

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

BHE BHE 23-25

BOARD DATE: February 14, 2023

**APPROVAL OF LETTER OF INTENT OF WESTFIELD STATE UNIVERSITY TO
AWARD THE BACHELOR OF FINE ARTS IN GRAPHIC DESIGN AND
AUTHORIZATION FOR FAST TRACK REVIEW**

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education (BHE) has evaluated the Letter of Intent of **Westfield State University** to award **the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design** 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 approved and advanced to the full BHE by the Executive Committee on 2/6/2023; and adopted by the BHE on 2/14/2023.

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
February 2023
Westfield State University
Letter of Intent
Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design**

DEGREE TITLE ABSTRACT ON INTENT AND MISSION OF PROGRAM

Westfield State University (WSU) intends that the proposed degree for a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design (BFA/GD), will increase enrollment in the Art Department. Currently WSU offers a BA in Art and finds that students who are serious about pursuing art during their junior and senior years of high school are told by their teachers to look at and pursue college and university programs that offer BFA programs instead, because they will provide a professional degree program that will help them become employment-ready, discover their artistic voice, and the communicative power of visual art. WSU underscored that the existing BA in Art with a concentration in Graphic Design is the department’s largest concentration and bodes well for increasing enrollment through a BFA program. Further, when WSU followed-up with admitted students who selected not to attend WSU, data showed that the absence of a BFA/GD program led students to choose other options (see rubric below).

First Year Students				Transfer Students		
Term	Applications	Admits	Enrolled	Applications	Admits	Enrolled
Fall 2022	119	31	12	17	8	5
Fall 2021	75	37	20	16	8	4
Fall 2020	47	32	10	13	8	7
Spring 2022	1	0	0	10	4	3
Spring 2021	3	1	0	4	2	1

The proposed Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design was approved by the Westfield State University Board of Trustees on October 12, 2022. The LOI was circulated on October 19, 2022. No comments were received.

A. ALIGNMENT WITH MASSACHUSETTS GOALS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

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

WSU reports that the proposed program aligns with the University's 2019-2024 Strategic Plans through reforming legacy programs, such as the BA in Art by adjusting and making changes that gear programs toward innovation and career pathways. It is planned that the proposed BFA program will include high impact pedagogies in creative work and experiential learning, and in course work and internships.

The proposed BFA program has been planned to align with WSU enrollment goals. It is anticipated the proposed BFA will also expand the institutions' academic profile with a professional degree. In addition, WSU's working relationships with the Springfield Public School District and community colleges in the region are expected to increase the number of students of color into the proposed programs.

Program or Department Supports to Ensure Student Retention and Completion

It is reported by WSU that the Art Department currently has five full-time faculty members and ten to twelve part-time faculty, including an MFA in Graphic Design who supervises the current graphic design concentration. WSU expects that retention will be significant particularly for traditionally underserved students targeted by the recruitment strategies for the proposed program. Staff and administrators have attended the Gardner Institute's Equity in Retention Academy¹ and are developing a plan that will improve the support and guidance academic departments can provide in contributing to student retention.

WSU plans that each student will have an advisor within the department, as well as a sophomore fall semester portfolio review by the department's faculty. WSU holds that its 15-18 student size studio class provides significant individual attention and feedback

¹ The John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education is a non-profit organization dedicated to partnering with colleges, universities, philanthropic organizations, educators, and other entities to increase institutional responsibility for improving outcomes associated with teaching, learning, retention, and completion. Through its efforts, the Institute will strive to advance higher education's larger goal of achieving equity and social justice. Retrieved 1/23/23 <https://www.jngi.org/mission>

to students and also ensures that all requirements are completed for graduation. The department works closely with the University's Career Center to help prepare its students for internships, careers, and further education.

Campus strategies and programs that WSU expects will support recruitment, retention and completion are enumerated below:

MassTransfer: Students can transfer into the proposed program after one or two years at a community college and graduate in a timely manner with 120 credits.

Westfield Promise: Students who participate in the Westfield Promise program are able to complete courses that will reduce their time to complete the BFA in Graphic Design by one full academic year. More details, including sample course plans, are available upon request.

Westfield State Dual Enrollment Program: The department offers classes to local high school students through the University's Dual Enrollment program. Two to three classes per semester are opened to these students. Students receive college credit for these classes which they can use toward a completion of a degree at Westfield

SOAR: Arts Advocacy Council for the Students of Color. SOAR is a faculty and student initiative focused on advocacy in the creative arts for students of color. We work towards improving the educational environment and outcomes for students studying in disciplines of Music, Theatre, and Art.

Career Center: Work study, internships, cooperative education, resume and interview preparation, etc. Services students, alumni, employers, and faculty.

Center for Student Success and Engagement: Provides students with the tools to explore academic opportunities and plan strategies for continued growth.

