S.07-35

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Senate Committee on University Priorities
Memorandum

TO: Senate

FROM: John Waterhouse
Chair, SCUP
Vice President, Academic

RE: Proposal for a Master's program in Digital Media at the Great Northern Way Campus (SCUP 07- 17)

DATE: February 21, 2007

At its February 21, 2007 meeting SCUP reviewed and approved the proposal for the Master's program in Digital Media to be offered at the Great Northern Way Campus.

Motion

That Senate approve and recommend to the Board of Governors the proposal for the Master's program in Digital Media.

encl.

c: R. Woodbury

SFU

SCUP 07-17

TO **SCUP**

ATTENTION **Sarah Dench** | TEL

FROM Trude Heift, SGSC

RE New program proposal

Master's program in Digital Media (GS2007.12)

DATE February 12, 2007

TIME 3:34:17 PM

At its 12th February 2007 meeting Senate Graduate Studies Committee unanimously approved the enclosed proposal for a Master's Program in Digital Media. SGSC shared the same concerns expressed by ACNGP regarding the way GNWC has been constituted with respect to students, in particular, resources, financial aid and student status.

I am forwarding this to SCUP, with the recommendation that the program be approved. In addition to the full proposal and course outlines, I also enclosed copies of relevant correspondence and external reviews of the program.

Trude Heift

c: R. Woodbury

2.

SFU

GS2007.12

TO **SGSC**

ATTENTION | TEL

FROM Trude Heift, ACNGP

RE New program proposal

Master's program in Digital Media

DATE February 12, 2007

TIME 3:17:46 PM

At the ACNGP meeting of 12 February 2007 the committee unanimously recommended that the proposed Master's Program in Digital Media be forwarded to SGSC, with the recommendation that it be approved. The committee, however, expressed concerns regarding the way GNWC has been constituted with respect to students, in particular, resources, financial aid and student status.

Trude Heift

c: R. Woodbury

3.

PROPOSAL FOR MASTER'S PROGRAM IN DIGITAL MEDIA

29	September	2006	Received by Dean of Graduate Studies
8	November 8	2006	"Notice of Intent" and supplementary information approved "in-principle" by Senate Committee on University Priorities
23	October	2006	Reviewed by Assessment Committee for New Graduate Programs
6	November	2006	Reviewed by Assessment Committee for New Graduate Programs
14	November	2006	Received revised program proposal from School of Interactive Arts & Technology
22	November	2006	Sent proposal to four external reviewers by Dean of Graduate Studies
15	January	2007	Received two external reviewers' reports by Dean of Graduate Studies
24	January	2007	Sent two external reviewers' reports to School of Interactive Arts & Technology
24	January	2007	Received revised program proposal
31	January	2007	Sent third external reviewer's report to School of Interactive Arts & Technology
12	February	2007	To be reviewed by Assessment Committee for New Graduate Programs

Proposal
for a

Master of Digital Media

professional degree program
to be offered at the

Great Northern Way Campus

May 1, 2006
minor revision June 28, 2006
minor revisions July 2006
minor revisions September 2006
minor revisions 14 November 2006
minor revisions 11 December 2006
minor revisions 12 January 2007

Proposed to:
BC Institute of Technology
Emily Carr Institute of Art + Design
Simon Fraser University and
University of BC

by the Board of Directors of the
Great Northern Way Campus

Approved by GNWC MDM Steering Committee on May 3, 2006
Approved in principle by GNWC Academic Committee on May 26, 2006
Approved by GNWC Academic Committee for consideration by academic departments at the GNWC institutions July 28, 2006

Note: Generic Course Proposal Forms are included in this version.

Executive Summary

The academic partners in the Great Northern Way Campus (GNWC) in Vancouver - BCIT, ECIAD, SFU and UBC - working with the BC new media industry (coordinated by NewMediaBC) have developed a novel proposal for a professional masters degree targeted on the needs of the industry. This program was allocated substantial financial support in 2006 by the BC Government and significant additional support is pledged by industry. The program will be housed in Phase I of a to-be-constructed Centre for Digital Media at the GNWC. Federal support is being sought for Phase II of the Centre to complement and add strength to the degree program.

The Master of Digital Media (MDM) degree program is an innovative graduate-level program to be offered at the GNWC. The MDM is a professional degree representing attainment of the highest status for practitioners in the entertainment arts and technology field and having an academic weight equivalent to the MFA and other professional degrees such as the MBA. In addition to its own core of expert faculty members, the program synergistically utilizes the strengths of the four GNWC institutions and practitioners in allied industries.

Digital media, which includes entertainment technology, can be defined as media experiences made possible by the advent of primarily computer-mediated digital technologies (e.g., electronic games and special effects in motion pictures). The principles and techniques used are also applicable to a wide range of non-entertainment uses, such as image processing, scientific visualization, flight simulators and other virtual environments for education and training.

The MDM degree is a full-time, two-year program. The entering cohort for the initial class is 35 students; expansion beyond this is anticipated in subsequent years. Due to the high level of personal involvement by the world-class faculty members and the costs of the excellent facilities, a premium level of tuition will be charged. Tuition and fees for the 2007/8 cohort are set at $20,000 for each of the two years for Canadian students and $30,000 for others; books, materials, and living and travel expenses are additional. Financial assistance may be available via government programs, but not from GNWC. Initially, at least, there will be one admission date per year, in September, with an application deadline of January 31.

The field of media arts and technology continues to grow in British Columbia. Employers demand the high level of creative and technical competence that graduates of this program will possess. Currently there is no other program of this nature and at this level in British Columbia or in Canada. The Master of Applied Arts degree offered at Emily Carr Institute of Art + Design includes three streams, Visual Arts, Design and Media Arts and emphasizes experimental exploration of media and new media environments and Simon Fraser University's Master of Science in Interactive Arts and Technology is a research-based program. Neither is an applied professional program such as the one being proposed. Comparable programs exist in the United States; however, the cost of attending school in the U.S. combined with the limited enrolment capacity of this type of program suggest that demand for the program from Canadian and international students will be high.

The structure of the program proposed here is modelled on the successful Master of Entertainment Technology degree offered by the Entertainment Technology Center (ETC) at Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh, PA. The leaders, faculty and staff of the ETC have been generous in providing advice and sharing their experiences. The content for the courses proposed has been developed collaboratively by a Project Team made up of faculty from BCIT, ECIAD, SFU and UBC, and industry collaborators. For each course, the course authors are acknowledged individually.

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CURRICULUM

Goal

The goal of the program is to provide high functioning professionals with the knowledge and skills required to be effective creators, practitioners and leaders in the fields of digital media, entertainment technology and other related industries.

Graduates will possess the skills and knowledge to:

- Take leadership in the creation of products, processes and tools that support the use of digital media to entertain, educate and communicate.
- Organize and lead interdisciplinary teams of artists, technologists and others who work together to the highest advantage in the creation of digital media that has practical application within industry.
- Creatively problem solve under the pressure of time and budget constraints
- Design and create digital media and entertainment technology products to industry standards
- Give and receive constructive feedback on the performance of team members

Program Components

The curriculum has four components: (1) *Core courses* (4 required), (2) *Elective courses* (2 required), (3) *Project courses* (4 required), (4) *an Internship semester* (required).

The backbone of the GNWC MDM curriculum is a sequence of supervised project courses, each of which places students in interdisciplinary teams, characterized by close interaction with both faculty members and industry professionals. The projects are of one semester duration and are structured to address differing elements of digital media and entertainment technology. These include core areas such as interactive narrative, immersive/virtual worlds, spatial and temporal domains, and 3D rendering. Team members are rotated for each new project. Project management and other management issues are addressed in all projects. Students typically devote up to 80% of their school/work/study time on project work in their 2nd, 3rd and 4th semesters.

In addition to the project courses there are a number of traditionally formatted courses. The program begins with a survey course on the

nature of digital media and entertainment technology. There is also a course in improvisational acting, in which students learn how to tell a story on the fly and how to create an interactive experience in the theatre, and another on creation of the visual story. There is a fourth core course on game design. A very wide range of elective courses is also available, primarily utilizing courses at the four GNWC institutions with input by experts from the entertainment technology industry.

The third key component of the program is interaction with leading practitioners in the private and public sectors, via a required internship, field trips, and a mentoring program with members of the industry. Arrangements for internships have been made with employers, in Vancouver and elsewhere, to ensure that students gain valuable skills by working on meaningful projects to which they can make significant contributions. Student project teams will also make field trips to digital entertainment companies, museums, theme parks, and relevant academic and industry conferences.

Program Requirements

The proposed MDM degree is a full-time, cohort-based program. There are four study terms of 15 credits each. There is also a mandatory internship during the summer after the first year of study. The proposed course of study is detailed below.

Year One (Fall)

DMED 500 Foundations of Digital Media (3 credits)
Business, technological, social and ethical issues and realizations of digital entertainment are introduced and framed.

DMED 501 The Visual Story (3 credits)
The visual story teaches the language of film-making and the director's craft as it applies to the digital format.

DMED 502 Improvising Story and Character (3 credits)
Techniques of improvisational acting are used to develop collaborative and creative skills. Students learn to rapidly develop dramatic themes, narratives, and characters, engage effectively with challenging situations, and build dynamic teams in creative environments.

DMED 520 Projects I – Building Virtual Worlds (6 credits)
Project courses are group independent studies, where teams of three to six students work on a focused project(s) during that semester. This first project course is made up of 5 short (2-3 week) projects.

Year One (Spring)

DMED 521 Projects II (12 credits)

DMED 503 Foundations of Game Design (3 credits)
Game design is a seminar and project-based course that teaches the mechanics and processes of game design.

Year One (Summer)

DMED 530 Internship (3 credits)
The required internship places the student in full-time work in the entertainment technology business and gives real-world experience in working to concrete deadlines with a motivated, often multidisciplinary, team. Students learn first hand the importance of effective communication and cooperation to achieve a specific goal.

Year Two (Fall)

DMED 522 Projects III (12 credits)

Elective Course (3 credits)

Year Two (Spring)

DMED 523 Projects IV (12 credits)

Elective Course (3 credits)

Elective Courses

Students may select their two required elective courses from the following:

1. Two MDM Special Topics courses and the one Directed Studies courses (see below).

2. Currently, the only MDM course proposed as an elective is: DMED 510 Financing & Distribution of Digital Entertainment (see below).

3. With permission of the Program, students may take any graduate course at any of the partner institutions for which they have the prerequisites. This is facilitated by the Western Deans' Agreement which allows students at Western Canadian universities to take graduate courses at other institutions with a minimum of formality.

4. With permission of the Program and agreement of the instructor, students may take one suitable senior undergraduate course at a GNWC partner institution.

The degree to be awarded

Students who complete the program will be awarded a Master of Digital Media degree jointly credentialed by the four GNWC partner

institutions. The Principles and Characteristics for Applied Masters Degrees, as shown on the DQAB website are as follows:

Guiding Principles - Applied Masters Degrees will:

- Focus on an advanced level of employment related practices and knowledge directly linked to labour market need.
- Include an appropriate program structure with a balance between theory and practical instruction, and a level of intellectual challenge comparable to existing graduate studies.

Characteristics - Applied Masters Degrees will:

- Include content that focuses on an advanced level of expertise in a recognized occupational sector or profession.
- Incorporate an applied focus based on scholarly and creative activities beyond the baccalaureate degree level.
- Respond to industry needs that provide employment opportunities for individuals completing graduate level studies.

The MDM degree program is designed to match these Principles and Characteristics. The program addresses a real industry need at the same time as providing a heavily project based approach to the application of advanced artistic and technical knowledge to challenging new problems.

Time required for the degree

Under normal circumstances, degree requirements for the MDM should be completed within five semesters (20 months).

Course proposals

The program structure has been described above. This section provides brief details of the courses to be offered.

Formal course proposals and full course outlines are included in Appendix B.

DMED 500 Foundations of Digital Media (3 credits)
Business, technological, social and ethical issues and realizations of digital entertainment are introduced and framed. The emergence and ongoing development of the digital entertainment industry is discussed

through a historical exploration and critical analysis of the economics, technical innovations, social demands and ethical constraints which define it. Outcomes are exploration and a critical perspective on digital entertainment which will act as a common basis for all subsequent discussion and collaboration between students with artistic, technical or interdisciplinary backgrounds.

DMED 501 The Visual Story (3 credits)
The many facets of storytelling are explored, with an emphasis on the meaningful visualization of creative content. Text and sound are used as the stimulus for development of visual narratives through shape, colour, line, texture and composition. Students cultivate essential art direction skills through photo essays, storyboards, animatics, character design, costume design, lighting design, mise-en-scene and cinematography. Classic texts are re-envisioned to develop a critical analysis of contemporary visual archetypes.

DMED 502 Improvising Story and Character (3 credits)
Techniques of improvisational acting are used to develop collaborative and creative skills. Students learn to rapidly develop dramatic themes, narratives, and characters, engage effectively with challenging situations, and build dynamic teams in creative environments.

DMED 503 Foundations of Game Design (3 credits)
Game design is a seminar and project-based course that teaches the mechanics and processes of game design. The principles learned in this class apply equally well to card games, board games, party games, athletic games, and computer games. Students analyze many types of games and design many games of their own, alone and in groups, using these principles.

DMED 510 Financing & Distribution of Digital Entertainment (3 credits)
(Elective course)
The financing and exploitation of digital entertainment is examined using actual forms, articles, and projects. Different methods of financing and distributing video games, mobile content, theatrical feature films, television projects and series will be examined. The drafting and negotiating of basic entertainment contracts and intellectual property law related to digital entertainment will also be discussed.

DMED 520 Projects I – Building Virtual Worlds (6 credits)

DMED 521 Projects II (12 credits)

DMED 522 Projects III (12 credits)

DMED 523 *Projects IV* (12 credits)

Project courses are group independent studies, where teams of three to six students work on a focused project(s) during that semester. The

number of projects per semester varies. The primary objective of the courses is to provide a hands-on working experience with teammates who are from different backgrounds and disciplines. Other objectives are to experience project management and have the possibility of working with an external client (some projects have external collaborators). The requirements for a project are as follows:

- The team must comprise students from both technological and non-technological backgrounds. During the course of the project, students having an engineering or other technical background will be expected to make a significant aesthetic contribution to the project and students having an artistic grounding would be expected to make a valuable technical contribution to the project.
- The team must both prototype and produce a tangible result (not a paper).
- The work must be overseen by a faculty member approved by the MDM program for this project.

The first Project course, DMED 520, Building Virtual Worlds, is somewhat different from the others. The course has 5 short projects in which student teams spend 2 – 3 weeks designing and implementing an artifact in a virtual world environment (Panda3D or similar). This rapid immersion into a group problem solving environment is designed to break down student inhibitions and to foster very rapid project planning.

The second, third and fourth project courses are normally based on semester length projects of increasing technical, artistic and management sophistication. All four of these courses have an explicit role in teaching business aspects of team based projects – project management and creation of a business plan by going through a 'green light' approval process. The role of business principles and practices in project courses is discussed further In Appendix B.

DMED 530 Internship (3 credits)
The required internship places the student in full-time work in the digital media or entertainment technology business and gives real-world experience in working to concrete deadlines with a motivated, often multidisciplinary, team. Students learn first hand the importance of effective communication and cooperation to achieve a specific goal.

Special Topics

By their very nature special topics courses will vary. Two such courses are proposed to provide flexibility. Special topics courses offered in the program will be approved by the Program Committee to essentially the same criteria required for approval of a new elective. At the time of approval, each special topics course will be evaluated for suitability for

study towards the MDM degree and the results of such evaluation will be noted in the course approval and course outline.

DMED 540 Special Topics in Digital Media I (3 credits)
DMED 541 Special Topics in Digital Media II (3 credits)

Directed Studies

Normally a student would take at most one directed studies course during their degree. Directed studies offered within the program will be approved by the Program Committee to essentially the same criteria required for approval of a new elective.

DMED 550 Directed Studies in Digital Media (3 credits)

Supervision

Students entering the program will be assigned an academic advisor. The advisor has the task of advising the student on issues related to study within the program and assisting the student in identifying projects. Other advice for students will come from the faculty member assigned to supervise their group in each project courses.

Business Issues in the Curriculum

Business related studies are an important component of this degree program. The integration of these topics into core courses and project courses is set out in Appendix B.

LEARNING METHODOLOGIES

The pedagogy of the Master of Digital Media program reflects its goals. We blend the innovative with the traditional, complementing a major orientation to team based project courses with more traditional core courses and electives. An industry based Internship is mandatory.

The four core courses take a seminar based approach to knowledge building through discussions moderated by the instructor. The authenticity of the topics studied is enhanced by the participation of industry experts in these discussions.

The project based learning (PBL) in the four project courses emphasizes learning activities that are long-term, interdisciplinary, student-centered, and integrated with real world issues and practices. One immediate benefit of practicing PBL is the unique way that it can motivate students by engaging them in their own learning. PBL provides opportunities for students to pursue their own interests and

questions and make decisions about how they will find answers and solve problems. PBL also provides opportunities for interdisciplinary learning. Students apply and integrate the content of different subject areas at authentic moments in the production process, instead of in isolation or in an artificial setting. Assessment in courses using group projects can be challenging; we propose that evaluation be based on both individual and group achievement where individual achievement may include a component of peer assessment.

