

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

BHE BHE 21-28

BOARD DATE: October 20, 2020

**APPROVAL OF LETTER OF INTENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS
LOWELL TO AWARD THE BACHELOR OF ARTS IN DIGITAL MEDIA AND
AUTHORIZATION FOR FAST TRACK REVIEW**

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education (BHE) has evaluated the Letter of Intent of the **University of Massachusetts Lowell** to award **the Bachelor of Arts in Digital Media** and has determined that the proposal aligns with BHE criteria. Accordingly, the BHE authorizes the Commissioner to review the program and to make a final determination on degree granting authority pursuant to the Fast Track review protocol.

VOTED: Motion adopted by BHE 10/20/2020.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 9(b); AAC 18-40

Contact: Winifred M. Hagan, Ed.D., Senior Associate Commissioner for Strategic Planning and Public Program Approval

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
October 2020
University of Massachusetts Lowell
Letter of Intent
Bachelor of Arts in Digital Media

DEGREE TITLE ABSTRACT ON INTENT AND MISSION OF PROGRAM

The University of Massachusetts Lowell (UML) intends that the proposed Bachelor of Arts in Digital Media (BA/DM) will address ongoing changes in labor demand within the media industry. This is in keeping with one of UML's key strategic goals: "Expand the university's leadership role in establishing innovative programs that support the creation of new industries and jobs in the region." It is expected that by building on existing opportunities with UML's Career Services and Cooperative Education Center, the Athletics Department, and Lowell Telecommunication Corporation (LTC¹), UML students will be able to acquire the skills needed in a competitive job market. It is intended that LTC will provide students with access to a high definition three-camera television studio for class projects and that students will benefit from internships and practicum opportunities throughout the university. As well, UML partnerships with The Coalition for a Better Acre, Western Avenue Studios, Generation Citizen, the UML Campus Recreation Center, the Tsongas Industrial History Center, the Tsongas Arena and its Audio/Video Department, and LTC are expected to integrate the proposed program into the greater Lowell community. UML plans that the program will partner with the Athletics department, such that students will broadcast Division 1 athletic events as part of a 10-year contract agreement with ESPN to air sporting events. These learning experiences are intended to be at the center of student learning for careers as media professionals.

After review by the chief academic officer at UML, the proposed program has obtained all necessary governance approvals and was approved by the University of Massachusetts' Board of Trustees on December 19, 2020. The LOI was circulated on August 10, 2020. No comments were received.

A. ALIGNMENT WITH MASSACHUSETTS GOALS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Address Gaps in Opportunity and Achievement in Alignment with Campus-Wide Goals

It is anticipated that the BA/DM will make aggressive efforts to recruit student populations that have been traditionally underserved at UML by partnering with Admissions on outreach to high schools hosting interested students for a visit to UML's Digital Media TV Studio. It is also planned that, once it is safe to do so, faculty will visit Lowell area schools to promote the program. UML's existing partnership with LTC is expected to be central to the program and faculty visiting Lowell High School (LHS) will be able to teach digital media skills to high school

¹ *The mission of LTC is to strengthen the City of Lowell as a community media and education center that empowers, connects, and informs all residents, businesses, and organizations in the City. We are the voice of Lowell around the world. Retrieved 9/28/20 <https://www.ltc.org/>*

students as a recruitment effort. This will expand the currently existing model between UML's Animation and Interactive Media program and LHS.

Examples of UML's recruiting efforts and strategies for enrolling students of color include targeted recruitment in cities and towns with those demographics. These include regular visits to Lowell High School, participation in college fairs; regular visits to Lawrence High School with office hours there; a strong recruiting presence throughout Boston public schools and Brockton High School; participation in Haverhill college fairs, college application day; actively engaged recruitment with Massachusetts community colleges including articulation agreements, frequent campus visits to Middlesex, Northern Essex, and Bunker Hill Community Colleges; and a Reserved Placement Program (RPP) that provides special enrollment at UML that guarantees entry in the first-year spring semester, contingent on one semester of successful full-time study at a partner community college. Additional examples of outreach to traditionally underserved students include partnerships with TRIO/Upward Bound Programs hosting campus visits, attending events and fairs; partnership with the District of Columbia -College Access Program (DC-CAP²); strong internal collaboration between UML Enrollment Services and Student Affairs, and Office of Undergraduate Admissions and Office of Multicultural Affairs; strengthening ties with local Boys and Girls Clubs, particularly in Lowell and Lawrence. UML is officially designated an "A Better Chance"³ (ABC) School. UML reports that in the spring of 2018, there were 52 active students enrolled in a digital media minor or enrolled in a Bachelor of Liberal Arts program with a digital media concentration. Of the 52 students, 33% are students of color and 42% are female. UML expects that the proposed program will aggressively seek out internships, co-ops, and other placements, ensuring opportunities for students.

