REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION TO PLAN (NOTICE OF INTENT) A BACHELOR OF FINE ARTS IN ILLUSTRATION
AT UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN – STOUT
PREPARED BY UW - STOUT

***Submitted for standard track.**

ABSTRACT

The University of Wisconsin–Stout proposes to establish a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in Illustration. This program is intended to grow institutional enrollment, as well as provide balance to the existing program array in UW-Stout's School of Art & Design, an academic unit with 1,299 students. This would be a new, distinct area of growth for the university, taking advantage of existing course offerings in the School of Art & Design, with additional coursework to add disciplinary specialization as required by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) accreditation board. Upon completion of this degree, students will be prepared to enter creative practice as illustrators in industries such as advertising, publishing, and entertainment, as well as engage in independent arts practice and consulting. The Minneapolis Creative Index shows the Twin Cities region's creative economy with an overall estimated $2.78B of spending per year, with recent regional growth. Nationally, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, growth in these sectors is projected at 5% over the next decade. Regarding student demand, regional statistics on degree completions with the Illustration CIP code (50.0410) show a growth of 25%–137% in recent years at competitor institutions in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, and Michigan. There is an estimated overall combined enrollment of approximately 750 students among these same programs, indicating a healthy and consistent pool of potential applicants in the upper Midwest.

PROGRAM IDENTIFICATION

University Name
University of Wisconsin-Stout (UW-Stout)

Title of Proposed Academic Program
Illustration

Degree Designation(s)
Bachelor of Fine Arts

Suggested Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code
50.0410

Mode of Delivery
Single institution and delivered primarily in-person.

Department or Functional Equivalent
School of Art & Design (SOAD)

College, School, or Functional Equivalent
College of Arts and Human Sciences (CAHS)

Proposed Date of Authorization
February 2024 Board of Regents meeting

Proposed Date of Implementation
Fall, 2024

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Rationale

The proposed degree was developed in response to a Provost call to action for new programs to increase enrollment and align with our current program array, emerging areas of demand, and polytechnic identity. This initiative was in response to recommendations from our Strategic Enrollment Plan (SEP) and Comprehensive Academic Plan (CAP).

Illustration is a field that borrows artistic skillsets from Drawing, Painting, and Printmaking (traditionally aligned with Studio Art), Comics, Animation, and Graphic Design (traditionally aligned with Design). Currently, UW-Stout's roster of alumni already includes professional illustrators, albeit with degrees in other creative disciplines. In response, the BFA in Illustration would provide a rigorous, NASAD-accredited major for students who might enroll in private art and design institutions in the region, or otherwise seek out a less appropriate fit in another major.

One of UW-Stout's Focus 2030 goals that was also a Focus Area of our CAP is to "Advance UW-Stout's reputation as an innovative polytechnic, offering a foundation of skills, liberal arts, and knowledge, cutting-edge technology and programs, and cross-disciplinary learning in an inclusive and supportive environment." The program does so innately, through interdisciplinary coursework, creative research, and communication principles, as well as the cutting-edge technology available within the School of Art & Design's computer labs and studio facilities. Illustration brings clarity to complex ideas, communicates stories, and explores new and creative ways of analyzing and presenting

information applicable across multiple professional disciplines. The BFA in Illustration program brings together artistic excellence and applied, problem-solving skills inherent to the practical Design industry.

Another Focus Area of the CAP was Student Success, which aligns with UW-Stout's Focus 2030 goals to, "Deliver valuable holistic support and integrated learning experiences that engage students in envisioning new possibilities, achieving their goals, and excelling in our global and diverse society" and "Preserve and enhance our educational processes through the application of active learning principles." The proposed program includes field-experience and internship opportunities into the program, as well as the business and entrepreneurial skills needed to manage an independent professional practice in a creative field. With skills in communication, analytical reasoning, and technical expertise, graduates will go on to forge new career paths in the growing landscape of creative fields operating today, specializing in industries where illustration is integrated into a standardized workflow.

The program is well situated within our School of Art & Design which has grown beyond the capacity of our current programs and attracted students with interests that are more varied than our current offerings. We expect this program to build on the overall success of our School of Art & Design by attracting new student enrollment while also taking pressure off our current offerings that are turning away students, such as the BFA in Animation and Digital Media and the BFA in Game Design and Development—Art.

Need as Suggested by Market Demand

It is difficult to obtain employment data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), as Illustration is included within the statistics for both Graphic Designers and Craft and Fine Artists, without itemization. However, BLS projects growth of 3% and 5% in these areas respectively between 2022–2032.[1] The Minneapolis Creative Index report indicates there are 3,218 jobs in the Twin Cities area under the header of "Fine Artists, including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators" and 7,600 Graphic Designers with which some illustrators identify.[2] Advertising and Publishing make up 24% and 19% of all creative industry sales, with the generalized "Design Services" making up 13%. These comprise 56% of all economic spending in the creative sectors in the Minneapolis area and are the three areas most likely to employ illustrators.

