

## ANNUAL PROGRAM ASSESSMENT FORM

**Name of Program:**

**Report prepared by:**

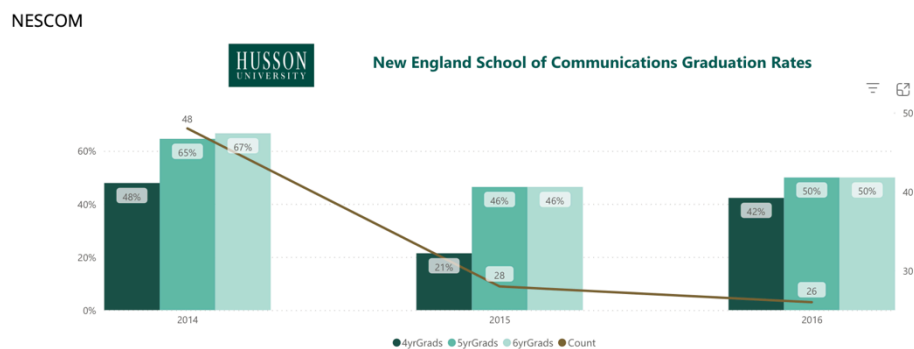
Frank Welch

**1) Please list the degree offerings:**

BS Video / Film Production

**2) Progression /Graduation update (NECHE 8)**

The class that came into the school in 2014, would have their “6 year” graduation mark in 2020, at that point 67% of the Freshmen that entered that group, completed the BS program. The next 2 classes (entering in 2015 and 2016) both fell to a 50% graduation mark when they hit their 6-year graduation marks, this is a pretty hefty decline.



While we can possibly cast some of the blame on COVID, for our 2016 cohort, because the majority would have graduated in the Spring of 2020, that might be too easy of an excuse. When looking back through our records, it seems like many of the students projected to graduate that Spring did so, only a couple of them had to come back in the Fall to finish something that was cancelled due to the pandemic. That coupled with the trend starting with the 2015 group, means that we might need to look closer at whether 2014 was unnaturally high, or if we are trending down.

The next two years’ worth of data might help us with this, but I think it is noteworthy that across all industries the pandemic has made people stop and consider changes in what they want to do and what they expect from life. One of these has been 4-year degree programs, with more people opting to find other ways to start a career or even to look into the concept of “micro jobs” to earn a living.

**3) Program’s Mission Statement (NECHE standard 1):**

*“Husson University seeks to inspire and prepare students for professional careers in current and emerging fields through professional programs informed by the sciences and humanities.”*

That is the mission statement for the University, and I would say without a question it sums up the view and vision of the Video and Film program. We have always worked to teach a wide set of skills in this field to help students be prepared for a number of jobs, when they graduate. This is supported by our programmatic outcomes that we base our classes on.

VIDEO/FILM DEGREE Program Outcomes:

- 1. Students will identify skills and apply knowledge, in multiple roles of a video production workforce.*
- 2. Students will utilize current industry equipment and software necessary for video production.*

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3. Students will create and utilize a pre-production plan.
4. Students will communicate effectively with peers, clients and consumers for product development.
5. Students will edit for purpose, pace, time constraints, and style.
6. Students will manage data across multiple formats and platforms.
7. Students will evaluate quality of work based on traditional theories.
8. Students will design and safely utilize lighting for effect and style.
9. Students will create, gather, and manipulate audio for video production.
10. Students will assess production difficulties, and troubleshoot to reach solutions.
11. Students will deliver products in accordance with given specifications.

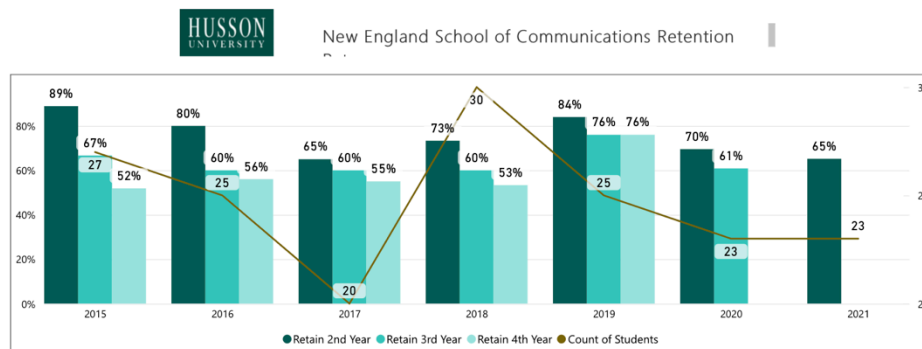
#### 4) Faculty updates (NECHE Standard 6)

We had 2 of our 4 full time faculty members leave in the Spring of 2022. One was replaced fairly quickly, with a full-time instructor who has a background in the Film industry, William Finger. Mr. Finger worked for years in Hollywood, specifically in the camera department of numerous films. He also has a strong skill set when it comes to pre-production planning and story structure. The students, many of whom are more interested in this field, have already taken to the knowledge he is bringing to the table.

