MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Regents

From: Board Office

Subject: Proposal for a Master of Fine Arts Degree in the Department of Art and Design, the College of Design, Iowa State University

Date: July 7, 2000

Recommended Action:

Approve a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degree, with a major in Integrated Visual Arts, from Iowa State University, and refer to the Iowa Coordinating Council for Post High School Education for review.

Executive Summary:

Iowa State University is requesting approval of a new MFA in Integrated Visual Arts (IVA). The proposed MFA of 61 credits (minimum) will offer students a program of study that uniquely integrates visual arts with technology.

In the field of art, the MFA is regarded as a terminal degree, comparable to the Ph.D.   The need for this degree program and major is based on rapidly expanding technologies that require greater collaboration across disciplines. For example, electronic imaging, web design, visualization experiments, and global communications reflect cooperative efforts of artists and scientists.

The proposal acknowledges that within the State of Iowa, the University of Iowa and Maharishi University of Management offer MFA degrees.   These two programs have different purposes and emphases. The ISU major will integrate science and art with theory and practice, thus supporting the land grant mission of the institution.

The new degree is consistent with the strategic plan of the University and the Board of Regents' strategic plan:

> Objective 1.1.0.0   Improve the quality of existing and newly created educational programs.
> Action Step 1.1.2.2 Focus graduate programs to conform to unique missions of each university.
> Action step 1.1.2.4 Encourage innovation in teaching by increasing resources and strategies for effective use of new instructional technologies.

Enrollment projections provided by ISU are based on current bachelor degree enrollments, as well as available studio space and faculty workloads. It is projected that five students will enroll in Year One, gradually increasing to 20 by Years Four and Five. Graduates of the program would be employable by universities, media firms, and businesses in such careers as illustrators, graphic designers, senior animators, and digital modelers. Other graduates would be able to work in such fields and professions as textile design, architecture, and chemical engineering.

The costs of the program reflect the addition of five new courses that will require that the Department of Art and Design hire a faculty member in either Year Two or Year Three. Some savings will occur as specializations in the current Master of Arts (MA) program, such as craft design, printing, and printmaking, will be dropped. The projected costs for the first three years of the program are $5,500, $51,000, and $51,500. See Attachment A, page 8.

The new degree program, offered through the College of Design, is consistent with the strategic plans of the College and the University. The proposal declares, "unlike the traditional MFA studio program which focuses on a singular medium, such as ceramics, printmaking, painting, metals/jewelry design, etc., the IVA program offers an innovative curriculum aligned with emerging art and design markets."

More extensive answers to the review questions are found in Attachment A, pages 5-9.

Background and Analysis

Need/Demand

ISU states that the demand for the program is high, with prospective students inquiring on a regular basis. The degree is the terminal professional degree in the field. Graduates of the program should have many employment opportunities in visualization, design partnerships and media firms, as well as college and university teaching.

A number of letters in support of the program are provided in the full proposal from the University. The letters come from colleagues on campus and from other Regent institutions. (This documentation is on file at the Board Office.)

The projected enrollments in this program for the next five years are:

	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four	Year Five
Graduate Students	5	10	15	20	20

ISU indicates that these projected enrollments were made on the basis of available studio space and faculty workloads. The University anticipates that students are likely to come from the Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) programs at ISU, within the state, and some from other states.

Duplication

While MFA degrees in the arts are offered by The University of Iowa, Iowa State University, and Maharishi University of Management, the proposed MFA in Integrated Visual Arts will be the only degree of its kind in the state that is geared toward the industrial, technical application of digital technologies. Unlike specializations in separate studio areas offered at The University of Iowa, the MFA in Integrated Visual Arts integrates science and art with theory and practice. The degree supports the land grant mission of ISU, uniting research and theory with practice.

The existing MA in Art and Design will be phased out as the MFA is incorporated into the curriculum. The new degree will replace the current MA in all areas but Art Education. The College of Design already offers the MFA in Graphic Design and in Interior Design; the proposed program supplies a new major focus for the existing degree. Additional Board approval would be necessary if the focus of the proposed degree is other than described above.

Quality

The collaborative nature of this degree aligns the department more closely with the mission of the University, with its emphasis upon technology. The new MFA engages the College of Design's mission in visual design and visualization and the Department of Art and Design's strength in visual communication across disciplines and media.

The quality of the current program will be enhanced in the new program. The foundations of the program are already offered. The majority of links and program elements outside the department are already established. The Biological Pre-medical illustration Program is an example of an established program that already draws upon collaborations which will continue.

ISU cites one of the strengths of the proposed program to be the collaboration between the arts and sciences, especially technology studies. A question that may need to be reviewed in more detail is whether more than six credit hours (out of 61 minimum) should be required outside the department.

The proposed program exceeds the standards required by both the National Association of Schools of Art and Design and the College Art Association of America.

Cost

Commitment to the proposed degree is demonstrated by the willingness of the department and College of Design to reallocate resources in support of the program, including a privately financed visualization laboratory.
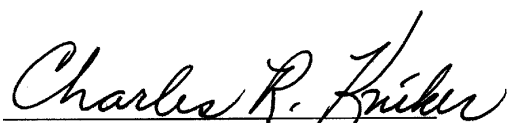
There is no anticipated change in the workload of present faculty. However, a new faculty position will be required in the second or third year of the program in order to deliver two specific technology courses. A summary of estimated additional resources for the first three years of the program is provided below.
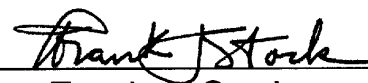
Estimated (Incremental) Costs

	First Year	Second Year	Third Year
Faculty	$0	$45,000	$45,000
Graduate Assistantships	0	0	0
General Expense	1,500	1,500	1,500
Equipment	0	0	0
Library Resources	0	0	0
New Space Needs	0	0	0
Computer Use	4,000	4,500	5,000
Other Resources	0	0	0
Total:	**$5,500**	**$51,000**	**$51,500**

The University is reminded that, if the program is approved, a post-audit report will be due within five years. It is requested that the University set in place mechanisms for accumulating the appropriate information necessary to complete the Regent post-audit review questions, so that each question can be fully responded to at the time of the post-audit. That the unique focus of this degree has been maintained will be of special interest in the post-audit.

The Interinstitutional Committee on Educational Coordination (ICEC) and the Board Office recommend approval of this request.

Charles R. Kniker   Approved: _Frank J. Stork_
Charles R. Kniker   Frank J. Stork

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