**Weber State University  
2019 Strategic Planning Report (SPR)—LEZ FORM**

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* Department: Humanities
* Degree Program(s) Addressed in the report: Writing in the Humanities BA
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SPR TEMPLATE-LEZ FORM

1. STRATEGIC GOALS: To provide a contemporary, useful, and exciting new minor to WSU students; to shorten the time to completion for our majors and offer them an internship opportunity. Meeting both goals not only will enhance students’ skills and employability potential, it also will increase our SCH, decrease cost per SCH, and contribute to WSU’s overall mission.
   1. Initiative: Focus on Service Role

With enrollments in our major on a slow decline (see Program Review Dashboard), as is being seen at similar programs across the country (see link to Discipline Data), we are emphasizing our focus as a service department which will increase our SCHs and decrease cost per SCH.

* 1. Initiative: Focus on new Interdisciplinary Minor

In consultation with faculty from all other colleges at the institution, we are planning to develop a digital communications minor that will help students in every discipline be better prepared to enter the 21st-century workforce. The ability to leverage technology in written, web and oral communication is a collective skillset sought by local employers. This minor will allow students to develop these skills and practice them in real-world settings via internships and/or invited presentations to local employers. According to data from DWS (see link), graduates with digital skills have a decided advantage in the workforce.

* 1. Initiative: Focus on HIEEs for majors

We want all of our graduating seniors to have at least a one-semester community internship on their resumes. It will take time to develop appropriate community partners, but we intend that some students will develop their internships into permanent positions, thus setting up a self-perpetuating stream of opportunities for future students. Numerous studies (see link) indicate that HIEEs enhance student retention and completion.

1. ALIGNMENT OF UNIT GOALS TO AA OBJECTIVES:
   1. Value/Quality: Providing all students with an opportunity to graduate with skills sought by local employers will establish WSU as a critical partner in the economic development of our local communities. This could drive increased enrollment, increased philanthropy aimed at the institution, and excellent job placement opportunities.

Our faculty will have research opportunities around both the area of Digital Humanities as well as research focused on 21st-century workplace skill development. Our younger faculty are looking for interesting and unique research opportunities; this research can inform both our curriculum and our pedagogy.

We have met with most programs that require students to complete a minor; this includes programs in Health Professions, Business, Social Science, Science, and Applied Sciences. There has been great interest expressed in the minor, particularly because we are designing it in a way that allows students to develop further and hone the program outcomes of their majors while completing courses in the minor.

* 1. Affordability:

The department faculty members feel fairly certain that we can create and run this minor with our current faculty. As older faculty retire, we can look to hire PhDs with digital communication expertise. The result should be more SCHs at lower cost generated by the department.

We intend to seek partners to support needed software acquisitions and training thus keeping direct costs to students as low as possible.

We plan to design hybrid, online, and weekend courses to enhance enrollments of some of our lower-enrolled face-to-face classes. Ideally, this will provide students with improved opportunities to complete this program in a timely manner.

Once our students reach 90 credit hours, they tend to take, on average, another 2.5 years to complete their programs. However, we also lose about 17% of these students. We intend to begin following up with these students to determine why they are leaving and if there are strategies that can be put in place to help them complete their degrees.

* 1. Access/Growth:

We intend to increase our campus presence by providing a minor that appeals to students and programs across the institution. If successful, this will increase the overall demand for our courses.

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It is likely that some of the courses developed for the minor (which is 18 credit hours; 9 lower division, 9 upper division) will resonate with programs seeking to better prepare their students for the workforce. The optimal schedule may be during alternative times.

1. **RESOURCES REQUIRED:** As noted above, we will not need additional faculty. However, as one of our senior faculty member nears retirement, it will be important that we be allowed to retain that line so as to hire a new faculty member with digital humanities expertise.

In addition, we predict the following costs:

1. $500 to interview selected employers about their needs in digital humanities
2. $2,000 to support collaborative research on digital humanities and workplace implications. We will apply for a Hemingway grant to support this work.
3. Software acquisition and training. Here too we will work with industry partners, WSU’s IT Division, and Student Affairs computer lab staff, but we envision some costs in year two (2020-21). We also will apply for an AARC grant.
4. Travel funds for faculty to attend the Digital Humanities and the Workplace conference in 2021. (~$2000)
5. Human resource time for an admin or advisor to contact students who have reached 90 hours and need help in completing their programs.
6. One course reassignment ($3000 in IW) during fall 2020 for a faculty member to redesign HIEEs and internship opportunities.
7. **METRICS TO MEASURE SUCCESS:**

By the end of **spring 2020**: Curriculum required for the minor will have moved through the approval process and be in the catalog for all 2020.

We will have contacted DWS and selected employers to gather data that will have shaped the curriculum. Also will have advertised the curriculum to these employers and across campus.

Students with 90 SCH will have been contacted and advised on how to complete the major.

By the end of **fall 2020:** We will have evaluated optimal times and methods for teaching those courses in the minor and will shape our future schedules accordingly.

We will have applied for ARCC grants and explored what technology may be needed to support the program.

The faculty member assigned to work on HIEEs and internships will present findings at the end of semester and we will incorporate those findings in spring 2021.

By the end of **spring 2021:** Faculty will have attended the Digital Humanities Conference.

We will evaluate the number of minors enrolled, hoping for at least twelve at the end of this first year, and will survey them about their needs.

By the end of **fall 2021:** Faculty will have submitted research on digital humanities to conferences and publication outlets.

We will have at least twenty minors enrolled, preferably from a wide range of colleges.

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Looking out five years, it is difficult to know with certainty the exact technologies our students will be using. However, students grounded in the effective use of digital communication tools will be able to adapt easily. We have an opportunity to develop an innovative and decidedly useful minor for a large number of students.

1. **OTHER:** We have a collaborative faculty who work well together and learn well from each other. This proposal has the support of the majority of our faculty, several of whom have begun research efforts in support of this program.