

Contact: Rachel Boon

**REQUEST FOR NEW PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA:
BACHELOR OF ARTS IN SCREENWRITING ARTS**

Action Requested: Consider approval of the request by the University of Iowa for a Bachelor of Arts in Screenwriting Arts in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS).

The Council of Provosts and Board office support approval of this program.

Background:

Description of proposed program. The proposed major in Bachelor of Arts (BA) Screenwriting Arts draws on the long creative writing tradition at the University of Iowa by expanding the undergraduate offerings to include a program in screenwriting. Students in the Screenwriting Arts BA will be instructed on practical skills and knowledge needed for becoming successful members of the screenwriting industry but also will learn about the history and theories related to screenwriting. At the same time that students are acquiring this rich and deep context for the creation of artistic writing productions, students will learn the basics of creative thinking and how to access originality by reading and studying literature, arts and film, learning research methods in the process. The BA in Screenwriting Arts will require a minimum of 120 semester hours, including 42 semester hours of work for the major. Students must maintain a GPA of at least 2.00 in all courses for the major and in all UI courses for the major. Course work focuses on writing, history, theory, cultural studies, and cinema production courses, with the latter helping students visualize the final product resulting from a screenplay. An internship is offered as an option within the requirements for the major.

Academic objectives. Students will learn to develop and sustain an intellectually rigorous and creative screenwriting career. In order to reach this goal, students will be instructed on narrative forms and genres in fictional and non-fictional prose, both outside of and within cinema and related media. Students will study poetics and dramatic form in order to recognize successful examples of visual and dramatic story-telling. Students also will learn the global history of cinema and the development of a cinematic language of visual story-telling while exploring emerging forms of film art and notable contemporary artists, thinkers and theorists by participating in screenings, artist discussions and panels. Students will undertake and complete short and long form screenplays while studying existing models, generating synopses, treatments, characterization exercises, mood boards, palettes and inspirational visual and musical archives related to fashioning their own process. The students will enhance their oral communication by learning how to pitch ideas and synopses while becoming familiar with industry workshops and international screenwriting and production labs. The proposed Screenwriting Arts major also balances the art and practice of writing with a study of literature, theory, and the arts and their pragmatic application.

Link to institutional strategic plan. The above major will "prepare students to be experts in their disciplines and leaders in their fields" in part through "high-impact practices" (HIPs) and "embedded career readiness," with these student success goals crucial to the UI and CLAS strategic plans. The initiative also enhances economic development in Iowa while increasing UI's prestige and enrollments, which are also goals of the UI Strategic Plan.

Relationship to existing programs at the institution. This is a new program. It will not duplicate any existing efforts at the University of Iowa.

Relationship to existing programs at other colleges and universities. Although colleges and other institutions of higher education in Iowa do not offer a screenwriting major, many offer excellent related courses or majors, particularly in digital media. For example, the University of Northern Iowa offers an emphasis area in Digital Media-Production, within its Department of Communication Studies, with a focus on digital storytelling, in all of its many forms, including "television news, magazine shows, documentaries, and related areas." A related major is Interactive Digital Studies, with students focusing on writing and editing on digital publishing platforms. Both of these UNI programs are closely aligned with communication theory, journalism and public relations. The Theatre major at UNI focuses on acting and directing while offering related courses in script analysis and playwriting. Iowa State University offers one course in screenplays and a second in playwriting, with undergraduates in the Performing Arts major selecting an emphasis in Theatrical Design, Acting/Directing or in Dance. Coe offers a Film Studies major with students choosing a particular aspect of film studies as an emphasis, including film writing, cinema studies or digital production. Grinnell offers two courses in screenwriting as well as courses in film studies, but not a major.

Unique features. The screenwriting arts major will continue a long history of involvement with film in Iowa, encouraging artists and producers to become familiar with the legacy of Iowa and Iowans in cinema as in writing. As the home of the Writers' Workshop as well as the International Writing Program; the Nonfiction Writing Program; the Iowa Playwrights Workshop; the undergraduate English and Creative Writing major; the Magid Center for Undergraduate Writing; and the Iowa Summer Writing Festival, the UI has a deep pool of writing talent to launch this new major.

Resources to establish a high-quality program. The University of Iowa has the faculty, facilities and equipment needed for this program. This includes related production facilities, including the following, which will be used by screenwriters to help produce what they write in order to better understand how writing scripts relates to the final product of film.

