Full Proposal for the Provost Productivity Grant

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Photographic Arts
College of Imaging Arts and Sciences

1. Title/Summary

Digital Photography Workbook

A booklet that will serve as a required textbook for students in the Photographic Arts program in the College of Imaging Arts and Sciences. The book will serve two purposes: to educate students in the relevant capabilities of imaging software programs equivalent to their overall experience, and to provide guidance and instruction in the use of high-end digital capture and scanning equipment used in our laboratories.

I will be researching, writing, designing, and supervising the printing of the book. I am estimating that the book will be 50-60 pages in length, and will be digitally printed on three-hole paper for insertion into a binder. Students will purchase the book through the campus bookstore at cost. Digital printing is required, as photographic-quality illustrations will be necessary for examples. The book will be primarily black and white but will include an 8-page color section, also necessary to provide examples.

Although no other faculty are included in the grant proposal, faculty from both the photography and printing programs have agreed to provide suggestions and advice.

Money has been requested to cover the cost of the first printing. Proceeds from the sale of the book will be used to pay for reprints of the book every year for new students. Revisions of the book will be necessary only with major upgrades to software and new equipment in the labs. I am anticipating revisions to the book every other year and I would not need to apply for additional grants from this committee to do so as the revisions would be minor enough to be part of my normal teaching load.

Questions have been raised as to why this couldn't be an on-line document saving printing costs. My experience, and that of my colleagues, has been that it is next to impossible to work with a software package and an image on screen and effectively consult a text, which is also displayed on the same screen. In earlier courses we found the students to be much more comfortable referring to a printed text as a learning tool. It is possible that at some point this document could go online but for our purposes it is much more effective as a hard-copy document.

2. Targeted Learners

The book will be targeted to second-year students in the School of Photographic Arts. The second-year program (Photography II) is considered part of our "foundation" program in the school. After completion of the second year students enter their major programs which include Fine-Art Photography, Photo-Journalism, Advertising Photography, and an anticipated new program titled "Visual Media". There are currently 180 students in the second-year program; additionally, approximately 20 transfer students take this course during the summer.

While the book is being produced for Photographic Arts students I certainly could see it being used in other programs in the School of Photography, including Photo Technology and Biomedical Photography. It also could be useful in the photography courses taught in various new media programs within the college.

3. Anticipated Impact on Teaching and/or Learning
The faculty of the School of Photographic Arts has been trying, for many years, to seamlessly integrate digital technologies into its core programs and classes. Currently, there are no classes in our program that are driven by a particular software package. Digital imaging is only one aspect of photography taught in our programs and the challenge has been to present this information simply and clearly as one part of the many educational objectives written into the curriculum. Unlike many disciplines (Graphic Design is a good example) photography is far from becoming totally "digital". So the problem has been to strike a balance between traditional "analog" forms of photography and the emerging digital ones. A large part of the problem has been the lack of a suitable textbook to introduce aspects of digital imaging that relate closely to the traditional forms of photography we teach in the first two years. Most of the texts we've examined cover (or attempt to cover) all of the capabilities available in Photoshop. However, for our 1st and 2nd-year students much of this information is irrelevant, and worse, confusing. While Photoshop is an exceptional program it contains many functions our students do not need to know at this point in their education.

The anticipated impact would be to clarify the essential tools and skills necessary for the successful implementation of digital imaging into our 2nd-year curriculum. The book would extend upon and improve the basic skills taught in the first-year. It would also benefit the faculty, many of whom are still learning the basics of digital photography. It is my goal to make this book mirror the curriculum for digital photography in the second-year so both students and faculty in the 9 sections are learning and teaching the same material.

4. Measuring/Reporting/Sharing

Measuring the impact of the publication will take several forms.

- A survey form will be designed for all students to complete which will measure the relative success of the piece. Changes could then be made based on the responses.
- Formal meetings throughout the year with the faculty to discuss issues relating to the effectiveness of the book.
- Informal discussions with faculty and technical staff.
- Informal discussions with 2nd-year students.
- Faculty evaluation of work (photographs) in class critiques and displays. My concern will relate to technical issues: how students use the book to improve the technical quality of their photographs.

I will report my findings in a written summary, completed after the third quarter of 2003. The report will include my personal observations and evaluation, observations and evaluations of the faculty teaching the course, the evaluation of the department chair, and samplings taken from the student evaluations.