Program or Department Supports to Ensure Student Retention and Completion

UML reports that all students are assigned a faculty advisor who serves as a mentor in the interest of retention and completion. Free peer tutoring is available at the department level in addition to the Centers for Learning. At the department, college and university level, the university monitors progress of students and, if needed, works with students to keep them on track. These efforts are overseen by the vice-provost for student success. UML plans one-on-one faculty advisors for the BA/DM students as well as professional advisors, in addition to faculty advisors for all first-year students; Starfish⁴ will be deployed for first-year students and River Hawk Scholars Academy is available for first-generation college students.

² DC-CAP provides a multitude of workshops and planning sessions to assist parents and families with the guidance needed to assist family members in the educational process. Financial aid workshops, parent informational sessions and family planning sessions are just some of the ways that families receive support. Retrieved 9/25/20 <https://dccap.org/>

³ ABC is a national educational access non-profit organization that assists high-achieving students of color gain access to preparatory schools and colleges. Retrieved 9/28/20 <https://www.abetterchance.org/>

⁴ Starfish is an early support system that provides students with feedback about academic performance in the form of flags, kudos, and referral alerts sent any time throughout the semester. Starfish helps colleges and universities increase retention and graduation rates. Retrieved 9/29/20 <https://www.hobsons.com/solution/starfish/>

Alliances and Partnerships with PK-12, Other IHE's, Community Employers

The proposed BA/DM program expects to develop articulation agreements with the Middlesex Community College Associate in Arts, Liberal Arts and Sciences: Communications Concentration program and the Northern Essex Community College Associate in Communication Arts: Liberal Arts: Journalism/ Communication program. UML expects to establish articulation agreements once the program has been fully approved.

Relationship to MassHire Regional Blueprints

UML found the MA Regional Blueprint to indicate that audio video equipment technician jobs show a demand at 478 and supply at 222, creating a gap of 257. Similarly, public relations specialists show a demand at 367 and supply at 229, creating a gap of 138. UML expects graduates of the proposed program will fill this demand. UML also reports that according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), it is expected that multimedia, digital filming, 3 dimensional videos, and special effects will see an increase in demand that will drive job growth, with the projected average growth of employment for film and video editors from 2016 to 2026 at 17 percent. UML also reported BLS as projecting that employment for television, video, motion picture camera operators and editors to grow by 13 percent between 2016 and 2026. UML anticipates an increased use of social media as a way for businesses to communicate with the public and that social media specialists, including digital engagement specialists, social media strategists, and online community managers will find ample opportunities for work. The proposed BA/DM program is positioned to prepare graduates with the production and technical skills in video, film and social media needed for this market. As well, the COVID-19 pandemic appears to amplify this need.

Duplication

UML reports that the proposed BA/DM Digital Media major is differentiated by an emphasis on media and technology. Similar programs at Emerson College, the University of Massachusetts Boston, the University of Massachusetts Amherst, the University of New Hampshire, and the University of Rhode Island do not share this emphasis, and instead are more focused on communications, media practice and journalism.

Innovative Approaches to Teaching and Learning

UML reports that the proposed program is preparing students for state-of-the-art digital media careers and that graduates will be able to produce media content using the latest technologies. Direct learning-by-doing experiences in the fields of digital film, digital video, and online media are expected to develop qualified graduates for a plethora of careers⁵.

⁵ e.g. digital filmmakers, online multimedia producers, social media editors, social media producers, social media managers, data visualization journalists, digital content editors, online news editors, communication specialists, digital

B. ALIGNMENT WITH CAMPUS STRATEGIC PLAN AND MISSION

Priority Rationale and Support of Strategic Plan and Overall Mission of Institution

UML expects that the proposed program will directly serve the mission and strategic plan of the institution with its emphasis on recruitment, retention, entrepreneurship, and community partnerships. As previously mentioned, a key strategic goal for UML is to expand the university's leadership role in establishing innovative programs that support the creation of new industries and jobs in the region. UML's partnership with The Washington Center⁶ provides students with professional experience through an internship program that includes both academic and career readiness. As well, the partnership with LTC cited earlier in this motion is planned to provide students with hands-on experience working on site at a local TV station.

