

**Preliminary Proposal for a PhD degree in Research and Leadership in Art, Design and Engagement at the University of Massachusetts Boston, in partnership with the Massachusetts College of Art and Design**

**I. Introduction**

The University of Massachusetts Boston's College of Advancing and Professional Studies (CAPS), in partnership with the Massachusetts College of Art and Design (MassArt) seek to establish a *self-supporting* interdisciplinary PhD Program in *Research and Leadership in Art, Design and Engagement* (RLADE).<sup>\*</sup> The Program would serve artists, designers, educators, and other professionals who are moving into leadership roles that build on their training and experience but take them beyond their original fields or specialties. RLADE would help mid-career practitioners become leaders who use research to advance teaching and collaborations that support others to be creative and transformative in diverse settings. The contributions of RLADE graduates would be manifest in new research initiatives and funded projects, publications, exhibitions, curricular changes and engagement with communities, educational institutions, and public agencies. Through this innovative program UMass Boston and MassArt would foster research in which theory and practice inform one another, produce new kinds of interdisciplinary leaders, and develop intellectually rigorous, socially relevant graduate training and research.

**II. Purpose and description of the program**

RLADE is designed as an interdisciplinary program, in which students would be guided to extend discussion and stretch inquiry where art and design intersect with the human and social sciences. The Program can be positioned as an addition to the interdisciplinary field of "transformative learning" that has grown from Mezirow's path-breaking work in adult education in the 1970s. Ten doctoral programs—9 U.S.; 1 Australian—use the term *transformative* in their titles or descriptions to refer to education that facilitates institutional and social change by guiding personal and professional change; this mission is shared by the proposed RLADE Program. Through rigorous, reflexive coursework and dissertation supervision, students would learn about establishing creative habits—drawing on the latest research on thinking and cognition—as well as undertaking research grounded in field, community, educational, or other institutional settings. RLADE differs, however, from existing transformative studies doctoral programs in giving a central role to building and working in well-organized studios, workshops, or analogous learning-working spaces. In the tradition of design-based instruction, it is important to have places where participants become reflective practitioners—where practical projects are incubated by individuals or in collaborative collectives, and sense is made of what happens when the projects are implemented in the wider world. In short, RLADE will be *creative* and *transformative education* that integrates creative habits, studio methods, and research grounded in practice.

*Leadership* and *engagement* in the Program's title refers to teaching and collaborations that support others to be creative and transformative in diverse settings. RLADE would seek students who have already begun to move into such leadership roles and provide them the opportunity to deepen and extend that development in their careers. Experience from students' original fields and current employment, when combined with the knowledge and skills they gain in RLADE, would inform the angles of research they pursue. The studio and reflective practice dimension of the Program would provide—and model—the support people need to establish creative habits—identifying and confronting complex, messy, ambiguous problems, drawing new connections, and seeing how things could be otherwise—and to undertake engaged research—taking risks in exploring ways to put ideas into practice within diverse groups, taking stock of the outcomes, and revising one's approaches accordingly.

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<sup>\*</sup> This proposal seeks UMass approval. Details about the partnership are included in endnotes; other supporting materials, beyond the scope of a 5-page document, can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/CTEdocs>.

With a RLADE PhD, graduates could expect to be strong candidates for leadership and facilitator roles as educators, researchers, policy makers, administrators, and practitioners in areas that encompass: visual arts, design, and media; innovative education and interdisciplinary inquiry; and group facilitation and community engagement. Because RLADE builds on graduate courses in Art Education, the Ph.D., while not an Art Education doctorate, could lead to college-level teaching in that area. At the same time, because career paths in many fields now require working in diverse groups and communities that face complex challenges and opportunities, the Program would welcome mid-career professionals interested in examining studio and reflective practices in settings beyond art and design.

