

SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS

Academic and Student Affairs
Consent

AGENDA ITEM: 5 – G

DATE: May 10, 2022

SUBJECT

Intent to Plan – DSU – BS in Digital Content Creation

CONTROLLING STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY

[BOR Policy 2:23](#) – Program and Curriculum Approval

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

Dakota State University (DSU) requests authorization to develop a proposal to offer an BS in Digital Content Creation. The program will equip students to analyze, create appropriate content, and manage media campaigns for current online, app-driven, social-media platforms as well as for traditional and print media. Most organizations today use a wide range of online channels—from their website to mobile chat to blogs—to connect with current and prospective customers, employees, and other stakeholders. As the world continues to move into the digital space, new communication channels and advanced data platforms have created opportunities for organizations to improve their customers' experience and adapt to new ways of doing business. Currently in the SDBOR universities there are no programs offered that match this employment need. The Digital Media Management & Social Media Communication positions available in South Dakota are with a wide variety of industries such as Healthcare, the State of South Dakota, Financial Institutions, Non-Profits, Construction companies, Insurance, Technology, Education, and many others.

DSU intends to offer the BS in Digital Content Creation on campus.

IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATION

DSU is not requesting new state resources but will reallocate existing resources.

Board office staff recommends approval of the intent to plan with the following conditions:

1. The university will research existing curricula, consult with experts concerning the curriculum, and provide assurance in the proposal that the program is consistent with current national standards and with the needs of employers.

(Continued)

DRAFT MOTION 20220510_5-G:

I move to authorize DSU to develop a program proposal for an BS in Digital Content Creation, as presented.

2. The proposal will define the specific knowledge, skills, and competencies to be acquired through the program, will outline how each will be obtained in the curriculum and will identify the specific measures to be used to determine whether individual students have attained the expected knowledge, skills, and competencies.
3. The university will not request new state resources without Board permission, and the program proposal will identify the sources and amounts of all funds needed to operate the program and the impact of reallocations on existing programs.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment I – Intent to Plan: DSU – BS in Digital Content Creation



SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS ACADEMIC AFFAIRS FORMS

Intent to Plan for a New Program

Use this form to request authorization to plan a new baccalaureate major, associate degree program, or graduate program; formal approval or waiver of an Intent to Plan is required before a university may submit a related request for a new program. The Board of Regents, Executive Director, and/or their designees may request additional information. After the university President approves the Intent to Plan, submit a signed copy to the Executive Director through the system Chief Academic Officer. Only post the Intent to Plan to the university website for review by other universities after approval by the Executive Director and Chief Academic Officer.

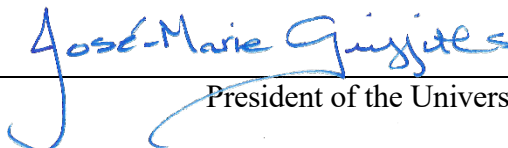
UNIVERSITY:	DSU
DEGREE(S) AND TITLE OF PROGRAM:	B.S. in Digital Content Creation
INTENDED DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION:	Fall 2023

☒ **Please check this box to confirm that:**

- The individual preparing this request has read [AAC Guideline 2.4](#), which pertains to new intent to plan requests for new programs, and that this request meets the requirements outlined in the guidelines.
- This request will not be posted to the university website for review of the Academic Affairs Committee until it is approved by the Executive Director and Chief Academic Officer.

University Approval

To the Board of Regents and the Executive Director: I certify that I have read this intent to plan, that I believe it to be accurate, and that it has been evaluated and approved as provided by university policy.

 _____ President of the University	2/23/2022 _____ Date
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Note: In the responses below, references to external sources, including data sources, should be documented with a footnote (including web addresses where applicable).

1. What is the general nature/purpose of the proposed program? Please include a brief (1-2 sentence) description of the academic field in this program.