The experiential learning that takes place in the mandatory internship has many of the advantages of project based learning. However, because of differences between different placement opportunities, it cannot be so easily evaluated. We propose that no grade be assigned but that both the company supervisor and the academic supervisor should judge the performance to be satisfactory.

FACULTY

A crucial feature of our program is that every faculty member will have expertise beyond the courses comprising the program. In other words, each faculty will have breadth of knowledge and experience in the general area of digital media and depth in their particular content area. Collectively the faculty (including adjunct and associated faculty) will be diverse and balanced -- they will present both multiple perspectives on digital media and seek to interpret differences amongst perspectives. For example, we expect to appoint faculty who have demonstrated a high level of expertise as computer scientists, engineers, cultural theorists, artists, designers, social scientists, and/or business theorists. See Appendix F for a description of the proposed mechanisms for faculty appointment.

PROGRAM CONSULTATIONS AND EVALUATION

External

The impetus for this program came from the BC digital media and entertainment technology industry whose efforts are coordinated by New Media BC. New Media BC (NMBC) is a not-for profit industry association whose mission is to advance Vancouver and BC as the World Centre of New Media and Digital Entertainment (http://www.newmediabc.com). Based on this industry need, in December 2004 GNWC published a Concept Paper for a professional masters degree program to meet these needs.

To evaluate the proposed program, as set out in the Concept Paper, three studies were conducted. The results of these studies (listed below) were considered in the development of this proposal.

1. February 7, 2005. Feasibility Report for the Master of Digital Entertainment Degree. Prepared by Dr. Maggie Beers, Ms. Terry Fuller and Ms. Sarah Wareing, BCIT Learning and Teaching Centre. This report reviews student perspectives on the proposed degree program. The Executive Summary is included in Appendix E. Student opinions were gathered through on-line questionnaires and focus groups. The results are positive and provide useful input to the program design.
2. February 13, 2005. Masters of Digital Entertainment Feasibility Study – Industry Perspective. Prepared by Dr. Steven Lee Berman. This complements the first study by providing an industry perspective. The Overview and Summary are included in Appendix E. Industry professionals from BC companies (22) and international companies (14) provided opinions by telephone interview, email questionnaire or focus group. There was clear consensus that such a program is needed.
3. May 16, 2006. Industry Commitments for the Masters of Digital Entertainment Program. Prepared by Ms. Anja Haman, Haman Consulting. The purpose of this brief study was to confirm the support available from industry. The Executive Summary is included in Appendix E. While there is strong support for the program, small companies, in particular, must put limits on the time and resources they can commit.

Since January 2005, GNWC leadership has had numerous consultations with leaders of similar programs in the United States, particularly with the Entertainment Technology Center at Carnegie-Mellon University and the Florida Interactive Entertainment Academy at the University of Central Florida. On March 27, 2006 GNWC President Bruce Clayman and Curriculum Coordinator Tom Calvert visited the ETC at Carnegie Mellon and on April 24 and 25 2006, ETC professors Drew Davidson and Brenda Harger visited GNWC and the partner institutions.

On March 21, 2006, a day-long workshop on post-secondary programs related to games was held at the Game Developers Conference in San Jose, California. Because of its relevance to our curriculum design, representatives from GNWC and the partner institutions participated in this workshop.

Internal to GNWC Partners

In 2005, GNWC established a Working Group to plan the curriculum of the new degree program. This Working Group comprised Monique Fouquet (ECIAD, chair), Jonathan Tyrrell (ECIAD), Robert Gardiner (UBC), Anna Kindler (UBC), Rob Woodbury (SFU), Justine Bizzocchi (SFU) and Laura Davie (BCIT). In February 2006, after BC Government funding was announced, Tom Calvert was appointed by GNWC to assist the Working Group in planning the new curriculum.

With the support of the Working Group open meetings for interested faculty were held at partner institutions as follows:

- UBC - Friday February 24, 2006. 18 faculty from the following schools and departments attended: Theatre, Film and Creative Writing; Art History and Visual Art; Anthropology and Sociology; Music; Linguistics; Computer Science; and Electrical and Computer Engineering.
- SFU – Thursday March 2, 2006. 16 faculty from the following schools and departments attended: Interactive Arts and Technology; Computing Science; Contemporary Arts; Communication; and Industry Liaison. Others from Kinesiology and the Publishing program expressed interest but could not attend.
- BCIT: Thursday March 2, 2006. The VP Education and 4 faculty leaders from Computing and Business Administration attended.
- ECIAD – 8 March 2006. The VP Academic and 7 faculty from Integrated Media; Digital Art; Animation; Print and Photo Media; Web and Digital Technologies; and Film attended.

Building on the meetings at the individual institutions, an *ad hoc* Project Team was formed. The extended mailing list included all who attended the meetings at the institutions or expressed interest. About 16 faculty attended three meetings on March 16, April 11 and April 25th. They were joined in one or more of the meetings by the following industry representatives: Lynda Brown, Director, New Media BC; Steve Seabolt, Electronic Arts; Mark Baxter, Gnosis Games; Rick Mischel, Mainframe Entertainment; Warren Franklin, Rainmaker; Leah Rubin, Radical; Dave Forsey, Radical; Mark Frein, Learning Strategies Group; Sang Mah, ComVU Media.

The *ad hoc* Project Team assigned responsibility for development of individual courses as follows:

- Foundations of Digital Entertainment – Alissa Antle, Torsten Moeller and Mark Frein (SFU).
- The Visual Story – Cathy Robertson (UBC), Leslie Bishko, Jonathan Tyrrell and Fiona Bowie (ECIAD).
- Improv Acting – Robert Gardiner and Michael Robinson (UBC).
- Game Design – Jim Bizzocchi and Chris Shaw (SFU).
- Business content – Mark Frein and Vadim Kyrylov (SFU), Laura Davie and Chris Jaques (BCIT).

At the final meeting of the *ad hoc* group on April 25, the small groups reported back and after discussion there was general consensus on the course content.

Similar Programs Elsewhere

While there are a growing number of programs and research centres that have a similar focus to the proposed professional masters degree, there are few that have the same model or offer a similar credential. The small group that are directly similar include:

Master of Entertainment Technology, Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA. (www.etc.cmu.edu)

Various MS degrees at Florida Interactive Entertainment Academy, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida. (http://www.cas.ucf.edu/CAS3/departments_academic_fiea.php)

MS in Computer Science (Game Development), School of Engineering, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California. (http://gamepipe.isi.edu/Education.html)

It should be noted that the ETC at Carnegie-Mellon has plans to establish franchised centres and degree programs in Southern California, Adelaide (Australia), Seoul (Korea) and Singapore.

A comprehensive and inclusive list of related Canadian programs and centres can be found in Appendix A. In addition, the Carnegie-Mellon website at http://www.etc.cmu.edu/resources/similar.html provides a more extensive list of related programs worldwide.

ADMISSION

Initially there will be one annual admission into the program with the possibility of early or out-of-cycle admissions in special cases. The annual deadline for applications is 31 January, with the possibility of late applications. The Graduate Admissions Committee, a sub-committee of the Program Committee, will adjudicate applications for admission by the end of April, and will announce its recommendations for applicants who have met the above deadline.

It is our aim to admit groups of students with diverse backgrounds, across the broad areas included in digital media and entertainment technology. The following admission requirements are designed to encourage such diversity while setting minimum standards for acceptance into the program.

Minimum Standard Entrance Requirements for the MDM degree

1. The academic equivalent of a 4-year baccalaureate degree from a Canadian or US university in a field related to the proposed program of study. For example:

- BSc Computer Science, BASc Engineering (Electrical, Communications, Computer Engineering), BA or BSc in Education,

Management, Economics or Communications, BFA in Art, Design or Performing Arts, BA in Art, Art History, Architecture, Linguistics, Psychology or Philosophy, BArch, BLArch, BBA, BTech (Electronic Engineering or Computing).

Or

- An undergraduate degree in another, related discipline. Applicants under this category are required to make the case for (a) the relationship between the discipline in which they hold their previous degree or degrees and this program; and (b) how they would benefit from this program.

2. A portfolio of previous work. This may include exhibited art, designs, film or video, computer software or engineering designs.

3. Demonstrated ability in computing.*

4. Demonstrated ability in academic writing. Applicants are to submit one sample of written work done as part of their undergraduate studies.

5. Minimum undergraduate grades:

- a minimum overall average in the B+ range (76% or higher) in third- and fourth-year courses, or
- academic standing with at least 12 credits of third- or fourth-year courses in the A grade range (80% or higher) in the field of study, or
- applicants who hold a four-year baccalaureate degree or its academic equivalent, which does not meet the requirements stated above, but who have had significant formal training and relevant professional experience to offset such deficiencies, may be granted admission on the recommendation of the Master of Digital Media program. Prior learning assessment will be conducted based on the principle that appropriate learning that can be identified, described and documented can be considered for recognition.

6. A suitable letter of intent (a) explaining the applicant's motivation for selecting this degree program, (b) summarizing relevant skills, training and experience; (c) describing proposed interests within the program and (d) indicating how the course of study would contribute to the applicant's future intellectual or professional growth. All of the above four points should be explicitly addressed in the letter of intent.

7. Three reference letters, each from a suitably qualified person.

8. These requirements are intended to equal or exceed the general graduate admission requirements at all partner institutions.

9. The Admissions Committee reserves the right to request an oral interview with an applicant either face-to-face, online or by telephone.

* Note that applicants lacking demonstrated ability in computing may be admitted on the condition that they take one or more suitable courses (e.g. SFU's IAT 800 Foundations of Computational Art and Design) but this course cannot be counted for credit towards the MDM degree.

Additional Requirements:

Demonstrated proficiency in the English language through one of the following means:

- A previous undergraduate or graduate degree completed at a university where English is the applicant's primary language of instruction
- A minimum score of 570 on the paper-based TOEFL test with a minimum TWE score of 5
- A minimum score of 230 on the computer-based TOEFL test with a minimum TWE score of 5

OTHER PROGRAM INFORMATION

Tuition

Because of the special nature of this program (world class professional faculty and exceptional facilities) students will pay tuition fees based on the costs. For 2007-08 the tuition will be set at $10,000 per semester for Canadian students and $15,000 per semester for students who are not Canadian citizens or permanent residents.

Administrative structure

The program will be based at the Great Northern Way Campus in Vancouver. A Program Committee, consisting of faculty members from partner institutions and representatives from industry, and reporting to the Director of the MDM Program will administer the program. The committee members will undertake the normal tasks of a graduate program committee.

A general statement on Governance for all GNWC programs is included as Appendix F. In addition, The GNWC Academic Committee and Board of Directors are currently in the final stages of discussing policies that will cover administrative issues. The documents currently under final consideration include:

1. Memorandum of Understanding between the GNW partner institutions
2. Policy on Admissions and Program Requirement
3. Code of Student Conduct and Discipline

These will apply to all graduate programs offered at GNWC – not just the MDM Degree. The regulations are comprehensive and hopefully cover all aspects of graduate student activities at GNWC. Student appeals of grades, etc will be handled by the UBC Senate Appeals Committee.

RATIONALE AND DEMAND

Potential applicants for program

It is expected that the majority of applicants to the program will be recent graduates with an undergraduate degree in either computer science (or a related field) or in the creative arts. However, a significant minority will either have a recent degree in some other discipline or will have spent several years in industry. The program is designed to accommodate this range of applicants. It is anticipated that selected program workshops, short courses and seminars will be made available to the digital media community on a non-credit basis.

Potential job market

The fact that industry initiated the planning for this program and persuaded the Provincial Government that it was crucial to their future viability attests to the job market. Also, the industry has committed itself to raise $8 Million to supplement the $40.5 million allocated by Government to support the program.

Beyond this, it is clear that on a world scale, Vancouver (and British Columbia) has become a significant centre for digital media, entertainment technology and games. A 2003 New Media BC study involved more than 700 new media companies around the Province. The majority of these companies (79%) are situated within the Lower Mainland with the remaining 21% distributed throughout other regions of the province. The study shows that a major reason for these companies to locate here is the quality of the environment. In spite of our favourable environment, however, it can be hard to recruit new media professionals from other centres.

In the Digital Media industry much of the creative development is carried out by multi-disciplinary teams. Typically these teams include

graphic artists, animators, special effects specialists, computer scientists (hardware and software) and a project manager. Although companies find it difficult to recruit outstanding team members in all of these areas, appropriate educational programs do exist. However, companies find it almost impossible to recruit individuals with a broad background in digital media and experience in organizing and leading multidisciplinary teams. The Master of Digital Media degree program is designed to meet this need. It is expected that graduates will take an initial position as a team member but will rapidly be promoted first to team leader and then to a manager responsible for multiple teams.

In addition to the digital media and entertainment technology industries the graduates of the MDM program can expect to find employment in a variety of other technology based fields. These include image processing (medical and scientific), scientific visualization, flight simulation, virtual environments for education and training and the development of interactive exhibits for science centres and museums.

In summary, there is an urgent need to develop programs like the Master of Digital Media to educate the leaders of tomorrow's industries.

APPENDIX A: LIST OF RELATED PROGRAMS

On page 12 above, three directly comparable US programs were identified:

- Carnegie Mellon University Entertainment Technology Center (http://www.etc.cmu.edu)
- University of Central Florida – Florida Interactive Entertainment Academy (http://www.cas.ucf.edu/CAS3/departments_academic_fiea.php)
- University of Southern California - Game Development Degree (http://gamepipe.isi.edu/Education.html)

In addition, we can point to several institutions in Canada that have programs or centres that are related, but not directly competitive with the new program proposed here.

Emily Carr Institute of Art + Design

Emily Carr Institute of Art + Design offers a Master of Applied Arts degree which includes three streams, Visual Arts, Design and Media Arts. The Media stream is the program that most closely overlaps the proposed Master of Digital Media degree but focuses more broadly on how images and objects can become interfaces to media environments. The Design stream deals with human factors and communications.

Simon Fraser University

The School of Interactive Arts and Technology offers research-based MA, MSc and PhD degrees. These degrees are interdisciplinary and their subject matter overlaps the proposed Master of Digital Media degree, but being research-based, these degrees complement rather than compete with the professional program proposed here.

Concordia University

Three programs with some relationships to ours exist.

- Media Studies – MA: Cultural and social aspects of media and communication
- Educational Technology – MA, PhD: Focus of the program is on communication, management theory and systems analysis.
- Open Media – MFA: This program includes art forms such as performance, installation, and electronic art.

McGill University

Art History and Communication Studies – MA, PhD: Focus is on interdisciplinary study of art, culture and communications, and the technologies of information, image, and sound. The program involves cultural and social aspects.

University of Toronto,

Toronto offers a collaborative graduate program through the Knowledge Media Design Institute. The program offers *"...a specialization for graduate students from a variety of academic backgrounds to engage in the design, prototyping, evaluation, and use of media intended to support and enhance the ability of individuals and groups to think, communicate, learn, and create knowledge."* (www.kmdi.org). Students are admitted to graduate study in a home department (Architecture, Landscape, and Design; Computer Science; Information Studies; Mechanical and Industrial Engineering; and Sociology). Students must meet all the requirements of their home department plus those of the KMDI program.

Toronto offers a program in the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology and the McLuhan Program in Culture and Technology. Topics include Communications in History, Theory, Technology and Perspective and Design in the Twentieth Century. The programs do not have an applied technology component.

Canadian Film Centre - Habitat Programme

Habitat (http://www.cdnfilmcentre.com/training/newmedia.html) is centred on the exploration, development and production of the interactive experience. Its goal is to provide educational programming that combines the intellectual rigour of post-graduate university environment with the results-driven orientation of a production studio environment. Though not a degree granting program, Habitat plays an important national role in the development of highly qualified new media personnel.

The Banff Centre - New Media Institute (BNMI)

BNMI (http://www.banffcentre.ab.ca/bnmi/) offers a series of summits, workshops, co-productions, co-developed programs and production. Through these vehicles, BNMI supports collaborative research, dialogue and networking, a laboratory for the prototyping and co-production and research of new media works, and a place for career development and training. Although not a degree granting program, BNMI plays an important national role in the development of highly qualified new media personnel.

To obtain a wider context, consult the list of similar programs and centres that is provided on the Carnegie-Mellon Entertainment Technology Center website
http://www.etc.cmu.edu/Global/resources/similarprograms.html

Great Northern Way Campus

Master of Digital Media Program Proposal

Appendix B

Curriculum Change Forms (UBC)

This Appendix comprises the curriculum change forms and course outlines for the Master of Digital Media (MDM) Degree to be offered at the Great Northern Way Campus by the BC Institute of Technology, Emily Carr Institute of Arts + Design, Simon Fraser University and the University of BC.

There are two versions of these course proposal and curriculum change forms, one a set in the format used at UBC (this document) and an equivalent generic set for the other institutions.

In addition to the course proposal forms and course outlines this Appendix also includes a Note on how business issues are handled in the curriculum.

Note: For convenience the Curriculum Change Forms and Course Outlines are in a separate file.

