South Central College Graphic Communications Program Background
Reasoning for a 72-Credit Waiver

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Graphics Production and Commercial Art were programs in existence for many years at SCC prior to the implementation of the current Graphic Communications program.

In 2008 the two programs started to look at the possibility of merging. Both programs used the same software packages and worked in the field of visual communications. The differences between the two programs were that Graphics Production was more geared towards project production with some layout and design. While the Commercial Art was more focused on layout, design and illustration with some production.

With guidance from both advisory boards in joint meetings, the go ahead to merge the two programs was approved. See advisory board minutes attached.

The joint advisory boards and faculty met over the next two years reviewing curriculum outlines, course descriptions, course schedules etc. It was decided that within the merging of the two programs that two emphasis will be maintained. A Graphic Communications emphasis in production and one in design along with a set of core technical courses all student would complete. After a couple of years it became evident that the emphasis should be eliminated and replaced with a Graphic Communications degree and diploma. Refer to the advisory meeting minutes in document GCCmeeting2.28.11. Spring 2013 was the first class graduation with the Graphic Communications degree.

With the merging of the two programs, some content from the Commercial Art program and from the Graphics Production had to be eliminated. Again the Graphic Communications course was refined under the guidance of the advisory board. We are producing a well rounded and versatile student with both the production capabilities such as printing, plate outputting, screen printing, bindery along with the layout, design, drawing skills and strong software skills in both areas.

A lot of content went into the merging of the two programs, and as mentioned some content had to be given up to fit into the current 72-credit program. Mesabi Range Community and Technical College-Eveleth campus, is the only other community college program in Minnesota that has the same CIP code (10.030100) as SCC. They are also seeking a waiver. Refer to document MesabiGraphicsAAS[2].pdf.

Since the current program has already been fine tuned and maintained as much content from the two original programs as possible, it would be very detrimental to try and cut any more out of the program. The 2013 spring advisory meeting strongly supports the SCC Graphic Communications 72-credit waiver as outlined in the in the advisory meeting minutes in document gcMtg_Min020713.pdf.

Liberal Arts and Science (General Education) courses

During the 2009-2010 academic years, SCC’s Graphic Communications program participated in a study of Graphic Design programs in the state known as the Tuning Project which was funded by the Lumina Foundation. Our charge was to outline student learning outcomes at the associate, bachelor, master and doctoral level. Our team of educators from public, private and for-profit colleges and universities concentrated our efforts on what outcomes should be different for an associate-level and bachelor-level graduate. The technical skill-set was identical. What differed the most was the depth and breadth of Liberal Arts and Science education a bachelor degree graduate is bringing to the table in terms of securing a job in the industry. Recommendations from this study suggest more Liberal Arts and Science courses for graduates at the associate level.

Since SCC’s Graphic Communications program articulates with Bemidji State University’s Design program and Bethany Lutheran College’s Media Arts program, our agreements outline a minimum of 18 transferable Liberal Arts and Science (general education) courses for all of our graduates. Since these agreements are already signed and in place, SCC’s Graphic Communications program did not want to tamper with credit values in LAS and jeopardize our articulation agreements because of the waiver process.