

**DATE:** May 20, 2021

**SUBJECT:** New Academic Program  
East Tennessee State University  
Digital Media, Master of Fine Art (MFA)  
(CIP 50.0102 – Digital Arts)

**ACTION RECOMMENDED:** Approval

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**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

East Tennessee State University (ETSU) proposes a Master of Fine Art (MFA) in Digital Media which will require 60-66 credit hours and will align with the standards set by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD). The purpose of the proposed degree is to create an avenue for advanced graduate-level study in digital media studio practice.

The proposed Digital Media, MFA aligns with the focus and concentration areas of both the existing Bachelor of Science in Digital Media and the minor in Digital Media. The proposal for the Digital Media, MFA was developed by faculty in order to offer students a terminal degree to meet the growing need in the industry for highly qualified digital artists. Additionally, graduates of the proposed program will have the necessary credential to teach at the college level post-graduation due to the terminal nature of the degree.

**INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNING BOARD APPROVAL**

The proposed Digital Media, MFA program was approved by the East Tennessee State University Board of Trustees on April 23, 2021.

**PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

August 2021

**ALIGNMENT WITH STATE MASTER PLAN AND INSTITUTIONAL MISSION/STRATEGIC PLAN**

The proposed Digital Media, MFA broadly addresses the state’s workforce and economic development needs and specifically aligns with the Tennessee Entertainment Commission’s Create\_Here campaign which highlights Tennessee’s creative technology class and seeks to recruit new talent and companies.

The proposed program aligns with ETSU’s goals to increase the number of graduate students and to promote a balance of workforce and academic outcomes by prioritizing funding for the creation of professional master’s and doctoral programs.

## **CURRICULUM**

The proposed program will require 60-66 credit hours which will be comprised of 42 credit hours of core courses; six credit hours of guided electives; and 12-18 credit hours of a culminating experience. The Digital Media, MFA will provide an array of experiences including the advancement of the individuals' skills in their digital media specialization; teamwork in digital media projects for internal and external clients; experimenting with new technologies; and opportunities to develop and finalize a professional body of work. Additionally, 70 percent of the program is studio-based credit hours which will meet the curriculum structure set by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD). Due to the proposed program's terminal designation and its suitability for postsecondary teaching, 20 percent of the curriculum is devoted to teaching and research.

Program learning outcomes for graduates of the proposed program are:

- Demonstrate mastery and depth of knowledge within their digital media specialty
- Demonstrate the development of individual expression through a variety of media
- Practice a high level of self-criticism for consistent development and growth
- Understand the importance of cultural and social diversity in digital media
- Work collaboratively and effectively in team environments
- Employ an iterative approach to digital media development
- Use applied research and evaluation methods
- Design and develop curriculum for digital media
- Evaluate the design teaching/learning paradigm

## **PROGRAM PRODUCTIVITY**

The proposed Digital Media, MFA program projects an initial enrollment of seven students increasing to a consistent 16 students by year four. Retention rates are calculated at 70 percent based on current Studio Art, MFA rates. The proposed program projects a consistent five graduates a year starting in year three.

	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>Enrollment</b>	7	13	17	16	16
<b>Graduates</b>	--	--	5	5	5

## **PROGRAM DUPLICATION**

Currently, no other universities in Tennessee offer a Digital Media, MFA program.

## **EXTERNAL JUDGEMENT**

An external review of the proposed program was conducted during a virtual institution site visit on October 30, 2020. Dr. Victor Zordan, Program Director of Digital Production Arts in the School of Computing at Clemson University served as the external reviewer for the proposed program. The virtual site visit included meetings with campus administrators, faculty, prospective students, and community partners.

Dr. Zordan made a recommendation for approval of the proposed program and stated, "ETSU's ample success in its undergraduate digital media program offers strong support that a pool of eager and interested students will initially and persistently be available to fill the ranks of the proposed MFA."

### **STUDENT DEMAND**

Many recent Digital Media graduates, graduates from other programs, and professionals from the industry have directly contacted individual faculty members of ETSU's existing undergraduate Digital Media program expressing interest in an MFA in Digital Media. Additionally, a 2016 survey of current ETSU students indicated 26 out of 40 students expressed interest in graduate school and 21 students expressed an interest in an MFA.

### **OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRAM GRADUATES**

Graduates from the proposed program will be qualified for advanced positions in animation, game design, visualization, and visual effects in addition to teaching opportunities at the postsecondary level. The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts an 8.4 percent growth in the job outlook for Multimedia Artists and Animators from 2016-2026. Additionally, the state of Tennessee has passed the Tennessee Visual Content Modernization Act of 2018 which provides \$25 million in recurring funds for grants to businesses for developing digital media. These potential growth areas align with the focus of the proposed program and will hopefully provide job opportunities for graduates of the program.

Letters of support for the proposed program were provided by representatives from Industrial Light and Magic, Magnetic Dreams Animation Studio, Mohawk Games, and 343 Industries.

### **INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY TO DELIVER THE PROGRAM**

The proposed program will be housed in the College of Business and Technology in the Digital Media Department. A professor of Professional Practice will be selected every three years to support the Digital Media Department. This position will teach at the undergraduate level, freeing up existing faculty to teach at the graduate level. and will be filled by a current Digital Media, MFA student. Three graduate assistant positions will be funded for the proposed program.

Existing facilities and space will be utilized to support the proposed program and any necessary expenditures will be funded through digital media course fees and institutional reallocations. Anticipated expenses and revenues for the proposed program are outlined in the THEC Financial Projections Form in Appendix A.