The purpose of this interdisciplinary degree program will equip students to analyze, create appropriate content, and manage media campaigns for current online, app-driven, social-media platforms as well as for traditional and print media.

2. What is the need for the proposed program (e.g., Regental system need, institutional need, workforce need, etc.)? What is the expected demand for graduates nationally and in South Dakota (provide data and examples; data sources may include but are not limited to the South Dakota Department of Labor, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Regental system dashboards, etc.)? Please cite any sources in a footnote.

Digital content campaigns involve an organization's online communication efforts. Most organizations today use a wide range of online channels—from their website to mobile chat to blogs—to connect with current and prospective customers, employees, and other stakeholders. As the world continues to move into the digital space, new communication channels and advanced data platforms have created opportunities for organizations to improve their customers' experience and adapt to new ways of doing business. Currently in the SDBOR universities there are no programs offered that match this employment need.

While this trend already existed within various industries and businesses, COVID-19 has accelerated the need for remote-friendly, digital communication between customers and businesses in nearly every industry.

The Digital Media Management & Social Media Communication positions available in SD are with a wide variety of industries, such as Healthcare, the State of SD, Financial Institutions, Non-Profits, Construction companies, Insurance, Technology, Education, and so much more.

These roles are among the fastest growing in the industry, with demand for social media jobs and skills increasing at the highest rate, according to data collected exclusively for Marketing Week.¹

With the pandemic forcing people to stay at home, consumer behavior has changed dramatically over the past 12 months. Brands have responded by shifting focus and spending to digital channels, which has had a massive impact on the jobs market.²

There has been a vast increase in demand for digital content and communications with social skills, with paid social media rising in demand by 116.4%.^{3 4}

LinkedIn published a study showing the top 15 In-Demand Jobs for 2021 and Digital Content Creator is listed as #9.⁵ When searching LinkedIn there are 450 "Digital Communications" positions listed for South Dakota.

We looked at US government data, but found it lagging behind the industry's rapid change. Bureau of Labor Statistics data is rather clumsily filed under Public Relations Specialist or Media & Communications. As the LinkedIn data referenced above shows, these are merely two ways among several of considering this evolving career.

¹ Tesseras, Lucy. "Social Experts and Digital Specialists: The State of the Marketing Jobs Market." *Marketing Week*, 5 Feb. 2021, <https://www.marketingweek.com/social-experts-digital-specialists-marketing-jobs-market/>

² Tesseras, Lucy. "Social Experts and Digital Specialists: The State of the Marketing Jobs Market." *Marketing Week*, 5 Feb. 2021, <https://www.marketingweek.com/social-experts-digital-specialists-marketing-jobs-market/>

³ Schaffer, ByNeal, et al. "What Is a Social Media Community Manager?" *Social Media & Influencer Marketing Speaker, Consultant & Author*, 28 Nov. 2021, <https://nealschaffer.com/social-media-community-manager/>

⁴ Taylor, Karen. "The 7 Hats of a Digital Marketers." *Kuno Creative*, <https://www.kunocreative.com/blog/successful-digital-marketer>

⁵ Southern, Matt G. "LinkedIn: Top 15 in-Demand Jobs in 2021." *Search Engine Journal*, 4 Mar. 2021, <https://www.searchenginejournal.com/linkedin-top-15-in-demand-jobs-in-2021/392479/#close>

3. How would the proposed program benefit students?

In addition to the many jobs currently available for a person with this degree, we imagine this major could be very attractive as a second major. Many fields need media management expertise (such as business, marketing, entrepreneurship, fundraising, school administration, public service, just to name a few), so by keeping the credit load relatively small, we see the major being beneficial as both a primary and secondary major, with the likely addition of a minor option in the near future.

Students also readily understand the concepts of content creation and social media campaign management. While some career tracks need to be explained to prospective students, this field is one which students engage with many times per day. We anticipate, therefore, that students will understand and be drawn to a field that affects their digital lives in very visible ways.

