Operation of the Digital Media Center

Statement of Purpose:
The Digital Media Center (DMC) was created to support the growing demand for the integration of visual literacies across Western’s curriculum. Identified as a priority for capital funding in 2013, and with construction complete in late 2015, the studio is now open and serving students and faculty consistent with its charter to be a central resource for new media instruction and production. While the DMC has begun to serve its mission, the facility has yet to be granted a sustainable, ongoing budget for operations, maintenance and equipment replacement.

Given the importance of the DMC to the advancement of Western’s curriculum, ATUS re-assigned one (1) professional, managerial staff position to provide primary support. Through a search conducted in the Summer of 2016 we hired Deran Browne, an experienced instructor of new media production. Additionally, ATUS has re-allocated $8,000 of one-time funds to support operations while Academic Affairs has made an additional one-time contribution of $7,000 for student labor. Additional one-time contributions of $21,500 were made by University Relations and Community Development to finalize the needed equipment and furniture in order to open the Center.

To be successful, the DMC will need an ongoing budget, not just for operations, but for a sustainable equipment replacement schedule.

Anticipated Outcome(s):
The DMC addresses the growing demand for media technologies and media production spaces within Western’s curriculum. Furthermore, the DMC exists as a result of mission-specific initiatives from the colleges. In particular, strategic plans generated by CFPA and Woodring specify a desire to strengthen the GUR core with visual literacy competencies, which includes an ability “to effectively find, interpret, evaluate, use, and create images and visual media” within cultural, ethical, and technical contexts (ACRL, 2011). In addition, Fairhaven’s strategic plan calls for strengthening its curriculum in video production and digital media, including a proposed minor open to all WWU students. And, CHSS is developing courses in the digital humanities. The development of courses with an emphasis in visual literacy addresses the prior lack of preparation students faced in working with visual media, and the creation of the DMC provides an opportunity for students to engage with faculty and a visual media specialist in critically and effectively designing and creating digital, visual media for scholarly work.

The DMC is capable of supporting these programs with its production studio and post-production lab featuring modern digital media equipment and specialized support staff. The manager of the facility has begun consulting with faculty and departments, assisting them with appropriately integrating visual and media literacies into the curriculum as well as providing ongoing development and support for instructional projects. Student internships and student...
employees are providing student-to-student training, as well as support and assistance to faculty and students during productions.

**Metrics:**
The operational goal for the DMC will be to maximize instructional use of the facility through curricular integration of media literacies, technology training and support. Following an orientation program, faculty and students will have 24x7 access to the studio. Metrics on use of the facility will serve as the primary outcome with clients served, instructional interactions and curricular intersections being additional performance measures.

**How does this project support the University Mission and Strategic Objectives?**
The DMC supports the university’s mission by offering a student-centered space where learners can develop their potential. As noted above, various college strategic plans call for greater inclusion of visual literacies and digital media in the general curriculum. Additionally, students are increasingly using media in community and service-learning projects as well as independent studies. A highly-accessible space with innovative technology and central support will provide an institutionally-efficient service for all students, faculty and colleges.

**What are the consequences of not funding this package?**
The facility requires operational funds and an equipment replacement cycle without which it will become outdated and obsolete. Possessing a modern facility without the necessary support undermines our institutional values of stewardship, innovation and cost effectiveness. A lack of support will negatively impact courses that intend to integrate more visual literacies and digital media into their coursework, faculty with academic and research interests in digital media, as well as students with interests in developing relevant skills and contributing to the community through media-related service-learning.

**What alternatives were explored and why was this alternative chosen?**
One alternative to providing operational staff support is to open the DMC primarily for self-service. This would limit the operation of the facility to faculty familiar with studio production facilities in general and the configuration of this studio in particular. In other words, the facility would be limited to only a few Western faculty and offer very limited direct-access to students. A second alternative is to offer support on a fee basis where use would be charged on an hourly basis. Support of this nature would likely be inconsistent, inefficient, and under-utilized.

Neither of these options would maximize use of the facility, provide high-availability access to students, nor advance the thoughtful integration of relevant, digital literacies broadly across the curriculum.

While this proposal is for the full cost to run and maintain the Center, we do not anticipate receiving these funds from one single source. Instead, multiple sources such as the Student Technology Fee as well as course fees will be sought. Receiving central matching funds from this proposal will demonstrate an institutional commitment toward the Center.

Until multiple sources of funding are committed in the coming year, bridging funds would allow the Center to maintain operations.
Which units (departments, colleges, etc.) will be involved?
While the facility will be open to any unit on campus, the following colleges and departments have already participated in the design of the DMC and are top candidates for utilization: CBE, CFPA, CHSS, Fairhaven, Woodring, Western Libraries, University Relations and Community Development, Design, English, Theater and Dance.

Equipment: (For major (>$25k) purchases, please provide the following information.)

Purpose:
The 2013 capital project provided $345,088 of equipment. Additional equipment and furniture contributed from various sources brings the total equipment inventory in the DMC to $399,670. This proposal is to maintain and establish a replacement cycle for this equipment. See the DMC Equipment Replacement Schedule (http://www.wwu.edu/q/dmc-eqp) for more detail.

Human Resources:
Given the importance of the facility, ATUS has already re-assigned a professional staff position to lead the DMC. To round out the resources, the Center requires student staffing.

Operating & Maintenance Costs:
This proposal seeks $30,000 annually for operational and maintenance costs to include student labor, equipment and set repair as well as supplies.

Anticipated Useful Life:
Anticipated useful life of the equipment will vary from three (3) to twenty (20) years.

Replacement Cost if any:
We anticipate that an annual replacement budget of $68,500 would be required to replace equipment provided by capital.

Space Requirements:

How much new space will be required?
The newly established space for the DMC will allow us to support most functions. A separate minor-capital request has been submitted in order to increase set storage space which will become increasingly important for growth.

Is appropriate space available on campus? Yes
Summary of Request:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Labor (4 positions)</td>
<td>$14,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Work Study &amp; Internships (10 positions)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Software Licensing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supplies (Hard Drives, Cables, SD Cards)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equipment Repair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Set Construction &amp; Maintenance</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equipment Replacement</td>
<td>$68,500</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$98,500</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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Reference


*Deran Browne Presenting in the DMC*