Meeting in the Educational Committee of Bachelor in Animation

Location:	Meeting date:
Online and at The Animation Workshop, Kasernevej 5, Viborg (Big Meetingroom)	April 11, 2024 13.00-16.00

Participants
Julie Raunsmed Peitersen
Lise Saxtrup
Emile Gignoux
Mario Grosu
Gry Lindebjerg
Kristina Sletting Jensen
Uriel Kranot
Karen Haldrup Lund Jakobsen
Niels Gram Riisgaard
Peter Dyring-Olsen
Dorte-Pia Ravnsbæk
Anna-Maj Geyti

Declined
Astrid Refstrup
Shelley Page
Magnus Møller
Chris Ebeling

Preparation

- Please read the attached report from the external evaluation of Animation.

- Please consider the following before the meeting:
    o Our graduates struggle with finding employment. What is your perspective on the current job market within the industry?
    o How do you see the impact of the rapid technological development in your job?
    o How can the bachelor programs get closer to the Industry?

Agenda

1. Welcome
13.00-13.05 (Peter Dyring-Olsen)

a. Welcome to new members

Niels Gram Riisgaard is a new students' representative since Sebastian Barfoed has graduated. Niels is also the chairperson of the Student Council at TAW.

Peter Dyring-Olsen has replaced Lotte Kronborg as Head of Studies from August 2024, so this is his first meeting in the Educational Committee of Animation.

Dorte-Pia Ravnsbæk is the new dean of the Storytelling, Design and Business cluster in VIA (from September 2023).

The members presented themselves.

b. Approval of agenda
The agenda was approved.

c. Election of meeting chair
Peter was elected to chair the meeting.

2. News from Head of Studies
13.05-13.20 (Peter Dyring-Olsen)

a) News from the bachelor department
The Animation Workshop has gone from two to one bachelor department with one head of studies. We still have a very strong focus on each of the individual educations. Faculty staff are still mainly focused on one education and/or specialisation. New study counsellor – Sofie – from October 2023.

b) Budgets 2024 and beyond
We had a budget cut process in Autumn. This applied to all programs and departments in VIA. VIA's economy is challenged in many ways (mainly due to lower intake of students on the big educations (nurses, pedagogy) and fewer seats on educations with programs taught in English (not at TAW, but primarily on the engineering educations.

This led to savings of overall 500.000 DKK across BAC.

Cuts are mainly done by not going through with hiring a new admin plus by cutting down on number of guest teachers, and we are no longer paying for work permits, meaning we rarely hire guest teachers from outside EU. This final point is in accordance with the overall strategy of strengthening the internal faculty. Internal teachers should teach.

What about 2025 and beyond?

- *We haven't fully realized the internal faculty.*
- *We haven't fully realized possible collaborations (internal and external, e.g. with a new software education in Viborg from the next academic year).*
- *If we compare ourselves to other educations in VIA, our educations are expensive.*

c) Development
We are engaged in a long-term development of ANIM and GS. Some elements will save money, some will have other effects.

This process will continue at least for the rest of 2024. We will focus on economy, employability and technological development.

d) Admission 2024
- *A new record: 556 applicants (371 CA / 185 CGA)*
- *For once, the main increase in number is CGA*
- *Still too soon to say more – we are engaged in looking through the applications as we speak*

- *We updated the portfolio requirements to make them clearer and also to open for other profiles for CGA specifically*
- *Our focus is on selecting candidates who are ready to study and to take on a professional life upon graduation*
- *Still, it's a very labour-intensive process and we're hoping to develop a more efficient method.*

e) Changes to the curriculum from study year 2024/25
We are doing some changes in how we examine the students. The formal process regarding this involves sending it for consultation in the educational committee and at the chairperson for the body of external examiners, before VIA's legal experts review the curriculum (legal check). It is considered finalised once approved by the board of directors before the summer break. This means that we will send it to you and that you have approximately one week to comment on it. If you have any questions, please direct them to Anna-Maj (agey@via.dk)

The point is noted.