Great Northern Way Campus

Master of Digital Media Program Proposal

Appendix B

Course Proposal Forms (Generic)

This document comprises the course proposal and curriculum change forms to be included as Appendix B of the Proposal for a Master of Digital Media (MDM) Degree to be offered at the Great Northern Way Campus by the BC Institute of Technology, Emily Carr Institute of Arts + Design, Simon Fraser University and the University of BC.

There are two versions of these course proposal and curriculum change forms, one a generic set (this document) and an equivalent set in the format used at UBC.

In addition to the course proposal and curriculum change forms this document also includes a Note on how business issues are handled in the curriculum.

Note: For convenience the Curriculum Change Forms and Course Outlines are in a separate file.

Great Northern Way Campus
Graduate Course Outline

Course Title: DMED 500 Foundations of Digital Media (3 credits)

Course Authors: Alissa Antle, Interactive Arts & Technology, SFU; Torsten Moeller, Computing Science, SFU; Mark Frein, Learning Strategies Group, SFU.

Instructors: To be appointed.

Course Description

This course explores the history and future of digital entertainment from three perspectives: business, technological and social. Through a series of three modules, attention is focused on the economic history of the industry, the evolution of state-of-the-art technology as it pertains to user experience and the social and ethical issues which result. A key theme of the course is the development of a framework to critically analyze as well as participate in the future of digital media and technology.

The course is team taught by several faculty and provides an opportunity for integrative teaching as well as integrative learning. A faculty team of three would divide the seminar into three related modules – starting with the economics of the industry, leading to historical overview of new media and interactive technologies and finishing with socio-technical and ethical issues. The faculty team should include a business-focused faculty member, a technology focused faculty member, and a ethics, sociology or social policy-focused faculty member.

Topics

Module 1: History & Business (6 weeks)
- History of the computer/console gaming industry
- History of the digital effects & film industry
- History of the digital animation industry
- Innovation and technology adoption
- Economics & markets
- Business strategy and business models

Module 2: Technology & Experience (6 weeks)
- Historical overview of new media and computing technology
- State-of the art in visual computing, aural computing and tactile computing
- Experiences in PC, console-based games and massively multiplayer online games
- Experiences in mixed reality (e.g., environments, , installations, stadium events)
- Experiences in ubicomp (e.g., mobile and location based services)
- Experiences in virtual reality (e.g., immersive installations)

Module 3: Social & Ethical Issues (3 weeks)
- Overview of sociotechnological change
- The gender divide
- Intellectual property, plagiarism, concepts of ownership
- Privacy and information warfare
- Social justice and responsibility

Learning Outcomes
Students will engage a range of key issues and research questions in the field of digital entertainment, through discussion, close readings, field experiences and critical analysis throughout the course. As key learning outcomes students should be able to:

- Describe what constitutes digital entertainment and characterize the components.
- Identify the evolving issues in digital entertainment and explain how they are being addressed.
- Construct strategies for the further development of digital media in the light of emerging issues.
- Analyse the market forces that drive the digital entertainment industry.
- Identify the historical precedents and discuss the evolutionary trajectories of technology.
- Characterize the state-of-the art in digital entertainment.
- Identify what drives experience innovation in the digital entertainment industry.
- Identify what drives technological innovation in the digital entertainment industry.
- Contrast why we love digital entertainment and why we love to hate it.
- Discuss the social implications of the digital entertainment industry.

Students will be asked to develop critical responses in the form of mini projects or reports.

Reading Lists
Selected readings to be taken from the following texts and supplemented with a binder of articles TBA.

- Albarran, A. B. and D. H. Goff (2000). Understanding the Web : Social, Political, and Economic Dimensions of the Internet. Ames, Iowa State University Press.
- Bell, D. (1973). The Coming of Post-Industrial Society : A Venture in Social Forecasting. New York, Basic Books.
- Bijker, W. E., T. P. Hughes, et al. (1987). The Social Construction of Technological Systems : New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology. Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press.
- Bolter, J. D. and R. Grusin (1999). Remediation : Understanding New Media. Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press.
- Caldwell, J. T. (2000). Electronic Media and Technoculture. New Brunswick, N.J., Rutgers University Press.
- Castells, M. (2000). The Rise of the Network Society. Oxford ; Malden, MA, Blackwell Publishers.
- Cotta Vaz, M. & Duignan, P.R. (1993) Industrial Light and Magic: Into the Digital Realm. Del Rey Books.
- Dodsworth, C. (1997) Digital Illusion: Entertaining The Future With High Technology. Addison-Wesley.
- Hertz, J.C. Joystick Nation: How Video Games Ate Our Quarters, Won Our Hearts, and rewired our minds
- Ii, B.J.P. & Gilmore, J.H. The Experience Economy: Work Is Theatre & Every Business A Stage

- Kent, S.L. (2001). The Ultimate History of Video Games From Pong to Pokemon. Crown Publishing.
- Murray, J.H. Hamlet On The Holodeck: The Future Of Narrative In Cyberspace.
- Sheff, D. (1993). Game Over. Random House.
- Rushkoff, D. Playing the Future.
- Salt, B. Film Style and Technology: History and Analysis

Course Requirements

Evaluation is based on three components. (1) Students will individually select a topic in the field of digital entertainment for approval by the instructor and will prepare a short research paper on this topic. Evaluation will be based on the originality and quality of research and presentation (2) Groups of 2 – 4 students will be formed to develop a more comprehensive presentation that examines some aspect of the digital entertainment industry. The grade for this project will have both an individual and a group component: evaluation will be based on thoroughness, quality of research and presentation, and effective collaboration (3) Students are expected to participate actively in weekly seminars and evaluation is based on students asking / answering questions in class.

Grading:
30% Research & Report
50% Collaborative Research and Presentation
20% Active Participation in Seminars and Projects

Course Syllabus

3 class meetings will be held per week. At least 2 meetings per week will consist of seminars or talks related to the readings and the topics below. One class meeting per week may be reserved for group work on the major collaborative project or demonstrations, field trips, etc.

Weeks 1-6 History & Business
- Week 1: History of the computer/console gaming industry
- Week 2: History of the digital effects & film industry
- Week 3: History of the digital animation industry
- Week 4: Innovation and technology adoption
- Week 5: Economics & markets
- Week 6: Business strategy and business models

Weeks 7-10 Technology & Experience
- Week 7: Historical overview of new media and computing technology
- Week 8: State-of the art in visual computing, aural computing and tactile computing
- Week 9: Experiences in PC, console-based games and massively multiplayer online games
- Week 10: Experiences in mixed reality (e.g., environments, , installations, stadium events) in ubicomp (e.g., mobile and location based services) and virtual reality (e.g., immersive installations)

Weeks 11-13 Social and Ethical Issues
- Week 11: Overview of sociotechnological change
- Week 12: The gender divide
- Week 13: Privacy and information warfare, Social justice and responsibility

Students are advised that Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Please read the MDM Academic Regulations and Policies for a full description of the policies on cheating and plagiarism.

Great Northern Way Campus
Graduate Course Outline

Course Title: DMED 501 Visual Story (3 credits)

Course Authors: Cathy Robertson (UBC); Leslie Bishko, Jonathan Tyrrell, Fiona Bowie (ECIAD).

Instructors: to be appointed.

Course Description

This seminar & studio course explores the many facets of storytelling, with an emphasis on the meaningful visualization of creative content. Text and sound are used as the stimulus for development of visual narratives through shape, colour, line, texture and composition. Students cultivate essential art direction skills through photo essays, storyboards, animatics, character design, costume design, lighting design, mise-en-scene and cinematography. Classic texts are re-envisioned to develop a critical analysis of contemporary visual archetypes.

Topics

- Fundamentals, history, theory and aesthetics of visual narrative: shape, colour, line texture, composition, duration, movement.
- Interpretation of text and sound: cultural and sociological issues, aesthetics, construction of meaning.
- The language of cinema: formal conventions and their historical, cultural, aesthetic development, evolution of cinematic language within contemporary media.
- Development and stylization of character: critical contextualization of stereotypes, archetypes.

Learning Outcomes

Students will engage in a range of key issues and research questions related to telling stories visually through digital media. Students are involved in projects, discussions, close readings, and critical analysis throughout the course. Key learning outcomes for students include the ability to:

- Identify the key elements of narrative form and structure: plot, story, narrative arc, character, conflict, narrative time, and narrative knowledge.
- Analyze the design and the effect of narrative form and structure across a variety of media and examples.
- Create and critique examples of the narrative impact of visual imagery on screen.
- Discuss and assess aesthetic, formal and cultural issues of interpretation.
- Create contrasting examples of the use of sound and music in visual narrative.
- Script visual stories using current and evolving scripting or storyboarding technologies.
- Discuss and illustrate the transformation of narratives between media.

- Critique the evolving role of cinematic conventions and their relationship to narrative.
- Create examples that illustrate the development of narrative from character and the reflection of narrative on character.
- Analyze and discuss the effect of interactive forms upon the design and the experience of narrative.

Students will be asked to develop critical responses in the form of visual story projects and reports.

Reading Lists

Colour
- Albers, Josef, *The Interaction of Color: Revised and Expanded Edition*, Yale University Press, May 2006
- Edwards, Betty, *Art of Using Color*, Tarcher, September, 2004
- Bellantoni, Patti, *If It's Purple, Someone's Gonna Die: The Power of Color in Visual Storytelling*, Focal Press, 2005

Narrative
- Lacey, Nick, *Narrative And Genre: Key Concepts in Media Studies*, London: Macmillan Press, 2000
- Rieser, Martin & Zapp, Andrea, Editors, *New Screen Media: Cinema/Art/Narrative,* London: BFI Publishers, 2002

Cinema
- Sonnenschein, David Ed., *Sound Design: The Expressive Power of Music, Voice and Sound Effects in Cinema*, Michael Wiese Productions, 2001
- Murch, Walter, & Coppola, Francis Ford, *In the Blink of an Eye: a Perspective on Film Editing*, Silman James, December, 1990
- Brown, Blain, *Cinematography: Theory and Practice - Image Making for Cinematographers, Directors, and Videographers,* Focal Press, 2002
- Lowell, Ross, *Matters of Light and Depth*, Lowell Light Management Inc.,1999
- Bordwell, David and Thompson, *Kristin, Film Art - 7th Edition,* McGraw-Hill

Art Direction
- Ettedgui, Peter, *Production Design and Art Direction*, Focal Press, February 2000
- LoBrutto, Vincent, *The Filmmaker's Guide to Production Design,* Allsworth Press, September, 2002
- Aronson, Arnold, *Looking Into the Abyss: Essays on Scenography*, University of Michigan Press, June, 2005
- Keller, Max, *Light Fantastic: the art and design of stage lighting*, Prestel Publishing, February, 2000

Costume Design
- Nunn, Joan, *Fashion in Costume 1200-2000, Revised,* New Amsterdam Books, February 2000
- Entwistle, Joanne, *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress and Modern Social Theory*, Polity Press, 2000

Game Production

- Freeman, David, *Creating Emotion in Games*, New Riders Publishing, 2004
- Sheldon, Lee, *Character Development and Storytelling for Games*, Premier Press, June 2004
- Linde, Riccard, *Game Art: Creation, Direction, and Careers*, Delmar Thomson Learning

Course Requirements

Evaluation is based on three components. (1) Students will individually select a topic in the field of visual storytelling for approval by the instructor and will prepare a short research paper or presentation on this topic. Evaluation will be based on the originality and quality of research and presentation. (2) Groups of 2 – 4 students will be formed to address a more comprehensive project that results in an innovative approach to visual storytelling. The grade for the project will have both an individual and a group component: evaluation will be based on thoroughness, quality and originality of presentation, and effective collaboration. (3) Students are expected to participate actively in weekly seminars and evaluation is based on students asking / answering questions in class.

Grading:
20% Research & Report
60% Visual Story Group Projects
20% Active Participation in Seminars and Projects

Course Syllabus:
3 class meetings will be held per week. At least 2 meetings per week will consist of seminars or talks related to the readings and the topics below. One class meeting per week may be reserved for group work on the major collaborative project or demonstrations, field trips, etc.

Weeks 1-3
Fundamentals of visual narrative
Interpretation of the written word into visual stories through shape, colour, line, texture, silhouette, value, contrast and composition.
- The nature of sequential imagery
- Photo essay, colour progression reel, other short assignments

Weeks 4-5
Poetics of sound and image
- Interpretation of sound and music into visual narratives.
- Three-dimensional space in image and sound

Weeks 6-8
The language of cinema
- Shot analysis and production planning
- Cinematography
- Shot, duration
- Editing, juxtaposition, continuity
- Off-screen space
- Blocking, gesture, movement, and performance
- Lighting for genre
- Sound: diegetic and non-diegetic

Weeks 9-11

The visual character and archetypes

- Critical, cultural and aesthetic considerations of designing characters from the inside out
  - The Character Bible
  - Interpreting the character bible into visual character design
  - Art direction: costume design, mise-en-scene, set design
  - Stereotypes, ciphers, and tropes

Weeks 12-13

The intersection of character and story on screen

- Final team project: re-envisioning classic texts (using the characters developed in Module 4).
- Art directing, genre, stylization
- Critical contextualizations

Students are advised that Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Please read the MDM Academic Regulations and Policies for a full description of the policies on cheating and plagiarism.

Great Northern Way Campus
Graduate Course Outline

Course Title: DMED 502 Improvising Story and Character (3 credits)

Course Authors: Michael Robinson, Robert Gardiner (UBC).

Instructors: To be appointed.

Course Description

This is a studio class in which techniques of improvisational acting are used to develop collaborative and creative skills. Students learn to rapidly develop dramatic themes, narratives, and characters; engage effectively with challenging situations; and build dynamic teams in creative environments.

Course Format:

Exercises in improvisational acting and physical performance, conducted in pairs and groups in a performance studio / rehearsal room environment. Two three-hour studios per week of in-class instruction and practice are given for 13 weeks, (a total of 96 in-class hours), plus 2 hours of final presentation following the completion of the 13 week term. Approximately 30 hours of reading and projects outside of class will also be assigned.

Topics:

- Fundamental principles of improvisation and "trust-building" exercises (2 weeks).
- Formal theatre improvisation exercises and study of the history of improvised performance and ritual. The exercises build teamwork skills and introduce students to archetypes of story telling and character. (4 weeks).
- Exercises in constructing narratives and making clear choices that lead to further possibilities for group action. (4 weeks).
- Students use their newly acquired skills to invent new improvisation forms and games, practice them, and apply improvisational skills in situations outside the classroom. (3 weeks + project activity & research outside of class + final presentations).

Learning Outcomes:

After completing this course students will be able to:

- Work easily with others from diverse backgrounds in creative groups.
- Apply techniques of improvisational acting to the creation of character and to structure narrative.
- Build on acquired improvisational skills to invent and demonstrate new improvisational forms and games.,
- Apply improvisation skills in other courses and projects.

Reading List

Johnstone, Keith: *Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre*, Meuthen.
Johnstone, Keith: *Impro for StoryTellers*, Taylor & Francis, Inc.
Duchartre, Pierre Louis: *The Italian Comedy* (Paperback), Dover Books

Course Requirements and grading
Evaluation will be based on active and engaged participation in group exercises and activities; students are not expected to become proficient performers but are expected to develop their collaborative and improvisational skills.

75% of the grade will be based on execution of in-class exercises and activities
15% of the grade will be based on successful completion of assignments outside of class-time
10% of the grade will be based on the final presentation

Students should wear comfortable, loose – fitting clothing to class. Additional requirements for clothing and footwear will be given during the first class meeting.

Weekly Syllabus:

Week 1:
- Introduction and orientation. Exercises: Warm-Up. Trust exercises. Neutral presence exercises. Offering and receiving exercises.
- Exercises: Warm-Up. Trust exercises. Neutral presence exercises. Offering and receiving exercises. Exercises exploring given circumstances and physical space. Basic movement-improv exercises. Free association exercises.

Week 2:
- Exercises: Warm-Up. Trust exercises. Exercises in group dynamics & in group dynamics with movement. Exercises in "accepting" cues and clues from other members of the group. Offering and Receiving exercises.
- Exercises: Warm-Up. Trust exercises. Exercises in "giving" cues and clues to other members of the group. Offering and Receiving exercises. Exercises in group dynamics with movement. Review of unit.

After the first two weeks of the course students understand the dynamic context of improvisation. They trust each other. They understand the process of offering and accepting. They have a sense of teamwork.

Week 3:
- Lecture and discussion: Improvisational performance and ritual events, Archetypes, stories and characters
- Exercises: Warm-Up. Exercises in observation and repetition. "Mirror" exercises. Ritual / ceremonial action exercises.

Week 4:
- Exercises: Warm-Up. Exercises in repeated movement and ceremonial movement. Exercises in transmitted gesture. Repetition and practice.
- Exercises: Warm-Up. Exercises in repeated movement and ceremonial movement. Exercises in transmitted gesture. Repetition and practice.

Week 5:
- Exercises: Warm-Up. Exercises in sound and choral sound. Exercises in transmitted vocal gesture. Repetition and practice.
- Exercises: Warm-Up. Exercises in sound and choral sound. Exercises in transmitted vocal gesture. Repetition and practice.

