TEACHING OBSERVATION
by Suzanne Proulx, Art Department Chairperson

FACULTY MEMBER: Brian Fuller

I observed Brian Fuller's ART 267 Film and Video 1 class on October 20, 2020. From Brian Fuller's ART 267/Film and Video One syllabus course description: "The emphasis of the course is on film and video as creative art media and the creative process as essential to analytical thinking and expression. The course examines historical and aesthetic approaches of the media based on twentieth century art. It offers individual experiences in film and video production." The "Dual System Recording Project" was due at the beginning of class.

Professor Fuller posted the assignment sheet on his website. The objective: "Perhaps as much or more than any other feature, dual-system recording distinguishes amateur from professional video. Student teams will practice dual-system recording resulting in footage used for successive instruction in post-production". He instructs in the sheet: "Employing a dual-system technique, record yourself or a friend reading or reciting 30 seconds of poetry or prose in a well-lit, well-composed (1) close-up, (2) medium shot and (3) long shot. Make sure the performer's mouth is plainly visible. The most successful filmmakers will conform to the following protocol:" then as a list of 13 steps to complete the assignment. Grading criteria are listed on the sheet.

Professor Fuller started promptly at 9:00 and paused to let a couple students join a few minutes later. This was a very full class, with 23 students present, which is an overload for this section. Some students were sharing their faces via video, some were not. He asked students to open Adobe Premiere, their footage log, audio files and footage files. He asked "what surprised you about this assignment?". A student said she forgot to clap; others laughed. He asked how she handled it. She explained that she re-started and labeled the bad recording. Prof. Fuller had a relaxed manner and the students seemed comfortable responding to his questions. A student added comments about 10 seconds of silence and how that and the clap prepares the student psychologically.

Prof. Fuller asked students what the most difficult thing about the assignment was. A student said remembering to keep quiet 10 seconds before and after the recording. Fuller reaffirmed that importance. He asked what else is easy or hard and students readily shared their challenges and how they solved issues. Fuller commented on and praised their problem-solving. He called on one student to ask how it went. The student was quiet at first, but Fuller

gently prodded the student to share more, and the student elaborated on how his process was working using his phone to shoot video. Fuller discussed technical challenges for students during the pandemic, and how there are always technical hurdles in any project, and film-makers and artists in general need to improvise and trouble-shoot. He also discussed challenges a film-maker needs to navigate as new technologies ever evolve. Prof. Fuller promptly responded to a student's question in the chat. She was expressing a challenge using a phone app. He addressed issues with her phone model and praised her for finding other solutions. He detailed the need to have control over F-stop etc. that distinguishes what a professional film-maker does compared to an amateur who shoots video.

Professor Fuller then coached students through file organization on their own computer and make sure they are linked. This will help students share their work efficiently in Premiere and make sure their links are working. He shared his folder with the students, but one commented that his screen looked blurry because of internet lags. It was blurry on my own screen as well. He polled the class and then changed tactics, sharing a screen shot. He instructed the students how to set up their folders step by step. Fuller led the class through the process of exporting the Premiere file so that it can be shared externally to Vimeo etc. He led them through additional folders that are crucial to be organized and systematic, especially if they need to move their project to other devices or share them. He then led them through the process of moving the files on their computer into Premiere. Students organized their file in real time then gave a thumbs up icon once finished. He answered questions as students organized their folders. It may have been helpful for Fuller to have screen shots in a shared folder of each step instead of live screen sharing to avoid issues with the screen and text blurring when internet lags. However the class seemed to be able to easily follow along, organizing their files step by step with Fuller's thorough and patient instruction, and the blur didn't cause any issues with student progress. Fuller then shared how own process for a recent virtual video tour he created in Premiere. He reminded them of his phone number for whenever they would like to contact him. He reminded them that he had sent a Vimeo link in the chat with supplementary review of what has been discussed so far in class in case they needed it.

The class session gave students important grounding in best professional practices in the industry. Despite the class being virtual, it was clear students have a good rapport with Prof. Fuller, and felt comfortable asking questions. The transition to teaching online has been a difficult one for many professors, Brian Fuller has handled this challenge seamlessly, and is able to elicit wide participation from students despite the potential awkwardness and coldness of Zoom. It is evident from my observation that Professor Fuller is a highly effective and experienced professor.