3. New dean: Dorte-Pia Ravnsbæk
13.20-13.25 (Dorte-Pia Ravnsbæk)

Dorte-Pia will present herself.

Dorte-Pia started 1st of September. She is very motivated for working with education after working in tax and the police. Her vision: How can we make the educations stronger together with each education's uniqueness and strength.

Dorte-Pia gave an orientation about that the educational sector are waiting for a political reform for the welfare educations. We still don't know the substance of the reform and we don't know the impact on the creative and business-oriented educations as TAW's.

4. Presentation of the members
13.25-13.50 (Peter Dyring-Olsen)

a. All members present themselves shortly.

b. Discussions on how you see the possibility of the program getting closer to the industry.
What is your perspective on which connections can be made?

Karen highlighted the focus on festivals, specifically mentioning Annecy, which is primarily for Animation (CA). She raised the question about other festivals like FMX and others that should also be considered.

Niels discussed Paneurama's efforts to facilitate connections between students and the industry, with plans for additional activities in the future.

Julie suggested introducing studio presentations earlier in the educational curriculum. She noted that student engagement increases when they visit companies in Filmbyen, including informal gatherings. She also queried if studios know how to contact The Animation Workshop (TAW) for specific profiles or talents.

Karen emphasized the importance of preparing students earlier for their careers and studio contacts. She proposed inviting guest teachers and recent graduates to share insights on entering the industry and strengthening connections with Arsenalet.

Niels mentioned the establishment of a forum for recent graduates to stay connected with TAW, and Paneurama's similar initiatives. He introduced "Good Fridays," an informal event to engage graduates and industry professionals.

Peter appreciated the focus on connecting students with the industry and encouraged further consideration on how TAW, staff, and the industry can collaborate more effectively. This topic will be revisited in future meetings for further discussion.

BREAK
13.50-14.00

5. News from TAW
14.00-14.10 (Kasper Kruse)

a. Economic analysis
VIA's Board of directors has opened a possibility for TAW for a 5 year plan (normally budgets is for 1 year). The board has asked for an economic analysis: what have been done and what could be 3 economic scenarios for the future – paired with qualitative interviews. The analysis will be presented to the board in May.

Mario asked about the pace of updating workstations. Kasper says that there has not been bought new workstations for three years. Earlier on there has been bought new workstations for 3rd year every year and their workstations has then been traveling down the years. The bachelor programs have been granted 2 mio. DKK for new hardware.

b. Reorganisation of the Research and Development department (FoU) at TAW
The 7 R&D centres in VIA are reduced to 3. This means that TAWs R&D is now connected to MSP and Software engineers in Center for Animation, Film and Digital Processes. Jakob Borrits Sabra, former head of TAW R&D will be the new head of the centre). The software engineers will open a new education in Viborg (Software engineering XR) from the academic year 2024/25 and we hope for great benefits from collaboration with this new education.

c. FilmEU.
FilmEI is one of the University Alliances in EU (of 60 in total). Four original partners have worked on FilmEU for four years. Four new members, including VIA, is participating from 2024. FilmEU is aiming for developing eg. Masters' degrees, micro credentials and new collaborations. TAW and MSP are representing VIA in FilmEU. Home - FILMEU European University for Film and Media Arts.

6. External Panel 2024
14.10-15.35 – incl. a 10 min. break (Peter Dyring-Olsen)
Attachment: Report from the external evaluation of Animation 2024.

Evaluations with external experts are conducted at VIA according to a cycle where each program typically undergoes an evaluation every 6 years. Evaluations with external experts at VIA serve the following primary purposes:

- To receive external input and feedback for the development of the program's quality and relevance by:
    - Identifying any areas of concern regarding the quality and relevance of the program.
    - Qualifying the ongoing development of the program and implementation of initiatives.
    - Supporting the reflection of the management and staff on the current practices and development
    - of the program.

The evaluation ensures that there is a qualified external perspective on the quality and relevance of each program at regular intervals. VIA's concept for education evaluation has been developed based on requirements from the Danish Accreditation Institution.