Week 6:
- Exercises: Warm-Up. Exercises in sound and choral sound. Exercises in transmitted vocal gesture. Repetition and practice.
- Exercises: Warm-Up. Exercises in sound and choral sound. Exercises in transmitted vocal gesture. Review of unit.

After six weeks of the course students have a sense of group discipline and the ability to work together. They trust each other. They understand the process of offering and accepting and the balance between following and leading, ego and neutrality, persistence and yielding. They have a shared vocabulary.

Week 7:

- Lecture and discussion: Narrative structure, how narratives are forwarded. The creation of character, how character is defined and developed. Construction of narratives with complimentary characters. The practice of constructive criticism is taught and encouraged – students learn the separation of what people do from what people are.
- Exercises: Warm-Up. Review of exercises in context of developing narrative and characterization arcs.

Week 8:

- Exercises: Warm-Up. Establishing circumstances, "Complimentarity," "Freeze Tag," "the Because Game," "Film Unit" (with modifications incorporating elements from Visual Story curriculum), "Word at a Time Story." Repetition and practice.
- Exercises: Warm-Up. "What Are You Doing," "Complimentarity," "Freeze Tag," "Typewriter," and "Typewriter shared story," "Film Unit" (with modifications incorporating elements from Visual Story curriculum), "Word at a Time Story." Repetition and practice.

Week 9:

- Exercises: Warm-Up. "What Are You Doing," "Complimentarity," "Standard Experts." Repetition and practice.
- Exercises: Warm-Up. "What Are You Doing," "Complimentarity," "That's Right Experts." Repetition and practice.

Week 10:

- Exercises: Warm-Up. "What Are You Doing," "Complimentarity," "Standard Endowments," "Cinema Game." Repetition and practice.
- Exercises: Warm-Up. "What Are You Doing," "Complimentarity," "Standard Endowments," "Cinema Game." Review of unit.

After ten weeks of the course Students have the ability to improvise stories with strong, interesting, characters. They know how to "play tennis" with the opportunities and offers in the developing story. Teamwork and creative work habits are refined.

Week 11:

- Warm-Up Exercises. Fundamentals of game creation. Practice.
- Warm-Up Exercises. Fundamentals of game creation. Practice.

Week 12:

- Warm-Up Exercises. Show creation. Assignment of final project. Practice.
- Warm-Up Exercises. Scripted narrative problem-solving using improv. Practice.

Week 13:

- Warm-Up Exercises. Video Game creation using improv techniques learned. Review of course.

Final Presentation: students apply principles and techniques learned, as part of the "end of term" presentations.

At the conclusion of the course students can work smoothly as teams in any configuration. They have integrated their improv skills with their other project and course work.

Students are advised that Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Please read the MDM Academic Regulations and Policies for a full description of the policies on cheating and plagiarism.

Great Northern Way Campus
Graduate Course Outline

Course Title: DMED 503 Foundations of Game Design (3 credits)

Course Authors: Jim Bizzocchi and Chris Shaw (SIAT, SFU)

Instructors: To be appointed.

Course Description

This lecture / seminar course explores the design of games and introduces the experience of gameplay. Games, both electronic and physical, will be analyzed from three perspectives: games as rules (the design of games), games as play (the player's experience of games) and games as culture (games as cultural phenomenon). Students will make both physical and electronic games as assignments in this course.

Topics

- games as rules
- games as play
- games as cultural artefacts
- the "Magic Circle" of game experience
- the design of interactivity and choice
- game balance and the experience of "flow"
- the use of artificial intelligence in game design
- games and narrative
- game planning and production process
- evaluation of games and game play experience

Learning Outcomes

The course provides students with:

- a practical understanding of the dynamics of game design
- a critical appreciation and understanding of the experience of game play
- a critical appreciation and understanding of games as cultural artefacts.

After completing the course students will be able to:

- produce a well-designed and balanced physical game (board, token or card game)
- plan and produce a short well-designed electronic game
- analyze and discuss existing board and electronic games in terms of game design and playability
- identify and discuss key cultural factors and issues implicit within existing games
- use industry-standard terminology to describe and discuss game play and the process of game design and production

Course Requirements: Evaluation

Evaluation will be based on successful completion of the game-design assignments given in the course and on successful completion of in-class exercises. Assignments will be assessed on the success and quality of the game designed, presentation of game and concept, and the game design's relationship to cultural, business, ethical, and other factors discussed in the course.

Grading:

In-class exercises	15
Pencil/paper game	10
Board Game Concept	5
Board Game Prototype	5
Final Board Game	20
Board Game Paper	5
Digital Game Concept	5
Digital Game Design Doc	5
Digital Game Intermediates	5
Final Digital Game	25
Total	**100**

References

The following texts are indicative-only at this point. Also, students will be responsible for finding additional research papers, texts, and industry publications suitable for the work undertaken.

- Katie Salen & Eric Zimmerman, *Rules of Play*, Cambridge MA, MIT Press, 2004
- Noah Wardrip-Fruin & Pat Harrigan, *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance and Game*, Cambridge MA, MIT Press, 2004

Greg Costikyan, *I have no words, and I must design* <http://www.costik.com/nowords.html>, plus other online Cosikyan articles at http://www.costik.com/writing.htm

Course Syllabus

3 class meetings will be held per week. At least 2 meetings per week will consist of seminars or talks related to the readings and the topics below. One class meeting per week may be reserved for in-class supervised work on assignments or demonstrations, field trips, etc.

- Week 1: Games & Play. 3 Schema for viewing games (Rules, Play & Culture)
- Week 2: Rules, balance & "meaningful" play
- Week 3: Interactivity, uncertainty, & the "Magic Circle"
- Week 4: Test physical prototype
- Week 5: Present & evaluate physical games
- Weeks 6-7: Intro to Digital Games
- Week 8: Games and Narrative
- Week 9: Online and mobile games
- Weeks 10 - 12: Production of electronic game project
- Week 13: Present and evaluate electronic game project

Most class meetings will also include both rapid game design mini-exercises, and the analysis of existing games - both electronic and physical.

Students are advised that Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Please read the MDM Academic Regulations and Policies for a full description of the policies on cheating and plagiarism.

Great Northern Way Campus
Graduate Course Outline

Course Title: DMED 510 Financing and Distribution of Digital Entertainment (3 credits)

Instructors: Rick Mischel (CEO Mainframe Entertainment) and other industry executives.

Course Description

This lecture / seminar course examines financing and exploitation of digital entertainment using actual forms, articles, and projects. Different methods of financing and distributing video games, mobile content, theatrical feature films, television projects and series will be studied. The drafting and negotiating of basic entertainment contracts and intellectual property law related to digital entertainment will be discussed as well as ethical issues related to digital entertainment.

Topics
3 class meetings will be held per week. At least 2 meetings per week will consist of seminars or talks related to the readings and the topics below. One class meeting per week may be reserved for in-class supervised work on assignments or demonstrations, field trips, etc.

Weeks 1-2: Introduction to Entertainment Financing. An overview of the gaming, film and television world. Discussion of sample projects.

Weeks 3-4: The Option Agreement, Talent Agreements & Related Agreements for Film and Television. Negotiation strategies for controlling material.

Weeks 4-5: Investor Financing. Analysis of Limited Partnership Agreement and potential returns on investment; Bank Financing Requirements. Raising private funding for incubation and growth

Weeks 6-7: Film Distribution. Limited Releases v. Studio Releases. Film Festivals and Acquisition Strategies for Companies.

Weeks 8-9: Foreign Pre-Sales and Co-Productions for Film and Television. International Sales and Marketing of Film and Television Product. International Film and Television Markets (Cannes, Mifed, Mip, Mipcom).

Week 10-11: Interactive Game Distribution. An analysis of online, mobile, and traditional videogame distribution. Analysis of revenue models.

Week 12-13: Intellectual property issues. Case studies.

Learning Outcomes
After completing this course students will be able to:

- explain and apply the principles involved in financing a digital entertainment company.
- develop a business plan for a digital media product.

- analyse a financing agreement and investigate alternatives.
- analyse a distribution agreement and investigate alternatives.
- discuss and apply issues related to sales and distribution of digital media and the role of intellectual property law.

Required Text

The Biz: Basic Business, Legal & Financial Aspects of the Film Industry by Schuyler Moore, Silman-James Press (latest edition).

Other required reading materials will be distributed prior to the class.

Suggested Readings:

Daily Variety or *The Hollywood Reporter* (available daily by subscription or newsstand—see their websites);
Dealmaking in the Film and TV Industry by Mark Litwack, Silman-James Press (2nd Ed. 2002);
The Business of Television by Howard Blumenthal & Oliver Goodnough, Watson-Guptill Publishers (1998);
3 Ways to Finance Your Feature Film by John Cones, So. Illinois University Press (latest edition);
Movie Money by Bill Daniels, David Leedy & Steven Sills, Silman-James Press (1998).

Course Requirements

Evaluation is based on three components. (1) Individually or as a small group students will select a topic for a case study in financing and distribution of digital media. This must be approved by the instructor and students will prepare a paper on this topic. Evaluation will be based on completeness of the research and clarity and relevance of the presentation (2) There will be an open book final exam. (3) Students are expected to participate actively in weekly seminars: evaluation is based on students asking / answering questions in class.

Grading:
30% Case study of company financing and distribution
50% Final Exam (open book)
20% Seminar Participation

Students are advised that Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Please read the MDM Academic Regulations and Policies for a full description of the policies on cheating and plagiarism.

Great Northern Way Campus
Graduate Course Outline

Course Title: DMED 520 Projects I – Building Virtual Worlds (6 credits)

Instructors: To be appointed.

Course Description

This studio / seminar course introduces the "Project Course" sequence in the MDM curriculum. These courses involve group independent study: teams of three to six students work on a focused project(s) during that semester. In Building Virtual Worlds, students are assigned 5 introductory projects in which student teams spend 2 – 3 weeks designing and implementing an artifact in a virtual world environment (Panda3D or similar). This immersion into a group problem solving situation is designed to introduce students to very rapid project planning and prototyping skills they will then develop and use extensively in the next three Project courses. Since this course involves both extensive homework / studio work and a seminar / discussion component, it's weighted at 6 credits.

All four project courses have an explicit role in teaching business aspects of team based projects – project management and creation of a business plan by going through a 'green light' approval process. The role of business principles and practices in project courses is discussed further in a Note below.

Requirements

The requirements for a project are as follows:

- The team must contain students from both technological and non-technological backgrounds. During the course of the project, students having an engineering or other technical background will be expected to make a significant aesthetic contribution to the project and students having an artistic grounding would be expected to make a valuable technical contribution to the project.
- The team must both prototype and produce a tangible result (not a paper).
- The work must be overseen by a faculty member approved by the MDM program for this project.

Learning Outcomes:

The learning outcomes identified here are general and largely common to all four project courses. Each project course after the first builds on the course before. For example, the ability to work together in a team in the first project is superseded by the ability to take responsibility for managing resources and for organizing teams in later projects. Also, specific outcomes will apply to specific project topics.

After completing the first project course students will be able to:

- Demonstrate the ability to work in an interdisciplinary team.
- Discuss the issues of project planning and apply them to several actual projects.
- Explain the Green Light approval process and apply it to several projects.
- Discuss the issues in project management and apply them to several actual

projects.

- Apply and integrate the content of different subject areas at authentic moments in the production process.
- Apply strategies for project planning and implementation under severe time constraints.
- Create artifacts in a virtual world.
- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the virtual world as a prototyping environment.
- Deliver a project at a negotiated level of capability and completion within time and resource constraints. Each project course in the sequence will establish goals and constraints more stringent than prior courses.

Reading Lists

- The reading list depends on the project.

Course Requirements

In project courses students are assigned to groups that balance disciplinary backgrounds. Evaluation in project courses is based on both group and individual work. The components are: (1) Each group, in consultation with the faculty advisor, will select a topic for the project. An initial project plan and background paper will be prepared by the group: evaluation is based on quality and completeness of the pitch and promise of the idea. (2) Project implementation and evaluation is a group activity but each student is given a mark for both their individual contribution (based on instructor and peer assessment) and for the performance of the group. Evaluation is based on success and quality of the project as presented, on effective teamwork, and on an individual student's contribution and participation. (3) Students are expected to participate actively in weekly seminars: evaluation is based on students asking / answering questions in class and contributing to discussion.

Grading:

30% Project plans and background papers.
The 5 project plans are each worth 6%: each individual will receive the group's grade
50% New Media Projects
The 5 projects are each worth 10%: 5% of the grade for each will be the group's grade which each student in the group will receive, and 5% of each will be assigned individually to students
20% Project Group and Seminar Participation
Students will be graded individually

Examples of possible projects for implementation in a virtual world:

- Develop tools and techniques to quickly and cheaply "sketch" the essential experience of a game design. A sketch is to a game what an animatic is to a movie. The goal of the project is to take a game script (character, set and interaction descriptions) and build a sketch of the interactive experience in two weeks or less, through the use of puppeteering and other time-saving methods.
- Create an interactive experience with an instantly recognizable connection between what you see and what you hear; a game so in tune with the music that you can play it with your eyes closed.

- Create an interactive 3D model of a segment of Vancouver – for example to allow a pedestrian to navigate a route from Gastown to China Town through the downtown east side.

Weekly outline

Students meet as cohort group with faculty 3 hours per week for discussion of general principles, processes, and issues in New Media design and implementation, or project "pitch" and presentation sessions. Individual project groups meet with faculty for at least 3 hours a week for consultation and development of that groups' project assignments. Final presentations are given for an invited audience of Digital Media Industry guests, and are scheduled to occur after the end of the normal term.

Week 1: course introduction and orientation: assignment of first of 5 New Media projects and organization of first project groups. Discussion of the "pitch / green light / review process and orientation to equipment and software
Week 2: Project #1 plan and background paper due: pitch and greenlight sessions by project teams. Begin work on Project #1.
Seminar discussion topics: operational planning and time-management.
Week 3: Project #1 presentation due. Discussion and analysis of projects and feedback from class and instructors.
Project #2 teams assigned, develop proposals for project #2
Seminar discussion topics: intellectual property: who owns ideas? Contracts and Agreements.
Week 4: Project #2 plan and background paper due: pitch and greenlight sessions.
Begin work on Project #2.
Seminar discussion topics: "scrum" and creating effective pitches
Week 5: Work on project #2.
Seminar discussion topics: solving problems and making decisions
Week 6: Project #2 presentation due. Discussion and analysis of projects.
Project #3 teams assigned, develop proposals for project #3
Seminar discussion topics: "defining the world:" design docs, story outlines, branding, and business plan
Week 7: Develop project #3, especially pitch and background paper.
Seminar discussion topics: ethics, law, and social impact of the entertainment industry
Week 8: Project #3 plan and background paper due: pitch and greenlight sessions.
Feedback from class and instructors.
Project #4 teams assigned, develop proposals for project #4
Seminar discussion topics: ethics, law, and social impact of the entertainment industry
Week 9: Project #4 plan and background paper due: pitch and greenlight sessions
Project #5 teams assigned
Seminar discussion topics: financial risk, contracts, and agreements.
Week 10: Work on project #4.
Seminar discussion topics: TBA related to questions and issues developed in projects
Week 11: Project #4 presentations
Project #5 plan and background paper due: pitch and greenlight sessions
Seminar discussion topics: TBA related to questions and issues developed in projects
Week 12: Work on project #5
Seminar discussion: course review and portfolio preparation.
Week 13: Work on project #5
"Final Presentations" tech prep and rehearsal
Week 14: Final Presentations

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Great Northern Way Campus
Graduate Course Outline

Course Title: DMED 521 Projects II (12 credits)

Instructors: To be appointed.

Course Description

This studio is the second "Project Course" in the MDM curriculum, and the first of three "major project" courses. These courses involve group independent study: teams of three to six students work on a focused project during that semester. These are expected to be large scale significant projects: students will work 40 hours per week or more in order to complete them, and will also attend a weekly seminar or discussion session. All four project courses have an explicit role in teaching business aspects of team based projects – project management and creation of a business plan by going through a 'green light' approval process. Another important theme in project courses will be ethics and law as related to digital media fields.

The role of business principles and practices in project courses is discussed further in a Note below

Student project teams will be expected to establish agreements for each project dealing with expected contributions, ownership of intellectual and other property created or assembled by the group, and other matters relevant to the proposed project.

Requirements

The requirements for a project are as follows:

- The team must contain students from both technological and non-technological backgrounds. During the course of the project, students having an engineering or other technical background will be expected to make a significant aesthetic contribution to the project and students having an artistic grounding would be expected to make a valuable technical contribution to the project.
- The team must both prototype and produce a tangible result (not a paper).
- The work must be overseen by a faculty member approved by the MDM program for this project.

Learning Outcomes:

The learning outcomes identified here are general and largely common to all four project courses. Each project course after the first builds on the course before and thus will result in more sophisticated and complex outcomes. Specific outcomes will apply to specific project topics.

After completing the second project course students will build on the first and be able to:

- Take responsibility for the work of others working on their team.
- Be able to organize and manage a team.