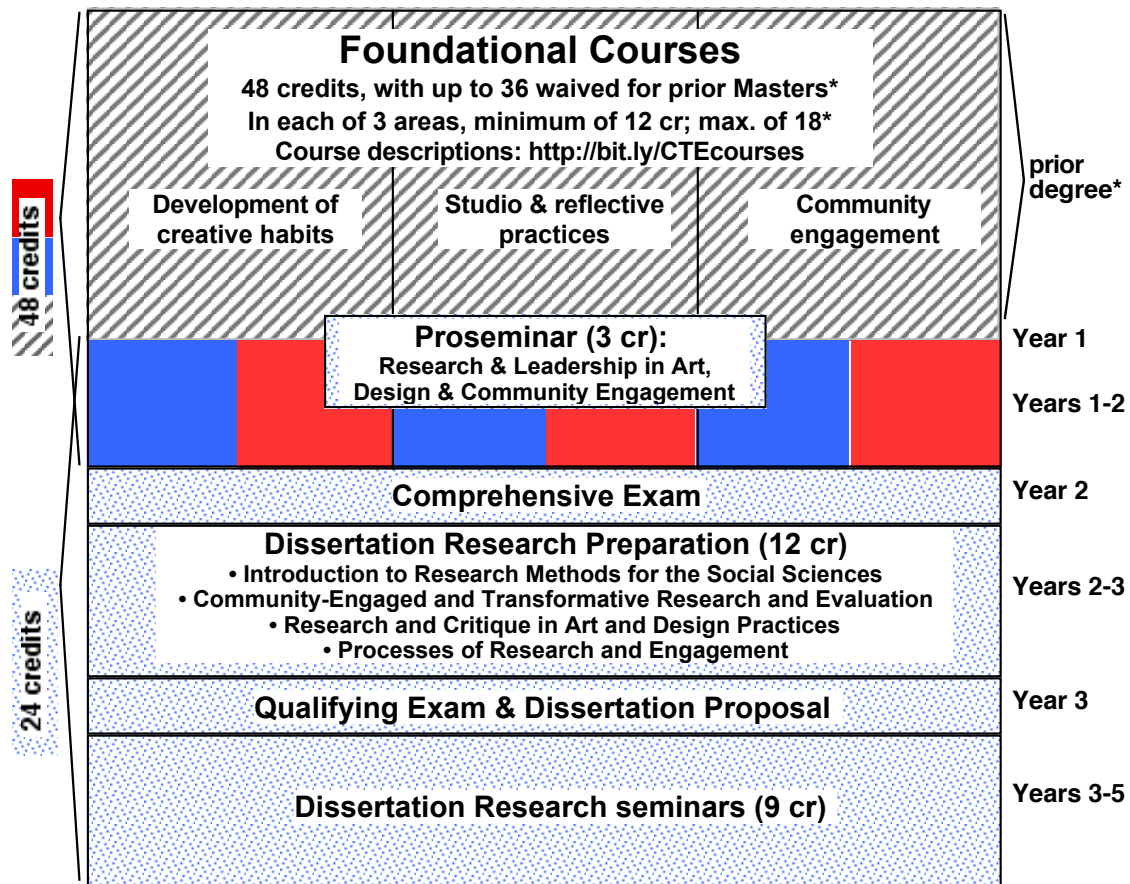
*Partnership:* The RLADE Program represents a synergistic partnership between the two institutions in which the curriculum and finances build on the existing Masters course offerings in Critical and Creative Thinking (CCT) in CAPS and Art Education (AE) at MassArt.<sup>1</sup> To launch the Program requires the participation of both institutions: MassArt cannot offer doctoral degrees; UMass Boston has a strong Art Department, but it offers only undergraduate courses. (The Art Department is in the early stages of developing a low residency Nantucket-based MFA program, but this would be in Art, not Art Education, and thus not a foundation for the RLADE program.) The CCT Program's existing graduate-level course offerings on thinking and cognition would form part of the foundation-course offerings for RLADE, while MassArt has the faculty expertise and facilities for the RLADE emphasis on studio-based graduate studies in art and design. In all other aspects, the institutions would be equal contributors. All dissertation courses would be offered through UMass Boston, but half of those courses would be taught by faculty on the Program committee from MassArt.<sup>2</sup> Faculty members from other units, especially the Art Department at UMass Boston and the Dynamic Media Institute (DMI) at MassArt, who hold the required advanced degrees would be welcome as advisors for RLADE dissertations, with course release for chairing four dissertations through to completion (subject to Colleges' policies). Given that the work of many UMass Boston and MassArt faculty combines personal, professional, and social change, RLADE students would be encouraged to include appropriate non-RLADE faculty in their doctoral committees. Selected courses from the DMI Master of Fine Arts program would be included as Foundational course options, as would relevant courses from a UMass Boston Masters in Art were such a program to be formed.

*Curriculum:* The proposed RLADE PhD requires 72 credits, but all applicants would be expected to have a relevant Masters degree and apply for matriculation as a Post-Masters PhD Candidate with up to 36 credits waived for prior courses that fit into the three areas of Foundational courses (see Figure on next page).

Foundational courses consist of existing CCT and AE Masters courses divided into three areas: 1) *Development of Creative Habits* (including courses such as Creative Thinking, Cognitive Psychology, Art and Developmental Theory); 2) *Studio & Reflective Practices* (e.g., Studio investigations, Reflective Practice, Design Studio); and 3) *Community Engagement* (e.g., Professional Field Study, Action Research, Interactive Media Project). The proseminar and dissertation-research courses would be new (submitted for governance review after Stage I approval) and span two traditions: scholarship of engagement (drawing on social science, especially action research and evaluation); and art and design critique. Students would be required to demonstrate research-level proficiency in a language other than English. The Program could be undertaken full-time or part-time during the fall, spring, and summer semesters, and be completed in 3.5 to 6 years. To accommodate working professionals regular classes meet in the late afternoon and evening or in a 3-week summer institute. A low-residency option (pending governance approval) would allow students who participate in an initial summer institute to then be brought into regular sessions of face-to-face courses over the internet (with video and well as audio presence).

