

November 06, 2019

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing in enthusiastic support of the English Department's application for a Bachelor of Science in English. Over the past several years, the English Department has been developing a robust program in Digital Humanities (DH). We have hired three new faculty members specializing in DH and have developed several courses in the field. In this, we are following one of the most exciting developments in the field of English and Literary Studies, as more and more scholars are exploring the work of literary and cultural production across media. As we seek to offer our students the most comprehensive and relevant education in Literary Studies, DH has become an essential complement to our literary history, cultural studies, and theory courses. A BS degree in English will recognize the new shape of our department and our field; it will offer students the opportunity to specialize in this exciting area and offer them the opportunity to develop the quantitative reasoning skills essential to the study of DH.

In addition to the development of our DH program, we have also developed a very popular set of courses in Video Game Narrative. These courses recognize an important new area of cultural development, one that is central to many of our students' lives, and one that has developed into an artform that is as sophisticated, rigorous, and worthy of study as any other. Our Video Game Narrative courses explore the full range of video games, offering students both a historical perspective on their development and the theoretical tools with which to understand them—and indeed make them. A key component of the audience for these courses is students from the U's very successful Electronic Arts and Engineering program, and we have worked closely with EAE to develop courses that introduce their students to the critical tools and narrative theory that are essential to video game production and development. As with our DH program, students taking the Video Game Narrative track will benefit from developing the quantitative skills of a BS degree.

It's important to emphasize that the BS in English will be an English degree; students will master the same skills that all our majors learn: critical reasoning, close reading of texts of all kinds, the fundamentals of literary history, and a broad understanding of contemporary culture in all its diversity and complexity. The learning outcomes of our BA in English will be shared by the new BS degree, while the latter offers our students a chance to study some of the important new directions of the current field of English.

Sincerely yours,



Scott Black  
Professor and Chair of English



## Letter Endorsing the Proposed Bachelor of Science in English

The College of Humanities has endorsed this proposed degree. I strongly support a B.S. option in English and that will not only provide students with a more direct pathway into the contemporary workforce but will also allow them to engage productively and creatively with the crucial intellectual possibilities and problems of this moment. The proposal does an excellent job of outlining the career opportunities opened up for English majors whose verbal skills are supplemented by a familiarity with new digital media and methodologies. I would also underscore that these students will be better positioned to collaborate in interdisciplinary research projects. The Department of English has already begun recruiting a faculty with strengths in these areas, provided leadership for the Marriott Library's Digital Matters Lab, and developed a certificate in Digital Humanities. The new degree program would not require any new hires and the courses it requires are already being taught regularly. As the proposal notes, these classes are among the most popular of the department's courses and appeal to and benefit majors in other areas, such as Entertainment Arts and Engineering. The B.S. option would call attention to and foster this exchange among disciplines.

The University of Utah's Department of English has long been recognized for the quality of its Creative Writing Program and indeed fostering creativity is at the core of the department's mission. It is obvious that creative work will increasingly take place in and through digital work. However, technology is also changing other aspects of literary research and instruction as it recasts how we understand and analyze texts, and the courses included here introduce students to those developments in literacy.

Other English Departments in Utah's state system have introduced similar degrees. One reason, which I want to emphasize, is that the B.S. option is much more compatible with the coursework of our community college transfers. The key difference from the B.A. is that competency in a second language is replaced by more extensive work in quantitative reasoning. While I remain a strong supporter of bilingual education, there is no doubt that mastery of quantitative reasoning is increasingly critical in every workplace, and even more valuable when it is complemented by the verbal reasoning skills, creative thinking and problem-solving these majors will develop from their literary studies. This degree option reflects a well-conceived and, I believe, necessary approach to ensuring that literary study will remain a vital discipline in an evolving university.

Sincerely,

Stuart Culver  
Dean, College of Humanities

November 1, 2019

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed Bachelor of Science in English. The proposed degree will be an exceptional complement to the EAE Bachelor of Science in Games, and I'm very excited to see the degree be approved. The Video Game Storytelling track in the proposed degree fills a demonstrated need among a group of students and potential employers that is not addressed by our Bachelor of Science in Games. Further, the degree provides a significant educational experience for students interested in the ideas of computing, interactivity and humanities, and it will support students for whom computational approaches to expression, through the lens of game creation, is a central value. Scholarly work in digital humanities, including those aspects of narrative at the core of games, has emerged as a significant area of study, and this degree provides students with the concepts and knowledge at the heart of this field.