- Take responsibility for managing resources.
- Discuss the issues of project planning and apply them to this project.
- Apply the Green Light approval process to this project and assess its effectiveness.
- Identify critical issues in project management as they apply to this project.
- Apply and integrate the content of different subject areas at authentic moments in the production process.
- Demonstrate technical and aesthetic innovation by creating one or more artifacts.
- Deliver a project at a negotiated level of capability and completion within time and resource constraints. Each project course in the sequence will establish goals and constraints more stringent than prior courses.

Reading Lists

- The reading list depends on the project.

Course Requirements

In project courses students are assigned to groups that balance disciplinary backgrounds. Evaluation in project courses is based on both group and individual work. The components are: (1) Each group, in consultation with the faculty advisor, will select a topic for the project. An initial project plan and background paper will be prepared by the group: evaluation is based on quality and completeness of the pitch and promise of the idea. (2) Project implementation and evaluation is a group activity but each student is given a mark for both their individual contribution (based on instructor and peer assessment) and for the performance of the group. Evaluation is based on success and quality of the project as presented, on effective teamwork, and on an individual student's contribution and participation. (3) Students are expected to participate actively in weekly seminars: evaluation is based on students asking / answering questions in class and contributing to discussion.

Grading:

30% Project plan and background paper: each student will receive the group's grade.
50% New Media Project: 25% will be the group's grade, which each student will receive. 25% will be assigned individually to each student
20% Group Project and Seminar Participation: grades are assigned individually.

Examples of possible projects

- Design and develop a mobile game for java enabled phones that combines techniques of stealth education and keyhole gaming to create a unique experience for pre-teens and teenagers to learn proper nutritional habits.
- Produce an animated short film. The project is run like a real studio, with each team member focusing on their own specialized area of production. The focus of the film is to be negotiated.
- Create an example of location-based entertainment or virtual ride as an engaging physical installation.
- Create a game design based on the idea of creating persistent games for busy people through the use of sporadic play. Sporadic play is the idea that rather than devoting hours at a time to playing a game, you can play in five-minute chunks throughout your day.

Course schedule:

Seminar or discussion sessions, generally 1-3 hours in length, will be held once a week. These sessions may include site tours or talks by industry professionals. The remainder of the course time will be apportioned to studio work on or off site as appropriate to the project. Each project team will meet weekly with supervisory faculty to discuss / demonstrate progress and receive advice: this will be scheduled to suit the other courses in the program.

Project presentations will be scheduled for the two weeks following the end of term, Some projects may have deadlines that don't coincide with normal terms. In these cases, students must schedule presentations on an individual basis with faculty. If a project's deadlines and requirements demand that it be carried into a second term, students may, with faculty and MDM Program consent and review, continue it into the next project course: evaluation and grades will be determined on an individual basis by the MDM Program

Students are advised that Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Please read the MDM Academic Regulations and Policies for a full description of the policies on cheating and plagiarism.

Great Northern Way Campus
Graduate Course Outline

Course Title: DMED 522 Projects III (12 credits)

Instructors: To be appointed.

Course Description

This studio is the third "Project Course" in the MDM curriculum, and the second of three "major project" courses. These courses involve group independent study: teams of three to six students work on a focused project during that semester. These are expected to be large scale significant projects: students will work 40 hours per week or more in order to complete them, and will also attend a weekly seminar or discussion session. All four project courses have an explicit role in teaching business aspects of team based projects – project management and creation of a business plan by going through a 'green light' approval process. Another important theme in project courses will be ethics and law as related to digital media fields.

The role of business principles and practices in project courses is discussed further in a Note below

Student project teams will be expected to establish agreements for each project dealing with expected contributions, ownership of intellectual and other property created or assembled by the group, and other matters relevant to the proposed project.

Requirements

The requirements for a project are as follows:

- The team must contain students from both technological and non-technological backgrounds. During the course of the project, students having an engineering or other technical background will be expected to make a significant aesthetic contribution to the project and students having an artistic grounding would be expected to make a valuable technical contribution to the project.
- The team must both prototype and produce a tangible result (not a paper).
- The work must be overseen by a faculty member approved by the MDM program for this project.

Learning Outcomes:

The learning outcomes identified here are general and largely common to all four project courses. Each project course after the first builds on the course before and thus will result in more sophisticated and complex outcomes. Specific outcomes will apply to specific project topics.

After completing the third project course students will build on the second and be able to:

- Develop, present and defend a well structured, supported and reasoned line of

argument for the project proposal and effectively use a range of media to present that argument.
- Apply the Green Light approval process to this project and assess its effectiveness
- Organize and manage a team, take responsibility for the work of others working on their team and take responsibility for managing resources.
- Identify and address critical project planning issues for this project.
- Apply and integrate the content of different subject areas at authentic moments in the production process.
- Demonstrate technical and aesthetic innovation by creating one or more artifacts.
- Develop new products and add to the field of applied knowledge.
- Deliver a project at a negotiated level of capability and completion within time and resource constraints. Each project course in the sequence will establish goals and constraints more stringent than prior courses.

Reading Lists

- The reading list depends on the project.

Course Requirements

In project courses students are assigned to groups that balance disciplinary backgrounds. Evaluation in project courses is based on both group and individual work. The components are: (1) Each group, in consultation with the faculty advisor, will select a topic for the project. An initial project plan and background paper will be prepared by the group: evaluation is based on quality and completeness of the pitch and promise of the idea. (2) Project implementation and evaluation is a group activity but each student is given a mark for both their individual contribution (based on instructor and peer assessment) and for the performance of the group. Evaluation is based on success and quality of the project as presented, on effective teamwork, and on an individual student's contribution and participation. (3) Students are expected to participate actively in weekly seminars: evaluation is based on students asking / answering questions in class and contributing to discussion.

Grading:

30% Project plan and background paper: each student will receive the group's grade.
50% New Media Project: 25% will be the group's grade, which each student will receive. 25% will be assigned individually to each student
20% Group Project and Seminar Participation: grades are assigned individually.

Examples of possible projects

- Design and develop a mobile game for java enabled phones that combines techniques of stealth education and keyhole gaming to create a unique experience for pre-teens and teenagers to learn proper nutritional habits.
- Produce an animated short film. The project is run like a real studio, with each team member focusing on their own specialized area of production. The focus of the film is to be negotiated.
- Create an example of location-based entertainment or virtual ride as an engaging physical installation.

- Create a game design based on the idea of creating persistent games for busy people through the use of sporadic play. Sporadic play is the idea that rather than devoting hours at a time to playing a game, you can play in five-minute chunks throughout your day.

Course schedule:

Seminar or discussion sessions, generally 1-3 hours in length, will be held once a week. These sessions may include site tours or talks by industry professionals. The remainder of the course time will be apportioned to studio work on or off site as appropriate to the project. Each project team will meet weekly with supervisory faculty to discuss / demonstrate progress and receive advice: this will be scheduled to suit the other courses in the program.

Project presentations will be scheduled for the two weeks following the end of term, Some projects may have deadlines that don't coincide with normal terms. In these cases, students must schedule presentations on an individual basis with faculty. If a project's deadlines and requirements demand that it be carried into a second term, students may, with faculty and MDM Program consent and review, continue it into the next project course: evaluation and grades will be determined on an individual basis by the MDM Program

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Great Northern Way Campus
Graduate Course Outline

Course Title: DMED 523 Projects IV (12 credits)

Instructors: To be appointed.

Course Description

This studio is the final "Project Course" in the MDM curriculum. These courses involve group independent study: teams of three to six students work on a focused project during that semester. These are expected to be large scale significant projects: students will work 40 hours per week or more in order to complete them, and will also attend a weekly seminar or discussion session. All four project courses have an explicit role in teaching business aspects of team based projects – project management and creation of a business plan by going through a 'green light' approval process. Another important theme in project courses will be ethics and law as related to digital media fields.

The role of business principles and practices in project courses is discussed further in a Note below

Student project teams will be expected to establish agreements for each project dealing with expected contributions, ownership of intellectual and other property created or assembled by the group, and other matters relevant to the proposed project.

Requirements

The requirements for a project are as follows:

- The team must contain students from both technological and non-technological backgrounds. During the course of the project, students having an engineering or other technical background will be expected to make a significant aesthetic contribution to the project and students having an artistic grounding would be expected to make a valuable technical contribution to the project.
- The team must both prototype and produce a tangible result (not a paper).
- The work must be overseen by a faculty member approved by the MDM program for this project.

Reading Lists

- The reading list depends on the project.

Learning Outcomes:

The learning outcomes identified here are general and largely common to all four project courses. Each project course after the first builds on the course before and thus will result in more sophisticated and complex outcomes. Specific outcomes will apply to specific project topics.

After completing the fourth project course students will build on the third and be able to:

- Develop, present and defend a well structured, supported and reasoned line of argument for the proposed project and effectively use a range of media to present that argument.
- Apply the Green Light approval process to this project and propose alternate approval models.
- Be able to organize and manage a team, take responsibility for the work of others working on their team and take responsibility for managing resources.
- Identify and address critical project planning issues for this project.
- Apply and integrate the content of different subject areas at authentic moments in the production process.
- Demonstrate technical and aesthetic innovation by creating one or more artifacts.
- Be able to solve new complex problems through innovative use of current technology.
- Develop new products and add to the field of applied knowledge.
- Deliver a project at a negotiated level of capability and completion within time and resource constraints. This final project course will set goals and constraints comparable to those in industry.

Course Requirements

In project courses students are assigned to groups that balance disciplinary backgrounds. Evaluation in project courses is based on both group and individual work. The components are: (1) Each group, in consultation with the faculty advisor, will select a topic for the project. An initial project plan and background paper will be prepared by the group: evaluation is based on quality and completeness of the pitch and promise of the idea. (2) Project implementation and evaluation is a group activity but each student is given a mark for both their individual contribution (based on instructor and peer assessment) and for the performance of the group. Evaluation is based on success and quality of the project as presented, on effective teamwork, and on an individual student's contribution and participation. (3) Students are expected to participate actively in weekly seminars: evaluation is based on students asking / answering questions in class and contributing to discussion.

Grading:

30% Project plan and background paper: each student will receive the group's grade.
50% New Media Project: 25% will be the group's grade, which each student will receive.
25% will be assigned individually to each student
20% Group Project and Seminar Participation: grades are assigned individually.

Examples of possible projects

- Design and develop a mobile game for java enabled phones that combines techniques of stealth education and keyhole gaming to create a unique experience for pre-teens and teenagers to learn proper nutritional habits.
- Produce an animated short film. The project is run like a real studio, with each team member focusing on their own specialized area of production. The focus of the film is to be negotiated.

- Create an example of location-based entertainment or virtual ride as an engaging physical installation.
- Create a game design based on the idea of creating persistent games for busy people through the use of sporadic play. Sporadic play is the idea that rather than devoting hours at a time to playing a game, you can play in five-minute chunks throughout your day.

Course schedule:

Seminar or discussion sessions, generally 1-3 hours in length, will be held once a week. These sessions may include site tours or talks by industry professionals. The remainder of the course time will be apportioned to studio work on or off site as appropriate to the project. Each project team will meet weekly with supervisory faculty to discuss / demonstrate progress and receive advice: this will be scheduled to suit the other courses in the program.

Project presentations will be scheduled for the two weeks following the end of term, Some projects may have deadlines that don't co-incide with normal terms. In these cases, students must schedule presentations on an individual basis with faculty. If a project's deadlines and requirements demand that it be carried into a second term, students may, with faculty and MDM Program consent and review, continue it into the next project course: evaluation and grades will be determined on an individual basis by the MDM Program

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Great Northern Way Campus
Graduate Course Outline

Course Title: DMED 530 Internship (3 credits)

Instructors: To be appointed.

Course Description

The Internship is a required component of the two-year MDM degree program and carries 3 credits but is graded pass/fail. The objective is to introduce the student to a real-life working environment in digital media organizations. Internships may be structured differently from one company or organization to another, reflecting the differing organizations and their modes of operation. For example, some organizations may wish to have the student take on a specific role in a project team, while another may wish to have the student rotate among teams. All participating organizations will be expected to identify a senior individual to act as a mentor for the student during the internship. The mentor would be available at least once a month to meet with the student. This individual should not be the student's direct supervisor in the position. Internships are expected to be full-time commitments, and will be paid commensurate with entry-level salaries.

Participating organizations will define the Internship positions in collaboration with the GNWC Internship Director. The Director will ensure that there are sufficient positions for all students. Positions will be posted beginning in the second semester of the program, and students will apply for the positions that interest them. Companies will be invited to demo sessions during the second semester in order to interview the students and view their work. Companies will make their own decision on which student to hire for the internship position, but the Director will work closely with the company representatives to fill the positions. If a student identifies an industry internship on their own, they must have the position approved by the Internship Director. Once a month, during the Internship term, the students are expected to attend a seminar to exchange information and share experiences arising from the internship. The Internship Director and/or faculty advisors will be available throughout the internship to support students and provide answers to questions. If no external internship placement is available, or should an internship end unexpectedly, the MDM Program faculty will make arrangements to ensure that an internal internship placement is provided.

Course Requirements

The student will prepare a summary report on learning experiences during the internship and will build on this experience to set out a personal learning plan for the final two terms of the degree program. Satisfactory completion of the Internship as certified by Industry and University supervisors. A pass/fail grade is assigned. It is proposed that the basis for assessment be as follows:

50% Report on learning experiences during internship
20% Learning plan for final two semesters based on internship experience
15% Assessment by industry supervisor of success in completing assigned tasks
15% Assessment by faculty supervisor of learning that results from the internship.

It is emphasized that because of differing internship opportunities, real judgment must be exercised in applying these criteria.

Learning Outcomes

After completing the internship students will be able to:

- Demonstrate the ability to undertake full-time work in a digital media or entertainment technology business.
- Demonstrate effective communication and cooperation in a real-life team environment.
- Assess the product development processes in a digital media business.
- Assess major business issues encountered during the internship and propose strategies to address these issues.

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Great Northern Way Campus
Graduate Course Outline

Course Title: DMED 540 Special Topics in Digital Media I (3 credits)

Instructors: To be appointed.

Course Description

By their very nature special topics courses will vary. Special topics courses offered in the program will be approved by the Program Committee to essentially the same criteria required for approval of a new elective. At the time of approval, each special topics course will be evaluated for suitability for study towards the MDM degree and the results of such evaluation will be noted in the course approval and course outline.

The topic of individual offerings will be chosen to take advantage of the availability of specific instructor expertise, to address a fast evolving development in digital media, or to address a topic not in the regular curriculum that is of interest to a group of students.

Course Requirements

To be determined.

Great Northern Way Campus
Graduate Course Outline

Course Title: DMED 541 Special Topics in Digital Media II (3 credits)

Instructors: To be appointed.

Course Description

By their very nature special topics courses will vary. Special topics courses offered in the program will be approved by the Program Committee to essentially the same criteria required for approval of a new elective. At the time of approval, each special topics course will be evaluated for suitability for study towards the MDM degree and the results of such evaluation will be noted in the course approval and course outline.

The topic of individual offerings will be chosen to take advantage of the availability of specific instructor expertise, to address a fast evolving development in digital media, or to address a topic not in the regular curriculum that is of interest to a group of students.

Course Requirements

To be determined.

Great Northern Way Campus
Graduate Course Outline

Course Title: DMED 550-3 Directed Studies in Digital Media

Instructors: To be appointed.

Course Description

Directed studies provide a mechanism for an individual student or a small group of students to work with a faculty supervisor to study subject matter not covered in regular courses in the curriculum. Directed studies offered within the program will be approved by the Program Committee to essentially the same criteria required for approval of a new elective.

Course Requirements

To be determined.

Note on Business Issues in the Curriculum

The business component of the MDM curriculum has of four main areas:

1. Project Management (Typical topics: scrum, waterfall development methodologies)
2. Teamwork (Typical topics: what a team is, how effective teams operate, creative problem solving, decision making, conflict resolution)
3. Business Plan Preparation (Typical topics: product specification, competitive positioning, market analysis [product and customer], resource requirements by phase, pricing, costing, profitability, risk assessment)
4. Management of the Business (Typical topics: general management, Org. behaviour and HR, Law, Industry structure, business models, business strategy)

In designing the MDM program it was decided quite explicitly that the business related issues would not be taught in the format of a traditional course, but rather would be integrated into the project courses on an as-needed, just-in-time basis. This approach has the merit that students working on digital media projects, many of which involve the creation of a digital media artefact, will come, by virtue of a perceived need, to appreciate the importance and value of an understanding of business issues, approaches, and tools, rather than seeing these matters as an appendage to the main thrust of the program. Further, this approach enables the development processes within the projects themselves to mirror those used in industry. So, by way of example, by integrating a green light process into the projects, a way is provided for demonstrating the relevance of effective project management tools and of a strong business plan without losing the interest of the students.

While the game industry can serve as an example of how the project would work, the approach described below should be easily adaptable to the needs of animation production or visual effects industry. The intention is for students to create functional working prototypes, and for the development processes to mirror those used in industry. Industry methods provide a framework to integrate animation, art, game design, software development, business and project management into one cohesive learning experience.

The Instructional Model

Consistent with the team and project bases of the MDM program the instructional model is one in which initially group goals are established, instructional material is then provided to assist the group to achieve its goals, a mid project review(s) of performance and progress with suggestions for improvement as needed is conducted, subsequent instructional material is provided, and the process culminates in a final evaluation. In this model there is extensive interaction between the instructional team and the students.