4. How does the proposed program relate to the university's mission as provided in South Dakota Statute and Board of Regents Policy, and to the current Board of Regents Strategic

Links to the applicable State statute, Board Policy, and the Board of Regents Strategic Plan are listed below for each campus.

DSU: [SDCL § 13-59](#) [BOR Policy 1:10:5](#)
[Board of Regents Strategic Plan 2014-2020](#)

Social media and its requisite content as a phenomenon distinct from all other media and marketing and communication is entirely mediated by, and generally created via, technology. It is tracked in entirely digital spaces. Dakota State's mission is perfect guidance for a major of this sort: we were the first university to offer a New Media major, which has antecedents dating to the 1990s at DSU. DSU has an equally long and successful business program. We believe we are the first university in the region to offer a major that weds our proven technological savvy to our established business and communication strategy. This interdisciplinary major draws from several disciplines, among them media content creation, digital video, image, and audio production, coding, marketing, and communication. We are aware of no other degree programs that incorporate communication and marketing with content creation tailored for social media, such as scripting, coding, and audio and video production for platforms like TikTok, Snapchat, Discord, Twitch, Instagram, Facebook, and emerging platforms in addition to traditional media formats, including print.

5. Do any related programs exist at other public universities in South Dakota? If a related program already exists, explain the key differences between the existing programs and the proposed program, as well as the perceived need for adding the proposed new program. Would approval of the proposed new program create opportunities to collaborate with other South Dakota public universities? *A list of existing system programs are available through the university websites and the [RIS Reporting: Academic Reports Database](#). If there are no related programs within the Regental system, enter "None."*

Media and Journalism Strategic Communication at University of South Dakota, but it has no significant digital or business curriculum. All required courses are MCOM courses. They do offer a minor in Social Media Marketing, which, if added to the Media and Journalism major would address some of this difference, but the minor requires no business or CIS/CSC courses, only marketing from an MCOM perspective. Our major is truly interdisciplinary, relying on coursework from across the campus. We believe this makes our major distinctive and unique, even as it addresses a proven need in the workforce.

We are aware of Black Hills State's proposal to consolidate some communication curriculum to address social media as a communication phenomenon. We anticipate no trespass between our interests, given

that their degree is a communications degree, and our proposal is fully interdisciplinary, drawing from business, digital arts, audio design, English, communication, and programming. Our drafting of curriculum so far spans multiple colleges and diverse fields, recently adding business application programming to anticipate that our graduates will be better equipped to create and embed software to analyze audience prior to crafting a coherent social media campaign, which would incorporate skills drawn from the interdisciplinary nature of our curriculum.

6. Do related programs exist at public colleges and universities in Minnesota, North Dakota, Montana, and/or Wyoming? If a related program exists, enter the name of the institution and the title of the program; if no related program exists, enter “None” for that state. Add additional lines if there are more than two such programs in a state listed.

This question addresses opportunities available through Minnesota Reciprocity and WICHE programs such as the Western Undergraduate Exchange and Western Regional Graduate Program in adjacent states. List only programs at the same degree level as the proposed program. For example, if the proposed program is a baccalaureate major, then list only related baccalaureate majors in the other states and do not include associate or graduate programs.

The only program that is truly comparable is at Minnesota State at Moorhead; the other programs are the traditional communications. There is nothing else in the states listed, including SD. We would be the 1st in the state to offer this degree program, especially the unique combination of business, technology, and communications.

	Institution	Program Title
Minnesota	Minnesota State Moorhead	Digital Media Management
North Dakota	UND	B.A. Communications Major
	NDSU	B.S. or B.A. Communications
Montana	None	
Wyoming	None	

7. Are students enrolling in this program expected to be new to the university or redirected from other existing programs at the university?

We believe this will be a very attractive option for new, incoming students. It speaks clearly of its purpose and career path in its name alone, an essential component in attracting new students, and it's very contemporary in such a way that 17-year-olds will appreciate its value in the modern workplace.

