

# College of Fine Arts

## 1999-2000 Vision Plan Proposal

### (revised)

## March 31, 1999

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**Executive Summary**

In October 1991, the College of Fine Arts completed an exhaustive, two-volume report on computing needs in the College of Fine Arts. This vision plan for computing was subsequently submitted to the university's Faculty Computer Committee (cf. *Faculty Computer Committee Report, 1992-93.*) The plan focused on teaching and research, citing specific needs for student microcomputer facilities, multimedia

learning environments, research laboratories, computer workstations for faculty and staff, a college-wide network, and an image database project.

Using allocations from the Faculty Computer Committee and its own resources, over the past seven years the college has systematically completed (or currently has in progress) all of the initiatives cited in the original vision plan. Because of the time taken to complete all aspects of the plan however, certain items need to be revisited. The college is currently preparing a new vision plan to guide the implementation of information technology over the next few years. Until the new plan is available, three areas of computing in the college would benefit from immediate attention.

- Since the initial purchase of faculty computers some three years ago, very little has been done to replace or upgrade those original machines with the effect that most faculty in the college are now using hardware that does not compare favorably with the machines their students are using. As a result, faculty are unable to take advantage of many of the important advances in Web and streaming media technology for curriculum development and delivery. An additional multimedia-capable classroom in the Music Recital Hall (MRH). (estimated cost: \$50,000)
- Network and server improvements to expand switched 100 Mbit service in the college and provide Utnet ports in public areas for use with student laptop computers. (estimated cost: \$29,000)
- Add and upgrade Wintel NT machines in an existing student computer classroom/lab so that the college can provide certification on an industry standard, high-end animation package. (estimated cost: \$21,000)

The College of Fine Arts 1998-99 Vision Plan proposal is a request for funding to replace 100 of the oldest faculty computers in the college to implement these three projects. Based on the faculty member's preference, either a new Macintosh or Wintel machine would be provided to replace aging equipment. Additional staff support would be required to set up and distribute the machines in a timely fashion, a cost that has been included in the request. Although not specifically part of the original college vision plan, each project builds on the already established infrastructure and will enhance student computing in meaningful ways. The estimated combined cost of the projects is \$152100,000.

## **Part I: Vision, Goals and Recent Progress**

### *A. College of Fine Arts Goals for the Coming Year*

The original vision plan for the College of Fine Arts (*Report on Computing in the College of Fine Arts*, October, 1991) was intended to provide a strategy "for the integration of computing resources into the curriculum development, instruction, research, performance production, and administration" of the college. In the seven years since that report was completed, the college has annually made systematic and consistent progress toward the realization of those goals. The college has also made commensurate progress toward the following goals identified by the Faculty

Computer Committee in its report *toward the Virtual University*, May 22, 1995.

- Universal access to information technology
- Provide seamless, easy-to-use, and secure network access to information for study, teaching, research, and administration
- Develop new models of instruction based on innovations in information technology

All College of Fine Arts undergraduate and graduate majors have access to information technology through computer facilities and networks that we have established, including a central computer laboratory located in the Fine Arts Library and computer laboratories in each of our three academic departments. Preceding university-wide efforts, we also provided our entire tenured and tenure-track faculty with computers and network access.

Armed with computer and network access, faculty in all three departments have reshaped existing courses, developed new courses, and implemented innovative teaching methods based on the new technologies (e.g., music theory, choreography, computer art for studio artists, etc.).

During the last seven years, we have provided students with computer laboratories, faculty with computers and network access, and the college with teleconference and computer-based teaching facilities. Having provided an Information Technology infrastructure and fostered innovative teaching that exploits these new technologies, the College of Fine Arts seeks funding to increase the number of multimedia classrooms, improve the network infrastructure, and implement new high-end animation capabilities.

### *B. The Current Situation and Progress to Date*

Over the past year, the college has undertaken two major projects and augmented its Information Technology staff in an ongoing effort to realize fully its vision plan.

#### *1. Teleconference Facility*

Recognizing the importance of Distance Education in today's environment, the college identified \$37,000 to add teleconference capability to an existing studio facility. Completed in February 1998, this facility has already been used in several distance education efforts and makes it possible to both enhance the curriculum of the college (i.e., provide access to educators and artists not physically located on campus) and project local courses to other locations (e.g., a second-year music theory course to another component of the University of Texas System).