Timing and Topics to be covered.

First Semester

In the first semester, the program covers topics which place the firm in the context of an industry. These include the business history of the industry, current structure(s), business models and strategy, current size and major trends. In addition, general topics

concerning running a DM business, such as human resource management, sources of finance, general management, and effective teams, including what constitutes a team, roles/responsibilities of a team member, decision making, and conflict resolution are addressed. These topics are covered as part of DMED 500 –Foundations of Digital Media, and also in DMED 520 –Projects I: Building Virtual Worlds. In addition to the above topics, DMED 520 will introduce the green light process and the fundamentals of project planning and management. DMED 520 is a 6 credit course and allowance has been made for the business coverage.

All business areas in this first semester will be covered predominantly in a seminar context and in DMED 520 primarily on an 'as-determined-by the Faculty' basis.

As per the course outlines for the two courses, evaluation will be on the bases of the quality of the research, report(s), and on value-added participation in seminars.

Second Semester
Here students start to apply the tools of project planning and management and of team management as they move to a green light approval process in their project. It is in this course that greater depth is provided on the two of the two main areas of project management and justification. The material here builds on that presented in the first semester. Faculty involvement here will be heavy as students learn not only the creation and production of a DM artefact, but also the application of business methodology to the creative and production processes. Here students start to 'learn by doing'.

The business topic areas covered in this second semester will be seminar based, and could involve one or more project groups depending on need.

Evaluation will be based on the degree to which project groups apply effective management techniques to their project(s) including the project plan and justification, the background paper, and on value-added participation in seminars.

FIRST YEAR. After completing the first academic year of the program students will be able to:

1. Describe the DM industry context (Development history, and current structure, economics, business models, ...)
2. Understand what a team is, how an effective team operates, how it resolves issues.
3. Understand what IP is and discuss issues surrounding its commercialization.
4. Create a business plan for a digital media project
5. Describe Project Management processes.
6. Take a project through the Green Light approval process.

Third and Fourth Semesters
Students in DMED 522 and 523 will be expected to apply project management tools and to produce green light documentation and make green light presentations with less and less direct involvement of Faculty, and at increasing levels of sophistication and professionalism.

It is expected that the majority of seminars held in these latter semesters will involve topics which may be of interest by only one or two project teams as issues faced by individual teams become more unique. They will also cover areas that may not have been covered by some student groups, and also topics of emerging importance to the DM industry.

Evaluation of the business components clearly will be on the basis of the degree to which student teams are able to work independently to produce industry acceptable outputs. Green light approval panels will include industry representatives.

SECOND YEAR: After completing the final two semesters of the program students will be able to build on the learning outcomes of the First Year (above) and apply them to increasingly more complex and sophisticated projects at the same time as working with less and less supervision from faculty.

In addition to managing their projects using an acceptable project management approach (such as 'Scrum'), students will be expected to justify continued financial support for their project by going through a process such as 'Green Light'. To give a flavour for what is involved, the requirements for a "Green Light" approval are summarized below.

"Green Light"

Most game or animation productions need to go through an initial pitch or 'green light' process to secure the funding required to bring it to market. This phase of development is of vital importance industry, but often overlooked in educational programs. By integrating a green light process into this program, a way is provided of demonstrating the relevance of the business components in this program without losing the interest of the students. Students will be expected to have developed all of the documentation and presentation material typically required by industry at these green light meetings. For a game pitch, this would include:

Preliminary Game Design Document
- Shorter than the full game design document
- Includes a vision statement for the game
- Includes the core game mechanics, main verbs, genre and expected emotional feel of the game
- Defines the game's DNA

Preliminary Story Document
- Outlines the narrative, back-story and characters in the game

Preliminary Visual Style Guide or Art Direction Document
- Visuals, reference and storyboards that collectively represent the look and feel.
- References for palette, lighting.
- Screenshots from other games with a similar look and feel
- Written description of the visual style
- Description of artistic influences and how the look and feel was arrived at.

Competitive Analysis
- An evaluation of current games in direct competition to this game concept

- Includes a short market analysis of how well these game did in the market place, press review scores, etc.
- Includes screenshots and press clippings.

Demographic Analysis
- Describes the anticipated purchaser of this game and their buying habits.
- Includes the results of a marketing survey in the target demographic
- Students will be expected to do a marketing questionnaire on their game concept and include the results.

Business Plan
- How much money is this game going to make?
- How much will it cost to make?
- What is the delivery date?
- What is the market?
- Why is this the market?
- What is the marketing plan?
- What is the revenue model? (Retail, digital distribution, micro-payments, advertising)
- Includes Pro Forma Financials
- Risk assessment

Note 1
At the green light pitch, students are "selling" the game concept to secure funding. Outlines of these documents are presented in Power Point during the pitch with visuals and game branding integrated to create excitement for the product. All the documents should contain game branding and be laid out for visual impact. (not white papers)

Note 2
In order to accomplish the above, content from seemingly diverse courses can be brought together to support the green light process. Instructors would be able to integrate their course material into the project with the result that students are provided a cohesively learning experience which brings content from all the courses.

Note 3
The documentation generated during the semester will also prove very useful to the students and faculty when it comes to applying for student competitions sponsored by SIGGRAPH, the Independent Game Festival (IGF) or Digifest (New Media BC).

APPENDIX C: CALENDAR ENTRY

GREAT NORTHERN WAY CAMPUS MASTER OF DIGITAL MEDIA GRADUATE PROGRAM

[A calendar entry based on the preceding materials is being prepared. In addition to creating a GNWC calendar, it is our goal to have calendar entries on-line and on paper at each of our four partner institutions, with appropriate background information on the Great Northern Way Campus.

Note that the UBC Calendar Entry is generated by the UBC Curriculum Change forms.]

APPENDIX D: LIBRARY NEEDS

It is proposed that the Library needs of the MDM program be met in two ways.

1. A small on-site physical collection of serials and monographs will be built up at the Great Northern Way Campus. This will comprise key textbooks and reference books related to the four core courses and the project courses; in addition, physical copies of a small selection of journals particularly relevant to digital media will be acquired.
2. Partner institutions will be asked to provide library privileges to all students enrolled in the MDM program. If this proves impractical or too expensive, the GNWC will subscribe to appropriate journals for electronic access.

SFU Librarian Lynn Copeland has convened a meeting of the Librarians of the four GNWC institutions. This group is now working together to develop a methodology to deliver Library services to GNWC students and faculty and to create and maintain an on-site collection.

APPENDIX E: STUDIES EVALUATING THE PROGRAM

This Appendix provides the Executive Summaries of three studies that were conducted to evaluate the 2004 Concept Paper. These studies provided input to the design of the current proposal.

Feasibility Report - Master of Digital Entertainment Degree

February 7, 2005

Lead authors

Dr. Maggie Beers Instructional Development Consultant
BCIT's Learning and Teaching Centre

Terry Fuller Instructional Development Consultant
BCIT's Learning and Teaching Centre

Sarah Wareing Technical Writer
BCIT's Learning and Teaching Centre

Executive Summary

Scope

This report reviews the student perspective in a feasibility study conducted by BCIT's Learning and Teaching Centre (LTC) in support of Great Northern Way Campus' (GNWC) proposal for a Master of Digital Entertainment (MDE) degree. Industry perspective will be provided in a separate document by Dr. Steven Lee Berman, an external consultant contracted by the GNWC.

Terminology

Digital entertainment is primarily defined as entertainment experiences made possible by the advent of computer-mediated digital technologies such as electronic games and special effects in motion pictures.

Program Description

The MDE is a professional, two-year graduate degree for practitioners in the digital entertainment field and combines required and elective course work with a series of project courses and an industry internship. It is offered at the Great Northern Way Campus in Vancouver and takes advantage of the strengths of the four partner institutions: BCIT, ECIAD, SFU, and UBC.

Methodology

The feasibility project team followed a three-step process: investigate existing programs, develop and cost a proposed program, and test potential student and

industry partner interest in the proposed program through an online survey and a series of focus group sessions with an exit questionnaire.

Market Environment

According to New Media BC's web site (2004), game development is a growth industry in BC. In fact, BC may be the largest game development centre (per capita) in North America. There are currently approximately 140 companies involved in this sector from development to distribution. It is anticipated that more than 3000 people will be employed in this sector by the end of 2005.

Competition

Due to its applied nature, there is no direct competition for the proposed MDE program in BC. Indirect competition exists in the form of graduate programs in other disciplines as well as diploma or certificate programs in new media.

Business Model

The business model places tuition at $8,000 per semester, for two semesters per year. According to estimates, these fees will allow the program to be cost-recovery with a small profit margin.

Critical Risk Factors

This study identifies five critical risk factors that may impact the feasibility of this program: industry support, fee structure and financial support, financial health of the entertainment industry in BC, approval of the degree by the provincial government, and GNWC partner institute agreements and collaboration.

Timing Considerations

There are four time considerations that may impact the decision to proceed with this program: the degree development and approval process, marketing and promotion of the degree, facility construction and renovation, and staffing.

Conclusions

Feedback gathered from students indicated qualified support for the proposed program. Student concerns revolved around three issues: industry support and recognition, affordability, and clarification of the curriculum. If these concerns are addressed in the program development phase, this report indicates that, from the student perspective, there is a place for the MDE program in BC.

Recommendations

Industry Partnerships

Confirm industry partnerships and hire a designated industry liaison.
Explore creative funding options to subsidize student work.
Market GNWC and program to improve visibility and recognition.

Program Goals

Clarify target audience and employment expectations.
Distinguish program from certificates, diplomas, and other degrees.

Program Content and Structure

Distribute internships throughout the year.

Offer an ongoing graduate seminar on topics related to the field of digital entertainment, including project management, ethics, and problem solving.

Facilities

Create a designated, state-of-the-art collaborative work space that imitates industry.

Logistics

Improve transit access between GNWC and partner institutes and schedule accordingly.

Grant MDE students same access to partner institute resources and electives as registered students.

BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

Great Northern Way Campus
MASTERS OF DIGITAL ENTERTAINMENT
FEASIBILITY STUDY

INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE

by Dr. Steven Lee Berman
February 13, 2005

A. OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY

This briefing memo is an assessment of the Master of Digital Entertainment (MDE) professional graduate program proposed for the Great Northern Way Campus (GNWC). It was developed by obtaining and analyzing information provided through responses to questions asked of more than thirty professionals in the digital entertainment industry. This memo is intended to be read in conjunction with the Feasibility Report ("the Report") about student assessments of the MDE, produced by the Learning and Teaching Centre at the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT). The Report contains the MDE Concept Paper, whose design was based on the Master of Entertainment Technology (MET) program at Carnegie Mellon University (CMU).

Respondents were selected from both British Columbia (BC) and US/internationally based companies. Methodology is discussed in detail below. The analysis indicates a need for the program by relevant industries, a desire for the MDE program, and a willingness of industry to:

- provide mentorship, teaching and training as adjunct faculty and/or advisors,
- provide internships to students, and
- hire prospective graduates.

Assessment of MDE Structure and Workload

The overall structure of the MDE (i.e. project based, required internships, some required courses and a variety of electives) was well received as presented. However, analysis does reflect Industry 's desire to modify some aspects. Specifically, regarding course structure, many in Industry would prefer a program that includes more core courses, or at least a year-long fundamental 'best practices' course, while preserving the applied, project-based nature of the program. Such courses could focus on:

- project management including business (budgeting and finance),
- legal matters (negotiation, contracts, intellectual property, and ethics),
- interpersonal/professional communication skills (cross communication between different skill sets, as well as up- and downstream in the reporting structure),
- creative communication skills (learning to tell and create a story using linear and non-linear narrative), and
- best practices, production processes and creative fundamentals.

Some respondents believed that, even with additional required courses, the MDE should remain a two-year, full-time program. They stated that the program should require more work from the students, since this serves to reflect the reality of working in the demanding field of digital entertainment and that if students cannot handle a rigorous program, then they should not consider digital entertainment as a career option. Some also stated that they expect that the MDE student would ideally have some level of relevant work experience prior to admission to the program.

Industry's Expectation of the MDE Graduate

Industry has a demonstrated need for an MDE program able to produce technically and artistically proficient graduates who have excellent leadership/mentoring and project management skills, are strong communicators, have a thorough understanding of process and associated process management. Cross-training (engineers/programmers with an aesthetic appreciation, and technically adept creative professionals) is one of the most important expectations Industry identified.

Industry's Level of Commitment

Industry is willing to provide meaningful internships and hire graduates with the intent that these professionals will rise quickly from slightly-higher-than-entry-level or intermediate positions to project management positions (e.g. producer level and development directors). Even small companies, which are concerned that potential MDE graduates may not have realistic expectations regarding pay or nature and level of starting positions and/or that graduates may not yet have sufficiently demonstrated proven skills, are willing to consider hiring MDE graduates to assess their professional skill sets.

Industry Is Not Committed to Supporting Program Costs or Professional Leave

While many digital entertainment companies say that they need a program such as this to produce graduates sooner and in numbers greater than the proposed cohort of 30 students, Industry has not committed to underwriting costs or other support for students in the program. For instance, when directly asked, Industry participants informed us that they are not yet willing to pay for students to attend the MDE full-time or provide professionals with a leave from the company to enroll in the program. In this regard, the MDE will have to establish itself as providing the value-added that other industries have come to expect when sending a key professional for professional development such as an Executive MBA.

What's In a Name? MDE or MET or Other

Most respondents preferred the MDE title to the Master of Entertainment Technology (MET) designation. Other respondents offered variations on the two, including Masters of Interactive Entertainment or Masters of Digital Entertainment Technology.

Summary Report Prepared by Bruce Clayman

of

Industry Commitments for the Masters of Digital Entertainment Program Great Northern Way Campus

Original Report Prepared by:
Anja Haman
Haman Consulting
May 16, 2005

Presented to:
Bruce Clayman
President and CEO
Great Northern Way Campus

Executive Summary

Assessment of Interest in MDE Program:

An indication of Industry support for the MDE program can be garnered from their interest in participating with the program throughout its lifecycle. For this assessment we have spoken with leaders from Vancouver-based animation and video game studios, and have described a project timeline that comprises three core phases:

1. Program Development
2. Program Execution
3. Overall Program Support

From interviews with top studios in the area, we have found that a significant majority supported the program, and were enthused about the reality of this program being offered in Fall 2006. Less enthusiastic studios are those that do not anticipate growing, or in one case are not looking for this type of graduate at the moment. The majority of studios offered verbal support as well as time and resources for Program Development and Execution. Given their competitive business environment this is a strong statement of support for the program.

Studios felt they were likely to hire graduates if they were high quality (indicating that *student selection*, *staff selection*, *curriculum content*, and *relevant tools and technology* were leading indicators of graduate quality; hence their interest in participating in these areas). Some important implementation issues need further exploration to ensure the MDE Program creates graduates aligned with studio needs. For example, project work must be as real as possible, and cannot replace the value of industry experience (therefore graduates will need realistic expectations about their role and salary when entering the industry). Some further thought should be given to a program similar to the Executive MBA whereby industry employees can take the program while working.

Estimating numbers of interns and graduates to be hired is difficult for most participants as this depends on the market, the quality of the students, and is three years in the future. However, it is generally felt that the market will very likely absorb all 30 students, and could likely absorb even more.

Based on feedback given through the interview process, the participants can be loosely divided into 3 categories. This is not a scientific assessment, but helps to qualify overall support:

Champions: *willing to drive the Program forward with time, people, and potentially funding.*

- Three firms

Helpers: *willing to invest time and people; likely to hire grads and/or take interns.*

- Three firms

Bystanders: *if the program creates high quality graduates, they will use them & get more involved.*

- One Firm (will do guest lectures and project mentors in any case)
- Another Firm (will help with curriculum development in short term)

Interview Statistics

- Number of firms approached: 11
- Number of firms having responded: 8

Summary of Commitments: Program Design Phase

Curriculum development is a key area of interest, and faculty selection is of interest for those who felt they could help. There is keen interest in moving to next steps in this phase – the progress made to date was particularly motivating for several studios, and was seen as a indication that this program is "real".

Faculty Search:

The faculty recruitment plan to execute a worldwide search for key experts in the field was greatly supported, and was seen as an important indicator of success for the program. Faculty will need industry experience to provide relevant guidance.

Curriculum Development:

A high number of studios committed to helping refine the Program to meet their needs. A mix of technical and design people have been put forth, and several studios have experience setting up industry-specific curricula, which should increase the value of their input to these committees (Four Firms, for example).

Issues that arose during industry interviews should be identified and addressed in the committee for Overall Program Design. Industry hiring practices for roles such as associate producer, art director, technical artist and game designer should be well understood before finalizing program content. Program relevance is key.

Specific employee time commitments need to be confirmed for the committees – the timeframe for this consultation did not allow for that type of commitment to be confirmed. Meetings in proximity to participating studios would be ideal. Support comes with a request to use meeting time wisely.

Summary of Commitments: Program Execution Phase

Guest Lecturers and Project Mentors

In terms of providing industry knowledge and experience, the local market is keen to be involved. Even those studios not anticipating growth or active involvement in early years offered to provide guest lecturers and project mentors.

