The Department of Theatre Arts at Utah State University announced this semester the addition of a new bachelor of fine arts degree. The new degree will allow students in the Department of Theatre Arts to study film production within the design and technology emphasis program.

This is the first time a film degree has been introduced to USU.

“There is much more to film production than just filming movies,” said Bruce Duerden, the current head of the film program. “For example, a big need in today’s industry is projector design, which our students will be able to do, and these designers are in high demand.”

Along with learning the technology behind film production, the new degree provides hands-on experience in organizing and producing film. Program officials said students will have the opportunity to team up with local and national production companies.

“The new degree opens up more options for students that want to do film,” said Utah State actor Allyson Hankins. “I’m excited. It will give two different outputs for the program — theatre and film.”

The Department of Theatre Arts introduced the new degree with hopes of expansion and to provide the department a film identity.

The new degree was approved last semester and USU will be working with Salt Lake Community College to give students a full degree in film production.

“We wanted to combine this program with SLCC because they have all the technology for a great film production program but not a lot of students and other resources to work it,” said Liz Wilson, a staff assistant for the department. “That’s what we bring to this collaboration. We provide the people to run the technology.”

The process of bringing students into the degree, as well as extending more opportunities, will be a gradual process.

“At the moment I am hoping to have just five to 10 students to begin with,” Duerden said. “We just don’t have the resources up here quite yet to accept as many students as we’d like but I do see this program expanding with ease in the future.”

Duerden said having a small number of students for the film production program won’t be hard. The hard part will be choosing which students will be part of the initial group.

The program is looking for students who have experience in the program as well as skill in film production.

“I have a stack of applications to go through,” Duerden said. “It’s going to be tough narrowing it down to just a handful and I am receiving new applications every day.”

The new film production program will start its first semester in the fall at both USU and SLCC.

*Kayla Swenson, Andrew Chen, Aubri Liechty and Sawyer Hemsley contributed to this report.*

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