

Interdisciplinarity@WMU- Phase One planning Template

- 1. Brief Overview:** Provide a brief overview of the proposed interdisciplinary initiative. What types of questions would the initiative ask? What types of complex problems would it seek to solve?

This is a proposal for a minor in the CFA entitled Performance Arts Technology. We propose removing the Multimedia Arts Technology (MAT) minor within the School of Music and adding a new minor that will be in parallel to the minors proposed to be under the School of Art's Kinetic Imaging (KI) degree. While this minor would include the course options of the MAT minor, it will also include additional course offerings from the other CFA units; thus, making it an interdisciplinary minor. This minor would be for any CFA or non-CFA students interested in performing arts technology, e.g. a music performance major who wants to learn to perform with technology or a theater major who wants to learn more tools for sound design. This would create a community element among the student body that promotes convergence. Students in various fields will work together and learn from each other. This minor would be a crucial component to eventually launching a CFA Graduate Degree in Performing Technology in which students could prepare for in their Junior and Senior year in an advanced graduate degree program. This degree will encourage CFA students to learn technological skills and non-CFA arts interested students to learn these skills as well. Complex problems we seek to solve: How do we recruit, retain, train and cultivate students to be skilled in technology that facilitates collaborative work in an interdisciplinary degree? How do emergent and recent technologies change how those in the arts create? We would create this minor for convergence, exposure, opportunity.

- 2. Impacted units:** What existing units, programs, and colleges would be involved in the proposed initiative? What other possibilities for collaboration across campus or in the broader community might exist now or in the future?

All three CFA units would be involved in this degree program: music, theatre and dance, and art. While this degree would be housed under the KI within the School of Art, the individual courses will still be taught within the units or be listed as CFA courses. The impact of digital technology on art and entertainment has resulted in ever increasing demand not only for expanded expertise, but also demand for expanded artistic vision, adaptation and problem solving. Student artists need to practice working in more cross-disciplinary situations in order to be prepared to lead in the future. Dance and Theater, Art, and Music would work together to share already existing courses and faculty to create this minor.

- 3. Impact on teaching, learning, and curricula:** Describe the anticipated impact of the proposed initiative on teaching, learning, and curricula. How might this initiative help to grow enrollment, including by reaching new audiences of learners through continuing education, dual enrollment, or professional certification? How will the proposed initiative positively impact the training of

undergraduate and graduate students? How does it enhance our institutional commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion?

This degree will be a packaging of currently existing and already proposed and approved courses. We will not need new courses to offer this degree. Some courses will require minor content adaptations based on the change in student population and the overall intention beyond such a minor. The approved curriculum revisions in the MAT program for fall 2021 and the approved courses intended to be part of the proposed Kinetic Imaging degree created the foundation on which to reform and repurpose the MAT minor into this degree and to share faculty, technological, and spatial resources. We believe that this new degree will be more popular than the current MAT minor and the number of involved faculty and units will make the new minor more attractive and distinctive. The impact of digital technology on art and entertainment has resulted in ever increasing demand not only for expanded expertise, but also demand for expanded artistic vision, adaptation and problem solving. Student artists need to practice working in more cross-disciplinary situations in order to be prepared to lead in the future. Computer technology makes all arts interdisciplinary and this minor would have a positive impact on students from all units by giving them necessary skills to get hired upon graduation. The Performance Arts Technology minor would keep the integrity and high quality of each independent CFA unit while creating opportunity to offer the students much needed skills in technology specifically targeted at their area of interest ie: Dance & Technology. The curriculum (almost all courses for this are already in place) would bridge the units out of their silos and network the students within the college and across campus. This minor creates collaboration, community, and integration that is essential to an artist in any field today; understanding how to collaborate and be highly skilled.

Performance Arts Technology Minor would open the door for diverse artists to study at WMU and could be a strong recruitment tool for many majors. This would also be a foundational step to eventually creating a CFA Graduate Degree in which serves as a retention tool and expanding special skills for the students. This would also create opportunities for TA's to teach some of the undergraduate courses in the Performance Arts Technology Minor.

