

Photography Department
Advisory Committee Minutes,
August 24, 2012

Meeting began at 2:30 in the Photography classroom in the F building.

Present:

Don Bartletti—LA Times

Grant Brittain—The Skateboard Mag

John Durant—Architectural Photographer; Commercial, Editorial,

Robert Barry—Faculty

Donna Cosentino—Faculty

Paul Sittmann—Laboratory Technician

Absent:

Tom Pappas—from Calumet (retail photography store)

The meeting began with introductions. A discussion about our program ensued.

John Durant wanted to know the practical application for our certificates. We explained the idea of the student having a more complete knowledge of photography in order to go into the work world better prepared. Certificates are a proof of that knowledge base.

Grant Brittain said that if he had had a certificate when he left our program he would have had a reason to ask for a higher salary.

Bob Barry asked John what skills and knowledge do you expect an assistant to have?

John said they should know digital workflow, how to do backups, setting up lights etc. He said more important is for a student to learn the business aspect: How to write an invoice, bill clients, write a contract, write estimates and, how to use social media. We explained that we offer a Business of Photography class and he was pleased to hear this. He said that it is imperative our program have up-to-date equipment such as professional-grade digital cameras, digital backs, studio equipment, printers, and Mac computers with current software. The others agreed.

Donna Cosentino said in Portfolio 209 we also teach aspects of the business of photography. John thought that class should be required for all Photo and Art students. Further discussion about our portfolio, commercial and business classes ensued.

John talked about copyright and some questions were answered about this.

Donna asked what about video? Grant Brittain said everyone now shoots video on assignment-as much video as still.

Don Bartletti said the LA Times has four full time videographers on staff. He said it is necessary whether you are a corporate photographer, shoot for an NGO, or for magazines.

John commented on Don's multimedia pieces on the LATimes website. Don said it is now a part of the job.

Donna commented that it is taught as a section in Photojournalism but more could be done in other classes. A discussion about the Photo Dept using high-end still Canon Cameras as video cameras as is often done in real world situations. John said they should learn Premier or Final Cut.

Donna asked if anyone still shoots film?

Grant said it is still taught in Susan Coppock's classes at San Dieguito Academy and also that he loves to still shoot film. Donna said that Poway High School's photo students still also use a darkroom and their ability to recognize what makes a fine print is exceptional.

Grant said he loves shooting film and wished he did it more. He thinks a backlash back to film and darkroom is coming and is happy we still teach it. Our film and darkroom classes fill and we expressed our need for more film cameras and updated darkroom equipment.

Grant did say that staff photographers need to send him scans if they do use film. We told him that scanning is a core part of what we teach in our digital darkroom classes.

John said "film has soul" and there are still many photographers who shoot it. He mentioned award winning photojournalist Antonin Kratochvil. He also mentioned Joni Sternbach's "Surfland" book of images made on tintypes. A discussion about our Alternative Processes classes took off from this.

We explained that our alternative classes fill and we have requested a remodel of our old color darkroom space to use as an alternative process work area. Bob mentioned that we wish to expand our menu of alternative processes offered in order to become a leader of this trend in the photo community.

There followed a discussion about history and contemporary trends. Grant said our History of Photography class was very important to him. That it helped him understand style. Don said it's important to look at other photographer's work to stay fresh and excited and to be inspired.

We went back to what young photogs need to know. Grant said he wants photographers to know how to write, how to blog and how to manage a web site. The importance of knowing social media and how to use it was discussed.

John said photographers need to have a web site though they may not have time to manage it themselves. There was a discussion about which sites can help with this...Photoshelter and Livebooks are good sites for photographers.

John spoke about digital asset management-storing in multiple places, Grant and Don talked about importance of 'keywords'.

Bob asked about the outlook for Photojournalists? Don said it's harder now, that fewer positions are available. He said it's easy to be idealistic. It was mentioned however, that there are more opportunities out there for web-based 'zines and news organizations.

All agreed that not only talent but 'stick-to-it-ness' is necessary to get ahead in the world of photography. A photographer has to be like a bulldog in the pursuit of a job.

John said in Commercial photography, top assistants get paid \$250 a day or more. Starting out as an intern it's \$10-20 an hour. Donna mentioned that several of our advanced students have become assistants. Right now we have photography students who assist here in San Diego, and three in New York that are assisting and doing their own commercial/editorial work.

Having your own business is hard said John. Says he needs \$4000 a month just to keep his studio running...young photogs need to understand this and that commitment is important.

They all agreed if the passion was there it's possible to make it.

Recommendations by the committee:

- To ready photojournalism students for the real world by increasing the multimedia part of our curriculum-including cameras, equipment and programs such as Final Cut that allow for video and sound/still image production.
- To ready our commercial program students for career opportunities through having practical and current studio equipment available to them as well as state-of-the-art computers and software related to commercial, editorial, product, and portrait photography.
- To make available to *all* program participants the right tools to ready them for potential career placement. Particularly digital equipment such as Mac computers with the most current editing and software programs, as well as high-quality, up-to-date scanners and printers.
- To keep the film and darkroom program going, to keep the equipment up-to-date, and to encourage alternative and antique ways of making images and prints so as to become a leader in this area.

The meeting ended at 4pm. Everyone was thanked for their participation and a future meeting was agreed upon.

Bob, Paul and Donna determined that we three should meet soon to discuss the info and suggestions from today's meeting to help advance our program.