- Studio A, Studio B and Studio C production spaces with professional studio equipment
- Digital and non-digital editing Rooms
- Electronic Media Labs
- JK Optical printer Oxberry Animation Stand Whisper room (soundproof booth for voice-over recording and/or foley and ADR (automated dialogue replacement)
- Equipment including cameras, dollies, grip equipment, tripods
- Assorted grip equipment including C-stands, flags, silks, nets, apple boxes and various other grip hardware
- Dolly system with both riding dolly and tripod-mounted dolly

Student demand. Because of the possible fall 2019 approval of this proposed program of study, a small first-year cohort of students is anticipated, particularly since Admissions will not yet have added this major to the list of those available to entering students. During its first year, the program will attract current UI students as a second program of study, with students declaring it in addition to Journalism and Mass Communication or Communication Studies, for example. There might also be students in English and Creative Writing and in Theatre Arts who see this new major as an opportunity to deepen their skills in a more specific area that complements their interests in directing or narrative storytelling. By year 3, the program will start to be known nationally as a destination for screenwriting. The department anticipates that undergraduates will come from many states outside of the Midwest to study screenwriting at Iowa.

Workforce need/demand. Screenwriting Arts majors will find employment as writers in the entertainment field, including in film making but also in television, marketing, advertising, public relations, and other areas that specialize in communication through by words and images. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics in the Occupational Handbook notes that occupations for writers

are expected to grow by 8% over the next decade. Related occupations such as public relations will grow at around 10% as will positions in advertising, promotions, and marketing. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Writers and Authors, on the Internet at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/writers-and-authors.htm> (March 16, 2019).

Cost. The resources will be supplied by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

	COSTS (year 1 & year 2)	TOTAL COSTS
Lecturer Line	\$60,000 (with benefits)	
Internship coordinator – Fellowships for promising screenwriters	\$42,000 and \$25,000	
Instructor Travel	\$ 12,000	
Facilities Cost	\$25,000	
Adjunct faculty	\$65,000	
Teaching Assistants	\$28,000	
Marketing/Recruiting	\$8,000	
Miscellaneous	\$15,000	
Total Yearly Cost (Year 1)		\$60,000
Total Yearly Cost (Year 2)		\$125,000

Projected student enrollment.

	Y	Y 2	Y 3	Y 4	Y 5	Y 6	Y 7
Undergraduate	2	25	50	75	125	125	160
Graduate	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Accreditation. The program will not apply for accreditation since this is not appropriate or required in this particular field of study.

Evaluation plan. Campus-wide assessment of majors occurs each year at UI, with departments pinpointing aspects of the major that need particular attention. This assessment is especially crucial in the first years of the program, with any obstacles analyzed, such as the need for increased seats in gateway courses or supplemental instruction in the most difficult foundational areas. At UI, all departments must submit annual assessment plans to the Office of Assessment.

The College also reviews new majors after the third year, with those committees that have approved the major analyzing its progress from the proposal stage through the graduation of its first students. Generally, the departmental chair of the administrative home of the program meets with the Undergraduate Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee (UEPCC) to discuss these matters, with the faculty committee then making recommendations on changes, if indicated.

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences reviews each CLAS department every five years. During this comprehensive review both continuing and new programs of study offered by the department in question are analyzed as well, with particular concern placed on size of the programs; curricular obstacles to a four-year graduation, if any, such as waitlists in key courses, courses with low enrollments, and the number of students retained and graduating with related majors and minors.

Date of implementation. Upon approval by the Board of Regents.

Letters of Support

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Office of the Dean
202 Catt Hall
Ames, Iowa 50011-1301
515 294-3220
FAX 515 294-1303

April 16, 2019

Helena Dettmer
Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum and the Humanities
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
120 Schaeffer Hall
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, IA 52242-1409

Dear Dean Dettmer,

Thank you for your note requesting our input on the University Iowa's proposed BA major in Screenwriting Arts. The proposed major will build on the strong reputation of the Writer' Workshop and expand the opportunities for undergraduates at the University of Iowa to develop their skills as storytellers within the Department of Cinematic Arts. It will be interesting to see how students respond to this highly specialized writing degree. It is clear that though we are experiencing a proliferation of platforms for sharing stories in our media-saturated culture, great writing will always play a crucial role.

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences appreciated the opportunity to review the proposal. We look forward to hearing more about how this program develops. If I can be of further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,



Amy R. Slagell
Associate Dean for Academic Programs
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
202 Catt Hall
Iowa State University
Ames, IA 50011
(515) 294-7270

College of Humanities, Arts and Sciences
Office of the Dean



April 10, 2019

Dean Joseph Kearney
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
240 Schaeffer Hall
University of Iowa
Iowa City, IA 52242-1409

Dear Dean Kearney:

I am pleased to support the major in Screenwriting Arts that will be offered by the University of Iowa. I am certain that students in the state of Iowa are seeking a program in screenwriting as I often find that question on recruitment days. The program also should help maintain and revive the entertainment industry within our state.

I hope the Board of Regents will consider our support in favor of your program as they make their decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Fritch".

John Fritch
Dean, College of Humanities, Arts and Sciences
Professor, Communication Studies