

**Coastal Carolina University
Conway, South Carolina**

**Proposal to the
South Carolina Commission on Higher Education
to establish a
Bachelor of Arts in Digital Content Development**

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**Edgar L. Dyer, Executive Vice President/Chief Operating Officer
For David A. DeCenzo, President**

PROGRAM PLANNING SUMMARY

CLASSIFICATION

Program Title:	Bachelor of Arts in Digital Content Development
CIP Code:	09.0702
Designation, type, level of degree:	New baccalaureate, 4-year
Proposed date of implementation:	August 2015
Supplemental STEM awards:	No
Delivery mode:	Hybrid

JUSTIFICATION

Need for program within the state:

The new Bachelor of Arts in Digital Content Development is a cross-disciplinary and multi-modal approach to the production, distribution, management, and critical analysis of digital culture as well as the application of digital solutions to research projects in the humanities disciplines. Instead of using only traditional content in history, literature, philosophy, and other humanities disciplines, this degree will focus more on the wide variety of digital content now available and in common use on websites and through programs accessed by laptops, tablets and smart phones; through social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter; and in the many applications developed for mobile technology. Using an array of pedagogies that take advantage of contemporary instructional technologies, students will acquire the knowledge base and skill-set necessary to create, market, organize, evaluate, and disseminate digital content (broadly defined) for a business or an organization, informed by the traditional liberal arts hallmarks of research, writing, critical thinking, and cultural awareness. Graduates of this program will be familiar with digital editing, interactive project development, the cultural impact of social media, the intersections of “analog” and electronic communication, and the theories and practices of digital visual culture and digital research methods. This degree will provide a supply of trained content development professionals and may anticipate the preparation necessary for jobs that are only now being defined.

Relationship of proposed program to existing programs at proposing institution:

The Edwards College of Humanities and Fine Arts at Coastal Carolina University already houses a growing new media and digital culture minor and several successful student-centered undergraduate initiatives: such as Ashes2Art: Digital Reconstructions, Athenaeum Press app development projects, and GIS course sequences which are geared toward digital content as a focus of study. This new degree hopes to build on existing initiatives.

Extent to which the proposed program duplicates existing programs in the state:

There is no duplicate, similar program in South Carolina. The College of Charleston has a relatively new data science program that covers some of the “big data” applications that inform the digital humanities, but our proposed degree diverges from data science in terms of structure, coursework, and potential career tracks.

PROGRAM DEMAND AND PRODUCTIVITY

A preliminary needs assessment suggests that there is demand for this program. A survey of juniors conducted by Coastal Carolina University’s Office of Institutional Research in Fall 2013 (N=71) indicated that 59% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that Coastal should offer a humanities-based digital content degree and 24% were either “likely” or “very likely” to consider pursuing such a degree. A second survey from the same semester, this one of 261 freshmen, revealed that 34% were interested in learning more about a B.A. in Digital Humanities, and 22%

were likely to consider pursuing such a degree. Anticipated enrollment for the fourth year is likely to be about 50 students, with annual completions after that point equaling 10-15.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATES

As the United States (and with it South Carolina) transitions to a knowledge economy, there has been an increase in the demand for “knowledge workers” who are comfortable communicating, creating, and managing information almost exclusively through electronic media. Throughout the educational, private, and public sectors alike, there is a need for individuals who can read, research, write, and think in ways that leverage the effectiveness of multiple digital platforms. Some of these positions are in the information technology sphere, best served by specialists in programming and hardware, but the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a growing job market for web developers (up 22%)¹, multi-media artists² (8%), and writers and designers for online publications³ (6%). The Bachelor of Arts in Digital Content Development would prepare individuals to create and curate the “digital footprint” of businesses, government agencies, and educational institutions. The South Carolina Department of Commerce lists 115 companies located in our state that note “information technology” and/or “digital content” as an area of activity.⁴ Our ability to increase such economic activity in our state is limited, given that Information Technology and Innovation Foundation studies show that South Carolina is falling behind when it comes to educating a knowledge economy workforce. In this area, we rank 39th out of 50 states.⁵ This new program should help address that deficit.

