

February 10, 2011

Testimony of Professor Karla Fox, University of Connecticut

Thank you for allowing me to provide commentary on Raised Bill No. 6050, An Act Concerning the Development of the Creative Economy.

I make these comments in my capacity as a Full Professor at the University of Connecticut, also with the support of the university Provost Peter Nicholls and Dean of Business Christopher Earley.

The Creative Economy bill presently under consideration is very important for Connecticut's future. Its contents synchronizes perfectly with a number of initiatives that the University of Connecticut is presently undertaking to strengthen and develop the state's economy, particularly in the creative and technology areas. I trust that UConn's myriad efforts to foster economic development in a number of aspects is well known to the Committee, so I will not dwell on them here. Instead, I wish to focus on two initiatives presently under development at our institution: the creation of a Digital Media Center with programmatic aspects of the Center located at UConn campuses in Storrs, East Hartford, Hartford and Stamford and faculty drawn from all of the regional campuses (including Torrington, Waterbury and Avery Point), and the preliminary development of a Certificate in Arts Management at UConn-Stamford. These initiatives, which are described in more detail below, are in alignment with the goals espoused in the 2010 Majority Leaders' Job Growth Task Force, particularly the goals of bringing high-value-added, low environmental impact jobs to the state.

Digital Media Center initiative

The Digital Media Center (DMC) initiative is a true interdisciplinary undertaking within the University of Connecticut, encompassing faculty in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the Schools of Fine Arts, Business, Engineering and Pharmacy. Discussions about participation are also under way with the Schools of Medicine and Dentistry in Farmington. Currently, forty-two (42) Senior Faculty have formally endorsed the establishment of the Center. The Digital Media Center will partner with existing research and outreach programs such as the Connecticut Information Technology Institute (CITI) and GE edgelab in Stamford, and the Connecticut Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation (CCEI) in East Hartford. This initiative is currently in the final procedural stage for formal establishment within the university, and a decision is expected early next month. Establishment of this multi- and inter-disciplinary center, with research and business services activities going on at university locations throughout the state, will greatly enhance the ability of the state to achieve the goals and outcomes articulated in this Creative Economy bill.

In regard to furthering the purposes of the Creative Economy bill, the following are the five main goals for the Digital Media Center:

GOAL 1: To create a vibrant interdisciplinary Center that affords an opportunity for faculty and students at the University of Connecticut focusing on such aspects of digital media as science and engineering, visualization, the arts, communications and business to collaborate in the rapidly expanding discipline of digital media ideation, production and new product development.

GOAL 2: To take the lead in informing the UConn Digital Media research community of extramural funding opportunities at the national, state and local levels while facilitating interdisciplinary proposals in those areas.

GOAL 3: To encourage and provide opportunities for digital media technology transfers and commercialization of research projects throughout the state conducted through the Center.

GOAL 4: To develop collaborative relationships with other educational institutions within the state.

GOAL 5: To forge research and artistic partnerships with Connecticut based businesses and to assist in the creation of new businesses that focus on digital media or utilize science-based visualization processes and technologies.

Certificate in Arts Management, UConn-Stamford

In recent years, due to a number of circumstances, including the creation of a state Film Tax Credit, a number of film, entertainment and visualization enterprises have moved into the state, particularly in Fairfield County. Many of the individuals associated with these companies possess a liberal or fine arts background, and have not have formal education in business management. In order to address potential market demand and prepare such individuals to better carry out the business aspects of their creative enterprises, the University of Connecticut School of Business' Stamford program is in the incipient stage of creating a Certificate program in Arts Management. At present, the School of Business is conducting a formal market study and this semester is offering the first course that could comprise part of such a certificate program. This Certificate would be attractive to both for-profit and nonprofit enterprises. It is certainly an initiative that would support the concept of fostering a creative economy within Connecticut.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to share thoughts and information with you.

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