

Annual Program Report 2024-2025

Game Design

The report(s) should be inclusive of all levels, degrees (i.e. certificates, bachelor's and master's), modalities and locations.

Department: Communications Media

Department Chair: Jeff Warmouth; Samuel Tobin (Game Design Coordinator)

Department Assessment Committee Contact: Randy Howe

This document is to be kept in the department and an electronic file is due to the AVP of Institutional Research and Planning by June 1, 2025.

Section I: Program Assessment (please complete this section for each program in your department)

Program: Game Design, B.S.

A. Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) (Educational Objectives)

I. List of PLOs and the timeline for assessment

PLO #	PLO – Stated in assessable terms	Where are the learning outcomes for this level/program published? (please specify) Include URLs where appropriate.	Timing of assessment (annual, semester, bi-annual, etc.)	When was the last assessment of the PLO completed?
1.	Students will be able to create original games following game development best practices.	The six program learning outcomes (PLOs) are listed on the university catalog website under Game Design, BS , which is linked to this URL, https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/game-design-bs	Formative assessments for each PLO occur in individual courses. A summative assessment occurs in each student's 4th year, during portfolio review.	
2.	Students will be able to demonstrate competency with industry-standard software and tools.			
3.	Students will be able to effectively collaborate on iterative team-based projects.			May 2024

4.	Students will be able to apply principles of game systems and programming.			
5.	Students will be able to apply visual art foundations and best practices to the creation of game art.			
6.	Students will be able to analyze games, design, and play from a variety of perspectives.			

- II. **PLO Assessment** (Please report on the PLOs assessed and/or reviewed this year. Programs should be assessing at least one each year.)

Using the table below, list and briefly describe the **direct method(s)** used to collect information assessing whether students are learning the core sets of knowledge (K), skills (S) and attitudes (A) identified as essential.

PLO # (from above)	Assessment description (exam, observation, national standardized exam, oral presentation with rubric, etc.)	When assessment was administered in student program (internship, 4 th year, 1 st year, etc.)	To which students were assessments administered (all, only a sample, etc.)	What is the target set for the PLO? (criteria for success)	Reflection on the results: How was the “loop closed”?
1, 2	Portfolio	4 th year	All	80% success	

You may use this comment box to provide any additional information, if applicable:

Any comments?

Summary of Findings: Briefly summarize the results of the PLO assessments reported in Section II above combined with other relevant evidence gathered and show how these are being reviewed/discussed. How are you “closing the loop”?

Reflection Prompt	Narrative Response
Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine that graduates have achieved the stated outcomes for the degree? (e.g., capstone course, portfolio review, licensure examination)	<p>All students are required to pass a portfolio defense prior to their capstone course: COMM 4880 Internship or GAME 4100 Game Studio. Students who complete COMM 4880 are assessed by the Internship Supervisor using the Communications Media Department’s Internship Appraisal Form, which is shared with the Game Design faculty.</p> <p>Students who complete GAME 4100 are reviewed by their peers using a numerical scale with written comments. In addition, they self-assess through the Game Studio Postmortem Report, a written self-reflection of the capstone semester as well as their experience in the Game Design program and the curriculum. These are shared among the Game Design faculty, but so far we have not done any formal assessment based on the data.</p> <p>It may be helpful to create a Game Studio Appraisal Form for faculty to complete, to work in parallel to the Internship Appraisal Form. It would also be possible to retroactively complete these for our students who have completed Game Studio.</p>
Who interprets the evidence? What is the process? (e.g. annually by the curriculum committee)	<p>Student portfolios are reviewed by Game Design faculty members. Students seeking COMM 4880 Internship are also reviewed by the Internship Director.</p> <p>Game Design faculty regularly discuss the results of the portfolio reviews, and students’ preparation for and performance in GAME 4100 Game Studio.</p> <p>GAME 4100’s Postmortem Reports and Peer Reviews are reviewed by the Game Design faculty team-teaching the course, and are periodically reviewed & discussed by all Game faculty.</p>
What changes have been made as a result of using the data/evidence? (close the loop)	All of these assessments provide important data used to revise and update the curriculum.

B. Assessment Plan for Program/Department

- I. Insert the program or department Assessment Plan (This is an independent plan from what is reported in this document). **Attached Watermark P&SS**
- II. Explain any changes in the assessment plan including new or revised PLOs, new assessments that the program/department plans to implement and new targets or goals set for student success.
- III. If you do not have a plan, would you like help in developing one? ____ Yes

C. Program Review Action Plan or External action Letter/Report

Annual Reflection/Follow-up on Action Plan from last Program Review or external accreditation (only complete the table that is appropriate for your program)

I. Programs that fall under Program Review:

i. Date of most recent Review: **2020-2021**

ii. Insert the Action Plan table from your last Program Review and give any progress towards completing the tasks or achieving targets set forth in the plan.

