

Advertising and Graphic Design Association of NC

Retreat to Discuss Impact of AI on NC Community College Graphic Design Programs

AGDA AI Retreat: Topics Discussed and Action Items

The recent Advertising and Graphic Design Association of NC (AGDA_NC) AI Retreat brought together educators, industry professionals, and AGDA members to discuss the rapidly evolving role of artificial intelligence in graphic design education. The retreat focused on several critical areas, leading to the formation of new committees and the identification of key action items. This introduction provides an overview of the topics discussed and the determined actions aimed at enhancing the integration of AI in graphic design curricula, supporting educators, and preparing students for future industry challenges.

New Committees Formed

1. **Ethical Implications and Copyright Issues Committee:** This committee will address the ethical considerations and copyright challenges associated with using AI in graphic design. The focus will be on developing guidelines and best practices to ensure responsible use of AI, particularly in student projects and assignments.
2. **Articulation Agreements Committee:** To facilitate smoother transitions for students, a committee was formed to establish articulation agreements with UNC system colleges and North Carolina private colleges. These agreements will ensure that credits earned in community colleges are recognized, allowing for a seamless continuation of education.
3. **Student Competition Committee:** A new committee dedicated to creating and managing a student competition was established. This competition will encourage creativity and innovation among students, providing a platform for them to showcase their skills in graphic design.

Key Discussion Topics

- **Soft Skills:** The importance of soft skills in the context of AI and graphic design was emphasized. Educators need to focus on developing students' communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills to complement their technical abilities.
- **Technology Needs:** The retreat highlighted the need for updated technology and infrastructure to support the incorporation of AI tools in graphic design programs. This includes upgrading lab equipment and software to ensure students have access to the latest AI technologies.

- **Curriculum Needs:** There was a consensus on the necessity to revise and enhance curricula to include AI-related content. This involves integrating AI concepts, tools, and ethical considerations into existing courses and developing new AI-specific modules.

AGDA's Role and Contributions

AGDA's role in supporting educator members was a central theme. The organization can provide valuable resources, including training materials, workshops, and networking opportunities. Additionally, AGDA plans to incorporate member college profiles on its website, offering a platform to highlight the strengths and unique offerings of different institutions.

Developing AGDA Student Membership

To foster student engagement, AGDA is developing a student membership program. This program will offer resources such as access to software tools, educational materials, and participation in the newly formed AGDA competition. The goal is to encourage active involvement and provide students with opportunities to enhance their skills and gain industry recognition.

Surveying AI Use in Industry

Lastly, AGDA will conduct surveys among advisory board members to gather insights on the use of AI in the graphic design industry. This information will help tailor educational programs to meet current local industry needs and ensure that students are well-prepared for the job market.

The AGDA AI Retreat set the stage for significant advancements in the integration of AI in graphic design education. By forming dedicated committees, addressing curriculum and technology needs, and developing student-focused initiatives, AGDA is committed to leading the way in preparing the next generation of graphic designers for an AI-driven future.

Five-Year Plan: Integrating Artificial Intelligence into Community College Graphic Design Curriculum (Statewide)

This plan outlines a five-year initiative to incorporate AI tools and knowledge into graphic design curriculums across community colleges in the state. The goal is to equip students

with the skills and understanding necessary to navigate the evolving landscape of AI-powered design.

Year 1: Laying the Foundation

- **Faculty Development:** Partner with industry professionals and AI experts to conduct workshops for graphic design instructors. These workshops should not simply introduce AI concepts, but delve into the technical aspects relevant to design. This could include training on using AI design tools, understanding the underlying algorithms, and troubleshooting common challenges. Additionally, workshops should address the ethical considerations of AI use, ensuring faculty can guide students towards responsible design practices.
- **Curriculum Review and Assessment:** Conduct a comprehensive analysis of existing graphic design curriculums to identify areas where AI can be most beneficial. This analysis should involve input from faculty, industry professionals, and current students. Consider not just core design principles, but also areas like design research, user experience (UX) design, and branding – all of which can be enhanced by AI tools.
- **Developing Resources:** Create a centralized repository of resources for faculty, including sample lesson plans, tutorials, and ethical guidelines for AI use in graphic design. These resources should be adaptable to different course levels and learning styles. Consider creating video tutorials demonstrating specific AI tool functionalities within design workflows, alongside case studies showcasing successful AI-powered design projects.
- **Professional Development:** Provide educator resources for professional development in AI, prompt engineering, and soft skills.
- **Lab Upgrades:** Upgrade labs to support new technologies being incorporated into Adobe software and other tools.
- **Present Proposal:** Present the proposal from the AGDA AI Retreat at the NC Community College System to gain support and feedback.