Need as Suggested by Student Demand

The best example of student demand is likely the growth in the Illustration CIP code

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[1] Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, Craft and Fine Artists. Retrieved September 30, 2023 from https://www.bls.gov/ooh/arts-and-design/craft-and-fine-artists.htm#tab-6

[2] Office of Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy at the City of Minneapolis. (2018) *Minneapolis Creative Index.* Retrieved on December 4, 2023 from https://mplsartsandculture.org/research

(50.0410) among our regional competitors. Although UW-Stout competes with other campuses in the UW System, no other UW campus uses this CIP code. As a result, the most notable competitor programs with the 50.0410 CIP code are at private Art & Design institutions. Specific institutions that were investigated include our nearest geographical competitor, Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD), our leading competitor in the state, Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design (MIAD), Columbia College Chicago, and the College of Creative Studies in Detroit, MI.[3] Combined, these four competitor programs had 188 degree completions within the 50.0410 CIP code in 2021, with MCAD and MIAD seeing the majority with 50 degree completions at each institution. In addition, each of these four competitor institutions has seen notable enrollment growth in degree completions with this CIP code: MCAD's growth is 25%, MIAD's is 127%, Columbia College of Chicago's is 30%, and CCS's is 32%. These numbers suggest there are currently 700–800 students working toward a BFA in Illustration in the Upper Midwest.

UW-Stout's School of Art and Design is of a substantial size and competes directly with these institutions. UW-Stout's School of Art and Design is 1,272 (as per Fall '23 10th day data) compared to MCAD's undergraduate enrollment of 675 and MIAD's of 900. Tuition at these four private institutions ranges from $30,000–50,000 per year. UW-Stout's reputation in the region, overall size and breadth of Art and Design programs, and lower tuition rates already make us aggressively competitive against each of these private institutions. We project a potential enrollment of 50 new students per year in this CIP code.

Overview of the Program

The proposed BFA in Illustration is an 80-credit comprehensive major that will be available in a traditional, in-person format. Including the requirement of 40 Stout Core (general education) credits, the program totals 120 credits. Students will be required to select an additional literature course that can be part of the total 40 credits when properly planned. Students will begin in the pre-BFA program before applying to their major.

As pre-BFA students, they will take a standard first-year array of Art & Design Foundation classes on topics such as drawing fundamentals, form language, and color theory. Following acceptance into the program, students will begin with an Introduction to Illustration course, engage in a series of introductory and intermediate courses in Studio Art and Design, and choose from a series of advanced topic electives using an individualized combination of traditional and digital tools. The content of these electives will include anatomy, gesture, staging, and an understanding of visual storytelling to develop authentic representations of real and imagined locations, scenarios, and characters for narrative applications. Students will engage in research and visual development; gain an understanding of perspective, light logic, material indication, and color; and develop a personal approach to creative expression. Students will be required to take an applied capstone course.

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[3] University Marketing. (2023). Lightcast.

Projected Time to Degree

Students can complete this degree in four years. We will also investigate transfer opportunities from aligned programs and community and technical colleges to provide an efficient path to the BFA.

Accreditation

UW-Stout is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and the National Association of Schools of Art & Design (NASAD). Following NASAD guidelines, the institution will communicate with NASAD to have the program officially approved by the accrediting body after gaining approval of the UW System Board of Regents.

Institution and University of Wisconsin System Program Array

UW-Stout offers six BFAs in the School of Art & Design, including: Animation and Digital Media, Game Design and Development—Art, Graphic Design & Interactive Media, Industrial and Product Design, Interior Design, Studio Art, and two BS programs: Video Production, and Arts Administration and Entrepreneurship. The proposed degree is distinct from these offerings but utilizes existing coursework from each, especially the BFAs in Studio Art, Graphic Design and Interactive Media, and Animation and Digital Media, in addition to the shared first-year foundational courses taught by the Studio Art area. This type of course array is standard among existing programs with this CIP code and reflects an interdisciplinary utility that is inherent to the practice. A BFA in Illustration prepares students specifically for this industry, and allows them to specialize in this area, rather than exploring one or two elective courses within a different program.

Because of this interdisciplinary utility and curricular adaptability, illustration programs are typically offered by larger institutions specializing in Art & Design, and UW-Stout is perfectly sized for such an offering. The existing programs in SOAD cannot support all the students in the pre-BFA without major infrastructural change, such as new physical facilities and additional tenure lines. However, these programs can be better supported by separating out the minority of students who would be better served by a BFA in Illustration. Contrary to unhealthy competition with our other BFA programs, alleviating some of the burden on heavily enrolled programs will provide some balance in our array and instructional needs. Providing more varied offerings will allow us to grow enrollments in the School of Art and Design, and the University as a whole, in a deliberate, purposeful manner. With approval, this program would be the only one in the UW System with the Illustration CIP code (50.0410).

Anticipated Resources

The proposed BFA in Illustration has the faculty, much of the curriculum, and facilities infrastructure in place to offer this degree. The program will draw on current

faculty from the SOAD, located in the CAHS. Once the new degree program is approved, an existing faculty member will serve as the Program Director and be provided a reassignment equivalent to others in that role on campus. The program includes courses already offered in the SOAD course array, as well as some new curriculum. As the program grows, additional sections of existing courses will be added as needed. We anticipate that tuition from increased enrollment will offset the expense of additional sections. No additional faculty are required until the program grows to a substantial size. UW-Stout's SOAD has nearly 100,000 square feet of dedicated visual and performing arts facilities that will adequately support this new program.