

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**REQUEST FOR A NEW PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA:
BACHELOR OF ARTS PROGRAM IN GRAPHIC DESIGN**

Action Requested: Consider approval of the request by the University of Northern Iowa to establish a new Bachelor of Arts Program in Graphic Design in the College of Humanities, Arts and Sciences in the Department of Art.

Executive Summary: Currently offered as a concentration in the Bachelor of Arts Program in Art-Studio, the proposed program will be established as a stand-alone program in the department. 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” and Goal #8 – “Iowa’s public universities and special schools shall be increasingly efficient and productive.”

Background:

- ◇ **Description of program.** The proposed program will prepare students to function as professional graphic designers, specifically in such areas as publication design, web design, interactive media design, and digital animation (motion graphics). It will place particular emphasis on theoretical, technical and hands-on information about the design of texts and images in printed and online layouts. An essential component will include project work in typography, color, identity systems, portfolio preparation, problem-solving, and digital technology.
- ◇ **Relationship to existing programs at UNI.** All the components of the proposed program are in place; this concentration has existed since the early 1960s when graphic design courses (known then as commercial art) were added to the department curriculum. The introductory level classes have been attractive options for students who intend to work with designers rather than as designers themselves. Students from outside the Department of Art have been majors in public relations, industrial technology, marketing, and electronic media.
- ◇ **Unique features.** The University of Northern Iowa has an established history of educating students in graphic design as reflected by success in student competitions at state, regional, and national levels and a favorable placement rate for graduates. Entry requirements and transfer policies assure program availability to a wide cross section of high school graduates and transfer students.
- ◇ **Duplication.** The proposed program is also offered at the following Iowa institutions of higher education – Iowa State University, University of Iowa, Drake University, Grand View University, Graceland University, Cornell College, Wartburg College, University of Dubuque, and Coe College. However, since the courses in the proposed program at UNI have been offered as an Art-Studio emphasis for a number of years, no new duplication will result from implementing the program. The programs at UNI and SUI serve distinctive student populations and fill the student demand for opportunities in the arts.

- ◇ Need for proposed program. Students enrolled in the Art-Studio emphasis represent the majority of all Art majors at UNI. Establishing the proposed program as a stand-alone program will result in better communication and advising; improved tracking will address retention and graduation rates. Furthermore, the new name will address the fact that there are important distinctions between the practice of “art” (which tends to place primary emphasis on individual creativity and self-expression, often stressing hand techniques) and “design” (which centers more on a problem-solving process in relation to extrinsic goals; is carried out on a computer; and may involve working collaboratively with teams and outside vendors).
- ◇ Student demand. The graphic design component has been one of the highest enrolled concentrations in the Department of Art with an average enrollment of 130-150 students. A stand-alone program will facilitate recruitment of future students.
- ◇ Workforce need/demand. Employment of graphic designers is expected to grow by 13%, as fast as the average for all occupations from 2008 to 2018 as demand increases from advertisers and computer design firms.¹ Program graduates with web site design and animation experience will have a competitive advantage as demand increases for design projects for interactive media web sites, mobile phones, and other technology. Demand for graphic designers will also increase as advertising firms create print and web marketing and promotional materials for a growing number of products and services. Growth in internet advertising is expected to increase the demand for designers.

Although the growth projections in the 2008-2018 State of Iowa Occupational Projections are more modest at 1.3%, they may not reflect the broad spectrum of jobs that designer graduates may be qualified to hold. For instance, “Printing Machine Operators” are included in the production category. While designers do not operate printing presses, they do pre-press and document setup at most print houses, these are considered production occupations in the Design industry. They require the general skills and training of a graphic designer to bridge the layout of client projects to press.²
- ◇ Resources. The courses and faculty in the graphic design concentration of the Art-Studio program will be sufficient to meet the needs of the proposed program.
- ◇ Cost. No new costs are anticipated because the resources are currently in place.
- ◇ Projected enrollment. The projected enrollment is 130 students in Year 1 through Year 7.
- ◇ Link to institutional strategic plan. The proposed program will support UNI’s Strategic Plan to “provide a rigorous and relevant undergraduate educational experience that prepares students for the future.”

¹ Source: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos090.htm#outlook>.

² Source: <http://iwin.iwd.state.ia.us/iowa/ArticleReader?itemid=00003928>.