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SUBJECT: Department Status for the Cinema Studies Program

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Background

Established in late 2010, the Cinema Studies Program (CINE) has functioned as an inter-unit structure in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), the School of Architecture and Allied Arts (AAA), the School of Journalism and Communication (SOJC). But because of UO administrative rules at the time of its creation, CINE offers its Bachelor of Arts degree solely through CAS. The College has also acted as its administrative home for budgeting, personnel, curricular, and space matters. The program is currently developing a minor and a Bachelor of Science degree.

Process

The Office of Academic Affairs scheduled a five-year, internal program review (the process for the first review of new programs) in spring 2016. The CINE program self-study described the history and growth of the program, its efforts to collaborate (internally at UO and externally through Lane Community College, regional internships for students, and a study abroad program in Ireland), its academic mission, contributions to the university's mission, faculty, and budget and other resources. The self-study identified several areas in need of attention: excessive "voluntary" service loads for participating faculty who have obligations in their home departments; an over-reliance on NTTFF; the need to expand course offerings in production; lack of adequate, consolidated program space; a need to give more attention to diversity in curriculum and hiring. Hiring more TT faculty was proposed as a way to address all but the space issue for reasons that we explain below.

Academic Affairs formed an internal review team: Daniel HoSang (Ethnic Studies and Political Science, CAS) and Laura Vandenburg (Department of Art, AAA) conducted the review and submitted a report in June 2016. Professors HoSang and Vandenburg commended CINE for being a "model of comprehensive liberal arts education," "the quality

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of organization and oversight for the program,” building “a strong external community,” and they also noted its unanticipated growth (CINE expected 75 majors by year three but had over 300 by then). Their report also identified a number of challenges:

1. The curricular divide between production and critical studies (related to a lack of clarity about the relationship of these two areas of study and the vision for the program)
2. The excessive service burdens on participating faculty, which they regard as not “sustainable in the long-term”
3. A need to involve faculty more in governance
4. A “lack of attention from upper administration” (including the expired MOU among the three colleges that has left management, budget, and strategic planning ill defined)
5. Lack of connection between SOJ, AAA, and CINE (despite boasting an interdisciplinary major in three colleges, “in reality there are significant disparities and differences in the connections and investments in the program on the part of the three colleges”)
6. Finding appropriate space, especially “if the production curriculum and faculty continue to expand”
7. And the need to “continue to address issues of equity and inclusion.”

CINE sent an online survey to its faculty since the summer timing of the internal report made it impossible to call a meeting; the new Advisory Board determined the survey topics. Respondents agreed with the HoSang/Vandenburgh report and ranked the six challenges the board had identified from the internal review, making these their first priorities: internal governance and excessive service because of the inter-unit structure and minimal CINE FTE, TTF lines in CINE, and the curriculum.

The internal review committee raised questions about whether CINE should become a department but did not answer them with a recommendation, and thus the CINE faculty did not address departmentalization in their response survey. However, the reviewers’ questions articulate some of the immediate benefits of departmentalization: CINE “would be better able to manage its affairs and take advantage of opportunities if it were a stand-alone department,” it could “build a clearer identity, core faculty and vision,” and departmentalization would resolve widespread confusion about the “location and status” of the unit.

We are proposing that Cinema Studies be moved into the College of Arts and Sciences and that it be departmentalized in CAS, so we can support this strong and successful program and offer it a stable faculty and budget base on which it can build its curricular and scholarly connections with other colleges and units on campus. Interdisciplinarity is fundamental to CINE, yet this value will be easier to realize once CINE has a secure departmental base of faculty, resources, courses, and spaces. The self-study, internal team report, and the Cinema Studies faculty response to the internal review all attest to the general agreement that CINE has outgrown its current situation and structure. CINE will be best able to augment its initial successes, respond to student need, maintain a competitive scholarly profile, and offer students an interdisciplinary major in an increasingly important

and appealing field if its faculty, budget, space, and energies are consolidated in one college.

