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Chair of the Assembly of the Academic Senate
Faculty Representative to the Regents
University of California
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
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July 10, 2023

PATTY GALLAGHER, CHAIR
UC SANTA CRUZ ACADEMIC SENATE

Re: Approval of Creative Technologies BA at UC Santa Cruz

Dear Patty:

On the recommendation of the University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP), the Academic Council has endorsed UC Santa Cruz's proposal to establish a Creative Technologies Bachelor of Arts degree.

Initially proposed as a fully online degree, the program has been modified to include in-person course options in order to fulfill the campus experience requirement outlined in Senate Regulation 630.E.[1] The upper-division coursework comprising the major is fully online.

The Senate recognizes this fully online major as a groundbreaking program, both for the campus and the UC system. Although the current version of the Compendium authored in 2014 did not anticipate the specific issue of fully online degrees or majors, and those kinds of programs are not explicitly addressed in the Compendium review processes, the "first of its kind" nature of UCSC's proposed program seemed to necessitate a system-level review and approval to align with the spirit, if not the exact wording, of the Compendium.

I am enclosing UCEP's report on its review of the new program.

Sincerely,

Susan Cochran, Chair
Academic Council

Cc: Provost Newman
        Academic Council
        Executive Director Lin

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[1] https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/bylaws-regulations/regulations/rpart3.html#r630

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY (UCEP)
Melanie Cocco, Chair
mcocco@uci.edu

June 19, 2023

SUSAN COCHRAN, CHAIR
ACADEMIC COUNCIL

RE: UCEP Review of UCSC Creative Technologies Proposal

Dear Chair Cochran,

UCEP received a proposal for the establishment of the Creative Technologies (CT) Bachelor of Arts (BA) Degree from UCSC in the spring of 2022. It was not reviewed that academic year but was passed on to the UCEP 22/23 committee. Since this degree was originally proposed as a fully online degree, UCEP members spent considerable time discussing the criteria for review in the fall/winter. We sent the proposal authors a substantial list of questions in February, 2023. UCSC communicated a thorough and comprehensive reply to our questions in April. Members of UCEP were pleased to see that the proposal was responsive to concerns and voted to endorse the revised proposal unanimously.

Strengths of the Proposal / Responses to Questions

- The revised program has been modified to accommodate the campus experience requirement recently defined in SR 630.E through the addition of in-person course options. Notably, the introduction of the revised proposal states that the requirement for a small number of in-person courses: "*increased opportunities to develop relationships and build community, which will ultimately work to help students to be successful in the major.*" In addition, the revised curriculum now offers an *"expanded list of Breadth of Arts (BOA) elective (courses)."* By expanding to include these classes, the program will provide a more extensive and richer set of elective course offerings to the students.
- The online modality is native to the program's pedagogical, research, and community-building aims. The program is highly accessible since the curriculum is designed for both students who start as UC freshman or for transfer students.
- There is a growing demand for digital arts majors. Additionally, the careers for which Creative Technologies prepares students are increasingly trending toward remote and hybrid working environments. In addition to the actual course material, students will develop the underlying skills of learning, ideating, and working collaboratively in remote settings.
- UCSC Senate Committees and the UCSC Administration approve of the proposed major.
- There already exists an infrastructure for student support (e.g., academic advising, career advising, etc.).
- The proposal includes faculty development to meet UC quality online. There will be training for faculty participating in the program.
- Thirteen faculty including three Teaching Professors will anchor the program. Notably, faculty bring expertise from three different departments: Art, Music, and Performance, Play and Design.
- UCEP was particularly pleased to see the plan for a comprehensive self-study of learning outcomes, assessments and student progress will be performed every three years.
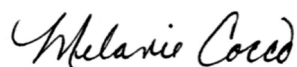
Ongoing Concerns

- As a *first* in developing an online major, UCEP is deeply interested in quality measures of the participating students. The Committee will continue developing online-major program policies for the University, and we request that a copy of the program's three-year self-study report be sent to the Chair. We anticipate comparing outcome measures achieved by students enrolled in the UCSC online major to similar measurements for students attending similar in-person UC Digital Arts programs.
- The question of awarding degrees to students who live entirely out of state remains. The UCSC response indicated that they did not believe there were any restrictions to questions of accreditation and authority in providing degrees to students who live in other states. CT Program Administrators should clarify in writing the issue of awarding degrees in other states with both WSCUC and the UC IRAP. Although there are undergraduate degree accreditation reciprocity programs among other states, UC is not currently a participant in those reciprocity agreements.
- Equitable access to the major by students of color and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds is a concern. The proposal response statement (page 12): "Students who choose to enroll in the Creative Technologies major will be choosing to participate in many courses that will be online, and they are not likely to make this choice if they don't have good access to the internet and an appropriate setting for taking online classes" seems to indicate that this program is designed for economically advantaged students. Existing online education programs at other universities largely benefit white students. It will be particularly important to assess the student demographic once the program is running.
- Questions regarding the mode of instruction remain. The revision and response does not provide a good sense of the amount of coursework that will be asynchronous vs synchronous. CT 70 seems to be asynchronous with students participating in break-out discussion and/or "crit" every other week. Engaging the students once every two weeks does not appear to be sufficient or substantial.
- The best online programs maintain small class sizes – usually less than 50 students per faculty member. It appears that some of the CT courses will have enrollments significantly larger than this threshold.
- Concerns remain regarding access to technology. How will students fabricate the items in CT 140: Fabrication and Production Studio? It seems unrealistic to expect students to be able to 3-D print items in their local community. In addition, will students who do not have easy access to campus be able to check out VR headsets by having them shipped or will they have to purchase these themselves?

A few questions remain:

- Who has access to the academic and artistic content and who owns/has property rights to that content?
- In general, what control is there over who sees the content? What safeguards exist to prevent siblings who live with students to view mature content that might be included in online pre-recorded or live lectures?
- Who has property rights to the recorded lectures?

UCEP looks forward to receiving your feedback. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Melanie Cocco, Chair
UCEP