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Proposing Additional Software Availability for GAND Students

 The Graphic and Animation Design (GAND) major is an exciting and innovative new program at Longwood, but currently it is suffering from a resources problem. There are no computer facilities on campus that have all the programs necessary for animation classes, and this has put students in a difficult situation on many occasions. To assist the program, I am proposing to implement animation software into a computer lab on campus for use by individual students and Graphic and Animation Design classes. This project will require several steps, including research, surveying the need for computer resources among GAND students and gathering their support, writing proposals to key people in charge of acquiring software, and advertising the addition of these computer programs into a campus computer lab.

 One of the first things that needs to be done for this project is research. In order to write proposals, I need to know how much money it would cost to implement my plan. The specific programs that I will request to be added are ZBrush and programs from the Autodesk suite, such as Maya and 3DS Max. The Autodesk programs are actually free for educational institutions so long as they register with the company (“Obtaining Software for Educational Institutions”). The more expensive part of my proposal is ZBrush. This program costs $399 for each computer of a volume educational license, with a minimum order of 10, which amounts to around $4,000 (“ZBrush”). To cut down on the price of making these programs available to GAND students, I have changed my project idea from creating a new computer facility to installing these programs in an existing computer lab. While I do think that eventually a dedicated computer lab would be useful for the program, right now the solution of installing the programs in an existing place will give students access to the programs sooner and save money for the department.

 Besides information about the budget, another important part of my proposal is demonstrating the need for a computer facility where students can access these programs. To show that adding new software to a computer lab would be an important resource for students in the Graphic and Animation Design program, I will incorporate information about facilities at other institutions with similar programs and a survey of GAND students. Discussing the facilities at other institutions will show that Longwood’s resources are not at the same standard of other similar majors in the area. Competitiveness is important to universities, so showing that increasing computer resources could make the Longwood Graphic and Animation Design program more competitive would help convince administrators to implement my proposal. I looked into the resources available to students at two other universities that I visited while touring colleges. Both Virginia Commonwealth University (VCUarts) and East Tennessee State University (ETSU) have designated computer labs for their Animation students that utilize all of the programs I am asking for in my proposal. In addition to addressing the facilities available at other universities, I also want to show that this proposal is wanted by and would benefit Longwood students in particular. To do this, I will prepare a survey with questions about the current state of technology in the GAND program and the proposal of adding more technology resources. A survey of GAND students can demonstrate that Longwood students would want these programs implemented and would utilize these new resources.

 Once background information has been gathered, I can begin writing the central pieces of my project, the proposals. First, I will write to the Department Chair Chris Register. For this proposal, I would be requesting the department to purchase a ZBrush site license so students could use this crucial program. I need to write to the Chair in order to obtain funding for this part of my project. This proposal will explain all of the components of my proposal and what software I would like to acquire, but it will primarily focus on ZBrush and how it would benefit students in the Graphic and Animation Design major since this is the part of the proposal that most requires the permission and funding of the Department.

 Before sending my proposal letter to Professor Register, however, I will need to gather the support of my fellow students so that my proposal has more weight. To do this, I am going to give a presentation to students in the GAND program as well as create a promotional storyboard that can be shared at the presentation or online. At the end of the presentation, I will ask the students to sign my proposal if they support the idea. With the support of other students behind my proposal, I will be ready to send it to Chris Register to receive permission to move ahead with my project.

 Once I have the Department Chair’s approval, I will contact Kim Redford, the Director of User Support Services, about downloading the programs in an existing computer lab. Originally, I had looked into adding the programs to the new Mac lab in C-STACK, since this building is adjacent to Bedford, where GAND courses are held. However, after more research into the programs that I wanted to add, I realized that some of them do not work on Mac computers. Therefore, I changed my focus to the computer lab in Hiner G16. This PC lab is available both to individual students and for reservation for classroom instruction. It is also open later than any other campus computer lab, giving students the greatest window of access. The proposal to the Director of User Support services will be less in-depth since I would already have the support of my department, but it will still include information about the programs I want to download and how they would be beneficial to GAND students.

 These two proposals are the key goal of my project, but once they are complete there is still some work to be done to make students aware of the new resources that will be available to them. For this reason, I will create a poster that advertises the addition of new software to the lab in Hiner G16. The poster will detail what programs have been added, where the lab is located, and what hours it is open. The posters would be posted around Bedford so that GAND students will be likely to see them. Raising awareness of the addition of new computer programs is crucial to ensuring that students are utilizing these new resources.

 These are the critical steps that I will need to take in order to complete my project and gain additional computer resources for students in my major. This proposal will grant new opportunities to GAND students and solve lingering technology issues plaguing the program. I am excited to begin working on this proposal and see ideas turned into action.

Works Cited

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