Request for an Interdisciplinary Minor
In
Animation Studies

SECTION I
The Request

We request the creation of a new interdisciplinary minor in the area of Animation Studies. Two colleges (Fine Arts and Humanities), three departments (Art and Art History, Communication, and Film Studies), one program (Arts and Technology Program in the College of Fine Arts), and the Center for High Performance Computing have collaborated in the design of this new minor which will take advantage of existing resources and provide an appealing new program for undergraduate students at the University of Utah. As outlined below, the interdisciplinary minor in Animation Studies will require 7 courses and result in the accumulation of 23 units.

ART 2200: First Year Studio 2D	4 units
COMM 3500: Writing for Visual Media	3 units
COMM 5640: Communication Technology and Culture	3 units
FILM 3710: Beginning Filmmaking	4 units
FILM 4500: Beginning Animation	3 units
FILM 5740: Animation Film Survey	3 units
COMM 5520: Interactive Narrative	3 units
OR	
COMM 5650: Videogames as Gendered Spaces	(3 units)
Total Number of Units	**23**

SECTION II
Need

The new interdisciplinary minor in Animation Studies responds to at least three different needs. The first need, and our top priority, is student driven. Over the course of the last 10 years, increasing numbers of students have designed their own animation degree program using the resources of the University's Bachelor of University Studies (BUS). David Zemmels, Assistant Dean for Technology in the College of Fine Arts, currently advises about 15 students who are using the BUS program to complete a degree in digital animation. It is by far the most popular degree within the BUS program. However, the purpose of the BUS program is to provide a structure for students to develop unique, often quite individualized, programs of study. It is not intended as a structure for students to earn degrees that are not formalized elsewhere on campus. The number of students taking this route, and the number of years that the pattern has been developing,

provides us with institutional evidence that this is a degree that can and should be formally offered at the University of Utah. As will be emphasized below, currently there are no formal programs (majors or minors) that emphasize animation studies in the USHE or in the Intermountain West. This Interdisciplinary Minor in Animation Studies would make a unique and important contribution to USHE. It is clear that the Minor, by itself, will not completely relieve the pressure from the BUS program. An Interdisciplinary Major would do much more to relieve that pressure. We have developed the structure for such a major and will advance that program as soon as the current moratorium on new majors is lifted. As an immediate measure, we believe that the Interdisciplinary Minor will allow us to continue to build the type of interdisciplinary relationships and courses that will benefit our students and our respective programs. The minor will also allow us to continue in our planning for the new major.

A second need is faculty and institution driven. There is a unique blend of scholarship and creative talent on the faculty and specific institutional endeavors that position us for believing that this is the right time and we are in the right place to formalize this new minor. For example, The Arts Technology Program at the University of Utah began in the Fall of 1999 as a response to the growing student interest in integrating digital technologies into the creative process. In the first year, this interdisciplinary program offered 3 classes that served 76 students. In 2001-2002, the program offered 17 classes with a total enrollment of over 400 students in 2002-2003 the program served 427 students and offered 20 regular classes. Consistently, the most popular classes are those teaching motion graphics, or animation technology. This institutional endeavor has been matched by two recent hires, one in the College of Fine Arts and one in the College of Humanities. Eva Honegger is a new member of the faculty in the Film Studies Program who has joined us specifically for her creative work in the area of animation film making. Cassandra Van Buren has joined the faculty of the Department of Communication and her work emphasizes scholarship and creative development of animation, primarily in the areas of video games and web-based environments. Additionally, the Center for High Performance Computing has supported several graduate students producing animations requiring high-end computer equipment and technical support and will continue to provide the necessary infrastructure support and expertise for the proposed Interdisciplinary Minor in Animation Studies.

The third need is market driven. Animation is a growing international industry, with distribution outlets including motion pictures, video games (arcade, console, computer, and handheld), the web, personal digital assistants, and cellular phones. Applications include entertainment, business, advertising, education, art, and information. Last year the U.S. video game industry, which is highly dependent on animation, generated $9.4 billion in sales, out-grossing the motion picture industry by $1 billion. Our research indicates that no animation studies or production program (no formal four year degree program) exists in the USHE or the Intermountain West. We believe that of the schools in the Intermountain West, our emphasis on technology and especially the resources made available through the Center for High Performance Computing, make us unmatched in our ability to compose and offer this Interdisciplinary Minor. For example, technologies like distributed visualization and Grid computing, that the Center needs for its core users,

will greatly enhance the value of the animation program by exposing students to the most advanced computational tools without significantly increasing the start up costs needed by the institution.

Therefore, because we have the resources to offer this minor (and have been doing so informally for about 10 years), because we have strong institutional commitments to this minor, and because animation is quickly becoming a vital forum for entertainment, information, and social influence, we believe that this Interdisciplinary Minor in Animation Studies is positioned not only for success, but will become one of the strongest areas of growth for these two colleges.

SECTION III
Institutional Impact

Because this proposed new Interdisciplinary Minor in Animation Studies is actually a formalizing of an informal practice, we see no need for new funds in the immediate future. In the most basic sense, we are simply organizing and institutionalizing a minor that the students themselves have designed using our existing resources. It is also our hope, however, that once this program is formalized and endorsed we will attract new students to the University of Utah and that the program will then mark an area of new growth, and new funds.

We believe that the new program will require no new funding to initiate but will result in the generation of new SCH because, once developed, the program will attract a wide range of students, some of whom are not currently attracted to or enrolled in the University of Utah.

SECTION IV
Finances

No new funds are needed and no additional resources will be required. This change is one that merely requires recognition and institutionalization of a program currently offered through the BUS program. Faculty resources already exist in each of the three departments and technological support is available through the Center for High Performance Computing.

Signature Page

Institution Submitting Proposal: University of Utah

College, School, or Division affected: College of Humanities, College of Fine Arts, Center for High Performance Computing

Department(s) or Area(s) affected: Communication, Film Studies, Art and Art History

Change in Description: new Interdisciplinary Minor in Animation Studies

Proposed beginning date: Fall 2004

Institutional Signatures (as required):

Department Chair (s)

Dean (s) or Division Chair

Chief Academic Officer