



September 30, 2009

To: Provost Paul Deluca

From: Julie Underwood, Dean

Julie Underwood

Cheryl Hanley-Maxwell, Interim Associate Dean

Cheryl Hanley-Maxwell

Re: Madison Initiative for Undergraduates: Proposal submission

The School of Education submits the following proposal to be considered for funding under the Madison Initiative for Undergraduates: *Undergraduate Photography Program*. The proposal clearly identifies the need for more resources being directed at the undergraduate Photography Program to meet the needs of Photography majors and to allow non-majors to access the introductory/gateway course. The proposal also describes how funding the requested Assistant Professor position (and accompanying TAs) will address enrollment concerns in more advanced photography courses by enabling more student to get through the gateway course.

The proposal aligns with the goals and the spirit of the Madison Initiative for Undergraduates. Furthermore, it targets one of the School of Education's Strategic Initiatives: infusing state-of-the-art technology into our work. Should it be funded it will facilitate the timely movement of majors through their course sequence and open the introductory course to non-majors who come from other Schools and College in the University. In relation to other proposals that will be submitted from the School of Education, this proposal is of medium priority. As such it is not one of our top priorities.

School of Education Office of the Dean

310 Lathrop Hall University of Wisconsin-Madison 1050 University Avenue Madison, Wisconsin 53706-1304
608/262-1763 Fax: 608/265-2512



Memorandum

To: Julie Underwood
Dean, School of Education

From: Tom Loeser
Art Department Chair

Re: Undergraduate Photography Program

Enclosed please find our Madison Initiative for Undergraduates proposal: "Undergraduate Photography Program"

Please let me know if any additional information is needed.

Thanks

Undergraduate Photography Program

Madison Initiative for Undergraduates

Proposal

Hire new assistant professor of photography to teach undergraduate studio classes and create two new T.A. positions for introductory photography sections

The core of this proposal is to build the photography program at UW-Madison. We request to hire a new assistant professor of photography with both traditional darkroom and digital photographic skills whose primary responsibilities will be to teach undergraduate studio classes, especially at the introductory level. We are also requesting the creation of two new T. A. positions to support this new faculty member's teaching of introductory photography courses to students from across campus in need of basic-level, technical instruction in photographic practice for the pursuit of a broad range of photography-based or enabled work. These T.A. positions will give the students enrolled in the course the kind of hands-on technical training in a small group "lab" setting necessary for effective skills development.

Faculty Hire and T. A. Lines needed to address great demand that exceeds current resources

Current undergraduate demand for introductory-level instruction in photographic practice exceeds our faculty and T.A. resources in two significant ways: (1) we cannot accommodate even all of our art majors and (2) thus, we also cannot open these courses to even begin to accommodate all the non-majors in need of basic technical instruction in photography. Our evidence for this demand is two-fold. First, there are large waiting lists. It should be noted that these lists represent only that smaller percentage of undergraduate students who wish to take the introductory course in photography and are willing to be placed on the list. From the spring of 2006 to the fall of 2009, waiting lists for the photography courses in the Art Department averaged 30 undergraduates. In some semesters, the waiting list was as high as 57 students. Second, despite the fact that photography is an interdisciplinary area that ranges from its pursuit as art to its practice as documentation and that basic technical knowledge of photography is necessary for work in a wide array of fields from journalism and communications to anthropology, there is **only one** faculty member (Tom Jones) on the entire UW-Madison campus who currently teaches introductory courses in photographic practice.

The numbers below represent the number of undergraduates that were on the waiting list:

Spring 2006 (57)
Fall 2006 (27)
Spring 2007 (39)
Fall 2007 (6)
Spring 2008 (19)
Fall 2008 (19)
Spring 2009 (42)
Fall 2009 (31)

The Art Department has had a twenty-year history of long waiting lists going back to before the arrival of Assistant Professor Tom Jones.

Problem of bottlenecks for photography majors

The problem for Art Department students and photography majors in particular, is that a single faculty member without T.A. support cannot simultaneously teach enough students entry-level photographic technique and teach the courses required for the full program in photography, namely the intermediate and advanced-level courses necessary for art majors specializing in photography. The fact that a single faculty member cannot simultaneously support a whole program in photography and address the demand for entry-level instruction creates a deeply problematic bottleneck. Therefore, there is overflow demand for the introductory course and under-enrollment in the intermediate/advanced classes because students cannot take intermediate/advanced-level courses until they have received entry-level instruction. Furthermore, a truly effective and competitive undergraduate photography program would have a tiered system of, at a minimum, an introductory gateway course, an intermediate class, an advanced class, and a capstone seminar with particular topics. The new faculty hire and two T.A. lines will allow us to offer the entry-level gateway course on a regular rotation each semester and to a larger number of students. This will allow students to get through the gate and move up through the program's levels of instruction and free the other faculty member to teach vital courses at the intermediate, advanced, and capstone level. Because there is only one instructor of photography, these necessary courses at the advanced and capstone seminar levels are not yet on the books. A crucial part of this plan for a top undergraduate program in photography is the design and implementation of courses at these levels.