Counseling Center: The Counseling Center offers an array of support services that include counseling, crisis intervention, outreach programming, etc. The counseling center is accredited by the International Accreditation of Counseling Services.

Tutoring and Learning Center: The mission of the Tutoring and Learning Center is to provide students with an opportunity to enhance their learning by providing one on one assistance in their courses. This inclusive program supports peer engagement in developing successful strategies for course completion.

Reading and Writing Center: The Westfield State University Reading and Writing Center supports students, faculty, and staff to assist writers on any type of project—academic, professional, or creative—in any discipline or field, at any stage of the writing process. Intellectual inquiry, rhetorical flexibility, and reflective practice are valued to foster a safe and diverse community of writers that extends beyond the campus walls.

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

WSU plans that the proposed BFA/GD will support a culturally, racially, and economically diverse group of students that more accurately reflect the clients served by graphic designers through developing partnerships with local businesses that will offer internships to students. The proposed BFA is designed to align with MassTransfer in the Art discipline, and expected to extend the pathway to the proposed BFA, particularly for students at Berkshire, Greenfield, Holyoke, Mount Wachusett, and Springfield Technical Community Colleges. Additionally, WSU's Art Department is reported to partner with the region's community colleges and high schools through *Student Portfolio Days* on campus as well as through bi-annual meetings with regional community college art departments. Furthermore, WSU participates with local high school artists, inviting exhibitions of student work at the Arno Maris Gallery and the Dower Center on campus. WSU faculty and staff in the Visual Art Education licensure program and the Art Department's professional development programs are engaged with faculty from regional public-school systems. The Westfield Promise and High School Scholars Programs have helped to develop significant alliances with regional public-school districts including the Dual Enrollment program, local high schools exhibiting student work at the Arno Maris Gallery and the Dower Center at the University, buttressing existing alliances with regional public-school districts, including Westfield, West Springfield, Springfield, Chicopee, Holyoke, Southwick-Tolland, Gateway Regional, Easthampton, and Hampshire Regional. The proposed BFA/GD program is expected to benefit from these alliances, shared experiences, and partnerships. WSU Career Center and the Art Department successfully place students in regional internships, who have gone on to gain employment in the region following

completion of an art program. These successes and learning experiences are expected to be extended and further developed for students through the proposed BFA/GD. An advisory board for the BFA/GD has been created to include WSU faculty from the Art department, faculty in Humanities from Holyoke Community College, a Graphic Designer at Brigade Branding and alumni of WSU, and the Big Y Foods Art Director, also an alumnus of the WSU Art program. It is expected that the advisory board will meet annually to examine student work and the program's curriculum to ensure its relevance to industry standard practices.

Relationship to MassHire Regional Blueprints

Not finding any specific references in MassHire, WSU reports that the industries employing the largest numbers of Graphic Designers are specialized design services; Advertising, public relations and related services; Printing, newspaper publishers and related support activities; Architectural, engineering & related services; Universities, and colleges; Management, health care systems, hospital, scientific and technical consulting services; Computer Systems Design; Internet publishing, broadcasting and web search portals; Aerospace products and parts manufacturing, bus service and urban transit; Periodical, book, & directory publishers; And miscellaneous manufacturing and clothing stores. WSU expects that the proposed BFA/GD will prepare students for positions such as Graphic Designer, UX / UI Designers (web and app designer), Brand Designer, Creative Director, Art Director, Digital Media Designer, and Animator, which are thought to support Massachusetts industries and needs in the state's creative economies². WSU maintains that the Pioneer Valley MassHire Regional Blueprint does list as a Priority Occupations Industry Graphic Designers, as part of the category of Professional Services, Back Office Administrative Support, Logistical Support Occupations, and IT support. It also maintains that MassHire indicates graphic designers are needed to support the Health and Social Service Care, Educational Services, and Advanced Manufacturing Occupational needs that this document does as Priority Industries and

² <https://www.indeed.com/jobs?q=Graphic+Designer&l=Massachusetts&redirected=1&vik=696f692b67a2a5ca> retrieved 10/6/2022.

Occupations for 2020. WSU also found that in the Berkshire Region MassHire Regional Blueprint workforce development plans under Critical Non-Priority Industries, the Creative Economy is listed. Graphic and web designers are part of this creative economy and are listed in the Pioneer Valley MassHire Regional Blueprint workforce development plans.³

Duplication

Westfield finds that there are no public or private institutions west of Lowell, MA that offer a BFA in Graphic Design. It was also found that the Massachusetts College of Art and Design and the University of Massachusetts Lowell do offer a BFA in Graphic Design. As previously noted, Mass Transfer Pathways in Art provide that student at Berkshire, Greenfield, Holyoke, Mount Wachusett, Quinsigamond, and Springfield Technical Community Colleges, will be eligible to transfer into the proposed BFA in Graphic Design program. MCLA offers a BA in Art with concentrations in Studio or Design, which is a similar program but not a BFA. WSU expects that the proposed program will serve a population in their particular region of the state.

