EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Associate in Fine Arts in Visual Art

West Kentucky Community and Technical College

A Proposal for Initiation of a New Degree Program

Mission, Influence, Organization

The proposed Associate in Fine Arts (AFA in Visual Art) is consistent with the System and institutional missions. The goals of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) and West Kentucky Community and Technical College (WKCTC) are to provide accessible, innovative, and comprehensive learning opportunities within an environment of excellence and commitment to student success in the global community. One of the primary goals of KCTCS and WKCTC is to facilitate successful transfer from community college to four-year universities through programs which properly prepare and equip students for further education at the college level. The purpose of the Associate in Fine Arts program is to prepare individuals interested in the visual arts to pursue careers in art and/or to transfer into Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) programs at four-year universities or four-year art schools to pursue a baccalaureate degree in the visual arts or art education. This degree will allow WKCTC to compete effectively for students seeking a relevant two-year degree that will be recognized and readily accepted by nationally accredited four-year colleges and art schools. In addition to arts-related coursework, required general education courses will further ensure that students are able to develop their own values, pursue goals, and contribute to the political, moral, social, and cultural enrichment of society.

Program Description

The AFA in Visual Art is designed for the student who plans to transfer to a four-year institution in order to pursue a BFA in the visual arts. It also addresses the needs of the student who is planning to pursue a career in arts-related areas requiring pre-professional credentials. The AFA program is carefully structured to address the needs of visually creative individuals while also addressing the education of the whole person. It includes general education requirements, required visual arts foundation courses in drawing, design, and art history as well as a wide variety of studio art electives. Students will focus on the development of artistic skills and development of a visual vocabulary for personal expression while exploring both traditional and nontraditional art areas. Classes will also encourage analytical and creative problem solving skills and experience in verbal presentation of ideas and critical concepts, resulting in a personal portfolio of artwork and the ability to speak and write about the arts. This program of study meets or exceeds the suggested requirements and guidelines for the two-year degree standards of the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) and includes all the necessary components for NASAD accreditation.
NASAD accreditation, in turn, will add weight to Paducah School of Art and its ability to develop articulation agreements with some of the nation’s best art colleges and four-year university programs.

**Supportive Data**

The AFA in Visual Art is a new program that has been developed by the faculty of the Paducah School of Art at West Kentucky Community and Technical College with the assistance of an advisory committee made up of key faculty, staff, and deans at four-year universities and art schools in the region. The program was developed to facilitate the development of both traditional and non-traditional arts-interested students in response to a direct need for a higher level of arts education and programming created by the artist’s relocation program and other arts initiatives in Paducah and other cities. In only three semesters, course enrollments have reached three hundred. Once we begin advertising the degree, that number is expected to grow. When the degree is formally in place, recruiting will be increased.

The curriculum is built on a core of general education requirements which are designed to develop an understanding of the world in which we live, critical thinking skills, communication skills, and an overall ability to learn and assimilate information. It also includes a fine arts core requirement that provides the necessary training in elements and principles of two- and three-dimensional design and color theory, including observational, analytical, and life drawing skills, techniques, and concepts. It further provides a basic understanding of the history of art from ancient times to the present in terms of chronology, culture, concepts, and developments in media, style, and theory. Students are then required to apply these principles and concepts in elective studio courses that build the skills and abilities necessary for successful manipulation of a variety of arts media. With exposure to a broad range of techniques and conceptual training, as well as exposure to professional practices and the development of a portfolio of work demonstrating their level of accomplishment, students are well prepared to meet the challenges of transfer into four-year programs of the highest quality and to excel at the next level as arts professionals.

**Resources**

The AFA in Visual Art will be the keystone program for attracting students and highly qualified faculty and visiting artists to the Paducah School of Art and to the community. In terms of new resources, including both physical facilities and personnel, no new resources will be needed in order to offer the Associate in Fine Arts degree. The Paducah Junior College (PJC) Foundation has infused more than $500,000 in funds over a three-year period to create the Paducah School of Art. West Kentucky Community and Technical College opened the Paducah School of Art in 2008. Studios were created in downtown rented space for two-dimensional design, three-dimensional design, drawing, painting, ceramics, and sculpture. In 2009, a well equipped digital photography and image making studio was added in space rented next door. A highly qualified faculty has been hired through national searches, supplemented with fully qualified part-time faculty drawn from the Paducah Artists Relocation Program.
To meet future needs, a 55,000 sq. ft. warehouse space was purchased by the City of Paducah and gifted to the college. This facility will undergo a planned renovation to provide state of the art studios for the study of traditional media and emerging technology for the creation of visual art and design. This facility will address the needs of art students ranging from pre-college to professional, but the AFA program is not dependent upon the new facilities for its successful launch. The courses necessary for the degree are already being taught at Paducah School of Art by faculty who are already present. The new facility will allow us to expand our future programming to include such things as fiber arts, restoration and conservation arts, fine art fabrication and casting, stone carving, a film making program, expanded art library, exhibition space, and more. The greatest resource is the unwavering support of the Paducah and McCracken County communities and the enthusiasm and excitement created by an already highly accomplished faculty at the Paducah School of Art.

Conclusion

The AFA in Visual Art will employ existing facilities, faculty, and courses to provide an organized program of study with a recognized degree as the result. This proposed program is consistent with the missions of KCTCS and WKCTC. The curriculum has been approved through the KCTCS curriculum approval process. The need has already been proven by the success of enrollment statistics at the Paducah School of Art, and the resources are available to implement the AFA in Visual Art immediately. The approval of this degree program will assist WKCTC and other KCTCS institutions in meeting needs locally and meeting enrollment and graduation goals for WKCTC, KCTCS, and the four-year institutions into which AFA students will transfer and graduate.