

**TOPIC: RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN INTERMEDIA ART | WRITING | PERFORMANCE AT
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER**

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I. SUMMARY

This item recommends approval for University of Colorado Boulder (UCB) to offer a Doctor of Philosophy in Intermedia Art | Writing | Performance.

II. BACKGROUND

COMMISSION AUTHORITY

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education's role and responsibility in the review and approval of new academic programs at institutions operating under a performance contract is defined in §23-5-129(6)(b), which states that new and modified program proposals shall be reviewed and approved only on the basis of fit with the institution's statutory role and mission.

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED PROGRAM

The following is summarized from UCB's proposal:

The Intermedia Art | Writing | Performance (IAWP) unit is an interdisciplinary digital arts and humanities research unit with a practice-based PhD in Intermedia Art, Writing and Performance. Core faculty collaboratively investigate past and present forms of digital art, writing, and performance and offer graduate students a hands-on, experiential-based learning environment in which to explore emerging forms of creativity triggered by practice-based research methodologies. The research conducted in the program reflects the rapidly transforming knowledge systems and digital media economies emerging from the substantial technological shifts currently taking place in our society. Digital creative work and critical media literacy play a defining role in our information society and are transforming all aspects of contemporary life, including the way many professional visual artists, multimedia performers, writers, publishers, digital humanists and archivists pursue their practice. Traditional scholarly and creative work outputs such as the single-authored print book or conventional gallery exhibitions have already been challenged by the emergence of multi-authored and/or hybridized forms of transmission such as Internet art sites, multi-platform storytelling or transmedia narratives, software art, interactive installations for public spaces,

social media game art, networked media activism, telematic performance art, and innovative art applications for mobile devices and tablets.

IAWP provides the university and the larger Colorado community a research and teaching unit that functions as an incubator for transdisciplinary studies tied to the advanced digital arts and humanities. By offering a unique, practice-based PhD program in intermedia art, writing and performance, IAWP enables an interdisciplinary group of already established practice-based arts and humanities researchers at CU to work with other faculty in CMCI, faculty across the campus—particularly with ATLAS, the projected School of the Arts, the College of Music and CU Libraries—and with individuals and organizations outside of the campus, including the thriving tech and startup communities who are also invested in practice-based forms of research and creativity.

Additional information on this proposed degree, unrelated to fit with statutory role and mission, is in Appendix A.

ROLE AND MISSION SUPPORT

This degree supports UCB's statutory role and mission, which states:

(a) The Boulder campus of the university of Colorado shall be a comprehensive graduate research university with selective admission standards. The Boulder campus of the university of Colorado shall offer a comprehensive array of undergraduate, master's, and doctoral degree programs. The Boulder campus of the university of Colorado has exclusive authority to offer graduate programs in law. The Colorado commission on higher education, in consultation with the board of regents, shall designate those graduate level programs that are the primary responsibility of the Boulder campus of the university of Colorado. The university has the responsibility to provide on a statewide basis, utilizing when possible and appropriate the faculty and facilities of other educational institutions, those graduate level programs. The commission shall include in its funding recommendations a level of general fund support for these programs. [§ 23-20-101, C.R.S.]

Pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes 23-5-129(6)(b), department staff finds that UCB's proposed degree is consistent with the institution's statutory role and mission. University of Colorado's Board of Regents approved the program at its September 11, 2014 meeting.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission approve University of Colorado Boulder's proposal to offer a Doctor of Philosophy in Art | Writing | Performance.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

C.R.S. §23-5-129 Governing boards - performance contract - authorization – operations

(6) While operating pursuant to a performance contract negotiated pursuant to this section, the governing board of a state institution of higher education:

(b) Need not consult with nor obtain approval from the Colorado commission on higher education to create, modify, or eliminate academic and vocational programs offered by the institution, so long as such creations, modifications, and eliminations are consistent with the institution's statutory role and mission. Institutions shall submit information to the department demonstrating that the creation or modification of an academic or career and technical education program is consistent with the institution's statutory role and mission. The Colorado commission on higher education shall have the authority to override the creation or modification of an academic or vocational program if the change made by the governing board is inconsistent with the institution's statutory role and mission.

APPENDIX:

Appendix A: Supplemental Information

APPENDIX A: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

This supplemental information is unrelated to the proposed degrees' fit with the institution's statutory role and mission. The following is summarized from the institution's proposal:

EVIDENCE OF NEED

Employer Demand: The PhD in Intermedia Art | Writing | Performance (IAWP) in the College of Media, Communication and Information believes it will produce graduates who are uniquely qualified for a wide range of attractive careers and are prepared to both successfully compete in an ever-expanding job market and, perhaps more importantly, adapt as the fields themselves change and expand. Given the exponential growth in practice-based intermedia research, the career possibilities are many and various. This degree will be unique among doctorates granted at CU in that it will certify expertise in both creative and scholarly endeavors. While individual students will of course choose to emphasize one or the other, all will graduate as both researchers and creative artists with knowledge of how each side of their preparation can fertilize the other.

Student Demand: Art programs have traditionally focused their terminal degree programs at the master's level in order to train students in the fine arts. In most programs, these MFA degrees are offered to students working in a specific traditional medium such as painting, ceramics, dance, poetry writing, or darkroom photography. These terminal MFA degrees are intended to provide students with the necessary training to enter the commercial art market as professional artists who sell their work through a traditional gallery system or to perform their work in public venues. Likewise, creative writing MFA programs traditionally train students to publish their work with small, literary or mainstream publishers while MA programs in the humanities identify themselves as training students for critical, not creative, research. However, there is now a movement to develop practice-based PhD programs in interdisciplinary and collaborative research environments that can expand both the depth and breadth of students' creative and critical capacities as well as their future job prospects. These emerging practice-based PhD programs are very attractive to artists and researchers who have developed their technical mastery of a particular creative practice but are now ready to further advance their education so that their technical skill sets can expand into the new media economies that drive the arts and culture sector. One of the attractions of the program is that not only will it be one of the first of its kind in Colorado, but an early and reputable entrant into a growing arena of higher educational activity beginning to take place on national scale. We believe that there are numerous emerging markets for creative professionals in the new media economy and that this unique program will attract students from all over the country, many of whom will stay in the state after graduation and contribute significantly to the Colorado economy.

DUPLICATION

The College of Media, Communication and Information believes this proposed PhD in Intermedia Art | Writing | Performance (IAWP) is unique in Colorado. Many Colorado universities offer an MFA degree in specific disciplines such as studio-based fine arts, dance and theater, or creative writing. These programs peripherally address some of the topics of the PhD, but none provide an advanced interdisciplinary PhD curriculum that specifically intersects with the new media economy, networked and mobile communication systems and information studies.

In fact, in the Rocky Mountain region, the most similar program to the PhD in Intermedia Art | Writing | Performance is the University of Denver's PhD in Creative Writing. While DU's program provides an example of a highly successful PhD program in the arts, the curriculum differs considerably from the PhD in Intermedia Art / Writing / Performance in that it does not have an "intermedia" focus or intent, nor does it emphasize practice-based outcomes at the interface of art, communication, and information aesthetics. Instead, it concentrates entirely on traditional forms of creative and critical writing and publishing.