Internships

While some suggestions for unpaid interns were proposed, for the most part industry accepts the practice of paying interns (likely because of the precedent set by Coop programs). Internship numbers are difficult to anticipate – length of internships, timing, and the experience of the students impact this decision. As well, it is difficult for developers to absolutely guarantee any numbers more than a year in advance. As a result of these factors, numbers given are low-end estimates.

Companies have very specific needs wrt internships and this topic must be covered in Phase 1: Program Design in order to maximize internships during program execution.

Summary of Commitments: Overall Program Support

Overall Program Support is primarily financial or through in-kind donations. Clearly those with significant investments in the program would like a seat on the Advisory Board.

Financial Commitments

For those firms indicating a level of interest in providing financial support (start-up funding, ongoing support or sponsorship programs), several key issues need to be addressed before final commitments can be considered. Lack of financial commitments should not be seen as a lack of interest in the program, but more as a lack of cash resources in a hit-driven, highly competitive marketplace. With larger players acquiring local studios (for example, Vivendi buying Radical, Disney buying Propaganda, THQ buying Relic) this trend may change.

Key issues to be addressed for potential sponsors:

Sustaining or Start-Up funding

- Presentation of the overall budget.

- An indication of financial support from other sources, such as government; confirmed commitments will need to exist before industry commits.
- An indication of long term commitment by the 4 educational institutions involved.
- The value proposition of donations made must be clarified. The primary corporate value of this program is attaining high quality graduates, but all studios in the area will have access to these graduates so what is the added value attained for financial sponsors? Since financial investments will likely differ in amount, how will value be aligned with the size of the investment? A sponsorship package needs to be created outlining value received for amounts donated (for example, naming a lab or naming a lecture series).
- One firm is the most likely to come forward with significant investment (both financial as well as in-kind) and will likely indicate their preferred return value
- Another firm indicated potential financial support of at least $1 million, but not likely $5 million.
- A third firm has indicated growth in Vancouver over the next few years, and potential interest in a Project Specific Sponsorship Program such as the one offered by CMU (see "Project Specific Sponsorship" note below). This studio is just starting up but has an experienced team driving it. .

Project Specific Sponsorship

- Access to faculty and students for research purposes is of less interest than an in-house training session. Studios would pay a premium to have condensed, topic specific versions of the course content presented in-house over a few days. This idea seems to be of great interest to multiple studios. There is an opportunity to create a unique, industry sculpted sponsorship package that has potential of improved revenues.

In-Kind Donations

- Few developers can offer technology or tools at a better price than the educational discounts offered by vendors or resellers. One firm is able to offer multiple software packages, such as Renderware and Edith, and is willing to discuss supporting a game lab through hardware and software donations. Another firm may also donate development kits if appropriate. Two other firms offered to help provide vendor relationships where appropriate (for example, hardware vendors often do not give educational discounts, in which case a firm might offer their relationship with the vendor). As studios grow they often move into new buildings, sometimes having excess space available before they grow into it. Potential space donations may exist as a result, however, this will usually be short term (1-2 years).

Graduate Hires

Since graduation will first take place in June 2008 it is difficult for any studio to guarantee hires. As expected, the quality of the graduates will impact the number of hires. It is generally anticipated that the 30 graduates will easily be absorbed by the industry.

Appendix: Process Used to Attain Commitments

The following process was used to attain industry commitments:

1. Definition of Industry Commitments
   - Define and confirm program needs, areas of industry participation
   - Confirm participants (primary studios in the area)
   - Confirm Project Schedule (based on Sept 2006 start)
   - Create 2 page commitment sheet for interviews

2. Conduct interviews with top 8-10 firms in BC with the goal of getting specific commitments and feedback (including areas where commitment will not be possible or likely).
   - Identify decision makers
   - Set meetings/phone calls with decision makers
   - Receive feedback and store in interview sheet, clarifying commitments, areas of concern, trade-offs
   - Set secondary meetings as necessary (e.g. HR)
   - Confirm accuracy of feedback over email.

3. Summarize commitments made, and provide assessment of likely support for MDE program in BC.

Appendix F
Draft 8 - July 24, 2006

Great Northern Way Campus

Academic Governance and Administration of Degree Programs

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide description of the principles of academic governance proposed for programs at the Great Northern Way Campus (GNWC) and the administrative mechanisms proposed for their implementation. The institutional context and history of the GNWC are provided to assist readers.

Background

In 2001, four major post-secondary institutions joined together to establish the Great Northern Way Campus (GNWC) in Vancouver. The British Columbia Institute of Technology, the Emily Carr Institute, Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia are jointly co-owners of the 8.9-hectare parcel of land on Great Northern Way, located between Clark Drive and Main Street.

The GNWC institutions are committed to work together, in concert with Provincial and Federal governments, the City of Vancouver, industry and other entities, to build a unique, integrated centre of excellence in teaching/learning, research and entrepreneurship, with program and collaborative research opportunities not available on any one campus.

In 2003, the Senates and Education Councils of the four GNWC institutions considered and approved in principle the Great Northern Way Campus Academic Vision document (with caveats, in one case, about the due diligence required prior to participation in GNWC programs). In 2004, the Academic Planning Committee of the GNWC completed the first Strategic Academic Plan which identified the following program areas for initial development: Urban Sustainability, Transforming Arts + Culture, and Digital Media. It also discussed the range of options for program development, governance and implementation.

Over the last two years, significant progress has been made in each of these three areas. Briefly:

Urban Sustainability: UBC is about to break ground on the Campus for the construction of the Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability, which will house activities of all four GNWC partners. The Learning City Group has offered a number of courses in urban sustainability; courses jointly designed and taught and were "officially" hosted by one of the GNWC partner institutions.

Transforming Arts + Culture: The former Finning welding shop has been converted into a Black Box Studio, which provides a venue for artists to explore the boundaries of their crafts. It has housed a range of activities and art installations; it served as the centerpiece of "Earth: the World Urban Festival" the official arts and culture festival of the World Urban Forum June 21-25, 2006, bringing artists from around the globe to Vancouver to share their stories and experiences, and help build awareness of the role of art in creating livable, sustainable and vibrant cities.

Digital Media: In fall 2005, after completing three feasibility studies, the GNWC decided to proceed with the offering of a joint master's program in Digital Media with

the strong support and collaboration of the local new media industry cluster, represented by New Media BC. In February 2006, in response to a joint request from the GNWC and New Media BC, the BC Government provided a substantial grant to facilitate the offering of the program and the construction of a building at the GNWC to house it, as part of a planned major centre.

As noted above, to date academic programming has been in the form of individual courses hosted by one or the other of the partner institutions. The GNWC administration facilitated the registration and transfer credit for students from the other three institutions and, in some cases, funds were transferred among the institutions to cover costs of instruction. Some modest support was provided by the GNWC itself.

This delivery method is inadequate for the offering of full academic degree programs, and considerable time and effort have been dedicated to development of a workable approach for their initial governance, administration and delivery. The following description, in outline form (for now), is presented for consideration. It is recognized that as faculty members and other employees are appointed and as students are enrolled, the decision-making structures will need to evolve in order to include mechanisms for their participation.

Structure

The four GNWC partner institutions are signatories of the Shareholder Agreement under which they are jointly responsible for major decisions about the Campus, including acquisition and disposition of capital property and appointments to the Board of Directors.

The GNWC Board of Directors comprises three senior representatives from each of the four GNWC partners, the GNWC President and up to three "external" members. The Board's Academic Committee comprises the four GNWC institutions' Vice Presidents, Academic (or equivalent) and one other person from each of the four partner institutions, plus the GNWC President, the Chair of the GNWC Board and external members. The Academic Committee has responsibility for the establishment and maintenance of the highest academic standards for GNWC programs. Its approval is prerequisite to seeking the approvals of the Senates and Education Councils of the partner institutions for GNWC academic programs.

The Academic Committee and Board of the GNWC recommend the following guidelines for offering of programs at the Great Northern Way Campus:

For each Program initiative, a Program Committee will be established; it will report to the Academic Committee. It will have faculty representatives from each of the GNWC institutions, student representatives and external member(s). Each Program Committee will have responsibly for the operation of its program and thus will serve in a role similar to that of an academic department. The Director of each program will be responsible to the Academic Committee for all matters related to academic content.

Credentialing

The Great Northern Way Campus will not be an autonomous degree granting institution and Provincial base (FTE) funding is not anticipated. Rather, GNWC degrees will be conferred by virtue of the credentialing authority of the four GNWC partner institutions. Recruiting information, websites, transcripts, degree parchments and similar materials will carry the crests of all four partner institutions. Program establishment will require approval by the Senates or Education Councils of the four

institutions, consistent with their established procedures. Approvals by the institutions will also be required for substantial changes to the program.

Status of the Director and Faculty Members

Each program's Director will be its academic and administrative leader. Appointment may be at a host institution or may be made under contract to GNWC; in the latter case, it is expected that the Director will be appointed as an adjunct professor at one or more of the GNWC institutions. In either case, appointment will be subject to approval by the GNWC Academic Committee and Board. All regular continuing faculty members in the program will be appointed at one or the other of the four GNWC institutions, following its normal appointment procedures, with input from the program Director. The institution of appointment for each position will be determined by the GNWC Academic Committee. Faculty members will be seconded to the GNWC program and housed at the GNWC, with the expectation of involvement also with the institution at which they are formally appointed - for example, via graduate supervision and/or service on committees. Infrastructure support for research will be provide by the GNWC. It is expected that regular faculty members at the GNWC institutions will wish to be associated with GNWC programs and their participation will be welcomed.

Student Status

Students will be housed physically and administratively at the Great Northern Way Campus. The Campus will take full responsibility for recruitment, admission, registration, fee collection, advising and provision of other services. This will involve creation of a full GNWC policy framework to govern academic matters (admission, grades, etc.), financial matters (fees, etc.), and student conduct (integrity, harassment, etc.). The principles underlying the GNWC policies will be fully consistent with the relevant policies of the four GNWC partner institutions. For essential and appropriate services that cannot be provided by the GNWC, arrangements will be made to offer them to GNWC students through contract services with any of the GNWC institutions, or other appropriate parties.

Staff Status

Recruitment, appointment, supervision and all other human resource aspects of relationships with other program employees - including administrative, professional, technical and clerical staff - will be accomplished via contracts with the GNWC. This will involve creation of a full GNWC policy framework to govern workplace matters including appointment, compensation and conduct.

Conclusion

It is hoped that this proposal will receive approval by the four GNWC partner institutions and that this exciting, unique opportunity at inter-institutional, multi-sector collaboration can proceed to fulfill its potential.

Summary of Governance Policies and Processes as they apply to Graduate Programs offered at the Great Northern Way Campus.
25 January, 2007

This Summary is based on the *MoU Concerning Academic Governance and Administration of Degree Programs* to be entered into by GNWC and the four partner Institutions. The Summary also refers to the two Appendices of the MoU, the *Policy on Admissions and Program Requirements* and the *Code of Student Conduct and Discipline.*

1) Admission process

The minimum grades required for admission are based on the minimum for most programs at UBC but are intended to be equivalent to those at most North American universities. Likewise, the TOEFL and other qualifications for students for whom English is a foreign language are based on UBC practice. Individual degree programs like MDM may have higher requirements. (See Appendix 1). The UBC Senate Admissions Committee will handle appeals related to Admissions (MoU 5.2 C. p.8).

2) Registration

Students register at GNWC which maintains their academic records. Each partner institution has access to the GNWC student records database and can create their own records if this is desired. (MoU section 5.6 - p.9)

3) Provision of Student Services

GNWC will be responsible for ensuring the provision of Student Services but may contract out to partners if appropriate (MoU 5.1 and 5.5). Partners are reimbursed for all costs (MoU 5.9).

4) Financial Aid

As with all student services, this is provided by GNWC (or government) but not by partner institutions. Students may be eligible for government loans and some scholarships are possible but funding would have to be raised by GNWC.

5) Appeals

Student appeals regarding academic standing (MoU Section 5.2 (c) and Appendix 1 - p. 29) or student conduct (MoU Section 5.3c and Appendix 2 - p.37), are handled by GNWC as set out in the MoU and its Appendices with final appeals being heard by the appropriate UBC Senate sub-committee on Appeals.

6) Status of students up to convocation

Except for the purposes of Convocation, students enrolled in Programs at GNWC are not students of the Institutions. They are students solely of GNWC. (MoU section 5.1)

7) Status of student when a degree is granted

When GNWC students graduate they become graduates of all of the institutions that credential the degree (MoU section 3.5). Likewise, they become alumni of these institutions (MoU section 5.8).

Vivian Blaker

From: Vivian Blaker [blaker@sfu.ca]
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2007 1:48 PM
To: 'Robert Woodbury'
Cc: 'Trude Heift'
Subject: External Review: GNWC-MDM

Dear Dr. Woodbury,

You will find attached two reports of four external reviewers on the proposal for the **Master's program in Digital Media**. We will forward the other reports to you upon receipt. If possible, I would appreciate a written response to issues raised by the external reviewers, by **Thursday, February 1, 2007**.

For your information, the reviewers were asked to respond to the following points:

- The academic merit and structural integrity of the proposed program
- The adequacy of the faculty and other resources available to the proposed program for achieving its intended goals
- The demand for the proposed program among prospective students
- The demand for graduates of the proposed program

An ACNGP meeting has been scheduled for further discussion of the program proposal. You are invited to attend the meeting on Monday, February 12th in order to answer any questions which the committee may have.

Vivian
for Trude Heift

Vivian Blaker
blaker@sfu.ca
Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies
Maggie Benston Centre 1100
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
8888 University Drive
Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6 Canada
T: 604.291.4255 F: 604.291.3080
http://www.sfu.ca/dean-gradstudies

From: Robert Woodbury [mailto:robw@sfu.ca]
Sent: Thursday, January 18, 2007 7:15 AM
To: Vivian Blaker

85

Vivian Blaker

From: Trude Heift [heift@sfu.ca]
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2006 7:48 PM
To: MARTIN ALLOR
Cc: Vivian Blaker
Subject: Re: Review of new graduate program proposal


MDM_proposal_SFU.pdf (598 KB)


MDM_Course_proposals.pdf (579 ...


ATT00048.txt (2 KB)

Dear Dr Allor,

Thank you for agreeing to review the proposed MDM program at Simon Fraser University. I am enclosing two files: a copy of the full proposal and a copy of the course proposals. To help the Assessment Committee reach a decision, it would be most helpful to have, by January 15, 2007, your comments on:

- The academic merit and structural integrity of the proposed program
- The adequacy of the faculty and other resources available to the proposed program for achieving its intended goals
- The demand for the proposed program among prospective students
- The demand for graduates of the proposed program

You should feel free to point out any potential problems with the proposed program and/or comment in any other way. Please contact me if any clarification is required.

I greatly appreciate your willingness to assist us in the review of this proposal. If you require a print copy, please let us know and we will courier it to you.

Yours truly,

Trude Heift, Ph.D.
Associate Dean of Graduate Studies
Associate Professor of Linguistics
Simon Fraser University
Phone: (604) 291-3369
Burnaby, B.C.
Fax: (604) 291-5659
Canada V5A1S6
http://www.sfu.ca/~heift

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Vivian Blaker

From: blaker@sfu.ca
Sent: Monday, January 08, 2007 1:23 PM
To: blaker@sfu.ca
Subject: RE: Review of new graduate program proposal (fwd)

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: "Ben Noel" <bnoel@fiea.ucf.edu>
Date: Fri, 5 Jan 2007 13:24:53 -0500
Subject: RE: Review of new graduate program proposal

Vivian and Trude,

Copying Steve and Craig Hagen from EA.

I reviewed the documents over the break.

First of all, congratulation on the support you are garnering. This is impressive and we encourage this type of education.

Here are some notes I took:

Executive Summary
1. Great to make it equivalent of terminal degree.
2. Good description of principles and techniques (not just games for instance).
3. The length of the program is good. Anymore than 2 years and I think it can become a barrier.
4. The cost seems appropriate (not sure if CAN or US).
5. You can find FIEA info at www.fiea.ucf.edu (not sure what address is listed in the doc for FIEA).
6. I think you will find an application deadline of Jan. 31 for a September start will be too early. It would be nice, but until you are very well known, graduate students will be coming in later than that.
At least that has been our experience.

Curriculum
1. Project based curriculum is critical.
2. Looking over the semester-by-semester curriculum, I think you will need more foundation courses in computer science and art. We are finding that students with CS and art degrees don't necessarily have the adequate skills to contribute productively...so we supplement with foundation training in art and CS. We have faculty from CS, Art, Film and Production. It's is critical to have a good mix.
3. I would not spend too much time on history, etc. Some, but you will find that the project work swamps the students. Regardless of what you do, they will feel the pressure toward

the team. I would limit Building Virtual Worlds to 3-4 projects in the first semester.
4. Producers or designers need more presentation training and they are the ones who need more design theory and learning. Every programmer and artist does not need to pitch ideas. They need to do some presenting, but they should do much of that within their discipline and then they can supplement the game presentations (by producer) as the team sees fit.
5. Overall, I think you have a bit too much "game design, story"
curriculum and not enough foundation. We have programmers in class with programmers. They work on C++, assembly, etc. and do projects such as recreating Pong in 3 days. We have artists in life drawing, portfolio
building. They must carry a sketch book and create each day.