#### *2. Electronic Classroom*

With the completion of the electronic classroom in August of 1998, the final major component of the original College of Fine Arts vision plan (*Report on Computing in the College of Fine Arts*, October, 1991) was realized. Originally planned for a space located on the fourth floor of the Fine Arts Library, funding and potential renovation

delays forced a new strategy. Therefore, the much-needed renovation of the Fine Arts Microcomputer Laboratory (FAML) and the implementation of an electronic classroom were combined into one project. The facility consists of twenty workstations for students, a workstation for the instructor, a server, audio and video equipment, and a projection system for documents, video and computer images. For the sake of consistency and convenience, a control system was installed that matches the teleconference facility and the pending multimedia lecture halls.

### *3. Expanded Information Technology Support*

With the completion of the main aspects of the original vision plan, the College of Fine Arts has a technology infrastructure that includes four large computer laboratories, a college-wide switched 100-BaseT network connecting over 500 hosts to Utnet, and a high-tech research center as well as numerous other technical facilities. With the breathtaking influx of information technology into the college, adequate support personnel have been a constant issue. Therefore, the college increased the Learning Resource Center fee starting in the fall of 1998 and hired two additional full-time employees to help with the management of computer facilities and provide technical support.

## **Part II: Facilities and Staffing**

### *A. Facilities*

Currently, the college has four student computer labs, a teleconference equipped classroom (cf. I.B.1 above), and an electronic classroom (cf. I.B.2 above). Other college facilities include professional-quality multitrack recording studios, electronic music studios, a robotic lighting laboratory, and a research facility (Center for Advanced Studies in the Arts, CASA) equipped with a variety of equipment including a Silicon Graphics Onyx Media Engine, and a Media 100 Video editor as well as other computer equipment. The first of an anticipated four multimedia-equipped classrooms was recently finished and construction on the second will begin at the end of the spring semester. The other two classrooms will follow at approximately three-month intervals.

All buildings in the College are connected to Utnet and there are currently about 550 hosts on the 100 Mbit switched network. Servers are located in each of the academic and non-academic departments.

### *B. Staffing*

The Office of Computing Technologies provides helpdesk, network and technology classroom support for the college as well as managing the Fine Arts Microcomputer Laboratory (FAML). Staffing consists of a Systems Analyst, three Microcomputer Applications Specialists, two part-time student consultants and seven part-time proctors. Two of the three academic departments (viz., Art and Art History and the School of Music) manage their own student computer labs

and have either a full-time Systems Analyst or a Microcomputer Applications Specialist with a number of student proctors. The Department of Theatre and Dance contracts with Academic Computing and Instructional Technology Services (ACITS) to manage their computer laboratory. The Center for Advanced Studies in the Arts employs a part-time student consultant.

### **III. The Projects**

#### *A. An Additional Multimedia Classroom*

##### *1. Description of Goals*

With the completion of the first of four planned multimedia classrooms, it is clear that demand for the rooms will exceed the available time. Currently, the college has enough funding to provide one facility for each building in the college, namely Music Recital Hall (MRH), Doty Fine Arts Building (DFA), Art (ART), and Winship (WIN). It is clear, however, that usage will be proportional to the relative size of the academic departments and therefore an additional room will be required in MRH to more evenly meet the anticipated demand.

##### *2. Audience*

Students in the School of Music will be the primary beneficiaries of this additional multimedia facility. The recently completed classroom in MRH is getting favorable reviews from faculty and students alike and a second facility in this building will clearly be put to use as soon as it is finished.

##### *3. Description of Facilities, Equipment, and Staff*

No additional facilities will be needed for this project as an existing classroom will be improved. Only minor modifications to the room are anticipated as most of the purchased equipment will be contained within a podium purpose-designed for this application. Multimedia presentation equipment will be similar to that found in three existing rooms in the college (viz., Fine Arts Teleconference Facility, Fine Arts Microcomputer Laboratory and Electronic Classroom, and the Recital Studio). It will consist of a video projector, screen, Wintel and Macintosh computers, a document camera, VHS tape machine, CD and Cassette machine and an integrated touchpanel control system. Existing staff will implement the facility augmented by a judicious use of private industry contractors. Once completed, faculty and students will be able to operate the room with a modest amount of support provided by existing staff in the college's Office of Computing Technologies.

