

The GRC Podcast

For Cal Poly GrC Advisory Board Members

Fall 2020

GRC POD UPDATE

Hello, Advisory Board members! I hope your families are healthy and your customers are doing well! This is going to be an interesting year in GrC – COVID-19 has limited what we are able to do in “face to face” (F2F) format, and the elimination of the Heidelberg offset press and Müller Martini saddle-stitcher are really causing us to look, and re-look at curriculum and pedagogy.

This summer was active – the photos below show the “before and after” of the Heidelberg removal. Looking at this with a “glass half full” attitude, these equipment removals have enabled space for our physically distancing requirements for labs.



The “Before”



The “During”



The “After” – lots of space!

Some good news!

We have had no melt in new student enrollment – we have 69 first time students, and 7 junior transfers! Roughly half of our first year students deferred housing which means they are attending Cal Poly virtually, but the other half is on campus – enjoying at least a small taste of college life. Our new faculty Hocheol and Ahmed are doing great, and the rest of the faculty and staff POD are a tremendous inspiration to me.

Our focus in the Department this year will be:

- Curriculum – continually honing and updating. Strategic planning for equipment!!!
- Diversity/Equity/Inclusion – ensuring that DEI is embedded in our classrooms, curriculum, and Department.
- Scholarship – our College has a new director of research and I look forward to seeing how our Department can produce research and scholarship in an interdisciplinary fashion.
- Branding “GrC” to Community Colleges and High Schools within California (this will be a stretch due to COVID).
- Most importantly – ensuring the faculty and staff don’t burnout. My biggest fear.

The “Learn by Doing” experience during COVID-19

This fall, only 13% of Cal Poly classes have a “face to face”, or F2F component – all others are virtual. In all cases, lectures are virtual. In GrC, we have 3 F2F labs – **GrC 211** (Materials for Graphic Communication), **GrC 316** (Flexographic Printing), and **GrC 372** (Applied Graphic Communication Practices – aka UGS intern class). Students have a strict check-in protocol where they provide proof of well being (a daily occurrence with an app), all wear face coverings and in many cases face shields, and practice physical distancing. I’m so glad “Learn by Doing” is occurring in our building!



GrC 316 Flexo class – printing during COVID!

We've also been able to place an **Information Technology Consultant** in the Department!

Steve Standifer joined our POD on Monday, October 12th. Steve has a great network admin/IT systems background, and as a plus, loves working with the Adobe products! He will be spending the next few months getting caught up on documentation and learning our unique workflows, software, plug-ins, and output devices. We are thrilled to have him! Many of you will recall that Eric Johnson, our previous ITC left GrC for a job in central Cal Poly IT over a year ago! I'm so happy we were able to finally fill this crucial position!



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UGS!

University Graphics Systems (UGS) is open! I was very nervous about what UGS was going to do in our virtual world, but we were able to convince Cal Poly Corporation (the entity they "work" for) that their duties of printing were essential, and since summer, they have been on campus trying to gain business. A nice boon to their bottom line came in the form of Cal Poly's facilities management – who needed COVID signage for the campus. It was a great, feel-good story that even hit the trades (here is the article in case you missed it: <https://www.calpoly.edu/news/sign-times-students-use-graphic-communication-skills-promote-covid-safety-measures>). They are trying really hard to be agile during this time of a de-densified campus. A hearty thanks to Troy Otts who has generously offered to mentor and advise the student company this year! I know some amazing, creative things will happen as a result.



UGS students running the Esko Kongsberg cutting COVID signage (printed off the EFI!!!)

Our Reality moving forward

I know many of you were disappointed with having a virtual Advisory Board meeting this summer, and I'm very grateful that it worked out so well. A hearty thanks to you all for the effort and thought that went into the pre-work and execution. A massive thank-you to Jim Kersten for the planning!

Fortunately or unfortunately, our world at Cal Poly will be virtual for some time. Winter and Spring quarter will be like fall – most classes virtual, and in GrC, we will again have 3 face-to-face labs.

What that means is our Career Days, International Graphic Communication Week, and Advisory Board meetings will all happen virtually for this academic year. In fact, no faculty can travel without the Chancellor's approval until June of 2021.

So, my latest "mantra" is – how can we take advantage of a virtual experience in a different way than we would face-to-face? How can we use online meetings to our advantage?

Well, just last week, we had our first-ever virtual Career Day. It went great! We had 5 companies (yes, a fraction of our normal turnout) – most production companies. They spent 20 minutes each presenting about their company and jobs to any student who wanted to attend. Then, we had 2 hours of 1:1 interviews, where the students signed up ahead of time. Using breakout rooms, students went in for 15 minute interviews. Everyone thought it was a good experience. Was it ideal? No. We much prefer in-person! But, the presentation format was less stressful for students who can be intimidated by entering a huge room full of companies – trade show style. The companies spent less time on getting here (obviously) and had more time to interact with students. So, there were some positives.

That's how I'm going to approach International Graphic Communication Week, our winter Advisory Board Meeting (we've already shown how productive our workshops are – fantastic!), future Career Days, and commencements. Finding the advantages of "virtual" while we patiently wait for our students to come back to Building 26.

In closing, and as always, I sincerely appreciate everything you do for our students and faculty. On top of your professional lives, you take SO much time to make the GrC Department at Cal Poly better. I look forward to interacting with you this year!

Cheers, all!
Colleen Twomey (c2me)