THE NEED TO REVISE THE VAT PROGRAM CURRICULUM

The VAT Faculty propose changes to the curriculum based on a 5-year period of development. These changes respond to three overlapping areas of concern: The needs of the institution, the needs of our students, and the requirements of the National Science Foundation Grant. The proposed changes consist of descriptions of existing courses, creation of new courses and reshaping of the VAT curriculum.

Areas of concern.

1. The needs of the institution require that: A) we fulfill our pedagogical responsibilities by staying current in the teaching of time-sensitive technologies; B) we maintain and increase enrollment in the Program; and, C) we reach out to all new and enrolled BMCC students to make the program accessible to anyone who wishes to pursue higher education in this field.

   In addition the VAT program will benefit from strengthening core academic competencies in order to improve performance on the CPE exam, rates of graduation, and other measures of achievement in the college.

2. The needs of the VAT students are to graduate with a cluster of skills -- academic, cognitive, interpersonal and technical -- that will prepare them to succeed in the competitive and fast changing moving-image industry or in a four-year college program.

   Students need to have a carefully structured curriculum that provides enough flexibility for working students/parents to enroll in classes and sections that advance their progress towards graduation while providing a choice of lab-production and non-production courses. We also know that many of our students require an introduction to basic science and technology concepts and terminology.

3. The National Science Foundation imposes a specific timetable and separate requirements.

   First, the NSF grant requires that we infuse HD technology into the syllabi of 11 of our courses through a 4-semester cycle over the life of the grant. This is not the same as creating new courses because it addressed the type of technology that will prevail in 2008, but not learning principles and outcomes. This infusion of HD technology is separate from the institutional process for presenting new or revised courses to the BMCC Curriculum Committee, Faculty Council, etc.

   Second, the NSF grant requires that all aspects of the VAT program -- including teaching and recruiting -- encourage the enrollment and success of women and nontraditional students.
Demographically, male students are the majority in the VAT program in a college whose majority is female. Women are under-represented in the Program.

This broader initiative has resulted in the addition of tutoring, College Now courses, and new outreach programs, as well as the reshaping of the curriculum to be more attractive, more up-to-date, and more flexible. This is a crucial part of the strategy for bringing women into the VAT program. Information about these program enhancements as well as the course descriptions are critical to our recruitment efforts.

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**Proposed Changes**

**Substituting new courses for current courses.**

**Problem:**
- When the CCC course descriptions were written, video technology was more stable and long-lived than it is today. Course descriptions that include specific hardware and software references are now obsolete and misleading.

**Solution:**
- The VAT faculty have created new courses to replace five exiting VAT courses and the course descriptions differ from their predecessors in the following ways: 1) We have described learning outcomes and 2) We eliminated references to specific hardware and software models or configurations. We have added some new language to describe the learning outcomes. The changes include clearer explication of learning outcomes and omission of specific time-sensitive hardware and software references. The learning outcomes of the course remain constant and will not change when new technology is used. (See Appendix A.)

- **Recommended action:**
  
  The VAT faculty request that, following a thorough review, these changes be approved and included immediately in advertising and recruitment materials. Updating our course descriptions is crucial to our recruitment efforts. Our obsolete marketing materials discourage potential students from enrolling in the college.

**Adding New Courses**

**Problems:**
- Some skills and learning outcomes that are important in the contemporary Video Industry are not being taught in our curriculum.

- Some skills and knowledge sets need to be emphasized to attract more women and non-traditional students and to insure their success.
Solution:

- We are teaching new courses to enhance writing skills (VAT 151 “From Script to Screen.”), to promote technological literacy (VAT 100 “Introduction to Video Technology”), and to teach special-effects/modeling skills (VAT/MMP 401 “Introduction to 3D Animation”).

- We have written 2 new courses to address the need for ever-expanding technological expertise: VAT 350, “Digital Video Publishing” and VAT 120, “Career Planning/The Digital Portfolio.”

- We have created a course that addresses the skills needed for success in an enormous portion of the video industry: the producing and management of media projects. This course is VAT 305 Production Management (and replaces CCC 300, “Budgeting for Audio-Visual Productions.”)

- We will develop a course in Digital Cinematography to address creative aspects of capturing and using the moving image. VAT 3XX is part of the NSF grant and is scheduled for development next in 2007-2008.

All new courses were designed in consultation with our steering committee. VAT 350, VAT 305 and VAT 3xx were approved at the 4/26/06 meeting of the curriculum committee.

See Appendix B

Recommended Action:

The VAT faculty request consultation and support for approval and implementation of these recommended changes.

Reshaping the Curriculum:

Problem;
Recent changes in the video/audio industry, specifically the convergence of video/audio/effects editing, make the audio courses (VAT 165 “Sound for Performance and Digital Media I” and VAT 265 “Sound for Performance and Digital Media II.”) increasingly attractive to many VAT majors. Structuring the Audio and Video courses as separate FOMIs has blocked access to these course for many VAT majors and discouraged successful completion of the degree program.

Solution:

We propose to collapse the FOMIs so that the Audio FOMI be eliminated and all VAT majors choose 4 of the 6 basic lab-production courses and one additional elective. We offer 9 high-quality VAT production courses (3 of which are electives) This will give our students more flexibility in selecting courses and scheduling class time to match their
interests without sacrificing the quality of the hands-on preparation that distinguishes our program within CUNY.

Other changes allow all VAT majors to choose between CIS 100 “Introduction to Computer Applications” and MMP 100 “Introduction to Multimedia” and to choose between SPE 240 “Interpersonal Communication” and SPE 245 “The Mass Media.”

Examples of the increased flexibility offered by the new Curriculum:

**Student A** wishes to be a camerawoman. She takes VAT 161 “Studio Production I” and VAT 261 “Studio Production II” for experience in operating studio HD cameras and takes VAT 171 “Remote Productions and Editing I” and VAT 271 “Remote Productions and Editing II” for experience in shooting with hand held cameras and doing post production on the footage. She may then add VAT 3xx “Digital Cinematography” or VAT 302 “Lighting for Television.”

**Student B** wants to become a producer/director. She may take VAT 161 “Remote Productions and Editing I” and VAT 261 “Remote Productions and Editing II” to get maximum experience in the studio and the control room. She then broadens her knowledge by learning about dialogue replacement and sound mixing in VAT 165 “Sound for Performance and Digital Media” and shooting on location through VAT 171 “Remote Productions and Editing I”. Her best elective will be VAT 305 “Production Management.”

**Student C** wants to work in Video/Audio but is not ready to narrow her interest during her time at BMCC. She can take VAT 161, VAT 165, and VAT 171, and any 200 level lab-production course. She can sample graphics by taking VAT 301, “Introduction to Graphics for Television”.

Each of these students will graduate with extensive experience in hands-on courses as well as VAT foundation courses and basic liberal arts courses.

These recommended changes are consistent with the preferences of the moving image industry and enhance the qualifications of our students in an intensely competitive market for both entry-level opportunities and career advancement.

All of the revisions listed above have been approved by the curriculum committee of the VAT Program and were passed by the Speech Department on 9/13/06.

See Appendix C Proposed Program requirements.

**Recommended action:**

The VAT faculty request approval of the curriculum revision described above for implementation in the Fall 2007 and inclusion in advertising and promotion pursuant to university approval.