Proposal to Departmentalize the Cinema Studies Program

We propose creating a Department of Cinema Studies for the following reasons:

1. Cinema Studies is a long-established academic field that is structured variously as a program, department, school, or college depending upon its academic context; the quick growth of the major and the need to stabilize faculty, budget, curriculum, and space argue for departmentalization at this juncture
2. The University of Oregon currently grants the Bachelor of Art degree to CINE majors indicating the status of Cinema Studies as a discipline in its own right; CINE intends to offer a Bachelor of Science degree and a minor soon
3. Departmentalization will give Cinema Studies curricular autonomy, which will support curricular reform, course development, and course scheduling and staffing
4. Departmentalization would make faculty recruitment easier
5. Departmentalization would make Cinema Studies at UO more visible and viable to prospective students
6. A departmental structure would provide better management of promotion and tenure, merit review, and other personnel processes
7. A departmental structure would eliminate the current need for faculty with tenure homes and service obligations in other units to volunteer unrecognized and uncompensated service to the CINE program
8. A departmental structure would offer faculty and students a better academic center
9. A departmental structure would make inter-unit collaboration easier and more effective by delineating the limits and expectations of the collaboration more clearly
10. A Department of Cinema Studies will signal the university's commitment to the field to donors, alumni, internship partners, and will help CINE promote student success through these career networks
11. Departmentalization enhances the capacity of this fast-growing field to offer graduate degrees in the future.

Proposal to Departmentalize the Cinema Studies Program in the College of Arts and Sciences

After almost a year of review and deliberation, we propose to house a new Department of Cinema Studies in CAS because there is general agreement that the current inter-unit structure has not been advantageous to the CINE faculty and students. Locating the department in CAS is in some ways a natural next step since the BA degree has been offered through CAS and budgeting also already occurs in CAS. The college has provided much of the program and office space in McKenzie Hall, employs the program staff, and already has the college-level staffing needed to provide oversight of the program as it grows.

More important, we believe that the best intellectual and academic fit for Cinema Studies is in the College of Arts and Sciences, where we will continue to cultivate connections to other colleges once CINE is a department in CAS. We will encourage the interdisciplinary and inter-college relationships already well developed among Cinema Studies with faculty

in all three colleges; this is essential to the wellbeing of the program. The self-study and the internal review team report both refer to the distinctions between two components of Cinema Studies at UO: critical studies and production. In our discussions about the program review, the CINE directors made clear that there is a valuable synergy between criticism and production in the major, not a tension. The curriculum should be about one-third production courses and two-thirds critical studies (history, aesthetics, interpretation, cultural criticism, formal criticism). That is, the majority of the Cinema Studies curriculum is in the liberal arts, and the directors emphasized repeatedly that the major is not a professional degree—even though it offers courses and internships that will prepare students for a range of careers. On academic grounds, then, we believe that the Cinema Studies department belongs in CAS.

Finally, the Cinema Studies faculty themselves voted in favor of departmentalizing in the College of Arts and Sciences on January 19, 2017. In an official program faculty vote, 14 members present at the meeting ranked departmentalization in CAS as their first choice, while 2 members present found forming an area in SOJC as their first choice. The faculty in Cinema Studies have taken a clear position in favor of joining CAS “after very careful and extended group deliberations.”

Criteria for Evaluating Proposals to Change the name or Designation of an Academic Unit

Alignment with strategic goals and objectives of the UO and academic units

A Department of Cinema Studies will align with the four institutional priorities of the UO’s 2015 Strategic Framework:

1. *Promote and enhance student access, retention, and success:* Giving CINE the increased visibility and stability of department status will, we believe, not merely offer current students a popular departmental option but also draw new students to the UO where they can pursue a Cinema Studies degree in a well-established and adequately staffed department context. CINE has been offering undergraduate majors internship opportunities in the media industry and has been placing its students well after graduation. These successes will only increase when CINE is an independent department.
2. *Enhance the impact of research, scholarship, creative, inquiry, and graduate education:* Departmentalization will also allow CINE to develop a graduate program in three years, and, based on the interest of graduate students already pursuing degrees at UO who have been GEs for major-fulfilling courses in CINE and who address Cinema Studies content in their work, a CINE MA or PhD will be welcome and successful. The opportunity to develop a graduate curriculum, teach graduate seminars, and work with graduate student researchers will increase scholarly productivity among the CINE faculty since more of their teaching and advising will directly connect to their own research. Further, a Department of Cinema Studies will enable interdisciplinary opportunities at the graduate level while also providing a consolidated faculty cohort for graduate students.
3. *Attract and retain high-quality, diverse students, faculty, and staff:* The self-study details the several ways that CINE is working to diversify its students, faculty, and curriculum. CINE’s hiring proposal identifies two “micro” clusters that will enhance the curricular focus on theory and practice and simultaneously deepen CINE’s