I would share the following in a faculty forum:

- Results from the student survey and faculty interviews gauging the effectiveness of the book as a teaching tool.
- Examples of work (photographs) created by students using digital photography.
- Observations by technical staff members relating to equipment usage as covered in the book.
5. Rationale

a. Why it is not part of regular college business

While the faculty in our program often use textbooks, it is unusual for them to write their own. The production of a book like this involves a great deal of time to conduct research, present that research in writing, assemble (design) that research in a form that is easy to comprehend, and oversee the printing of the information. I have received 1/2 release time during the upcoming spring quarter to work on this project and I will be spending a great deal of time on it over the summer as well. It would be impossible to pursue such a project working with a full teaching schedule and have it completed in time for implementation during the fall quarter of 2002. Funding for the printing of the first run would also be difficult to accomplish within the constraints of the department budget.

b. Relevance to required cluster, college, and/or department competencies.

As discussed in section 3, the integration of digital photography into our 2nd-year curriculum has been an ongoing process for the past several years. Currently, digital imaging is being taught by some of the faculty, all of whom have varying degrees of experience, without a clear definition of what should be taught as outlined in the curriculum or course description. Our 1st-year program has just revised its curriculum and has fully integrated digital imaging into it. Currently, the 2nd-year program is doing the same; I am a member on a committee charged with this task. One of our charges is to bring more advanced concepts of digital photography into the curriculum, enough so that once the students enter their major field (each one of them with their own specialized requirements) they will have a solid skill set in both traditional (analog) and digital photography.

The committee recognizes that a clearly defined set of goals and educational outcomes must be realized. This book is an attempt to do that. It will provide an outline of both hardware and software skills necessary for the student to be successful in his/her major program. As such, it will not only act as an instructional text but as a guide to the educational requirements written into the curriculum.

c. Relevance to other faculty and the transfer of success from this project to them.

As mentioned above, the faculty currently teaching in the 2nd-year curriculum bring a variety of digital imaging experience into the classroom. Some are very familiar with the process, others not at all. Looking at the bewildering array of current software applications can be a daunting experience for students as well as teachers who have spent the majority of their careers working with traditional processes, myself included.

The book proposal would be relevant to the faculty for the following reasons:

- By defining the most effective tools available in imaging software (primarily Adobe Photoshop) the faculty member could improve classroom presentations and increase their own knowledge of digital processes.

- By serving as an outline of the course curriculum the book would serve as a reminder of what will be covered in the course, and what will not. Students who wish to pursue more
advanced software applications would be encouraged to do so through electives in their 3rd and 4th years.

- As a document that can be continually revised and updated, faculty contributions to the publication could be encouraged. Information could even be printed and distributed during the year. This would be a very effective way of getting faculty involved as well as offering a broader perspective to the students.

d. Relevant credentials/experience

Although I will be consulting faculty from both the printing and photography departments of CIAS I will be responsible for the writing and design of the book.

I have taught Digital Photography at RIT since 1994 and was the second faculty member in the department to teach the course. Two years later, I helped write the course Introduction to Electronic Imaging, an introductory course which, at that time, was a requirement in the 2nd-year program. The same course was moved to the 1st-year two years later and I served as coordinator of the course for 8 years. As coordinator, I was responsible for arranging lecture material, selecting textbooks, hiring of adjunct faculty, writing exams, and revising the course material as software and hardware continued to develop. At the same time I taught the course Digital Photography, an elective class which followed Introduction to Electronic Imaging. It is the content of Digital Photography that we are working on integrating into the 2nd-year curriculum. My personal photographic work as well as much of my commercial work utilizes digital imaging technologies.

In addition, over the last two years I have been taking courses in both the Printing and Graphic Design departments. Relevant courses include: Digital Workflow, Color Separation Systems, History of the Book, Typography II, and Symbol/Icon. With the input from my colleagues in these departments I feel qualified and confident that I can produce this document.

e. How this innovation will fit in my discipline or program

My proposal is to write a document unique to the curriculum requirements for students in our Photographic Arts program. As it will teach students to both effectively use equipment found in our laboratories and intelligently use software to produce photographs consistent with the requirements of our 2nd-year program it will serve as a valuable learning tool.

Timetable

March 8: - Research begins.  
- Faculty consultation.  
- Equipment testing and evaluation.

March 22: - Grant notification. If a grant is not awarded a greatly reduced document will still be produced as a result of the release-time given. If a grant is awarded design and layout considerations will begin.

Mid-May: - After commencement, writing and layout of the book will begin.

Mid-to-late August: - Document delivered to “Hub” for printing. Publication to be available in the campus bookstore at the beginning of the fall quarter.
Grant Application Budget 2002

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Salaries and Materials are for the purchase of supplies and services for the project. Salaries are for faculty and staff, including graduate assistants and student workers. Other includes professional services, consultants, and staff support. Funds will be available for travel through the letter will be considered if a direct connection can be demonstrated between the project and a given conference. Projects will be evaluated for their potential to contribute to the goals of the grant.
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**Support Provided** by college in addition to grant requested: applicable.

**Educational Technology Center**

*Additional support estimated:*