The attached report summarizes the evaluation day for Animation held on February 28, 2024. In addition to the expert panel, which consisted of external professionals with specific expertise in the field of the program and the needs of the job market, representatives from management, faculty members, and students from the program participated.

At the meeting we will ask the Educational Committee to discuss the four recommendations from the expert panel. We will organize groups for discussion. Each group will discuss two recommendations and give the education feedback on what to focus on. The groups' conclusions will be discussed in plenum.

The panel was asked to give input to how the education can handle the graduates' employment situation and the rapid technological development. Please have your perspectives on this in mind when you discuss the recommendations.

Recommendations from the expert panel (pp. 22-23):

1. The academic dimension of the program:
   a. It is commendable that the program aims to enhance the current academic dimension with students' reflective abilities and writing skills. It is also important for the program to maintain its current focus on analysis and production.
   b. It is emphasized that an academic dimension should also highlight the creative dimension as a level of knowledge and reflection that fully corresponds to the traditionally academic.

2. Professional focus:
   a. The program is praised for its focus on education and profession.
   b. The idea of opening the program to the outside world by introducing laboratory-based teaching is crucial to pursue and realize.
   c. The program should demonstrate and examine how the external faculty structure contributes to making the program a unique education with special competencies. This includes the fact that students learn from each other to a much greater extent than in many other programs.

3. Employment and admissions:
   a. The program should open to other industries and functions than the known ones and explore what the program can offer these industries. The panel assesses that the program in its current form already has much to offer due to its basic elements.
   b. It is crucial that the admission criteria reflect that the program also educates for jobs outside the actual DVI industry. In line with this, an analysis should be conducted of what is being worked on in the industries and how.

4. Competencies and content:
   a. The program should also focus on students' personally professional competencies, so they are equipped to enter the job market. Consider also addressing contemporary issues such as cancel culture and other relational matters that may lie outside the curriculum.
   b. The program may consider introducing a "technological-historical philosophicum" as part of the teaching in technology understanding. A historical metaphorical understanding is necessary to innovate within the field. Technological history could be anchored with an internal teacher, and it would be useful to have good communication, for example, in the form of an "explainer" video.

Notes from the groupwork:

1. The Academic Dimension (Niels, Gry, Kristina)
We are considering the possibility of working more academically and reflectively without necessarily requiring increased written work. Theory could play a larger role in teaching than it does today, including in students' presentations (oral). There could also be reflections within group contexts. Students should be able to articulate why they have made the creative choices they have.

How can we move beyond focusing solely on the goal (the final product) during a production period? Could students also be tasked with creating a behind-the-scenes reel (individually?), with guidelines to showcase

reflections and process (potentially collaborating with MSP)? Check out "The Animation Showcase" (high priority)

2. Focus on Professionalism (Peter, Julie, Karen):
- *We agree that TAW should document its teaching methods.*
- *We encourage more exercises with a focus on experimentation (with different methods/technology)*
    - o *E.g. Do the same exercise within 3 different timeframes (a week, a day, an hour).*
    - o *Focus on quality over quantity*
- *Put the student in a situation where they cannot solve the exercise how they usually do (making an animated film)*
    - o *How simple can they make it?*
    - o *Make use of different competences (be aware of all that we are capable of)*
    - o *Practice focus on what it really needed.*
- *Create a (physical, actually existing) room where students can/must experiment.*
    - o *Let the student experience the usefulness of experimenting.*
    - o *Get them started on experimenting early to make it easier to do on later projects (e.g. 6th semester ptoject)*
- *Create a culture around keeping up with new technology*
    - o *Make it easy to share information/resources*
- *This point is high priority.*

2. Professional focus (Niels, Gry, Kristina)
B. What is meant by "outside world"? Various partner collaboration projects. Inspired by DR Lab, could it be something along those lines?
Laboratory; for example, playing in a motion capture studio, what can this technology do?
Collaboration can be structured around a product (VAF collaboration)
Or based on learning to use a software or something else where there is more room to experiment and where the focus is not on a final product, but more on the process.

7. AOB
15.55-16.00