

History of the GC&PT Program at VCC

In 1962 the “Graphic Arts Program,” later renamed the “Printing Production Program” in the early 1980s, was established by Principal Dean Goard at VVI, now known as VCC. He chaired an Advisory Committee that was established by the BC Graphic Arts Association. The other members included two employers,

Tom Alexander and Dick Blockberger, and four union representatives, Len Guy, Bob Scott, Bill Dunsmuir, and Earl Kinney.

The first ten-month class was a group of journeymen from the printing industry that were making the transition from hot metal to offset printing.

Along with this training many other areas of printing production were covered.

The following year the program was opened to the public and expanded to two years.

At that time both modern offset lithography and traditional letterpress methods were taught. Equipment included two 10" x 12" Heidelberg Windmill letterpresses, a 12" x 18" flatbed letterpress, a two-colour Harris offset press and a horizontal camera.



During the early 1970s students hand set type, using both Ludlow and Linotype equipment. According to Brian Pinkerton, a former instructor, they were very old and in the late '70s were replaced with a VIP Phototypesetter. Pinkerton was very happy to see

them leave. In 1972, the department was

much smaller than it is now. The present stripping area did not exist until the new tower was built. The students had to use a classroom on the fifth floor and another classroom was located near Pender Street.

By 1976 a lack of funding made it necessary to condense the program back down to ten months.

The course time was divided into four distinct areas: Production Planning/Sales, Composition, Film Assembly/Camera, and Press/Bindery. Students produced a variety of projects including flyers, calendars, brochures, posters, and even hardcover books. A few newspapers were produced with humorous articles and pictures.

(40 Years and Counting!)

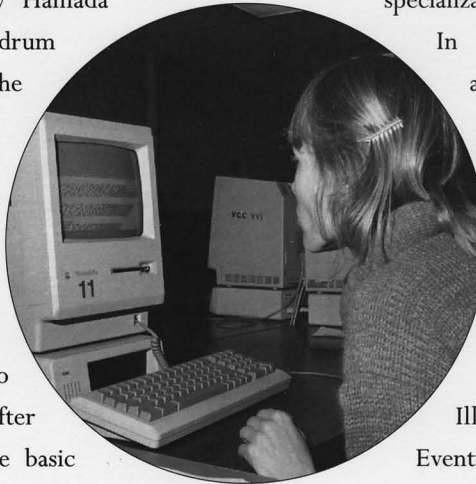
Then in 1986, the Film Assembly/Camera area was further divided to form a fifth area, Litho-Prep and the Composition lab was upgraded to include Macintosh computers. A Linotronic L300 image-setter was installed for outputting from the Macs. The following year, five new Hamada presses were installed and a drum scanner was introduced to the Camera/Scanning area.

Night school classes began in the late 1960s. The classes were always full and they continued until about 1990.

In 1990-1991, a request was made by the printing industry to make changes to the program. After completing five months of the basic courses, one course each month, the new program allowed students to specialize in one area for the next four months.

During the early 1990s the first yearbook was produced. (Until then a group photo was taken of the class at the end of the year.) Students from the Photography Program at Langara came in and

produced the colour photos. Some of the equipment used in the production of the yearbook included Mac computers, the imagesetter, a DC 300 Scanner, and three Harris 125 presses. Around 1995 the program returned to ten months and the specialization component was dropped.



In 1996-1997 flatbed scanners and Mac PowerPC 7200s were purchased. During those years some of the computer programs that were introduced were MacPaint, MacDraw, MS Word and PageMaker. Soon FreeHand joined the group along with Photoshop, Illustrator, and QuarkXPress.

Eventually PageMaker and FreeHand were dropped from the program due to a disagreement with Aldus. In the following years, additional printing industry software and hardware was added. Two Macintosh G3 labs were added in 1999 and the department was cabled for ethernet. The program was expanded to include an optional two-year program in 1999 at the request of the

Program Advisory Committee. The department and program names were changed from Graphic Arts Printing Production (GAPP) to Graphic Communications and Production Technology (GC&PT). The yearbook was reintroduced into the curriculum for production by the second-year students.

Over the years we have had over 25 staff members and 1,700 students. Many of the students have become very successful print professionals.

What is planned for the program in the near future? In February 2003, GC&PT will officially become a two-year program once again. Students will enjoy two ten-month school years and an optional working summer co-op thanks to this change. These 20 months will culminate in a Graphic Communications Diploma. All course content will remain the same with the last five months of the second year structured to guide students through the experience of working in and running a printing

company, using a variety of software and industry standard workflow components. During the rollout of the newly structured program, other initiatives are planned, allowing the GC&PT program to keep pace with industry and technological changes. Ryerson University accreditation, and Apple and Adobe certification are only a couple of those initiatives.



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