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Departmental Initiative Proposal
Proposal to incorporate technology across the Art Department

The Art Department proposes to incorporate technology across the department in the following manner:

1. Add a digital technology component to selected studio art courses.
2. Institute a web page for each studio course. The pages would be designed by upper level art students.
3. Create an online digital gallery to display student work. The gallery would be designed and maintained by upper level students.
4. Create an annual Art and Technology Guestship, whereby an artist working with technology would visit campus to discuss their work.
5. Evolve the Guestship, over a period of years, into a "New Media Festival" held at EC where digital artists, students, and faculty would interact and discuss digital media.

Rationale:

The computer continues to revolutionize the way in which creative people interact with and interpret the world. Visual artists have been on the leading edge in appropriating digital technology.

The EC Art Department currently offers eight studio art courses that are completely computer-based. These "computer art" courses are supported by the equipment housed in the Multimedia Studio (Mac Lab, OM 201). Thus, there already exists within the department a commitment to technology as well as the hardware and software required to realize it. This initiative would make use of existing equipment and require the addition of two pieces of equipment. In addition, there are sound pedagogical reasons for incorporating such technology into other more traditional studio art course offerings. For example, digital technology skills are a necessary

component within our art curricula and in order for students to be capable and successful in their future careers.

The art department proposes to add a technology component to existing studio courses. The courses chosen for this initiative are those in which computer technology is being shown to have valuable use. That is not to say that the courses will become completely digital, but rather, that more traditional ways of working within the media will be joined by the new processes that the computer as a tool can provide. The courses chosen by the art faculty to receive the new digital tools are in the areas of Photography, Printmaking, and Design.

The medium of photography was one of the first to incorporate digital media. This proposal addresses an emphasis in the digital manipulation of photography as well as the use of digital output. In addition to learning the darkroom processes of printing negatives with enlargers with photographic papers and chemicals, students would also learn the processes of digital photography. In some cases, negatives would be scanned and manipulated onscreen in photo manipulation software. From there the completed images would be output from the computer via an archival inkjet printer. At other times, students would be capable of complete digital photography, through images captured via digital camera, thereby completely bypassing the darkroom.

Printmakers have also embraced digital technology as a tool to allow for the creation and refining of images that would then be output via traditional printing processes. Through the use of the scanners, digital imaging and illustration software, and transparencies printed on the laser printer, printmakers can explore new ways of combining new and older processes, allowing for greater creative exploration within a traditional medium.

Students in design would also be using the computer as an additional design tool in courses that currently incorporate no technology greater than that of the photocopier. Professional designers are using computers in professional applications, thus our students in Design, Visual Communication, and Graphic Design would be well served to have the experience. We would require no specific additional equipment for the Design students.

Timeline for implementation:

This initiative would be realized in phases.

Phase 1. Digital component added to Photography Studio, Printmaking Studio, Design Studio, Graphic Design Studio, Visual Communication Studio, course web pages created, online gallery created. To begin Fall 2001.

Phase 2. Art and Technology Guestship, beginning academic year 2001-02, to be repeated annually.

Phase 3. New Media Festival hosted by EC, targeted for 3-5 yr.

Budget:

\$2500 (to be used as partial funding) to be distributed as follows:

1. Purchase of Epson 2000P Photo-quality color ink jet printer with archival inks for use in digital Photography.
2. Purchase of arc lamp plate exposing unit for application of digital Printmaking processes.
3. Honorarium for guestship speaker.
4. Purchase of additional digital camera for use by students across media. The cameras currently owned by the college are in great demand from all areas of the college and are therefore not always available when students need them.

Benefits to students:

Students would be exposed to both the traditional methods and new digital trends within each of the courses mentioned. They would have a much broader base of experience in their media. They would therefore be more prepared for careers in the visual arts.

Benefits to faculty:

The faculty involved with this proposal have embraced many of the same uses of technology in their own creative work as producing artists. This initiative would allow faculty to shift course content to incorporate new processes without which our courses are incomplete.

Benefits to the college:

The Art Department would clearly be embracing new creative possibilities without abandoning time honored traditional media. The guestship, online

gallery, and festival would be evidence of a creative community actively engaged in discussions and explorations relating to art and technology. The greater exposure of the college in the context of an expanded internet presence via the proposed web sites would be of benefit to the college as a whole.