Overall Goals, Learning Objectives, Outcomes Evaluation (Form B Appendices)

UML intends to market the program to incoming students through multiple fronts including reaching out to high schools with tech programs, hosting campus events and engaging in career fairs. UML also plans to continue internal collaborations with current major programs to recruit minors. UML also anticipates the importance of further developing and tracking existing partnerships and conducting outreach to additional community and industry partners with the Office of Career Services for service learning, internships, and employment opportunities for students. Tracking alumni is planned by UML to provide data on student successes and to strengthen the network between UML, the community, and the industry.

C. ALIGNMENT WITH OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL OBJECTIVES OF INSTITUTION

Enrollment Projections (Form C Appendices)

UML reports that the proposed program will have a negligible effect on enrollment in other programs.

Resources and Financial Statement of Estimated Net Impact on Institution (Form D Appendices)

The program's administrative structure is planned to include a program director and affiliated faculty and these positions will constitute the faculty group. The UML College of Fine Arts,

content specialists, digital reporters/photographers/videographers, lighting directors, cinematographers, directors, web/media content developers, and news/sports anchors

⁶ *The Washington Center provides a bridge between higher education and professional careers—leveraging all that Washington, D.C. has to offer to provide dynamic, experiential learning opportunities to empower and motivate young people, including immersive internships and academic seminars. Retrieved 9/29/20 <https://twc.edu/about>*

Humanities and Social Sciences, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies will serve ex officio on the faculty group, providing programmatic input and curricular, recruitment, and marketing coordination with other undergraduate programs within the College. The Digital Media program director's duties are planned to include managing the recruitment and admissions process, coordinating delivery of the foundation courses (including course scheduling and coordination of adjunct faculty), scheduling classes, and teaching within the foundation courses. The program plans to hire a full-time non-tenure-track faculty member specializing in screenwriting. This hire is expected to be housed in the English department and will provide teaching that will support Digital Media as well as English, including the English department's concentrations in Creative Writing and Theatre Arts.

Additionally, UML reports that tuition and fees figures have not been adjusted for the current pandemic, and that enrollment in program is not expected to be significantly impacted by it. UML further expects a growing job market will continue to ensue in this area and that because the program was designed for digital technology, it may benefit from an increasingly virtual business and arts world, even post-pandemic.

STAFF REVIEW AND VALIDATION

Staff thoroughly reviewed the **LOI** proposing full degree granting authority for the **Bachelor of Arts in Digital Media** submitted by the **University of Massachusetts Lowell**. Staff validate that the **LOI** includes all data required by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education. Staff recommendation is for BHE authorization for the Commissioner to review the program pursuant to the Fast Track review protocol.

Form A: Curriculum

BA Digital Media

Major Required (Core) Courses (Total courses required = 5)		
<i>Course Number</i>	<i>Course Title</i>	<i>Credit Hours</i>
DGMD.1000	Intro to Digital Media	3
DGMD.2310	Media Law and Ethics	3
DGMD.2400	Introduction to Digital Editing	3
DGMD.2501	Video Production for Digital Media	3
DGMD.3400	Lighting Principles	3
	Subtotal # Core Credits Required	15
Concentration Course Choices (Total courses required = 7) (attach list as needed)		
DGMD.1020	Introduction to Telecommunications	3
DGMD.2200	Screenwriting	3
DGMD.2500	Broadcast Engineering	3
DGMD.3000	Multimedia Storytelling	3
DGMD.3100	Digital Editing	3
DGMD.3300	Digital Cinematography	3
DGMD.3450	Blogging	3
DGMD.3501	Introduction to Digital Filmmaking	3
DGMD.3502	Production Management for Film	3
DGMD.3541	Vlogging	3
DGMD.3701	Visual Motion Effects	3
DGMD.3703	Electronic News Gathering (ENG)	3
DGMD.4000	Directed Study in Digital Media	1-6
DGMD.4100	TV Studio Production	3

DGMD.4103	TV Sport Broadcasting	3
DGMD.4200	Podcasting	3
DGMD.4300	Directing for Film	3
DGMD.4750	Internship in Digital Media	3
ARTS.2200	Web Design I	3
ARTS.2741	Storyboarding	3
ARTS.2770	Compositing & Motion	3
ARTS.2620	Dig. Imag. & Photo: Photoshop	3
ARTS.2420	Language of Video	3
ARTS.2780	Interactive Media	3
AEST.3800	Understanding Movies: Cinema as Social Commentary	3
CRIM.2230	Crime and the Media	3
ENGL.2220	Oral Communication	3
ENGL.2260	Technical and Scientific Communication	3
ENGL.3000	Intro to Journalism	3
ENGL.3010	Newswriting	3
ENGL.3050	Reviewing the Arts	3
ENGL.3690	Reading and Writing New Media	3
ENGL.3870	Intro to Editing and Publishing	3
HIST.3480	Making an Historical Documentary	3
POLI.2100	Media & Politics	3
POLI.2220	Politics of the Internet	3
POLI.3160	Politics and Film	3
POLI.4220	Political Communications & Media Studies	3
	Subtotal # Concentration Credits Required	21

