

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

REQUEST FOR A NEW PROGRAM AT IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
BACHELOR OF DESIGN PROGRAM

Action Requested: Consider approval of the request by Iowa State University to establish a new Bachelor of Design Program in the College of Design.

Executive Summary: The proposed program is an interdisciplinary, student-centered, flexible studio-based design degree that will offer new opportunities for students to engage design thinking in a collaborative environment focused on addressing contemporary real-world problems and settings. This proposal was reviewed by the Board Office and the Council of Provosts and is recommended for approval. No concerns were raised when it was presented to the Iowa Coordinating Council for Post-High School Education. The proposed program addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan priorities to “provide educational excellence and impact as well as economic development and vitality.”

Background:

- ◇ **Description of program.** The proposed program is a 122.5 credit undergraduate program focused on the interdisciplinary nature of design and the power of the design studio as a place and method for generating ideas and solving problems. The core of the program is a series of forums and studios intended to connect history, theory, and practice to give students hands-on experience with design challenges that vary in complexity and scale. Studios will focus on visual communication of complex information, inventing new objects, creating habitable places, or solving difficult environmental issues. Several of the new courses associated with this program will be designed for non-majors.
- ◇ **Relationship to existing programs at ISU.** The proposed program is related to the other degree programs offered by the College of Design (Architecture, Community and Regional Planning, Graphic Design, Industrial Design, Interior Design, Landscape Architecture, Integrated Studio Arts, and Art and Design). The distinctive feature of the proposed program is its studio-based interdisciplinary focus which encourages an understanding of the connections between different design and art disciplines, and of each one’s role in engaging the important current issues. It also provides a way for students who are not ready to commit to a single design/art discipline to study design and, potentially, to link this education with other fields. This degree is intended to complement the College’s existing humanities-based Bachelor of Arts Program in Art and Design which attracts students interested in a broader view of art and design as understood through the lens of visual culture studies.
- ◇ **Duplication.** The proposed program does not exist elsewhere in the state of Iowa. Degree programs in the arts and in some design fields are offered at many of Iowa’s colleges and universities, including the University of Iowa and the University of Northern Iowa. ISU’s College of Design is unique because its programs in art and applied design coexist with programs in architecture, landscape architecture, and planning. There are only a handful of universities in the United States with the same array on a single campus or within the same college.

While Bachelor of Design programs exist at other universities (the nearest is the University of Minnesota), they are typically offered within architecture programs, often as a stepping stone to a Master's degree in architecture. The proposed program has a distinctive interdisciplinary focus made possible by the breadth of expertise offered by the College of Design's diverse faculty.

- ◇ Student demand. Each year, a number of first-year design students are not admitted or do not apply to one of the college's professional programs. Most transfer to other programs at ISU; some enroll in the college's Bachelor of Arts Program in Art and Design; some retake courses and reapply to one of the professional programs; and a few leave ISU. Many students transfer to pre-business, pre-advertising, civil engineering, construction engineering, and apparel merchandising. The proposed program would provide another opportunity, in addition to the existing Bachelor of Arts program, for those students to stay in the College of Design. The proposed program is designed for students interested in studio-based education of a more general nature, i.e., not focused on a single discipline. It also provides another opportunity for students interested in pursuing a double major, such as business and design, advertising and design, engineering and design, and apparel merchandising and design.

The proposed program would also provide an opportunity for community college transfer students interested in design to complete a four-year degree in design (two years at their community college and two years at ISU) if they complete a relevant set of courses before transferring to ISU. Furthermore, the proposed program would provide an opportunity for undergraduate students who are interested in design but who do not wish to pursue one of the professional programs. Many prospective students explore College of Design offerings but do not enroll in the college's first-year program because of the need to declare a discipline specific major at the end of that year.

- ◇ Unique features. The features that make ISU an appropriate place to initiate the proposed program include the breadth of art, design, history, and planning disciplines offered by Iowa State University's College of Design and the expertise of its faculty.
- ◇ Resources. Most of the courses required for the proposed program are currently offered by ISU; the proposed program will draw on existing faculty, facilities, and equipment. New courses for the proposed program will require additional faculty and space. The College will need to add three new FTE faculty positions to teach the new courses associated with the proposed program and to serve as faculty advisors. In addition, a ¼ FTE advising position will be needed to assist the faculty advisors. All courses will be taught in existing college studios and university classroom spaces.
- ◇ Cost. The University projects that the cost for the proposed program will be \$95,460 in Year 1, increasing to \$263,160 by Year 7. New tuition revenue from the proposed program is expected to exceed the cost of offering this program.
- ◇ Projected enrollment. The projected enrollment is 40 students in Year 1, increasing to 120 students by Year 7. The department also anticipates up to 40 non-majors enrolling in specific courses of the proposed program. Students enrolled in the College of Design's Core Design Program, first-year students enrolled at ISU, and community college students will likely be sources of students.

- ◇ Workforce Need/Demand. Graduates of this program will pursue a wide variety of vocations. Some will pursue employment in careers related to design, journalism, business, engineering, law, arts, public service, or emerging fields. Some students will pursue this degree with another undergraduate major like business or engineering. Graduates' idea-generating and problem-solving skills are needed assets in many fields and work settings. Recent articles on Forbes.com point to the need for creativity in the workplace at all levels.¹ For some students, this degree will form the foundation for graduate study in a design or art field. For students pursuing this route, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' "Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010-11 Edition," predicts growth in the number of jobs available for all fields related to the College of Design.

- ◇ Articulation agreements. ISU anticipates pursuing articulation agreements with Des Moines Area Community College, Kirkwood Community College, Iowa Central Community College, and North Iowa Area Community College.

- ◇ Link to institutional strategic plan. As an interdisciplinary, student-centered, and flexible studio-based program, the Bachelor of Design Program will offer new opportunities for students to engage design thinking in a collaborative environment focused on addressing contemporary problems and issues. Thematic course modules taught by faculty in multiple design disciplines will incorporate methods that artists, designers, and planners use to creatively address such issues as sustainable living environments, energy efficiency, water and food systems, transportation networks, climate change, and social entrepreneurship. The proposed program is particularly relevant to the strategic planning goals of "attracting outstanding students who seek an education that prepares them to make a difference in the world" and that challenges them "to collaboratively learn, grow, and succeed as resilient global citizens and involved alumni."

The proposed program will be the first college-wide interdisciplinary undergraduate program that fully leverages the College's unique combination of disciplines and position within a research university to provide students with a broad and varied undergraduate experience. The proposed program will be attractive to students who want to double major or who have yet to decide which design discipline most interests them. The flexibility of the proposed program will make it possible for community college transfer students to complete their program in four years. This flexibility and openness meets the goal of attracting "a diverse group of students" and the land-grant ideals of making higher education "accessible to all, regardless of race, gender, or economic circumstance" and "putting science, technology, and human creativity to work."

The learning outcomes of the proposed program also match the strategic planning goals of educating students who can confront "common, global challenges" by applying knowledge and converting "what they know into products, services, and information that will improve the quality of life for the citizens of Iowa, the nation, and the world." The curriculum will prepare students to work as part of a team in a variety of disciplinary settings from design professions to journalism, business, law, engineering, arts, and public service. Graduates may also choose to pursue additional education in the design professions or other fields in which design thinking and critical analysis are valued.

¹ "Creativity is the New Black" by Colette Martin, July 16, 2010; "What is Creativity's Value in Marketing, in Business" by John Dragoon, October 4, 2010.