Year 2: Implementation Begins

- **Introductory Courses:** Develop introductory courses or modules on AI for graphic designers. These courses should cater to varying student backgrounds, offering a strong foundation in AI fundamentals for beginners while allowing more advanced students to explore specific design applications.
- **Integration into Existing Courses:** Start incorporating AI-related topics into existing design courses in a strategic manner. This could involve introducing case studies of AI-powered design projects from leading companies, having students

experiment with AI tools for design tasks like mood board generation or color palette creation, or using AI to generate design variations for critique sessions.

- **Industry Partnerships:** Collaborate with local design firms to create internship opportunities specifically focused on AI integration into design workflows. These internships should provide students with hands-on experience working with professionals who are actively utilizing AI tools.
- **Bimonthly Meetings:** Organize paid support for bimonthly meetings such as Tech Talks or Lunch and Learns to continuously engage faculty and students with the latest in AI and design.

Year 3: Deepening Knowledge & Skills

- **Advanced AI Courses:** Offer elective courses on advanced AI topics for design, such as machine learning for graphic design or generative design principles. These courses can delve deeper into the technical aspects of AI, allowing students to understand how design tools leverage machine learning algorithms and how they can influence design outcomes.
- **AI and Ethical Design:** Introduce dedicated courses or modules focusing on ethical considerations when using AI in graphic design. These courses should address potential biases within AI algorithms and how to mitigate them, explore copyright and intellectual property issues with AI-generated content, and emphasize transparency in design projects that involve AI assistance.
- **Student Projects & Competitions:** Encourage students to incorporate AI tools in their design projects in creative ways. This could involve projects that explore the boundaries of AI-generated design, challenge students to find solutions for ethical considerations with AI tools, or focus on user experience (UX) design for AI-powered applications. Organize design competitions with an AI focus to foster creativity, innovation, and critical thinking around the potential of AI in design.
- **Premium Access to AI Tools:** Provide premium access to ChatGPT or other similar tools to get access to resources such as creating bots and digital artwork that can be used to enhance learning experiences.

Year 4: Refining & Expanding

- **Curriculum Evaluation:** Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the integrated AI curriculum. Assess student learning outcomes through project assessments, surveys, and exit interviews. Gauge faculty comfort level with AI integration through workshops and focus groups. Solicit feedback from industry partners regarding the preparedness of graduates for AI-driven design workflows.

- **Standardization and Best Practices:** Based on the evaluation, establish best practices for AI integration in design curriculums across the state. Develop standardized learning modules and resources that can be easily adapted by different community colleges, ensuring consistency in student learning experiences.
- **Public Outreach:** Organize workshops and informational events for industry professionals, policymakers, and the general public. These events can raise awareness about the evolving role of AI in graphic design, showcase the state's educational initiatives in preparing future designers for this new landscape, and potentially attract industry partnerships and funding opportunities.

Year 5: Sustainability & Future Growth

- **Continuing Education:** Offer ongoing professional development opportunities for faculty to stay updated on the latest advancements in AI for graphic design. This could involve online courses, webinars, or participation in industry conferences focused on AI and design.
- **Industry Collaboration:** Establish a formal advisory board with industry representatives to provide ongoing feedback on curriculum relevance. This board should include representatives from design agencies, tech companies with design-focused teams, and freelance designers who actively utilize AI tools.
- **Research & Development:** Encourage and support research initiatives within community colleges to explore new AI applications in graphic design and contribute to the broader academic and professional community.

The following AGDA members participated in the AGDA Retreat on May 19-22 in Wrightsville Beach, NC:

Erik Perel | Alamance CC (AGDA Executive Board)
 Michael Lawson | Guilford Tech CC (AGDA Executive Board)
 Kat Jackson | Guilford Tech CC
 Hope Carroll | Catawba Valley CC (AGDA Executive Board)
 Jen Cousar | Central Piedmont CC (AGDA Executive Board)
 Brittany Holleran | Central Piedmont CC
 Brady Bone | Central Piedmont CC
 Eleanor Nicholl | Pitt CC (AGDA Executive Board)
 Josh Gooch | Stanly CC (AGDA Executive Board)
 Amber Arnder | Wilkes CC
 Bethany Swain | Wilkes CC

Jen Fisher | Fayetteville Tech CC
Sara Smith | Fayetteville Tech CC
Denielle Fennern | Fayetteville Tech CC
Lisa Hughes | Randolph CC
Ronna Stroud | Mitchell CC
Cable Hardin | Cape Fear CC
Nicki Bloomer | Cape Fear CC
Jenny Rowland | The Dot Collection (Speaker and Facilitator)



Jay Smith Virtual Presentation on [“Ai and the Future of Graphic Design”](#)