CURRICULUM

We envision a curriculum that foregrounds the interdisciplinary nature of the digital humanities, requiring nine hours of interdisciplinary humanities at its core:

- HFA 250 Digital Humanities Cross-Disciplinary Seminar
- HFA 350 Theories and Methods of Interdisciplinary Research
- HFA 400A Digital Writing, Documentation, and Presentation

Students would then take course sequences in web design aesthetics, new media and culture, geographic information systems, technology and human values, interactive media and society, recording technology, computer aided design, and special topics courses on the critical analysis of digital, network and mobile media technologies, as well as an internship. Primarily built on existing classes, the proposed 120-credit curriculum would look like this:

Core Curriculum – 34-41 credits

Required Foundation Courses:

- ENGL 231 Film, New Media, and Culture
- ENGL 331 Critical Approaches to New Media
- ARTS 103 Visual Arts and Culture
- COMM 101 Introduction to Communication
- COMM 275 Communication Theory
- ARTD 201 Graphic Design

Required Interdisciplinary Core: (12 credits)

- HFA 250 Digital Humanities Cross-Disciplinary Seminar
- HFA 350 Theories and Methods of Interdisciplinary Research
- HFA 400A Digital Writing, Documentation, and Presentation
- HFA 488 Digital Content Development Capstone

Required Digital Humanities Sequence (15 credits):

- HFA 309 Interactivity and Culture
- HFA 312 Social Media History, Development and Analytics
- HFA 345 Knowledge Creation and Digital Representation
- HFA 316 Digital Resources in the Humanities

Take 2 of the following courses: (6 credits)

ARTD 205 Web Design I
ARTD 303 Illustration
ARTD 304 Motion Design I
ARTD 306 Interactive Design Techniques
ARTD 308 Advanced Typography
ARTS 362 Digital Photographic Techniques
ARTS 424 Photographic Theory and Practice

Take 2 of the following courses:: (6 credits)

ENGL 459 Advanced Composition and Rhetoric
ENGL 392 Digital Editing
ENGL 431 New Media and Literature
JOUR 304 Writing for Interactive Journalism
JOUR 305 Journalism News Writing and Reporting for Media
JOUR 307 Copy Editing
JOUR 314 Video Journalism Production

Take 1 of the following courses: (3 credits)

GIS 200 Digital Earth
GIS 204 Introduction to Geographic Information Systems
GIS 310 Digital Cartography
GIS 311 Earth Observation
ARTS 450Q Ashes2Art: Digital Reconstruction of Ancient Monuments
ARTD 440Q Pre-Professional Studio
HFA 495 Digital Content Development Internship

Electives: (16-29 credits)

A notable element of the program is the innovative delivery mode. All coursework will be available synchronously in both face-to-face *and* online modes, with students able to choose either (or both) delivery method. Every class session will then be digitally archived for future use and aggregation, and we intend to explore methods of measuring competency through asynchronous skill development, adapting “badges” and similar certifications to the credit-hour structure already in place in South Carolina higher education. In a capstone experience (HFA 488) students will plan, develop and execute a digital media project.

ARTICULATION AND INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION

Students who complete this degree would be prepared for graduate work in a number of humanities disciplines as well as in library programs and some social science programs. A student with a B.A. in Digital Content Development who seeks graduate education would be prepared for the kind of cross-disciplinary, technology-rich activity fostered by USC’s Center for Digital Humanities and Clemson’s Digital Humanities Initiative. We also see strong possible connections with the Lowcountry Digital Library (LCDL) at the College of Charleston.

ESTIMATE OF COSTS

Current faculty members have the expertise to initiate this program. The creation of this new program would necessitate some redistribution of coursework, so we anticipate a modest increase in instructional costs, perhaps to the level of .25 FTE of faculty, or about \$15,000. A comprehensive library analysis is likely to reveal a need for additional databases, estimated at \$1500 per year. The anticipated demand for the program should generate steady growth. Given estimated enrollments, the costs for this new program will be covered by tuition generated by the program. No additional funds are being requested from the state.

Appendix:

¹ <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/computer-and-information-technology/information-security-analysts-web-developers-and-computer-network-architects.htm>

² <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/arts-and-design/multimedia-artists-and-animators.htm>

³ <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/writers-and-authors.htm>

⁴ <http://scommerce.com/sc-industrial-directory/results>

⁵ <http://www2.itif.org/2012-state-new-economy-index.pdf>