##### *1. Budget*

Equipment and installation for this project will total an estimated \$50,000 based on our experience implementing similar facilities in the college (viz., Fine Arts Teleconference Facility, Fine Arts Microcomputer Laboratory and Electronic

Classroom, and the Recital Studio). A summary of expenditure for the recently completed Recital Studio multimedia classroom upgrade is included in the appendix.

## A. *Improvements To The College Network*

### 1. *Description of Goals*

There are three goals in this project. First, the college has funding to upgrade the computers in the existing student labs so that they are capable of producing and viewing all types of streaming media. Increased bandwidth will therefore be required on their network connection. This part of the project will provide 100 Mbit, switched service to every computer in the student microcomputer laboratory facilities.

The second part of this project is a pilot program to provide ethernet ports connected to Utnet in public areas of college buildings. Since the college has a limited ability to provide seats in computer labs, it is hoped that the availability of ethernet ports in the buildings will encourage students to provide their own laptop computers. More mundane network applications such as email and Internet searches will be possible on student provided machines while preserving the limited lab space for applications that require equipment or software that the average student would be unlikely to have.

Finally, two new Macintosh OS X servers will be purchased to replace aging machines now in use and a third existing machine will be upgraded to OS X capabilities. This new operating system has important benefits in speed, reliability, and security that will benefit students using the college computer laboratories.

### 2. *Audience*

College of Fine Arts students are the intended audience and all parts of this project will have a positive impact on the quality of network and fileserver service they enjoy.

### 3. *Description of Facilities, Equipment, and Staff*

No additional facilities will be required and equipment purchased will be installed in existing network hub closets and labs. Installation and support will be provided by existing Office of Computing Technologies staff.

### 4. *Budget*

Item	Cost
(9) 24 port, switched ethernet hubs (@ \$1000 each)	\$9,000
Additional category 5 wiring to college public areas (96 @ \$100/wire)	\$9,600

(2) Mac OS X servers (hardware and software, \$5000 each)	\$10,000
(1) Mac OS X software upgrade for existing server	\$400
<b>Preliminary Total</b>	<b>\$29,000</b>

## A. *High-End Computer Animation Workstations*

### 1. *Description of Goals*

As students and faculty have become more sophisticated in their use of the computing facilities in the college, interest has grown in more specialized areas. One activity that has become very important is 3D modeling and computer animation. Two professors in the college have incorporated animation in choreography and movement courses and others teaching in design and transmedia use it also. There is a growing need for a high-end, industry standard animation platform in the college as well as hardware that supports this animation well enough to make routine, non-trivial use of it commonplace.

Co-incident with the college's need, a software company, *Alias*, is making a certification program for their industry-standard modeling and animation program, *Maya*, available to schools in an attractive, cooperative arrangement. If a school can provide 10 Wintel NT machines capable of running *Maya*, and at least one full-time faculty or staff member who completes their certification course, *Alias* will provide 10 software licenses for \$2500 – a mere fraction of the normal commercial cost. Furthermore, *Alias* will provide the employee certification as part of the \$2500 fee, and that employee then becomes able to certify others. *Alias Maya* is widely used in the television, film and computer game industry and anyone with such a certification has ready access to a growing pool of very desirable jobs.

The goal is to take six Wintel NT machines already in place in the Fine Arts Microcomputer Laboratory (FAML) and upgrade them to the standard required to run this software. Four additional machines would be purchased making the required 10 machines. After beginning the arrangement with *Alias*, students studying in any area that teaches the use of *Maya* as part of a larger curriculum of choreography, movement, design or transmedia (and potentially others) could also receive a level 3 certification in this widely-used software application. Of course, the new and upgraded machines will be of general use to other students using the lab also.

### 2. *Audience*

Students in the College of Fine Arts have expressed a growing interest in high-end, industry-standard applications like *Alias Maya*. Coupled with the potential of an industry certification to add to their resumes, this represents a real opportunity for industry cooperation in the educational goals of the college.

### 3. *Description of Facilities, Equipment, and Staff*

No additional facilities will be required for this project as the new and upgraded machines will be located in an existing lab. At least one faculty member has expressed an interest in obtaining the *Alias Maya* software certification and the college will also certify one staff member. This will ensure good support on the application for students.

### 4. *Budget*

Item	Cost
(4) 350 MHz, Pentium II, NT computers	\$10,000
Additional RAM for 10 NT machines (10 @ \$210 each)	\$2,100
(10) <i>Alias Maya</i> software licenses	\$2,500
(10) High-End video cards for NT machines	\$4,000
Additional disk storage for rendering	\$2,400
<b>Preliminary Total</b>	<b>\$21,000</b>

## **IV. Instructional Technology Funding Overview**

Information Technology funding in the College of Fine Arts has been derived up to now from one of three sources: Information Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC) distribution of student fees collected campus-wide, student fees collected by the college and its departments, and other college funds such as annually budgeted special equipment money.