- 4. Impact on research and creative activity:** Describe the anticipated impact of the proposed initiative on research and creative activity. How will this initiative promote discovery and creative scholarship? How might it result in increased external funding?

The creation of this minor would align perfectly with the upcoming Center For Advancing Art and Research and Virtual Imaging Technology Assistance Lab initiatives currently being undertaken by the CFA. These new advanced technology spaces will provide a venue that will enable and showcase the creative activities of both students and faculty in this new program. In addition, students in this minor may also have the opportunity to work in the new spaces as student employees, and apply their skills to research and grant projects from across the university in areas such as Virtual and Augmented Reality.

Presently there are no courses that facilitate interdisciplinary projects between all three units. Such projects have been extra and co-curricular, which largely results in a disparity of opportunity whereby students with relatively less need to work outside of school are the only ones who participate in such projects. The interactions between these students will create collaborative, discovery, and new research opportunities. This initiative fits with the renovation of the MMR and that specific endeavor is attractive to donors. Also, the type of projects that would occur in such a space, facilitated by the courses in this degree, would be something that could attract donors and could result in projects that are presented that have ticket sales.

5. **Efficiencies and/or cost savings:** How might the proposed initiative contribute to increased efficiencies and/or cost savings, for example by reducing administrative positions (e.g. chairs/directors), sharing staff support services and/or by sharing facilities?

The Performance Arts Technology Minor would utilize programs, faculty, and courses already in place, with the addition of a few credit hours for collaborative creation for the students to create cost savings, workload efficiency, and shared staff opportunity. This would take duplicate skills being taught throughout the CFA and consolidate them into one course ie: take sound editing out of Music for Dancers and send those students into a basic sound editing course in the MAT program with other MAT students. This would allow for reform or reimagining of Music for Dancers. This course could also potentially be shared amongst students for different units and be co-taught by Music and Dance Faculty to lighten work loads. When the CFA graduate degree is eventually created, the graduate students would serve as TA's for the undergraduates in the Performance Arts Technology minor. This would help with workload, community, and retention of undergraduate students to pursue the CFA graduate track.

6. **Impact on course offerings and workload:** At present, proposed initiatives will only be feasible and sustainable if they can be supported by existing resources, including instructional capacity, faculty and staff time, and facilities. Will the proposed initiative streamline existing course or program offerings? Could the initiative help create more equitable and sustainable workload for faculty, for example, by reducing the need to offer under enrolled courses, reducing the frequency of course offerings or eliminating the need to teach some courses?

Please see Efficiency/Cost Savings.

7. **Additional Information:** What additional information would you like to provide in support of this proposal?

Technology and collaboration are near omnipresent in the individual and collaborative work between artists in professional contexts, including dance, music, digital audio, video, gaming, projection, digital theatre design, and art. Technology for live performance transcends disciplinary divisions in the arts, but the individual art disciplines are largely segregated. This degree will attempt to answer the question: "How do you provide students in traditional arts programs opportunities to learn and experiment with technology commonly incorporated into arts performances?" Fundamental concepts of working with technology in performance also transcend interdisciplinary divisions and would create interdisciplinary opportunities. We have the courses, faculty resources, and facilities to offer students opportunities to learn these fundamental skills and we are reducing duplication of classes and skills with this cross disciplinary program that will allow students not only to work with each other, but to gain understanding and proficiency with the technologies in these associate fields. Dancers benefit from understanding digital music techniques, and theatre designers can implement more complex 3d modeling software learned from Art for example. The shared courses allow for exposure to other skills necessary to get hired upon graduation. We are currently still siloed in schools within the CFA, this minor would create opportunities for students to work and create together across mediums. This would create a community element that promotes convergence. Students in various fields will work together and learn from each other. They could complete 1 year of graduate work to complete this master's degree and it would be geared towards WMU student retention that uses the minor to introduce students to new skills

and allow them to specialize in their graduate work at WMU with the appropriate mentorship and curricular foundation.

8. Contact

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