

Visual and Performing Arts

In 2001, the Los Angeles Times declared the entertainment business to be among the top ten growth industries of the new century. Careers in the Arts are more completely integrated now with other businesses and require the use of technology in both the act of creation and in communicating the art to its audience.

Michigan Technological University is uniquely positioned to provide students with a foundation in traditional arts - Art, Music, and Theatre - and practical experience with integrating Arts and technology in a significant number of ways. Because MTU's Visual and Performing Arts Department has never had distinct academic majors, the faculty has not been incarcerated within disciplinary walls. Their history is one of collaborative enterprise. The University's strength in Chemistry, Computer Science, Humanities, Instructional Media, Materials Science, Social Sciences, and Structural Engineering, its adaptable infrastructure, and depth of community support, provide MTU with significant technological, physical and social resources other universities would need to develop. Michigan Tech's success in interdisciplinary programs and enterprise projects has developed both the administrative expertise and philosophical commitment to trans-disciplinary endeavours.

Importance to MTU:

Developing the Arts will contribute to the University in four ways:

1. **Improving Financial Stability** - Using the minimal revenue formula, annual expenses decrease from the current \$755,900 to roughly \$268,000, creating a \$500,000 increase in available revenue. The calculation does not include the growth in general education student credits which will be a by product of growth.
2. **Improving Competitive Edge** - Currently, Michigan Tech provides the best student buy in terms of Tuition and size. Clarkson, Colorado Mines and Missouri Rolla are not even in the same league with MTU the Arts fully developed. Lehigh, Cal Poly, and Carnegie offer traditional arts programs. Though good, they are not comparable to the sophistication and interdisciplinary power of MTU' fully developed majors. Georgia and RPI have a minor commitment to the arts and do not possess the interdisciplinary approach characteristic of Visual and Performing Arts at MTU. To sum, Michigan Tech, to observers, is more like RPI and Carnegie than other the comparable universities, but with an orientation to the future and a commitment to trans-disciplinary programs.
3. **Attracting and Retaining Good Students** - In the Fall Semester of 2006, twelve percent of the student body enrolled in Fine Arts classes or participated in a performance group. Ninety-six percent of entering Freshmen reported participation in one of the Visual or Performing Arts. Women are particularly attracted to the Arts. Stronger Arts programs, which recruit serious art students, will increase the diversity of the Student body. Beyond gender, art students bring a different way of thinking about problems. Artists are highly intuitive. They simultaneously factor multiple dimensions of an issue, problem, or observation, finding a result that factors human emotional reactions,

societal forces, and levels of interpretation as well as practical considerations. Such students diversify the analytical reasoning environment created by a student body largely invested in solving mechanical and technical problems.

4. **Improving Quality of Life and Promoting the Development of Wisdom** – Participation in the Arts develops creativity in problem solving and the collaborative activity enhances group interpersonal communication and leadership skills. The experience of beauty or the creation of beauty provides a pleasurable sense of elation and, when accompanied by a moment of insight into the complex content, prompts a state of deeper understanding of subject matter. This knowledge provides the bits and pieces experience by which we develop understanding of particular phenomenon and assemble a view of the patterns of life that is wisdom.

Program:

The Visual and Performing Arts Department plans to attract 175 majors to its programs over the next five years. Three new majors will be added to the current opportunities available to students. They are Theatrical and Mediated Performance, Electronic Music, and Art and Art Technologies.

The Development Process:

Developing the Visual and Performing Arts will follow some guiding principles:

1. The approach will be entrepreneurial. A key faculty member will be hired to direct the development of each program emphasis. The program director will have one year to implement the curriculum and the following year will recruit majors to the program.
2. Facilities will be developed before or during the first year of program development.
3. Even though each step of the development process will require a new funding commitment, the actual cost to the University of operating a Visual and Performing Arts Department will be reduced by the generation of new income.
4. Facilities and equipment funding will be raised from private sources through the combined efforts of the Performing and Visual Arts faculty, Research & Sponsored Programs and the University Advancement Staffs.
5. The Development process will include changes in the organizational structure to reduce University operating expenses.