Art Directors Club and the AIGA. Conferences and events, such as Reasons To Be Creative, TEDactive and TEDxEast, fill her calendar. Previous experience includes: 10 years running a boutique multimedia art direction studio (Esquirol & Co.) which created interactive and print based design solutions for a variety of local clients, as well as working as a Senior Designer at a full service ad agency in Providence, RI creating print, web, radio and TV campaigns for regional and national accounts & as the Art Director for Dan's Papers, a weekly magazine out of Bridgehampton, NY.

EVALUATOR'S EDUCATION:
Master of Fine Arts: Design and Technology, May 2004
Parsons School of Design (New School University), New York, NY
Thesis Advisors: Andi Dezso, James Conklin, & Abe Geil

Continuing Education Courses, 2000-2001
Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI

Bachelor of Arts: Fine Art - Majors: Design and Print Making, May 1999
Connecticut College, New London, CT
Thesis Advisors: David Smalley, Andrea Wollensak, & Bridget Baird

EVALUATOR'S OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS:

On April 22nd 2013 I had the pleasure of visiting the New Media Program at LaGuardia Community College where I met Associate Professor & Program Coordinator James L. Richardson, a handful of students and a couple of colleagues, while touring classrooms and lab facilities. During this visit I saw a growing and engaged student body in the New Media program at LaGuardia, students who are clearly getting a great deal of support, knowledge, training and interest from their faculty and advisers on campus. Students in the program are actively using the department facilities to prepare to either enter a demanding and competitive industry or to go on to a four year senior college. There is a well documented shortage of technically proficient and trained employees to join the web technology sector; obviously this degree program is educating for an "in demand area" of our economy. The New Media program at LaGuardia is also fulfilling an important need in the Long Island city community where there is no neighboring program with similar open enrollment and financially accessible education of this high quality.

Based on my understanding of the PPR report, my visit to the campus, and my deep understanding of both the industry and over half a dozen similar degree programs in NYC, I find that the curriculum is aligned with the most modern standards and expectations of the local workplace. While it is wonderful to see this nimble, dedicated and impressive work from the lean team of one full-time faculty member, I do not believe this staffing equation is in the best interest of a department so poised to grow beyond expectations. It is my recommendation that the program increase the number of full-time faculty to facilitate tackling the smart agenda seen in *Section V. Action Plan* of the PPR report. In the case this is not possible I would strongly recommend finding staffing support in other areas, such as: A) Perhaps adjunct faculty with seniority could use their weekly office hour to better support the department initiatives. B) Increase the number of work-study positions for students; perhaps for tutoring and other lab or classroom support roles. C) Regularly provide release time for full-time and part-time faculty to facilitate their continued study of our

rapidly changing technology landscape, and how best to educate the future workforce. Because, as I've stated in my observations: this is a growth area in the economy and is drawing record numbers of students to study at most comparable programs in the country. With more staff, support and publicity I think you'd see enrollment and industry attention increase in The New Media Program at LaGuardia quite a lot.

On page 17 the PPR brings up naming systems for similar departments

> *"Articulation and assessment of program equivalency becomes a serious issue when digital media based programs have no consistent naming or departmental conventions across universities systems. For example the digital media program at one school may be housed in the Art Department and called Media Design while at another institution the same program might be located in the Computer Department and called Communication Technology."*

For the most part I agree with the point the PPR makes; that it is time from program to program...across the country...across the board...to ask: what do other New Media Programs call themselves and where do their students and credits easily transfer to? Perhaps it is time to talk about setting a standard. The confusion this varied departmental naming convention creates for students is a concern on multiple campuses, but this thought process brings me to an important point: The title of the New Media department at LaGuardia is very explicit, and it is important and correct that the focus is on, and should remain on: NEW. This means that all the faculty must be on the cutting edge of this industry. It cannot be overstated how rapidly this industry changes and updates, and how thirsty it is for talent with NEW technical know how. Without the right amount of departmental and campus support for a program of this nature a curriculum would stagnate and a department could fail to meet the mission in its own title (it will no longer be new)! An important part of the solution is providing a model of constantly pursuing self education, and it is clear from my observation of The New Media program that the enrolled students have excellent mentors in their faculty. The Program Coordinator should continue the excellent work of keeping his curriculum ahead of the tech curve and finding adjunct faculty who can teach to current industry standard, as well as maintaining the great idea outlined on Page 5 of the PPR for maintaining standards in teaching in the New Media program:

