

# Innovative Delivery of Master's Programs

Peter Diffley,  
University of Hartford

Thomas Scott,  
San Diego State University

# Low Residency MFA

- \* Students: professional artists who can't leave their studios for long to earn a degree.
- \* Their motivation: to get their creative juices flowing again, broaden their professional networks, and/or earn the terminal teaching credential.
- \* Their locale: anywhere.

# Low Residency MFA

- \* Faculty includes:
  - \* College of Art full time faculty
  - \* Adjunct art school faculty
  - \* Visiting instructors who are very successful professional artists, curators, or gallery owners
- \* Administrators:
  - \* Director (management, faculty and student recruiting, curriculum, program quality control)
  - \* Asst Director (student recruiting and management, site management)

# Program Structure

- \* **Summer 1-2.** On campus. 12 days. 10-12 hr days. 4 courses plus studios. Work/eat/live together.
- \* **Interim:** Continue to work on course work thesis project. Counsel and criticism is provided over the internet.
- \* **Fall 1-2.** Distant site. 6 days. Finish old courses start 2 new courses.
- \* **Interim.** As above
- \* **Spring 1-2.** Distant site. 6 days. Finish old courses and start new courses.
- \* **Interim.** As above
- \* **Summer 3.** On campus. 12 days. Finish up courses and thesis. Faculty evaluation of thesis and art exhibit. Graduation. Celebration dinner.

# Advantages of low residency

- \* National/International pool of potential students.
- \* Limited “off-season” use of on-campus facilities.
- \* National/International pool of potential instructors.
- \* Limited time for both students and instructors to be away from their day-jobs.
- \* Enhanced visibility of the program, college, and university.

# Disadvantages

- \* Hiring a director with sufficient reputation and contacts to draw students and instructors.
- \* Expensive national marketing to kick-start the program.
- \* Complex and atypical management of the distant sites.

# Characteristics of disciplines where low residency works

- \* Work can be transmitted electronically.
- \* Students require extensive time to themselves to learn material.
- \* Work doesn't require continuous on-site mentoring.
- \* No required practical training (teaching, internships)
- \* Work that can be done "at home".
- \* Lecture-light instruction

# Examples of Programs that might work

- **Fine Arts:** Illustration, Photography
- **Humanities:** Literature, Languages, musicology
- **Science:** Mathematics
- **FieldScience:** sociology, ecology
- **Education:** Ed Technology
- **Business:** MBA, Public Admin.



# Disciplines that probably won't work

- \* **Work can't be transmitted electronically.** e.g., Sculpture, Painting, Dance, Architecture
- \* **Considerable on-site mentoring:** Music Performance, Dance, Exp. Science, Allied Health
- \* **Special Equipment needed:** Exp. Science, Engineering
- \* **Internships required:** Teacher education, many allied health and nursing specialties
- \* **Lecture-heavy disciplines:** Psy, Pol. Sci., History

# Where do Graduate Deans fit in the process?

- \* Plant the seed with the academic dean and give it a reason to grow.
- \* Defend the idea against traditionalists
- \* Carefully evaluate the new program proposal:
  - \* Academic rigor
  - \* Credentials of the faculty and instructors
  - \* Reputation and stamina of the first director
  - \* Operating budget
  - \* Recruiting strategy

# What do you do that's different?

- \* Blended campus/internet instruction
- \* Internet courses and programs
- \* Distant site
- \* Concentrated (weekends, summer only, etc)
- \* ???