8. What are the university's expectations/estimates for enrollment in the program through the first five years? What are the university's expectations/estimates for the annual number of graduates from the program after the first five years? Provide an explanation of the methodology the university used in developing these estimates.

DSU currently has minors in Audio Production, Computer Graphics, Digital Photography, English for New Media, Film Production, Multimedia/web Design, Production Animation 2-D and 3-D and Professional and Technical Communications which all have good enrollments. According to Assistant Director of Admissions Amber Schmidt, “We hear about a dozen requests for [this] type of a degree annually. With social media having a larger interest in that high school age range, I would not be surprised if we continue to see [...] more.” We expect that this new program will generate greater interest in enrollment after it is established and promoted externally.

Furthermore, we need to be prepared to offer relevant and exciting programs to accommodate DSU's proven and predicted growth. Director of DSU Athletics Jeff Dittman recently announced an expected increase of over 200 student athletes over the next 3-5 years, and according to our admissions team, this is a degree program that is often requested from student athletes. Dittman also announced that DSU is adding drone racing, and Men's and Women's soccer and golf, and more. He added that DSU has grown rapidly to roughly 400 student athletes and over the next 5 years that will increase to over 600. And DSU VP of Admissions Amy Crissinger summarizes both growth trajectories this way: "The expectation is that our enrollment will grow from both an undergraduate and graduate student perspective [...]. Athletics itself is [...] one of the five strategic priorities identified in the university strategic plan. The initiation of a comprehensive athletic facilities project is the most visible of the strategies put in place to further develop the student-athlete experience and will certainly positively impact student enrollment with a goal to push us past the 600-person student-athlete benchmark."

9. Complete the following charts to indicate if the university intends to seek authorization to deliver the entire program on campus, at any off campus location (e.g., USD Community College for Sioux Falls, Black Hills State University-Rapid City, Capital City Campus, etc.) or deliver the entire program through distance technology (e.g., as an on-line program)?

Note: The accreditation requirements of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) require Board approval for a university to offer programs off-campus and through distance delivery.

	Yes/No	Intended Start Date
On campus	Yes	Fall 2022

	Yes/No	If Yes, list location(s)	Intended Start Date
Off campus	No		Choose an item. Choose an item.

	Yes/No	If Yes, identify delivery methods <i>Delivery methods are defined in AAC Guideline 5.5.</i>	Intended Start Date
Distance Delivery (online/other distance delivery methods)	No		Choose an item. Choose an item.
Does another BOR institution already have authorization to offer the program online?	No	If yes, identify institutions:	

10. What are the university's plans for obtaining the resources needed to implement the program? Indicate "yes" or "no" in the columns below.

	Development/ Start-up	Long-term Operation
Reallocate existing resources	Yes	Yes
Apply for external resources	No	No

<i>If checking this box, please provide examples of the external funding identified below.</i>		
Ask Board to seek new State resources <i>Note that requesting the Board to seek new State resources may require additional planning and is dependent upon the Board taking action to make the funding request part of their budget priorities. Universities intending to ask the Board for new State resources for a program should contact the Board office prior to submitting the intent to plan.</i>	No	No
Ask Board to approve a new or increased student fee	No	No

11. Curriculum Example: Provide (as Appendix A) the curriculum of a similar program at another college or university. The Appendix should include required and elective courses in the program. Catalog pages or web materials are acceptable for inclusion. Identify the college or university and explain why the selected program is a model for the program under development.

U Minnesota Moorehead “Digital Media Management” is more similar than other programs. It leans more toward a true business major, but includes digital content creation and social media design, but it is lighter on interpersonal communication, application programming, and audience analysis coursework than we propose.

<https://navigator.mnstate.edu/Catalog/ViewCatalog.aspx?pageid=viewcatalog&catalogid=36&chapterid=540&topicgroupid=5025&loaduserredits=True>