Specific area where improvement is needed	Evidence to support the recommended change	Person(s) responsible for implementing the change	Timeline for implementation	Resources needed	Assessment Plan	Progress Made this Year
Assessment						
1. Work with Director of Assessment to develop an assessment plan	The program does not have a formal assessment plan. We currently have only one method of assessment -	Director of Assessment, Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Game Design Faculty	Complete by May 2024		Implement Assessment Plan in Watermark Planning & Self-Study	COMPLETED 2024

	the portfolio review					
2. Update Game Design Mission Statement to align with current University and School of Arts & Sciences mission statements	The Mission Statement has not been updated since the program was created in 2012	Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Game Design Faculty	Complete by May 2024		Update Mission Statement & add to Watermark Planning & Self-Study	COMPLETED 2024
Gather Peer Grade data	Assessment of Team-based Collaboration SLO	Game Coordinator & faculty	Complete by April 2025		Included in Watermark	Assessed Peer Grade for Game Studio Capstone in 2024, aligned with Team-based Collaboration SLO
Curriculum						
3. Update Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and curriculum map for the Game Design Major & Minor, revising curriculum as needed	The SLOs for the Game Design program have not been updated since the program was created in 2012, and we do not have a formal curriculum map with SLOs	Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Game Design Faculty	Complete by May 2024		Report updated SLOs & curriculum map in Annual Departmental Plan Report for AY 2024	UPDATED 2024

	mapped to specific courses					
4. Collaborate with other units on campus to identify specialized or interdisciplinary paths for students, including game art, audio, and writing	Evaluator notes that the program is insular, and recommends exploring further collaborations with humanities, computer science, music, psychology, business, art, and English Studies	Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Game Design Faculty	Ongoing		Include progress report update in Annual Departmental Plan Reports	Discussed collaborations with Music faculty (Art of Video Game Music, Game Scoring)
5. Create additional Programming for Games courses as replacement or alternative for required Computer Science I & II courses	External evaluator, students, and alumni recommend that game programming courses are more effective when taught within the Game discipline, rather than from a Computer Science perspective	Program Coordinator, Game Design Faculty, Department Curriculum Committee	Complete by May 2024	Faculty with experience with game programming & technical game development	Include progress report update in Annual Departmental Plan Reports	Developed a Visual Scripting topics course with visiting faculty Andres Gonzalez, that we ran in Sp25 and again in Fa25.
6. Implement Game Jams	External evaluator and	Program Coordinator,	Ongoing		Include progress	Annual Game Jam is incorporated into all

into the core curriculum	faculty recommend that game jams be mandatory and incorporated into the curriculum	Game Design Faculty			report update in Annual Departmental Plan Reports	Game courses. We did not run the FSU annual jam, but we supported a student-run jam and Global Game Jam
Faculty						
7. Hire a 6th tenure track faculty member with experience in technical game development and game programming	We are still 1 faculty member short, based on our enrollment. Students, faculty, and external evaluator note the lack of support for students interested in programming & technical concerns	Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Game Design Faculty	Complete by May 2023	Tenure-track hire	Include progress report update in Annual Departmental Plan Reports	Visiting line was approved for 2024-2025, and renewed for 2025-2026. Tenure-track request was supported by Dean & Provost, but denied by President Lapidus, and not offered again
Diversity						
8. Plan and implement a Climate Survey for students in the program, and facilitate follow-up dialogue	Students and external evaluator report concerns about the climate in the Game Design program	Program Coordinator, Game Design Faculty	Complete by May 2023		Include progress report update in Annual Departmental Plan Report for AY 2023	NOT YET IMPLEMENTED. IN PLAN FOR 2025-2026

9. Work with Admissions to draft & implement a Diversity Initiative, and to outreach to high schools & technical schools	Evaluator, faculty, and students note that our gender diversity should be strengthened	Admissions Director, Department Chair, Program Coordinator	Complete by May 2023		Include progress report update in Annual Departmental Plan Report for AY 2023	NOT YET IMPLEMENTED. IN PLAN FOR 2025-2026
Professionalization						
10. Create an External Industry Advisory Board	We have never held a formal External Advisory Board, though this was initially part of our program plan	Program Coordinator, Game Design Faculty	Complete by May 2024		Include progress report update in Annual Departmental Plan Report for AY 2024	We created an External Industry Advisory Board and met in Fall 2023. We did not meet in 2024-2025
11. Develop partnership with MassDIGI for industry advice, guidance, career and internship opportunities for students	Evaluator, faculty, and University Provost & President have all noted the value that MassDIGI would bring to the program and the University	Program Coordinator, Game Design Faculty	Ongoing		Include progress report update in Annual Departmental Plan Reports	We have not been offered to work with MassDIGI since they changed leadership in 2024. WILL REACH OUT IN 2025-2026
Student Support						