Innovative Approaches to Teaching and Learning

Internally, WSU plans multiple student supports including embedded tutoring, peer mentors, experiential learning and focused advising in the first semester.

B. ALIGNMENT WITH CAMPUS STRATEGIC PLAN AND MISSION

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

The proposed BFA/GD is planned as a reform of the legacy BA in Art program. It is proposed to better serve current needs around innovation and career pathways.

The proposed program has been planned to align with WSU enrollment goals and is expected to offer an affordable professional degree for graduates, who will be prepared for the workforce as active citizens and contributing members of communities.

³ <https://www.mass.gov/doc/pioneer-valley-blueprint-update>. Retrieved 1/23/23

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

WSU reports that the professional emphasis on the proposed program is a good match for the interest of many students and families. The proposed program goals and objectives are based on the NASAD standards for professional undergraduate degree programs in Graphic Design. With these requirements as a starting point, the proposed BFA/GD program is designed to fit the mission and values of WSU, and to distinguish the program as producing formal design thinkers and designers that can work all the tools associated with the trade, and are also market-ready, graphic design professionals. It is anticipated that students will learn from a traditional studio Fine Arts curriculum with a research based graphic design pedagogy focused on branding. WSU expects that a commercial approach of brand implementation will provide students and graduates with an advantage for internships and employment.

Program goals are designed to emphasize the development of universal skill sets for many career paths in the arts. Westfield also planned the program goals and objectives to align well with AAC&U's Curriculum-to-Career Innovation Institute.

C. ALIGNMENT WITH OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL OBJECTIVES OF INSTITUTION

Enrollment Projections (Form C Appendices)

WSU expects a positive impact of increased enrollment drawing on students in western Massachusetts, New England, and eastern New York State. No negative impact on current programs at Westfield is anticipated.

In the proposed LOI WSU details its calculations of the number of students in all of the MassTransfer Arts programs in regional community colleges and expects that the proposed BFA/GD to provide an attractive option to the students of these programs to obtain a baccalaureate degree. WSU also emphasized its commitment to recruiting and enrolling a diverse population of students, including those from MA community colleges. WSU has improved and extended outreach to public school districts serving racially

diverse students using more personalized recruiting strategies in these areas. The Admission Office staff supports and ensures students are applying and completing their applications and attended on-the-spot accepted student events in the local area, meeting with students who have applied and sharing the news of their acceptance to Westfield State at the event. WSU provides increased opportunities for racially underserved students to visit the campus and learn about SOAR. A close partnership with Springfield Public Schools through the Reach to Teach Program, enrolls Springfield students in Education programs at WSU. The Westfield Promise Dual Enrollment Program encourages students to pursue a degree education at WSU. Reach to Teach and Westfield Promise commits scholarship dollars to help students pay for their education. As well, engagement with students and families through the enrollment and financial aid processes is significant at WSU. WSU holds that while most students can apply and be accepted, many often struggle with the next steps in the process. Thus, WSU enrollment strategies are designed to help families understand the full cost of attending and support students and families throughout the enrollment process through a variety of mediums, with staff outreach to students and personalized relationship-building at the core.

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

Westfield plans that the classes will be taught in the studio rooms of The Catherine Dower Center for Performing and Fine Arts as well as through remote and synchronous online teaching modalities, and through on and off campus internship programs. Within the Catherine Dower Center for Performing and Fine Arts, the Art Department has the facilities (21,028 square feet) to offer and meet the needs of a BFA degree. The facility has three Mac Labs, 3D printers and a large format color printer in addition to printmaking, painting, drawing, sculpture, and ceramics studios to support the program's Foundation Program.

No additional faculty, staff, space, or financial resources are expected to be needed for this program. WSU expects to see a net impact of around 10 to 15 new students per year, \$115,00-\$230,00 net increase in revenue, including 1st year students and transfer students. Most courses are already offered within the Art Department. The curriculum has been reconfigured to offer a clear and additional pathway to the BFA.

STAFF REVIEW AND VALIDATION

Staff thoroughly reviewed the **LOI** proposing full degree granting authority for the **Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design** submitted by **Westfield State University**. 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 A1: LOI Curriculum Outline: BFA Graphic Design