> *"Blackboard course sites were created with lecture materials, homework assignments, audiovisual supplements; ePortfolio influenced projects, and revised syllabi to enable all New Media adjunct faculty to be ready to teach and address the programmatic, departmental and college wide goals on the first day of class. It was hoped that this "course in a box" strategy would give the program coordinator the latitude to research emerging areas, while insuring that critical new media skills are taught by qualified professionals in a consistent manner across semesters."*

The PPR also states:

> *"Textbooks need to be selected yearly as major vendors such as Adobe, Apple, and Microsoft implement new software."*

And the PPR is right on target about this, but I want to reiterate that the pace of updates to the new media industry are bigger and more complex than most departments have time to comprehend. In fact: Adobe, Apple and Microsoft are also having a hard time maintaining pace with the global open source initiative. For example in the first quarter of 2012 Adobe introduced "The Creative Cloud" in an attempt to keep up, and in their press release stated:

> *"SAN JOSE, Calif. —April 23, 2012 — Adobe Systems Incorporated (Nasdaq:ADBE) today announced Adobe® Creative Cloud™, a radical new way of providing tools and services* that will change the game for creatives worldwide. A subscription-based offering, Adobe Creative Cloud is a hub for making, sharing and delivering creative work and it is centered around a powerful release of Adobe Creative Suite® 6 software (see separate release), packed with innovation across its industry-defining design, Web, video and*

digital imaging tools." -http://www.adobe.com/aboutadobe/pressroom/pressreleases/201204/042312AdobeCreativeCloud.html

Adobe says this is 'game changing' for creatives worldwide because the software giant would be able to modify and release updates at a pace that finally comes closer to the daily evolving open source initiative. Thankfully it is clear from my visit to LaGuardia campus and speaking with the Program Coordinator James Richardson that the New Media Program has long been aware of, and correctly responding to, the lightning speed of changing technology impacting our profession, for better or worse, on a near daily basis. The curriculum at the LaGuardia New Media program correctly reflects the same global trends in higher education seen elsewhere in similar degrees which are trying to teach not only developments that come from a rapidly evolving tech savvy consumer culture, or changes stemmed from revisions put forward from software giants, but mainly trying to teach newly adopted developments from Open Web Platform Standards as described here.

> *"W3C standards define an Open Web Platform for application development that has the unprecedented potential to enable developers to build rich interactive experiences, powered by vast data stores, that are available on any device. Although the boundaries of the platform continue to evolve, industry leaders speak nearly in unison about how HTML5 will be the cornerstone for this platform. But the full strength of the platform relies on many more technologies that W3C and its partners are creating, including CSS, SVG, WOFF, the Semantic Web stack, XML, and a variety of APIs." -http://www.w3.org/standards/*

The PPR states on page 7 that one third of the New Media student body at LaGuardia is female (which is higher than the national average according to a survey also cited in the PPR) and with that in mind I would recommend the department should bring in or implement ways to inform the female student body about further opportunities for learning and advancement specifically for women in technology, and do what they can to encourage these students to go further in programming and digital studies.

Finally I will state that overall, based on reading the data in the PPR and my site visit, The New Media Program looks great and the students who fully take advantage of all that's offered should be pleased with their results whether transferring to a senior college or joining the workplace. This was an excellent observation; I overwhelmingly agree with the findings of the PPR and I strongly support the Action Plan as laid out in the PPR from page 28 onward.