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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Office of the Provost & Vice Principal

Academic & Research

MEMORANDUM

Date: March 24, 2011
To: UBC Okanagan Senate
Attention: Nathalie Hager Manager, Okanagan Senate Secretariat
From: Dr. Alaa Abd-El-Aziz,
Provost and Vice Principal Academic and Research Okanagan
Re: Establishment of *The Centre for Culture and Technology* in the Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies – Acting Dean Kenneth Phillips (information)

In compliance with Senate *Policy O-5 – Research Centres and Research Institutes* found on the Senate website at: <http://www.senate.ubc.ca/okanagan/policies.cfm> I am bringing the creation of the Centre for Culture and Technology in the Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies to the attention of the Okanagan Senate. This item is for information only.

Acting Dean Kenneth Phillips will speak to the creation of this research centre.

**A Proposal to the UBC Okanagan Provost
for the Establishment of a Research Centre to be called “The Centre for Culture and Technology”
February 14, 2011**

The Department of Creative Studies, on the recommendation of the Head, proposes to establish a Research Centre to be called “The Centre for Culture and Technology” (CCT) under the UBC Okanagan Senate Policy 0-5 “Research Centres & Research Institutes.”

The host faculty of the Centre for Culture and Technology will be the Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies. The project or theme-based mandate focuses on creative and scholarly inquiry into multiple forms of art, media and technologies as a vehicle for expression of community, culture, identity and dialogue. A key role of the Centre is to advance research/creation processes and theoretical discourse in the dynamic field of culture and technology in order to consider rapid changes in technologies themselves as well as their reflection of, and influence on our cultures and communities. Through this focus, the Centre will foster innovation in computer-based multimedia technology and its associated practices by building bridges between technology, community, and culture.

This Centre will benefit from being housed in the Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies as it is the faculty that houses both the theoretical and artistic elements to contribute to a research/ creation mandate.

The Director of the Centre will be Dr. Aleksandra Dulic who will report to the Dean of the Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies who in turn will report to the Provost on matters related to the Research Centre.

The management plan of the Centre for Culture and Technology is attached to this proposal.

Management Plan for The Centre for Culture and Technology

Mandate:

The Centre for Culture and Technology will foster innovation in computer-based multimedia technology and its associated practices by building bridges between technology, community and culture. It will develop new approaches to digital technology by integrating the embodied intelligence embedded in expressive arts, crafts and traditional ways of knowing with design processes in culturally appropriate forms. The Centre will promote research that brings art and science into contact within a technological context to develop a critical awareness of the dynamic relationship between culture and technology. As a state-of-the-art laboratory engaged in innovative research, the Centre will develop meaningful content, artwork and services, support innovation processes, expand new knowledge transmission strategies for cultural expression and communicate cultural knowledge to audiences across a range of age groups and cultures — particularly in collaboration and in community-based research. The Centre will take on the important mediatory role of communicating these strategies to the public and to researchers, both nationally and internationally.

The research facility will be located at UBC O's Administration Building (044) and will house the equipment and reconfigurable laboratory space. The space will be a venue for community members and researchers to develop, test, and evaluate a range of culturally situated technologies in a laboratory setting. The Centre will employ high-bandwidth communication technologies to enable archiving digital objects and collaboration with national and international community and university partners. Mobile equipment will allow researchers to work on projects in the field with community members.

Aleksandra Dulic will direct the implementation and ongoing day-to-day management of Centre for Culture and Technology and determine the priority-of-use for the research facility and infrastructure. Priority will be assigned to activities directly related to the CCT research projects and those of graduate students and community partners, followed by collaborative and visiting research partners, other UBC O's researchers and their graduate students, and external researchers. Upgrades of the equipment or acquisition of new equipment will be assessed on the basis of need. Future upgrades will be financed through research and equipment grants.

Sources of Funding:

Renovations to the Administration building are currently being applied for through Canadian Foundation for Innovation (Dr. Aleksandra Dulic and Stephen Foster).

Several projects are being proposed for this space and applications for funding have been made. A summary of these applications is listed below.

Project One: "Experiencing Climate Change Scenarios Through Virtual Landscape Composer"
PI: Dr Dulic Funding (Confirmed): 2008/10 SSHRC Image, Text, Sound and Technology Fund \$49,998.00; 2011 FCCS Dean's office: \$18,000 UBCO 2008/11 Work Study program approx: \$36,000; Funding (applied for): SSHRC Standard Research Grant 2011/14 \$ 249,823

Project Two: “Hybrid Places: Relocating Hypermedia with Context Aware Locative Art.”

PI: Dr Dulic Funding (applied for): SSHRC Research and Creation Grant 2011/2014 \$248,000; Canada Council For the Arts \$60,000

Future Directions: The Centre will develop partnerships with the South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program and the Centre for Species at Risk and Habitat Studies (SARAHs) at UBC Okanagan with an aim to develop a new 3D simulation game that will encapsulate challenges and solutions to climate change issues and threat of habitat loss in Okanagan. Building on the experience Dr. Dulic gained in project one, the CCT will bring together ecological knowledge environmental science, 3D modeling, artistic, and traditional expressions in a way that is interactive, media rich, and accessible. The Centre aims to bring an interdisciplinary team of researchers, storytellers and craft practitioners to develop content and user interface for a mixed-reality exhibit depicting South Okanagan lands, species and cultural heritage in order to personalize the challenges of developing solutions to climate change, species at risk and habitat science issues through an engaging interactive exhibit. Funding will be applied for through SSHRC and The Canada Council for the Arts Interarts grant.

Schedule for Review:

After three years, the Centre for Culture and Technology will be reviewed by the Head of Creative Studies and the Dean of the Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies, in consultation with the Director and other users, to determine if the mandate is being fulfilled and if the funding has been forthcoming. If the review is satisfactory, the research centre will continue as a research centre. If the review is unsatisfactory, the centre will have two more years to fulfill its mandate.

After five years, the CCT will be reviewed again by the Head of Creative Studies and the Dean of the Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies, in consultation with the Director and other users. If the review is satisfactory, the centre will continue or can be considered for transition to a research institute or other type of unit. If the review is unsatisfactory, the CCT will be discontinued when appropriate.