### **ASSESSMENT AND POST-APPROVAL MONITORING**

An annual performance review of the proposed program will be conducted for the first five years following program approval. The review will be based on benchmarks established in the approved proposal. At the end of this period, the campus, institutional governing board, and THEC staff will perform a summative evaluation. The benchmarks include, but are not limited to, enrollment and graduation, program cost, progress toward accreditation, and

other metrics set by the institution and staff. If benchmarks are not met during the monitoring period, the Commission may recommend that the institutional governing board terminate the program. If additional time is needed and requested by the institutional governing board, the Commission may choose to extend the monitoring period.

**Tennessee Higher Education Commission**  
**Appendix A: THEC Financial Projections**  
**East Tennessee State University**  
**Digital Arts, Master of Fine Arts**

Seven-year projections are required for doctoral programs.

Five-year projections are required for baccalaureate and Master's degree programs

Three-year projections are required for associate degrees and undergraduate certificates.

Projections should include cost of living increases per year.

Planning year projections are not required but should be included when appropriate.

	Planning Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<b>I. Expenditures</b>						
<b>A. One-time Expenditures</b>						
New/Renovated Space <sup>1</sup>	\$ 30,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Equipment	15,000	-	-	-	-	-
Library	-	-	-	-	-	-
Consultants	6,000	-	-	-	-	-
Travel	3,000	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub-Total One-time</b>	<b>\$ 54,000</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>B. Recurring Expenditures</b>						
<b>Personnel</b>						
<b>Administration</b>						
Salary	\$ -	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
Benefits	-	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
<b>Sub-Total Administration</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 6,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 6,030.00</b>	<b>\$ 6,060.90</b>	<b>\$ 6,092.73</b>	<b>\$ 6,125.51</b>
<b>Faculty</b>						
Salary	\$ -	\$ 68,000	\$ 70,040	\$ 72,141	\$ 68,000	\$ 70,040
Benefits	-	26,540	26,948	27,368	26,540	26,948
<b>Sub-Total Faculty</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 94,540</b>	<b>\$ 96,988</b>	<b>\$ 99,509</b>	<b>\$ 94,540</b>	<b>\$ 96,988</b>
<b>Support Staff</b>						
Salary	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Benefits	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub-Total Support Staff</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>Graduate Assistants</b>						
Salary	\$ -	\$ 23,400	\$ 23,400	\$ 23,400	\$ 23,400	\$ 23,400
Benefits	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tuition and Fees* (See Below)	-	35,706	36,420	37,149	37,891	38,649
<b>Sub-Total Graduate Assistants</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 59,106</b>	<b>\$ 59,820</b>	<b>\$ 60,549</b>	<b>\$ 61,291</b>	<b>\$ 62,049</b>
<b>Operating</b>						
Travel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000
Printing	-	-	-	-	-	-
Equipment	-	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Other	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
<b>Sub-Total Operating</b>	<b>\$ 5,000</b>	<b>\$ 10,000</b>	<b>\$ 18,000</b>	<b>\$ 18,000</b>	<b>\$ 18,000</b>	<b>\$ 18,000</b>
<b>Total Recurring</b>	<b>\$ 5,000</b>	<b>\$ 169,646</b>	<b>\$ 180,838</b>	<b>\$ 184,119</b>	<b>\$ 179,924</b>	<b>\$ 183,163</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES (A + B)</b>	<b>\$ 59,000</b>	<b>\$ 169,646</b>	<b>\$ 180,838</b>	<b>\$ 184,119</b>	<b>\$ 179,924</b>	<b>\$ 183,163</b>

	Planning Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<b>Projected Student Numbers</b>						
Incoming		7	8	8	8	8
Graduating		-	-	5	5	5
Total Expected Enrollment		7	13	17	16	16
Course Fees per Student		2,700	2,700	2,700	2,700	2,700
Total Course Fees		18,900	35,100	45,900	43,200	43,200

**\*If tuition and fees for Graduate Assistants are included, please provide the following information.**

Base Tuition and Fees Rate	\$ -	11,902	12,140	12,383	12,630	12,883
Number of Graduate Assistants	-	3	3	3	3	3

	Planning Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<b>II. Revenue</b>						
Tuition and Fees <sup>2</sup>	-	102,214	192,921	256,408	245,288	249,330
Institutional Reallocations <sup>3</sup>	59,000	67,432	(12,082)	(72,289)	(65,364)	(66,167)
Federal Grants <sup>4</sup>	-	-	-	-	-	-
Private Grants or Gifts <sup>5</sup>	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other <sup>6</sup>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>BALANCED BUDGET LINE</b>	<b>\$ 59,000</b>	<b>\$ 169,646</b>	<b>\$ 180,838</b>	<b>\$ 184,119</b>	<b>\$ 179,924</b>	<b>\$ 183,163</b>

**Notes:**

**(1) Provide the funding source(s) for the new or renovated space.**

The investment for renovations will need to be provided collaboratively by the University, the College of Business & Technology, and the Department of Digital Media.

**(2) In what year is tuition and fee revenue expected to be generated? Tuition and fees include maintenance fees, out-of-state tuition, and any applicable earmarked fees for the program. Explain any differential fees.**

With tuition and university fees at \$11,902, and digital media course fees of \$135 per credit hour, the proposed degree should be generate positive revenue in it's second year.

**(3) Identify the source(s) of the institutional reallocations, and grant matching requirements if applicable.**

The initial investment for faculty will be a collaborative effort between the College of Business & Technology and the Department of Digital Media.

**(4) Provide the source(s) of the Federal Grant including the granting department and CFDA(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance) number.**

N/A

**(5) Provide the name of the organization(s) or individual(s) providing grant(s) or gift(s).**

N/A

**(6) Provide information regarding other sources of the funding.**

N/A