Overall, good direction.

Some things we found out. Recruiting is not easy. We get a lot of requests, but to get the talent, you almost have to treat like a game studio (ie. we need 20 programmers, 20 artists and 15 producers, etc.).
Find the right mix, with the talent level that allows your faculty and teams to complete good work (ie. don't have lower talent that has to be taught), and kids that can finance the tuition is not easy. Very hard.
We work a lot on recruiting. It pays off for us, but we do a lot. The program will not be effective with a lot of producers and not enough art or programming, for example.

Same with faculty. You can't hire a lot of producers. You will need
some producer/designers. They will need to have demonstrated the ability to nurture students. That's not always easy with industry
folks. On the CS side, you will need the same and someone who is a good
programmer as well. If students are better than teacher, you will have issues. We have not had that, but have seen that elsewhere. The art side critical concerns are: 1) ensure you have enough artists and good ones with a work ethic; 2) don't allow producers to burn them out. That is one of the reasons I suggest less projects in BVW. If you do six projects and producers are in need of art, then the artists will deliver, ignore their other classes and be bitter afterwards. We had some of that the first semester and we have adjusted accordingly.

Thanks for letting us look it over. You are heading in a great direction. We have been thoroughly challenged and the rewards have been
great. Our faculty and students look and act like a studio. Different
model than industry, but similar in execution.

Thanks
Ben

Ben Noel
Executive Director, FIEA
University of Central Florida
500 W. Livingston Street
Orlando, FL 32801
407-235-3612
bnoel@fiea.ucf.edu
-----Original Message-----
From: Vivian Blaker [mailto:blaker@sfu.ca]
Sent: Wednesday, November 22, 2006 2:01 PM
To: Ben Noel
Cc: 'Trude Heift'
Subject: RE: Review of new graduate program proposal

Dear Dr. Ben Noel,

Thank you for considering to review the proposed MDM program at Simon Fraser University. I am enclosing two files: a copy of the full proposal and a copy of the course proposals. To help the Assessment Committee reach a decision, it would be most helpful to have, by January 15, 2007, your comments on:

. The academic merit and structural integrity of the proposed program
. The adequacy of the faculty and other resources available to the
proposed program for achieving its intended goals
. The demand for the proposed program among prospective students
. The demand for graduates of the proposed program

You should feel free to point out any potential problems with the proposed program and/or comment in any other way. Please contact me if any clarification is required.

I greatly appreciate your willingness to assist us in the review of this proposal. If you require a print copy, please let us know and we will courier it to you.

Yours truly,

Trude Heift, Ph.D.
Associate Dean of Graduate Studies
Associate Professor of Linguistics
Simon Fraser University
Burnaby, B.C. Canada V5A1S6
Phone: (604) 291-3369Fax: (604) 291-5659 http://www.sfu.ca/~heift

-----Original Message-----
From: Ben Noel [mailto:bnoel@fiea.ucf.edu]

Sent: Tuesday, November 21, 2006 1:36 PM
To: Vivian Blaker
Cc: Trude Heift; Tom Carbone
Subject: RE: Review of new graduate program proposal

I would be willing to review and/or include some of our faculty (specifically Tom Carbone). I'm not sure what is meant by detailed review.
I have no problem reading or commenting on a 14 page document.
If it's a bigger time commitment, I'd like to understand more.

Thanks
Ben

Ben Noel
Executive Director, FIEA
University of Central Florida
500 W. Livingston Street
Orlando, FL 32801
407-235-3612
bnoel@fiea.ucf.edu
-----Original Message-----
From: Vivian Blaker [mailto:blaker@sfu.ca]
Sent: Tuesday, November 21, 2006 3:32 PM
To: Ben Noel
Cc: 'Trude Heift'
Subject: Review of new graduate program proposal

Professor Benjamin Noel
Florida Interactive Entertainment Academy University of Central Florida Orlando City Expo Centre 500 West Livingston Street
Orlando, Florida
32801
U.S.A.

Dear Dr. Noel:

I am writing to ask if you would be willing to review a proposed new graduate program in Digital Media at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada.

The program proposal has been approved in principle by the university, and must now receive an external review before a final decision is made.
External reviewers have been selected because of their experience with programs of this type.

The proposal is about 14 pages of text that requires a detailed review.
This
is accompanied by a package of information (detailed calendar entry, course and faculty descriptions) which is supplied as background material and does not require detailed review.

You are asked to comment on the academic quality of the program, the resources (people, space, library, etc.) assigned to the program, the likely demand for the program, and the proposals for employment of its graduates.
Typical external reviews are between two and four pages.

We are hoping that reviewers would be able to complete the task by January 15, 2007. I would be very grateful if you could assist us with this, and I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

If you are unable to participate in the review, please advise me as soon as possible, so that I can look for other reviewers.

Yours sincerely,

Trude Heift, Ph.D.
Associate Dean of Graduate Studies
Associate Professor of Linguistics
Simon Fraser University
Burnaby, B.C. Canada V5A1S6
Phone: (604) 291-3369Fax: (604) 291-5659 http://www.sfu.ca/~heift

Vivian Blaker

From: Trude Heift [heift@sfu.ca]
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2007 8:09 PM
To: Vivian Blaker
Subject: Fwd: Review of new graduate program proposal


Review of the Master's of Digi...


ATT00285.txt (61 B)

Vivian,

Below Jonathan's review as a Word attachment.

Trude

Trude Heift, Ph.D.
Associate Dean of Graduate Studies
Associate Professor of Linguistics
Simon Fraser University Phone:
(604)
291-3369
Burnaby, B.C.
Fax: (604) 291-5659
Canada V5A1S6 http://
www.sfu.ca/~heift

Begin forwarded message:

> From: Jonathan Sterne <jonathan.sterne@mcgill.ca>
> Date: January 15, 2007 5:53:15 PM PST (CA)
> To: Trude Heift <heift@sfu.ca>
> Subject: Re: Review of new graduate program proposal
>
> Hi Trude,
>
> I hope this is what you were looking for. If you still have
> questions, please let me know.
>
> Best,
> --Jonathan
>
>
> --
> Jonathan Sterne, Associate Professor
> Director, Graduate Programme in Communication Studies
Department of
> Art History and Communication Studies Arts Building, W-225
McGill
> University
> 853 Sherbrooke St. W.
> Montreal, QC Canada H3A 2T6

> jonathan.sterne@mcgill.ca
> [001] 514-398-5852 (office)
> [001] 514-398-7247 (fax)
> office location: W-280 Arts (3rd floor, west wing)
>
> http://www.arts.mcgill.ca/programs/ahcs/
>
>

Review of the Master's of Digital Media Program at the Great Northern Way Campus

Jonathan Sterne, Associate Professor
Department of Art History and Communication Studies
McGill University

My charge:

I was asked to review

- The academic merit and structural integrity of the proposed program
- The adequacy of the faculty and other resources available to the proposed program for achieving its intended goals
- The demand for the proposed program among prospective students
- The demand for graduates of the proposed program

I was also asked point out any potential problems with the proposed program and/or comment in any other way.

My Review:

First, let me begin with what I cannot comment upon. Usually program reviews include an in-person component where the reviewer visits the campus to meet the faculty, see the facilities, talk with students (it appears from the Association of Internet Researchers listserv that the program is already up and running?) and to pursue other lines of inquiry. (They also usually come with a stipend for the reviewer, but as they say in the drug trade, "the first one is free".) As such, I am commenting on a written proposal.

I also cannot comment upon the demand for graduates of the proposed program beyond noting that since NMBC asked for it, there should be some demand. Indeed, the closer the ties with industry, the greater the likely demand. But as someone who does not work in the media industry and who does not study their employment patterns, I simply have no perspective from which to say "yes, digital media companies will snatch up your graduates," though it certainly looks from the proposal like you have done your homework and that there is high initial interest in the program, at least from the eight firms approached. As an academic, I always get nervous when I read about "sponsorships" – internships are one thing, but no private business should have control over the curriculum or course material in any way – that should be the job of tenured and tenure track faculty.

What the Program Does Well

Overall, the MDM is very well conceived and seems like a tight match with the kinds of skills that the new media industry in BC wants. The curriculum nicely mixes "theory" with application, while avoiding the pitfalls of credentialing mere experience – the approach to the internship, for instance, is very sensible in this regard (since internships are routinely trouble-points in curricula like this). The balance between core and project courses also seems quite good. I was especially pleased with the improvisation course as a component of the curriculum, since it is always important to remind the students that even though the tools and platforms are new, the expressive forms that comprise digital media are quite old. Along these line, I would recommend hiring a "game studies" prof down the line who could teach contemporary critical perspectives on gaming as well as a more historical and/or anthropological course on play and simulation in human culture.

I have reviewed the course proposals and they seem like a good strong group to start with In terms of additional courses, beyond game studies, I could see a course in aesthetic theories of new media. One might also, given the staffing, separate the intellectual property and financing issues into separate courses. Indeed, we are still in a relatively early period in the industry, and given the continuing challenges of bittorrent and other file-sharing technologies, it will be necessary for students to consider a wide range of profitmaking and revenue-generation models for the products they create. You might also offer a course in hardware theory and interface development, as these are huge issues in several new media industries (digital audio and gaming are only the two most obvious examples). Finally, if the arts component is meant to really stand on its own alongside the industry training, there should be two courses in new media arts, one a theory course where they read aesthetics and history, and one a project course.

I am not sure whether my role as reviewer is to recommend adoption of the curriculum or the program, but my overall evaluation is quite positive. It appears to do what it sets out to do, and appears to meet the demands of the industry. My comments on the "potential problems" below are meant to be taken in that spirit. They are only longer than the praise because I am trying to be helpful.

Potential Problem Areas

From an academic standpoint, there are really two major potential problem areas worthy of note from the outset:

1. **Pedagogy**.

It was nice to see some attention paid to student learning styles in the program proposal. Complementary to that are some issues with pedagogy and curriculum. As you will see, these are largely resource issues, rather than technique issues.

One the one hand, a professional program needs to bring in people who are actually active in the industry to educate students. At the same time, such people may or may not be trained as teachers, and so standards and practices may vary greatly from one course to

another and from year to year. Of course, tenured and tenure-track faculty are sometimes bad teachers as well, so it isn't quite fair to single out the professionals who are teaching on the side. Each population of teachers has different needs that will be important for the long term health and survival of the program.

Tenured and tenure track faculty need the resources to constantly refresh themselves and their courses. If they are teaching production oriented courses, they need to be given a budget and time to refresh their own production skills in their chosen area. This is an issue worldwide right now as new versions of software and news ways of doing things constantly come out. While I doubt you'll have the problem of the campuses where audio production courses are still using analog tape and teaching splicing (instead of digital editing), failure to build in time and money for production faculty to retrain themselves on a regular basis (say, every 3-4 years) will in the long run produce a similar result (see also my discussion of facilities below). So-called "theoretical" faculty will also need resources to maintain an active research agenda, which will keep them reading in their fields and bringing the latest from the scholarly journals to their syllabi.

Professionals who are teaching in the program need two things. First, they need real salaries (and should under no circumstances be paid adjunct or part-time wages) as you are asking them for a substantial time-commitment for what will already certainly be less money than they can make cranking out video games or designing new special effects (or whatever the professional in question does). The real compensation says "this is a real job, we demand your time." Second, they need some training in how to translate their professional experience and practical knowledge (that is, know-how which may or may not have ever been formally taught to them, but which they have gained through experience in the business) into academic knowledge that can be conveyed to students in a classroom setting, keeping in mind that experiential learning can "convey" just as well as a lecture or other approach.

Additionally, I'd recommend a healthy budget for bringing in guest speakers and professionals.

There should also be flexibility in the curriculum. Right now, the digital storytelling and design of virtual worlds courses sound like just the thing. In 3-5 years, we may be on to other basic skills necessary for digital media design. As such, there should be some flexibility, a wide range of "special topics" offered on current issues, and frequent revisions to the curriculum as necessary.

2. Facilities

There is surprisingly little written in the proposal regarding facilities for the program, apart from a brief mention of in-kind donations from companies and other means to get equipment at below-market value and a wholly inadequate library plan.

A program such as this will live and die with its facilities. You are going to need up-to-date computers for each and every student and faculty member. In fact, you may need to

have a mix of PCs and Macintoshes given the different platforms on which different subsets of the industry rely, which would suggest slightly more than one computer per student. These will need to be up to date which means they will have to be replaced at least every three years, if not more often, given that gaming and other digital media applications are actually quite processor-intensive and tend toward the bleeding edge of computing power. If that weren't enough, you'll need properly designed rooms for any audio work you do (for instance, is THX certification an issue?), several large-format screens for collaborative work and demonstrations, all the major gaming platforms, and a dedicated high-speed internet connection (at McGill, for instance, a lot of streaming content is "throttled" to prevent students from downloading tons of pirated material; faculty at Western Ontario complain that their high speed internet connections are only nominally faster than dialup – a program such as the MDM *cannot* have these kinds of problems, which means either dedicated infrastructure or a very good working relationship with the IT department for the school as a campus). Also if students are going to be spending hours in classrooms or labs, ergonomics become an issue. This is all off the top of my head. More careful thought would lead to more suggestions.

So not only do you need to make sure the proper facilities are in place, the nature of your program requires that you basically begin your life with a plan for updating and replacing most computing technology given that we're talking about a 3-year window. Equipment like speakers, chairs, mice, high-end monitors, and so forth can probably be relied on for 5-10 years, depending.

I think these kinds of facilities and a replacement plan is absolutely crucial for a program that claims to be on the cutting edge and aims to impress industry members.

The library needs are a little more difficult to predict, but I would not assume that your students will be willing to go all over town to track down the relevant literature for their papers. You'll need a dedicated library budget, and perhaps you should look into the library use patterns of the Carnegie-Mellon's Master's of Digital Entertainment program since that is a model. Short of that, you should set aside some money to build up library facilities a year or two after the program has started, once you have a better idea of where your students' needs are not being met.

In closing, this looks like it will be a strong program, unique in Canada and well-positioned to bring revenue to the university, provide opportunities for interesting interdisciplinary collaboration among faculty and industry leaders, and facilitate new kinds of learning for students. It is certainly a program I could see recommending to university graduates looking for industrial and creative training in new media. To make the program truly outstanding, the universities involved need to make a sustained – and concrete – financial commitment to it.

Vivian Blaker

From: zyda@usc.edu on behalf of Michael Zyda [zyda@usc.edu]
Sent: Sunday, January 28, 2007 6:07 PM
To: Trude Heift
Cc: Vivian Blaker; Mike Zyda
Subject: Re: Review of new graduate program proposal

Dean Heift,

□ □ □Sorry for the delay in response to your request below for a review of this material for the MDM program. I have done a quick read through this material and have the following comments.

1. I understand its relation to the CMU degree program. The CMU and the MDM programs both are "one size fits all" programs. You take Artists, Game Play Designers and Engineers and place them all in the same set of courses for the two years of the MS degree. There has been some success with this at CMU BUT I worry that students in these Masters programs do not grow beyond their undergraduate education in their original field. I imagine that a person holding a BS in Computer Science going into this program will not grow beyond that BS knowledge in Computer Science - that is a problem for the game industry, where much of the new technology that needs to be developed requires graduate level coverage. The same is true for Artists and for Designers. While they will get a great understanding of the games business and game production from your Masters degree, they will not have the Masters level Artist/Engineer/Designer background that would make this stronger. So, while I think the MDM program is ok as it is, I have personal reservations that this is the right way to go.

2. My□preference is to do what we have done at USC - we have an Interactive Media MFA in the School of Cinema, an MS in Computer Science (Game Development), and 2D/3D Game Art and Design in the School of Fine Arts. The Games courses overlap for these three schools' degree programs, including Final Games A & B but students in the individual programs receive the stronger education of their particular field. So, we end up with Masters level Engineers who can really build MS level technology for games of the future, as well as MFA Interactive Media students who have industrial strength Game Play Design, and students with□strength in Game Art and Design. I believe that over time, the USC model will be the one that serves the game industry better for the future.

3. It would probably be of value for me to visit and present a talk on what the USC BS/MS in CS (Games) degree programs look like to you, so that we could have a longer discussion on how your Great Northern Way efforts should unfold. I believe the focus on the CMU effort was because they were in this early and looked successful. Over the long term, my guess is that the right way to go is to have overlapping degrees based on the underlying BS level education of the students. That graduates stronger people for the games industry.

4. The USC GamePipe program's web site is http://gamepipe.usc.edu. I have attached two papers on the BS/MS in CS (Games) degrees. My contact information is below.

5. Appropriateness of faculty - no bios of the named faculty were provided, so hard to say much. I would be looking for experience with shipping a hit game in their bios.

□ □ □mz

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Michael Zyda, Director
USC GamePipe Laboratory
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SAL□300
Los Angeles, CA□□90089-0781□

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http://gamepipe.usc.edu/~zyda/GamePipe/□ Latest GamePipe Material