Problem of lack of access for non-majors

The fact that demand among majors for the current entry-level gateway course in photography exceeds what we can offer has led to the current triage solution of limiting enrollment to a small number of majors. This triage attempt is not a sustainable solution for our majors and the development of our program. It creates the additional problem of preventing us from addressing the needs and demands of non-majors. Because we limit courses to majors, we do not have waiting list data for non-majors. But, we do have the compelling evidence that: (1) basic technical knowledge of photography is a skill required of any student pursuing research, documentation, or creative application of visual materials in fields as diverse as Journalism, Creative Writing, Fine Arts, and Anthropology, (2) there is only one professor (Tom Jones) currently teaching photography in the entire university, and (3) Professor Jones regularly receives special requests for admission. For example, Professor Jones reports of his introductory course:

“There are constant requests from undergraduates, both art and non-art majors, to take the classes. The current protocol is to give art majors access first; hence many non-art majors are unable to take the course. One example of why there are many outside requests is The School of Journalism and Mass Communication does not offer any courses on photography in their curriculum. The majority of these requests come from undergraduate students who are working for The Badger Herald and The Cardinal. There are also numerous other majors

throughout the university who see photography as an opportunity to incorporate an interdisciplinary approach to their work. A few years back I had an undergraduate who was getting a film degree in Mass Communication. He took the concept from his final project in my class and later transformed it into a film. This film was accepted into the Wisconsin Film Festival. The breaking down of departmental driven boundaries can only enhance the undergraduate experience.”

The new hire and two supporting T.A. positions will allow us to offer the entry-level gateway course more frequently and increase the number of students enrolled in the course. This will, in turn, allow us to accommodate the needs of our majors and open up space in the courses to non-majors.

Importance of Undergraduate Program in Photography

While photography has undergone a profound shift from darkroom to digital technology, this major change has only increased the ubiquity of photography in our environment and, thus, the need for both technical and critical skills in the production and analysis of photographic images. This proposal will provide basic access to learning core skills in photographic technique, develop instruction in digital photography (for which we do not currently have a dedicated course), and deepen the curriculum to combine a full ladder of courses from entry-level to capstone seminars in photographic practice (from darkroom to digital) with course offerings in the history, criticism, and theory of photography. Innovation in community-based learning, cultural competency and visual literacy skills inform and guide this initiative. Although we currently offer some digital components in our classes we are not yet offering a course dedicated to digital photography. This puts us at least ten years behind other top research universities. Digital technology is becoming the new foundation for photography and, while the University offers short one-day courses through DoIT and various libraries, this plan to hire a new faculty member with traditional darkroom and digital skills will allow us to fully develop and integrate digital photography into the curriculum. This proposal to develop a top undergraduate program in photography with necessary instruction in traditional darkroom techniques and new digital technologies builds on our strengths in the Department of Art and across campus.

Interdepartmental Opportunities

The proposal builds on our strategic partnership with the Visual Culture Center as our plans for opening the entry-level gateway course to non-majors is a key piece of the plan to develop a degree program in Visual Studies that will require the development of skills in photographic practice. Reciprocally, Professor Jill Casid (Associate Professor of Visual Culture Studies and Director of the Visual Culture Center) whose current research and practice focuses on photography is initiating the process for affiliating with the Department of Art and offering courses cross-listed between art and visual studies. This plan also represents a strategic partnership with the Department of Art History where Professor Casid regularly teaches a large, undergraduate class in the history and theory of photography which we intend to cross-list, Professor Nancy Mithlo (Assistant Professor of American Indian Art) teaches courses in photography and film from an anthropological perspective and with particular focus on native representation, and new

hire Lauren Kroiz who is a specialist in twentieth-century American photography will be teaching courses dedicated to her area. The plan is to cross-list these courses for our majors. With these key faculty and curricular resources in place, the new hire and supporting T.A. lines will allow us to develop an interdepartmental program in photography, crucially including instruction in new digital technologies, which a 21st-century university campus must have to remain current and prepare its students for the current demands of the workplace.

Current Strength of the Art Program

A current strength in the Art Department is that we have three American Indian faculty members: Truman Lowe (Ho-Chunk), John Hitchcock (Kiowa/Comanche) and Tom Jones (Ho-Chunk). In addition, Nancy Mithlo (Chiracahua Apache) is a recent hire in the Art History Department. The University of Wisconsin-Madison is developing a national reputation for these high numbers, as no other university art programs come close to matching us. Tom Jones has been tremendously successful in his efforts to develop the photography area since his arrival in 2005. While we will certainly not restrict our search to the American Indian community, Jones' national reputation and his extensive connections will be an important asset in minority recruiting for the requested new position.

Plan for Implementation

- (1) **Faculty Hire:** The proactive steps taken to identify and recruit from a varied pool of candidates will take place through networking with campus agencies that are familiar with the diversity of professional organizations that support faculty development in under-represented communities such as the Native American Indigenous Studies Association, the Future of Minority Studies, the Society of Photographic Educators and En Foco (an organization dedicated to cultural diversity in photography).
- (2) **T.A. Positions:** TA's will be hired according to standardized Art Department Teaching Assistantship hiring procedures. The Art Department selects TA's through a two-tiered process that starts with a department-wide review of visual materials. Finalists are selected for interviews based on faculty rankings. They must then come to campus for an intensive interview process. The top-ranked candidates, after this process is complete, receive job offers.
- (3) **Course Plans:** The proposed structure of the beginning class would be taught as a larger lecture course by the new hire with TA's teaching the darkroom labs. The lecture course would have a total enrollment of 60 undergraduate students. The labs would be broken down to 4 sections of 15 students. We intend to add both an advanced class and a capstone seminar, along with cross-listing courses in history and theory of photography.

Budget

Faculty: One full-time Assistant Professor at \$57,000-\$70,000.

TA: Two Teaching Assistantships for the academic year at \$11,911 (44.44%) with fringe benefits at \$3,275.53 (27.50%), and the cost of tuition remission at \$8,000 per TA. The total cost for two TA's \$46,372.

We are not requesting any infrastructure needs/cost, as we have excellent new digital and darkroom facilities at the Art Lofts.