Unfortunately, due to a hiring freeze at the University the other position is not being filled at this time, and we are trying to find qualified adjunct to cover the threatened classes. Maine can be a challenging state to find academically qualified people in this field, as the majority of the ones who are, live closer to where more production is being completed.

#### 5) Program Goals / Strategic initiatives (NECHE Standard 2, 5):

There have been many changes to the curriculum sheet over the years, adding courses, changing the content and name of a class, all in hopes of remaining relevant to the current industry. These initiatives seem to be strengthening our retention of students when it comes to carrying a student through all 4 years. Looking at the below posted graph we can see that in 4<sup>th</sup> year (or BS senior level) students were in the low to mid-50% area as it relates to the size of the class when it entered the school. That number jumps in 2019 to the mid 70% area and then the following Spring (when Covid hit) we see it dip back a little, but stay above the 60% mark.



This is extremely important for us, to see that the content and courses are successfully carrying students through all 4 years and into graduation. We do not know yet how those numbers will look for 2021 or 2022, and although we can expect some negative results from the part of the student body that departed during the pandemic and did not return, we can be hopeful that our work to strengthen the core will help keep it as high as possible.

Goals from the previous year:	Met / Not Met	Assessment summary:	Action
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- Work on student retention - Covid Recovery, relating to classes and being prepared for another instance - Course Assessments Mapped to Program Outcomes	Ongoing Met  Met	N/A N/A	
- More Recruitment Efforts - Evaluate Pre-Requisites - Program Forecasting	Ongoing Met Not Met	New Faculty and classes need to be worked on	
- Create VF “Principles of Video and Film”	Met		
- Re-Invent VF Audio for Video - Assist Marketing Efforts	Met Ongoing		

Goals for the upcoming year:	Assessment planning:	Notes
- Fill Instructor Positions	N/A	
- Add a Class in Narrative Directing	Yes	
- Work with the XR Program to Explore this Technology in Video	Yes	
- Assist Marketing Efforts	No	
- Work on Retention	No	
- Continue to Rebuild Intern Program, Post-Covid	Yes	
- Work to Rebuild Live Program, Post-Covid	Yes	
- Continue Video Support to the University	No	

**6) Curricular mapping / Outcome assessment (NECHE Standard 4, 8)**

All courses in the Film / Video program should be mapped to the Programmatic Outcomes at this point, minus the 2 that our new instructor is teaching. He is working on this, and should have them completed by the start of the Fall 2023 semester. He will then start working to build the new Narrative Directing class, and it will be mapped by Summer of 2024.

Student Learning Outcome	Courses mapped to SLO	Summary for the given academic year	Action
Outcome 1	VF105, 212, 224, 234, 312, 248, 441		
Outcome 2	VF100, 105, 205, 212, 224, 234, 243, 312, 322, 441		
Outcome 3	VF100, 205, 234, 248		
Outcome 4	VF100, 105, 224, 243, 135, 248		

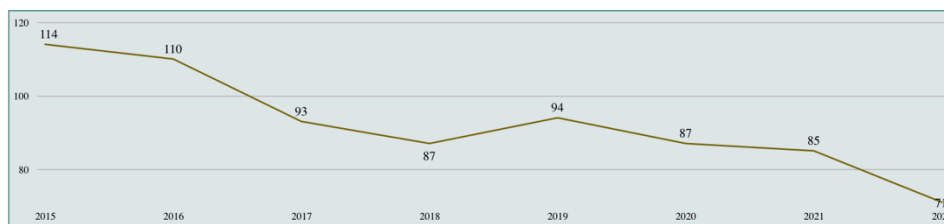
Outcome 5	VF100, 105, 205, 322, 441		
Outcome 6	VF100, 105, 205, 212, 224		
Outcome 7	VF100, 105, 234, 243, 312, 322, 135		
Outcome 8	VF105, 205, 234, 312		
Outcome 9	VF100, 212		
Outcome 10	VF 212, 224, 234, 243, 312, 441		
Outcome 11	VF 322, VF 224, 441(Really all VF classes)		
(Listed Above in Section 3)			

### 7) Executive Summary:

In closing, there is a lot of good information to take from the report, and some things to be concerned with. As stated above, it seems that recruitment, enrollment and retention really should be the focus of the next year(s). We have some questions on classes and faculty, but the core is sound and we will continue to work from that to help our students learn the skills needed to succeed.