12. Provide additional portfolio support for students by creating a dedicated course or incorporating portfolio development and feedback into core curriculum	Evaluator, faculty, and students report that students need more support and scaffolding to develop portfolios that will serve them in a professional capacity	Program Coordinator, Game Design Faculty	Ongoing		Include progress report update in Annual Departmental Plan Reports	Portfolio development is required assignment in several core classes.
13. Work with Career Services Center to develop a comprehensive Career Development support plan for students starting in the first year	Evaluator and students note the lack of support for students developing resumes & portfolios, or seeking summer internships or post-graduate employment	Career Services Director, Program Coordinator, Game Design Faculty	Ongoing		Include progress report update in Annual Departmental Plan Reports	Working with Career Services to create Game Design resume & portfolio guide, which we would like to expand into to a comprehensive Career Development support plan
14. Work with Library to develop resources to support the program	Evaluator recommends collaborating with the Library to develop resources to aid	Library Director, Program Coordinator, Game Design Faculty	Ongoing		Include progress report update in Annual Departmental Plan Reports	

	student and faculty research					
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Section II - Departmental Outcomes

A. Departmental Strategic Initiatives

Accomplished Initiatives AY24-25 <small>Add more rows as needed</small>	Corresponding Strategic Plan Goal & Strategy <small>Goal # followed by Strategy # ex: 1.3</small>	Indicate (X) if a Diversity, Equity and Inclusiveness (DEI) Goal
Successfully rehired Andres Gonzales, Visiting Assistant Professor of Game Design, who started in Fa24		
Created new elective course: GAME 2075 Digital Character Sculpting to replace Advanced Game Art		
Updated Game Design Minor to be more flexible & less restrictive, while maintaining the 18 credits		
Removed Designing Historical Games from the curriculum. This one was unfortunate, but it was co-taught with a History professor who left the university, and the History department removed their parallel course.		
Hosted Global Game Jam in Jan 2025, and a student-run jam in the Fall	Goal 3, Strategy 3.6	
Game Design students showcased their work in VISIONS, the honors exhibition of student work from the Communications Media department, with support from faculty	Goal 3, Strategy 3.6	

Students in Game Studio Capstone presented work at PAX East Convention in Boston, and presented a Postmortem presentation to the campus community, both in May 2025	Goal 3, Strategy 3.6	
Faculty members awarded MSCA Professional Development Funds for professional development courses and research/creative practice projects, and faculty travel funds to present work at conferences.	Goal 4, Strategy 4.4	
Ran monthly department Admissions tours and participated in shadow program for accepted students. Faculty planned and participated in 2 Open Houses in Fall 2024 and 2 Future Falcon Days in Spring 2025		
Continue our partnership with the Nursing department to develop XR (Mixed Reality) projects for Registered Nurse training, through cross-departmental Marieb Foundation Grant. Hired multiple interns and post-graduate fellowships.		
Continue our Unreal Academic Partner relationship with Epic Games		
Discussed collaborations with Music faculty. Consulted on their Art of Video Game Music course, discussed possible Game & Film Scoring and Game Audio Implementation courses.		

Planned Initiatives for AY 25-26 <small>Add more rows as needed</small>	Associated Strategic Plan Goal & Strategy <small>Goal # followed by Strategy # ex: 1.3</small>	Indicate (X) if a DEI Goal
Hire a 6th tenure track faculty member with experience in technical game development and programming, based on our action plan		
Create additional Programming for Games courses as replacement or alternative for required Computer Science I & II courses	Goal 1, Strategies 1.1 and 1.2	

Plan and implement a Climate Survey for students in the program, and facilitate follow-up dialogue	Goal 2, Strategy 2.1	X
Work with Admissions to draft and implement a Diversity Initiative, to potentially include an event and/or publication that showcases the contributions of our female & transgender students & alumni, to be distributed to high schools & technical schools.	Goal 2, Strategy 2.5 Goal 5, Strategy 5.3	X
Work with Admissions to outreach to high schools and technical schools		
Work with Career Services Center to develop a comprehensive Career Development support plan for students starting in the first year		

B. Departmental Accomplishments and Reflection:

Take this section to reflect on--

1. *24-25 Accomplishments not captured above*
2. *Initiatives that you may be considering for 25-26 academic year that you did not already capture above*
3. *Any other thoughts or information that you would like to share*

This was a year of transition and struggle for Game Design. On a positive note, we successfully hired a visiting assistant professor for 2024-2025, which was renewed for 2025-2026. However, our request for an additional tenure-track faculty member, based on our ongoing Action Plan, our program needs, and our continuing high enrollment, was denied.

One of our faculty members experienced a serious ongoing instance of harassment by a student in the Fall semester, leading to a medical leave in the Spring. Three Game Design faculty, including the Coordinator and the Department Chair, took overloads to cover their colleague's courses. This unplanned situation of overwork made assessment activity nearly impossible to focus on.