commitment to ethnic, racial, and global diversity as it departmentalizes. Faculty have proposed two TTF hires in Filmmaking Practices that emphasize ethnic and racial diversity: an assistant professor in Narrative Production and an open-rank position in Cinema and Social Justice; and two TTF hires in Critical Studies that emphasize Cinemas of the Global South.

4. *Enhance physical, administrative, and IT infrastructure to ensure academic excellence:* CINE is one of the rare academic units on campus that can contribute directly to the UO's IT infrastructure, and developing centralized space and infrastructure is already an articulated part of its plan. CINE hopes to be able to use a large carry-forward fund to upgrade classrooms, create a sound stage for production courses, and acquire an FTP server system for storage and student collaboration.

Potential for enhancing academic excellence and increasing scholarly productivity

Again, we feel that independent department status and the ability to oversee and staff their own curriculum will improve CINE's ability to serve students as teachers and advisors. The development of a graduate program in the future will bring competitive graduate students to a sought-after specialization and will support the scholarly research of the CINE faculty.

Opportunities to attract students and promote student success

The greater visibility and stability of a department will allow CINE to communicate its offerings to prospective students and will enhance CINE's ability to cultivate networks of donors and alumni who can help assure student success through philanthropic support, internships, and career mentoring. According to the five-year review, Cinema Studies students have already developed a sense of intellectual community. Departmentalization and the securing of a unified space for Cinema Studies will greatly improve students' ability to interact with their faculty and cohort, which will strengthen student success and further enhance alumni and donor commitments.

Opportunities to realize cost savings and administrative and administrative efficiencies

The budget implications for departmentalizing CINE are cost neutral from an institutional point of view since CAS already has the necessary administrative structure in place for the department, and the UO would initially simply be moving faculty lines within the university. However, *adding* new faculty lines to build the Cinema Studies department would have budgetary implications. Alternatively, increasing the size of the department by moving lines among CAS units (as we are already doing) would be budget neutral, although it would create pushback from the units losing lines. Creating a graduate program in the new department would have specific costs, primarily the expense of GE stipends and waivers; those might be new positions or positions moved from units that no longer need their existing levels of GE allocation.

We propose establishing the new department with seven current TTF lines (2.6 FTE from SOJC and 4.0 FTE from CAS) and maintaining joint appointment relationships with two or three other TTF. We recognize that the Provost may wish to replace some of these lines in their current locations, but we anticipate that the growth and appeal of Cinema Studies as a department at UO will ultimately bring new students here, making the investment in

departmentalization now a good one. Further, the departmentalization of Cinema Studies will improve curricular control and scheduling, which will provide new opportunities for consolidated, interdisciplinary course offerings that reduce curricular redundancies and make student enrollments more efficient and consistent.

Opportunities to raise external funds to support academic programming

We expect that becoming an autonomous department will improve CINE's ability to maintain strong ties with its graduates and cultivate relationships with donors interested in cinema studies and its related fields. Even as a fledgling program, CINE has managed to attract donors and has work with alumni to offer innovative courses, internship opportunities, and more; departmentalization and the dedicated attention of development officers will enhance these efforts.

Consistency with trends in the field

Departmentalizing the Cinema Studies Program is absolutely consistent with longstanding trends in the field that have acknowledged cinema studies as a vital, significant, interdisciplinary area of study that keeps pace critically with a quickly changing and constantly ramifying field. The question is not whether Cinema Studies is an acknowledged and important field but how it can be structured most effectively at the University of Oregon.

Conclusion

The Cinema Studies Program has just undergone its five-year internal review and found to be so successful that it needs to develop and grow to realize its burgeoning potential. A Department of Cinema Studies would undergo a ten-year review in 2021. By that time it will be appropriately staffed, settled in its spaces, offering a graduate degree, and we will be able to evaluate its direction, its strengths and weaknesses, and its achievements and needs. The findings of the decennial review will determine its future as is the case for all departments.