EAE and the Department of English have a strong track record of collaboration around curriculum at the intersection of storytelling and game design, and faculty from each of our units share affiliate faculty status with the other. The department's excellent faculty and their clear appreciation for and engagement with the role of games scholarship in the context of a modern and integrative view of their discipline makes the Department of English well qualified to offer this new degree. I believe the proposed Bachelor of Science in English is a very innovative and timely offering, and it will further raise the profile of the University of Utah as a worldwide leader in academic games programs. I look forward to working with you in making this new degree a success.

Sincerely yours,



R. Michael Young, Ph.D.  
Interim Director, Entertainment Arts and Engineering  
Professor, School of Computing  
University of Utah



THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

## Digital Matters

November 6, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I write to show my enthusiastic support for the Bachelor of Science in English proposal. Since 2017, I have been director of Digital Matters, a digital humanities lab and program at the University of Utah, housed in the Marriott Library. I am also an associate professor of English and author of *Illegal Literature: Toward a Disruptive Creativity* (University of Minnesota Press), and coeditor of *Techno-Orientalism: Imagining Asia in Speculative Fiction, History, Media* (Rutgers University Press).

Digital Matters offers several points of intersection between the Bachelor of Science degree in English. Currently, Digital Matters occupies lab space in the Marriott Library, where we have access to 3D printing stations, an array of Virtual Reality headsets, along with myriad planned resources, including machine learning desktops. Moreover, we have a robust array of workshops, lectures, projects that currently caters more to researchers, faculty, and graduate students designed to integrate research in the arts and humanities with technology.

We have two dimensions in our next phase of foundation-building. The first is physical: we are in the process of planning and fundraising the multimillion dollar construction of a new lab space in the Marriott Library that will house several technology-related entities, including Digital Matters, as well as classrooms, conference rooms, collaborative areas, a fabrication lab, audio/visual studios, and a dedicated VR/AR studio. The second is programmatic: we are planning to integrate into undergraduate teaching and research by offering module courses on software platforms and tools to complement digital humanities inflected courses, which would include courses in the Bachelor of Science curriculum. Moreover, should undergraduate students want to engage in research, we are more than open to students who are interested in working on their projects in the lab and can offer our expertise and resources.

We welcome the opportunity to work closely with the Department of English in supporting their B.S. in English degree program, and strongly encourage the committee to carefully consider the proposal. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

David Roh, Ph. D.  
Director, Digital Matters Lab  
Associate Professor, Department of English  
University of Utah  
[david.roh@utah.edu](mailto:david.roh@utah.edu)  
(801) 581-3082

November 5, 2019

To whom it may concern:

The School of Computing is pleased to support the proposed BS for English degree curriculum requirement of COMP 1010: Programming for All. This course was developed for a broad, cross-disciplinary set of students and there are currently materials and assignments in the course based on Digital Humanities examples and concepts. We expect students from the English BS degree program to be a valued demographic in demonstrating the campus-wide appeal of the course.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David E. Johnson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. David E. Johnson  
Assistant Professor, Lecturer  
School of Computing  
University of Utah

06 November 2019

Dear J. Willard Marriott Library,

The English Department is currently requesting approval for a new undergraduate Bachelor of Science in English. As part of that process, we are asked to provide the Library with a letter outlining the resources we might require as part of the new program. Initiating the B.S. degree in English would require no new Library resources.

As the program grows, however, we hope that the close collaborative relationship between the English Department and Digital Matters in Marriott Library will be an asset to English majors studying Digital Humanities, new media, and video game design. Dr. David Roh has informed us that Digital Matters is currently in the process of formalizing workshops and classes that would complement the B.S. in English. If an English class designed with B.S. students in mind assigned a project entailing web design or video editing, for example, DM may organize training crafted to their interests and the projects that they are pursuing. This prospect of individual students and/or whole classes receiving specialized instruction from DM affiliates further enhances the depth of experience and preparation that the English department is able to offer its majors. These workshops and classes would take advantage of the DM space within the Library. However, the frequency and size of the workshops and classes will be completely determined by DM, and thus the English Department anticipates no strain on existing Library resources or need for any acquisition of new resources.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,



Jessica Straley  
Associate Professor  
Associate Chair of English, and Director of Undergraduate Studies  
Jessica.straley@utah.edu