<i>Required (Core) Courses in the Major (Total # courses required = 25)</i>		
<i>Course Number</i>	<i>Course Title</i>	<i>Credit Hours</i>
ART 0101	First-Year Seminar	1
ART 0103	Drawing 1	3
ART 0104	Design Fundamentals	3
ART 0105	Three-Dimensional Design	3
ART 0106	Art Survey: Prehistoric to Middle Ages	3
ART 0107	Art Survey: Renaissance to Present	3
ART 0108	Computer Graphics for Art Applications I	3
ART 0109	Writing for Art and the Artist	3
ART 0201	Printmaking I	3
ART 0204	Pottery I	3
ART 0205	Sculpture I	3
ART 0209	Color Theory and Practice	3
ART 0214	Drawing II	3
ART 0216	Painting I	3
ART 0333	Early 20th Century Art	3
	One 200-300 Level Art History Course	3
ART 0206	Graphic Design 1	3
ART 0212	Computer Graphics II	3
ART 0210	Typography 1	3
ART 0228	Graphic Design II	3
ART0224	User Experience / User Interface Design	3
ART0344	Graphic Design III	3
ART 0380	Graphic Design Capstone	3
	Two 200-300 level Art Studio Classes	6
	<i>Sub Total Required Credits</i>	73
<i>Elective Courses (Total # courses required = 0) (attach list of choices if needed)</i>		
[Course Number]	Three Elective Classes	9
[Course Number]	[Course Title]	[0]
[Course Number]	[Course Title]	[0]

[Course Number]	[Course Title]	[0]
[Course Number]	[Course Title]	[0]
	<i>Sub Total Elective Credits</i>	9
<i>Distribution of General Education Requirements</i> Attach List of General Education Offerings (Course Numbers, Titles, and Credits)		# of Gen Ed Credits
Arts and Humanities, including Literature and Foreign Languages		10
Mathematics and the Natural and Physical Sciences		13
Social Sciences		9
Diversity		6
<i>Sub Total General Education Credits</i>		38
<i>Curriculum Summary</i>		
Total number of courses required for the degree		38
Total credit hours required for degree		120
<i>Prerequisite, Concentration or Other Requirements:</i>		

Form B: LOI Goals and Objectives

Goal	Measurable Objective	Strategy for Achievement	Timetable
Developed capacity for critical, creative, investigative, and conceptual thinking.	Through classroom critiques, class projects, and annual exhibits	Monitor these goals through student projects and adjust the curriculum, pedagogy as needed	1 st year of program
Ability to identify and solve visual and conceptual problems.	Through classroom critiques and class projects	Monitor these goals through student projects and adjust the curriculum, pedagogy as needed	1 st year of program
Ability to present and communicate effectively, creatively, and critically across a range of form and media	Through classroom critiques and class projects	Monitor these goals through student projects and adjust the curriculum, pedagogy, equipment as needed	1 st year of program
Generate a personal focus and contribute an independent voice to the world	Through classroom critiques and class projects	Monitor these goals through student projects and adjust the curriculum, pedagogy as needed	1 st year of program
Be ready to work as professionals in graphic design; illustration and animation	Internship site feedback and remarks, feedback from the Career Center, and through critiquing students work in classes and at annual exhibits	Monitor these goals through student projects and adjust the curriculum, pedagogy, equipment as needed	4 th year of program and upon graduation
Refer to the fullest range of historical and contemporary art and design	Through students meeting set project objectives and outcomes that has	Monitor these goals through student projects and adjust the curriculum, pedagogy as needed	1 st year of program

sources from across cultures and time	these concepts applied to them		
Apply a wide range of research methods and technologies in gathering and analyzing information	Through students meeting set project objectives and outcomes that has these concepts applied to them	Monitor these goals through student projects and adjust the curriculum, pedagogy as needed	1 st year of program
Engage effectively in individual and/or collaborative approaches to work	Remarks from client work in class and from internship sties and employers and the Career Center	Monitor these goals through student projects and adjust the curriculum, pedagogy, equipment as needed	1 st year of program
Interact proactively and constructively with diverse local, national, and global	In internships, classes, employment, and graduate school	Monitor these goals through student projects and adjust the curriculum, pedagogy as needed	3 rd year of program forward and upon graduation

Form C: LOI Program Enrollment

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
New Full-Time	10	10	10	10	10
Continuing Full-Time	15	15	15	15	15
New Part-Time	5	5	5	5	5
Continuing Part-Time	0	5	5	5	5
Totals	25	30	30	30	30

Form D: LOI Program Budget

<i>One Time/ Start Up Costs</i>		Annual Enrollment				
	<i>Cost Categories</i>	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
none	Full Time Faculty (Salary & Fringe)					
none	Part Time/Adjunct Faculty (Salary & Fringe)					
none	Staff					
none	General Administrative Costs					
none	Instructional Materials, Library Acquisitions					
none	Facilities/Space/Equipment					
none	Field & Clinical Resources					
none	Marketing					
	Other (Specify)					
<i>One Time/Start-Up Support</i>		<i>Annual Income</i>				
	<i>Revenue Sources</i>	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
none	Grants					
none	Tuition					
	Fees	\$12,000	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$16,000
none	Departmental					
none	Reallocated Funds					
	Other (specify)					
	TOTALS	\$12,000	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$16,000