To: Curriculum and Programs Committee (CPC)

From: Academic Program Working Group (APWG)
       Mark Greenwood, Doug Downs, Bill Brown, Kirsten Ostergaard
       Michael Babcock (Chair)

Date: November 5th, 2015

Re: Level II proposals for a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Integrated Lens Media

Overview:

The proposal from the School of Film & Photography is for the creation of a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Integrated Lens Media. The goal of the new program is to provide an interdisciplinary course of study in film and photographic media. The genesis of this Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) proposal was in response to perceived changes in the field as well as student feedback. The proposed BFA program builds on an existing curriculum where students receive training in both photography and film during the first two years of the major. Candidates for the new program would then pursue a customized interdisciplinary curriculum in their junior and senior years. Students would apply for admission to the BFA program at the end of their sophomore year after completing a sequence of foundation courses in the production, analysis, and history of film and photography. The proposed BFA program will require 84 credits in the major (current BA degrees require 56 credits). This increase relative to existing options is in accordance with the National Association of School of Art and Design (NASAD) guidelines that recommend students in BFA programs take at least 65% of their credits in their major area of study. It is anticipated that the new program will make students better prepared for specific graduate study (e.g. MFA programs) and as professional artists.

Proposal Strengths:

1. The proposal has been unanimously approved by the tenured and tenure-track faculty of the School of Film & Photography.
2. MSU currently has the faculty expertise and facilities to support this new program. Only one new seminar course run each year is required to implement the new program.

3. This BFA program represents a novel interdisciplinary course of study that is unique to the MUS system. Although UM has separate programs in film and photography, the MSU program under consideration integrates lens media in a way that can give our students an advantage when applying for graduate study and career opportunities.

4. The proposed program will not require changes to any existing programs at the institution or new resources.

5. There is evidence that the program will advance MSU’s strategic goals, particularly in the areas of learning, discovery, and integration.

6. The proposal details a sequential plan of study that is rigorous and requires more credits than existing BA programs in film and photography. However the BFA could still be completed in 4 years and without exceeding 120 credits.

7. The program’s unique integration of film and photo study has the potential to facilitate new student recruitment.

Proposal Concerns and Adjustments:

1. The APWG expressed a minor point of confusion regarding the opportunity for students to reapply to the BFA program if unsuccessful in gaining acceptance. This concern was addressed by Professor Nelson with the following changes to the proposal:

   In the “Program Details” section, the line "Students who are not admitted to the BFA will be able to continue in their BA program" was changed to "Students who are not admitted to the BFA will be able to continue in their BA program, and will have the ability to reapply for entry into the BFA the following year."

2. Since the existing first two years of the curriculum are identical to that of the proposal, APWG wondered if students could apply for the BFA program sooner than the anticipated start date as outlined in the proposal. Professor Nelson addressed this concern by adding the following sentence to the program:

   “Students who enrolled at MSU prior to the fall of 2016 will be eligible to apply for the BFA program provided they complete the prerequisites.”

In summary, the APWG believes this proposal has significant merit and potential. We commend the School of Art for proposing a new program in response to the perceived needs of your
students and the shift in expectations of graduate schools. We hope that the Curriculum & Programs Committee and Faculty Senate will endorse this proposal.