New England School of Communications Fall Enrollments 2015 thru 2022



The above graph highlights the most worrisome fact, that we have been pretty much in a steady decline in enrollment within the Video / Film program since the school (New England School of Communications, or NESCom) went from being an independent entity and it was fully brought under the fold of Husson University (2014). This could be caused by a lot of things, two large ones come to mind and offset the numbers a little. The first is cost. Our cost was significantly less when we were not under Husson tuition formats, so even though the total number of students is down, the amount of money being made is not cut by that number equally. The other is a change in marketing, through no one's fault.

The cost of the programs at NESCom was very low for a number of the years when enrollment was high, as it allowed for more students who could not afford a more expensive school to attend. It also appealed to some as an alternative for those who could afford, but wanted to graduate with less debt. For example, if 114 people paid \$13,000 we would have a total of \$1,428,000. If 71 people paid \$20,000, we would make \$1,420,000, for a difference that is much smaller than the student numbers would have you think.

As far as the marketing, and again this is no one's fault, but as a university we market the entire system and not individual programs (or at least not much), as there are so many that would want equal promotion. This is different from years ago, when we could directly market the Communications programs to more targeted audiences. This no doubt has made it so we are less visible as a video program to the students interested in this kind of work.

Onto positive things, we have had many achievements over the past few years, short films made from works written by Stephen King, a documentary on a real life murder cold case that has gotten a lot of attention, numerous live sporting events broadcast around the state, interesting projects mixing with other departments like Audio or XR to give the students unique opportunities in the field that they are

trying to move into, and all of these things have been 100% student driven. For a small school, our students get more hands-on learning opportunities than people could imagine, and they do so with excellent instruction along the way. This all goes back to the mission statement for Husson, and it the driving force behind us wanting to get students career starting jobs.

There are plenty of opportunities on the horizon as well. More live events with our mobile unit being able to produce projects in the field with dozens of students working together for broadcast or streaming deliverables. More short films, we have just received permission to start early script work on a possible 3<sup>rd</sup> Stephen King project and are currently working with the State Police, Bangor Fire Department, and other agencies to offer our students opportunities creating videos. Our placement in quality jobs has been good over the past few years, despite the pandemic, for example we had 6 students working at this year's Super Bowl and 2 of those just graduated in May of 2022.

When it comes to threats to the program, the biggest will remain enrollment. Nationally students who are leaving high schools are realizing that there are other outcomes for them that do not include a massive amount of debt and a 4-year college degree, this trend will continue. It is driven by a lot of factors, one being that inflation has made it so the common goal of careers equaling houses and stable lives seem less achievable for graduates, even with a degree and even more challenging with the student loan payments. The other issue is that so many young people are seeing a trend of micro-careers being successful. That would be where a person does not strive for one career focused job that covers their financial needs and takes 40-50 hours a week, but rather they take on 4 or 5 or even 6 small jobs that are possibly more fulfilling for them and they add these small incomes together to make a living. We currently have fewer students in the pool of candidates to fight for, and it is very likely that number will continue to get smaller.

From a budget standpoint, with lower numbers comes cuts, and we have definitely had to shrink our expectations on what we spend each year. This has meant purchasing some things with the idea of keeping them longer than maybe we would have 4 years ago. Despite this, I feel that we are still being supported very well by the university and are allowed to create a learning environment that is full of excellent equipment, all of which is very relevant to the industry today. I feel very lucky to work at a college that understands that money must be spent to have equipment that students want to come learn on.

I am a little more nervous when it comes to the budget for faculty. We have had a hard time filling positions recently, somewhat due to our pay not meeting the expectations of a few candidates. Being in a somewhat remote area, with a very small number of professionals doing Film Production, it is usually something we have to look outside of the state for. Now of course, as listed above, we have a hiring freeze in place which is forcing us to try and fill a full-time position with adjunct, and people will not be moving this far for any adjunct position to teach 2 classes, so we will be trying to find the most qualified people we can within our market. That is not to sound negative, it is just a fact of business today, and honestly, we have a couple of excellent instructors right now who have been picking up the slack, and taking on more work to help us transition through. The important thing is that this has not affected the quality of education the students are receiving.

In closing, the program is sound, the student outcomes and opportunities are excellent and we see no reason why they should not stay that way. We need to work harder on enrollment and retention to help us through the down swing in high school graduates applying to colleges. I believe that our hands on approach and our excellent placement numbers will help us do so. Hard work and proper use of our resources, along with good leadership and support from the University will help us continue in the pledge of educating and assisting students in the beginning of their careers.