### *A. Information Technology Advisory Committee Funding*

Each year since the beginning of the ITAC distribution, the college has received project-oriented allocations that were used to construct each of the four student computer laboratories and will also pay for the multimedia classrooms. An accompanying ITAC allocation has provided money for equipment maintenance and upgrade in the student labs as well.

### *B. College of Fine Arts Fees*

The college also collects several fees that provide a portion of the Information Technology annual budget. A Learning Resource Center fee is used primarily to fund IT personnel (Office of Computing Technologies) and staffing for the Fine Arts Microcomputer Laboratory (FAML). Each of the academic departments (viz., Department of Art and Art History, School of Music and the Department of Theatre

and Dance) charge a fee to their majors for departmental lab funding. These fees are also used primarily for personnel. A college-wide equipment use fee is used to purchase both computer and non-computer related equipment.

### *C. Other College and Departmental Funding*

The remaining IT funding is provided by a variety of college and departmental sources such as special equipment money, and ticket revenues and rental fees (in the case of the Performing Arts Center). Grants provide a small portion of the budget each year also.

### *D. Life Cycle Methodology*

Up to now, college efforts have gone into providing Information Technology to faculty, staff and students for the first time. Funding from the three previously mentioned sources has been used as needed to meet the goals of the original vision plan. It has taken the combined effort of all college IT personnel just to keep up with the rapid acquisition of technology. The priority has been on getting equipment and software into service where none previously existed.

Clearly, now that some of the original equipment is reaching the end of its useful life, life cycle funding is an increasingly important consideration. Therefore, a new committee has been formed to study computing in the College of Fine Arts and produce a new Vision Plan. Life cycle funding will be one of the many issues addressed as this committee sets a direction for college Information Technology efforts in the new millennium.

## **Appendix**

### *Information Technology Expenditures for FY 1997-98*

<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Equipment</b>	<b>Physical Plant</b>	<b>Telephone</b>	<b>Supplies, etc.</b>	<b>Total</b>
ITAC Funds		\$ 91,564	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,949	<b>\$ 94,514</b>
State Funds	\$ 83,735	\$ 169,201	\$ 63,378	\$ 80,715	\$ 57,041	<b>\$ 454,070</b>
Local Funds	\$ 328,667	\$ 667,319	\$ 109,440	\$ 25,648	\$ 11,247	<b>\$ 1,142,321</b>
Endowment Funds		\$ 41,062	\$ 4,127	\$ 16,419	\$ 2,973	<b>\$ 64,580</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 412,402</b>	<b>\$ 969,145</b>	<b>\$ 176,944</b>	<b>\$ 122,782</b>	<b>\$ 74,211</b>	<b>\$ 1,755,484</b>

### *College Infrastructure Summary*

100% of the college is connected to Utnet. The college network was upgraded in January 1998 to a 100 Mbit switched backbone with 10 Mbit Ethernet available in all rooms and 100 Mbit service available in all buildings.

### *Computer Facilities*

Fine Arts Microcomputer Laboratory (FAML)– FAB 3.2

Art Laboratory (ARTL) – ART 1.206

Design Laboratory (DESL) – ART 1.202

Music Microcomputer Laboratory (MML) – MBE 3.122

Theatre & Dance Laboratory (TaDLab) – WIN 1.138

*Technology Classrooms*

Teleconference Suite – MRH 2.636

Electronic Classroom – FAB 3.2

*Multimedia Classrooms*

Recital Studio – MRH 2.608

DFA 2.204 (Scheduled completion, June 1999)

ART 1.102 (Scheduled completion, September 1999)

WIN 2.112 (Scheduled completion, January 2000)

*Recital Studio Multimedia Upgrade Cost Summary*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Fixtures	\$ 1,500.00
Projection System	\$ 13,519.00
Video and Audio Control	\$ 11,174.25
Audio/Video Hardware	\$ 7,032.00
Ceiling Audio System Upgrade	\$ 534.30
Lighting and Control Systems	\$ 7,607.97
Computers	\$ 5,447.04
Misc.	\$ 1,604.80
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 48,419.36</b>