LETTER OF INTENT – 1
(New Certificate or Degree Program)

1.   Institution submitting request: Arkansas Tech University

2.   Education Program Contact person/title: Dr. David Eshelman

3.   Telephone number/e-mail address: (479) 964-0890/deshelman@atu.edu

4.   Proposed Name of Certificate or Degree Program: Bachelor of Arts in Social Media Influencing

5.   Proposed Effective Date: 06/01/2023

6.   Requested CIP Code:09.01023

7.   Program Description: A degree in Social Influencing anticipates and parallels trends taking place in the professional world, namely, the problem that messages are no longer controlled by the messenger. Film companies, manufacturers, public agencies, for example, no longer maintain control over their own brand because what influences public perception is not merely the result of advertising, but those who can influence that perception "socially." This program teaches students how to be social influencers-professionals that assist employers in creating perceptions of their products or services. Historically, this has taken the form of testimonials, product placements in film or television, and celebrity advocates. With the rise of alternative media, broadcast platforms, and new technologies, social influencers have replaced old-style tactics of perception formation.

The Department of Communication and Media Studies can be key in attracting students to this new field, in which they would learn both historical methods of mass communication, but also the new technologies and methods used in the burgeoning field of social influencing. Though none so far in Arkansas, many colleges and universities are offering training in this, including Temple University, Michigan State University, and Point Loma Nazarene University (PNLU). With this degree, ATU can match the personnel needs of companies and agencies who recognize that their messaging must take place within new social media platforms and not necessarily rely on traditional marketing outlets that are becoming less effective in the swirling mediaverse, around which clusters of media platforms are centered, branching out to inform and persuade audiences in non-traditional ways and with non-traditional forms.

The proposed degree provides many benefits, including
- Amplifying and extending the expertise currently available among the Communication and Media Studies faculty. This includes public relations, filmmaking, multimedia, social media, and performance skills.

- Making use of new equipment and technologies already purchased for program expansion, including items for broadcast, multimedia presentation, and other virtual environments.
- Preparing students for workforce, as social influencers are beginning to be used by companies to expand their reach into the marketplace through a cultivation of their social media presence.
- Reaching into a new academic arena that is driven by current workforce needs.

8.   Mode of Delivery (mark all that apply):

__X___On-Campus

_____Off-Campus Location

Provide address of off-campus location_____

_____

Provide a copy of the e-mail notification to other institutions in the state notifying them of the proposed program. Please inform institutions not to send the response to **"Reply All"**. If you receive an objection/concern(s) from an institution, reply to the institution and copy ADHE on the email. That institution should respond and copy ADHE. If the objection/concern(s) cannot be resolved, ADHE may intervene.

Submit copy of written notification to Higher Learning Commission (HLC) if notification required by HLC for a program offered at an off-campus location.

_____Indicate distance of proposed site from main campus.

_____Distance Technology (50% of program offered by distance technology) Submit copy of written notification to HLC if notification is required by HLC for a program offered by distance technology.

9.   List existing certificate or degree programs that support the proposed program: BA Journalism and BA Communications

10.   President/Chancellor Approval Date:

11.   Academic Affairs Officer: Date:

From:	Tammy Weaver
Sent:	Wednesday, October 5, 2022 7:47 AM
To:	Tammy Weaver
Subject:	FW: Email to Other Institutions

From: David Eshelman <deshelman@atu.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, October 4, 2022 3:20 PM
To: Tammy Weaver <tweaver@atu.edu>
Subject: RE: Email to Other Institutions

This email is a notification that Arkansas Tech University is proposing a Bachelor of Arts in Social Media Influencing. Arkansas Tech University is interested in receiving your comments or feedback about the program. ADHE requested through e-mail communications that you not "Reply All" when sending your response about the program. If you do have an objection, concern, or comment, please reply to me and copy ADHE.

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