Free Elective Courses (total courses required = 10)		
<i>Course Number</i>	Course Title	Credit Hours
	Free electives	30

<i>Distribution of General Education Requirements</i>		# of Credits
Attach List of General Education Offerings (Course Numbers, Titles, and Credits)		
ENGL 1010 and 1020 and FAHS 1090 College Writing 1 and 2- and First-Year Experience Seminar		7
MATH and Science		6
Social Sciences		9
Arts & Humanities		9
Science with Lab		8
Language 1 & 2 & Culture		6
Language 3 & 4 & Culture or World Ready		6
World Ready Elective or Free Elective		3
<i>Sub Total General Education Credits</i>		54
<i>Curriculum Summary</i>		
Total number of courses required for the degree		42
Total credit hours required for degree		120
<i>Prerequisite or Other Additional Requirements:</i> Students must take 36 credits within the major, with at least 15 credits at the 3000 or 4000 level. Students may take all courses within the designation DGMD if they choose to. Students cannot take more than two courses from a single department outside of Digital Media to fulfill the major credit hours' requirements.		

General Education Offerings

Course number	Title	Credits
ENGL.1010	College Writing 1	3
ENGL.1020	College Writing 2	3
FAHS.1090	First Year Experience Seminar	1
	Arts & Humanities Elective	3
	Arts & Humanities Elective	3
	Arts & Humanities Elective	3
	Social Sciences Elective	3
	Social Sciences Elective	3
	Social Sciences Elective	3
	Math Elective	3
	Science with Lab Elective	4
	Science with Lab Elective	4
	STEM Elective	3
	Language 1 & Culture	3
	Language 2 & Culture	3
	Language 3 & Culture or World Ready Elective	3
	Language 3 & Culture or World Ready Elective	3
	World Ready Elective or Free Elective	3

Form B: LOI Goals and Objectives

Goal	Measurable Objective	Strategy for Achievement	Timetable
Work-Ready Students	95% employment within one year of graduation	Work with Career Services provide students with internships in industry. Track alumni, working with Office of Alumni Affairs	Within five years of program approval (to assess first cohort)
Work-Ready Students	100% of majors engaged in service learning, internship, or other form of experiential learning during their undergraduate experience	Build on existing partnerships and outreach to additional community and industry partners	Year two
Outstanding faculty	Hire full-time and part-time faculty to deliver needed courses and facilitate internships and placements	Work with departments to ensure interdisciplinary collaborations, hire a FT lecturer with a relevant sub-specialty	Years 1-3
Become a signature program that draws outstanding students	100 majors and 35 minors or BLA concentrators	Aggressively market program to incoming students, reach out to high schools with tech programs, such as Lowell High. Collaborate with current major programs to recruit minors	Years 1-3

Form C: LOI Program Enrollment

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
New Full-Time	15	15	30	40	25
Continuing Full-Time		15	30	60	75
New Part-Time					
Continuing Part-Time					
Totals	15	30	60	100	100

Form D: LOI Program Budget

One Time/ Start Up Costs		Annual Enrollment				
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
	Cost Categories					
	Full Time Faculty <i>(Salary & Fringe)</i>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Part Time/Adjunct Faculty <i>(Salary & Fringe)</i>	\$14,700	\$14,700	\$14,700	\$14,700	\$14,700
	Staff	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	General Administrative Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Instructional Materials, Library Acquisitions	\$6,500	\$6,500	\$11,500	\$12,000	\$13,000
	Facilities/Space/Equip ment	\$40,000	\$50,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000
	Field & Clinical Resources	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Marketing	\$500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$0	\$0
	Other (Specify) Stipends/Scholarships	\$2,200	\$2,200	\$2,200	\$2,200	\$2,200

One Time/Start-Up Support	Revenue Sources	Annual Income				
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
	Grants	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Tuition	\$279,948	\$571,094	\$1,165,032	\$1,980,554	\$2,020,165
	Fees	\$8550	\$17,442	\$35,582	\$60,489	\$61,699
	Departmental	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Reallocated Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Other (specify)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	TOTALS	\$288,498	\$588,536	\$1,200,641	\$2,041,043	\$2,081,864