*Admissions:* The anticipated number of students who would matriculate each year is 10-12. Students would be selected on the basis of the quality and relevance of their prior education (with a GPA of at least 3.4 at the Master's level) and their research and career interests in creative and transformative education as

evident in letters of recommendation, a personal statement, and a portfolio and writing sample, such as the student's Master's thesis or capstone project. The ability of applicants to pay for the Program would *not* factor into admissions decisions.



### III. Relationship to the Mission and Priorities of the Academic Units

A PhD Program in Research and Leadership in Art, Design and Engagement would build on both institutions' strengths, be distinctive among a small set of comparable local, national, and international programs, meet workforce demands in the nation and Commonwealth, and not compete with existing UMass Boston doctoral programs.

The CCT program has, for over thirty years, helped mid-career students involved in a wide array of professions and endeavors to develop clarity and confidence to make deep changes in their learning, teaching, work, activism, research, and artistry (averaging 11 MA graduates per year since 1980). By the time CCT students finish their studies, they are prepared to teach or guide others in ways that often depart markedly from their previous schooling and experience. Some CCT graduates have gone on to doctoral programs in conventional fields, but many more have asked for an interdisciplinary doctoral program that extends their CCT education. The formal home of the CCT program moved to the College of Advancing and Professional Studies (CAPS) in 2012, but the core Program faculty continue to have appointments in the Colleges of Education & Human Development or Liberal Arts. RLADE would be the first doctoral degree for CAPS, aligning well with the College's role in a) promoting mid-career personal and

professional development for adult learners with a diversity of interests and needs, and b) incubating workplace and instructional innovation, especially in areas that span traditional disciplines.

According to its Vision statement, UMass Boston seeks to “meet the need for independent, creative, and compassionate... leaders who will shape the quality of individual and social life,” “conduct research that has both local and global reach, that creates new knowledge in all major areas of human concern, and that helps our students acquire the refined and complex knowledge, values, and skills of inquiry that the highest levels of research foster and the globalized world requires,” “conduct research and scholarship across a broad range of intra- and interdisciplinary areas,” and “increase... enrollments, program offerings, advanced degrees granted, research support, and scholarly productivity.” (The strategic plans of MassArt also include increasing graduate enrollments and offerings and increasing external funding and scholarly productivity.<sup>3</sup>) The RLADE Program is well situated to contribute to all these goals with an innovative doctoral program focused on the relationships among professional and creative practices, educational philosophy and pedagogy, and transdisciplinary and innovative research. (A CAGS program could enhance professional and educational practice, but, without the research focus, fewer opportunities for advancement and funding would follow.) The research projects and grant applications of RLADE faculty would be enhanced by faculty having PhD students to stimulate them and with whom to collaborate.

Examples of inquiries that prospective core RLADE faculty are involved in include the following:

- a. Community- and public-engaged scholarship that has a special focus on equity and access to the arts and design. Questions range from the development and evaluation of arts programming, curricula, assessment, and community partnerships for secondary schools to the study of educational and professional pathways to support public scholarship among “artists, humanists, designers, and other scholars in the cultural disciplines who passionately wanted to claim engagement at the core of their identities as intellectuals and artists” (quoting here from *Imagining America*, a consortium of “Artists and Scholars in Public Life,” <http://bit.ly/18KRvKs>).
- b. Research investigating arts and design teaching and learning including habits of work and play, potential transfer of skills and dispositions, and embodied and situated cognition.
- c. The development and implementation of the theoretical framework behind studio pedagogy in fields where that is not traditional.
- d. Design thinking about information, knowledge, and understanding and how that is created and communicated to foster, encourage, and support engagement to create a better society. This research examines the multiplicity of synchronous and asynchronous, digital and analog educational environments, and modes of adult education enable individuals and groups to undergo transformation.

Both institutions have committed themselves to global diversity in the student body and to international connections in their scholarship. The RLADE core faculty is already distinguished in this respect, having significant international experience and engagement in scholarship that is transnational in scope. MassArt AE faculty members have developed international programs including university partnerships in Ecuador and India (pending final approval), and CCT has partnerships in development in Portugal and Australia. The low-residency option would also help with recruitment of a diverse international student body.

#### **IV. Need for the program**

Evidence of the need for a RLADE PhD takes three forms: 1) important research questions specifically suited for RLADE students and faculty (described in sect. III); 2) a pool of qualified mid-career professionals who seek to advance their careers through a doctoral education beyond their original fields or specialties and, more specifically, in interdisciplinary, transformative studies; and 3) career advancement opportunities, in and beyond the academy, that match the attributes of RLADE graduates. Market research on 2 and 3 required for Stage II review will be undertaken as soon as possible. This research will take into account the following factors:

- a. There are mid-career professionals who seek an interdisciplinary, transformative studies PhD as demonstrated by the existing doctoral programs. For example, the Transformative Education PhD

program at the California Institute of Integral Studies claims to recruit 30-40 new students each year to their program, which is primarily online (see profiles of students and alums <http://bit.ly/12SosRC>).

The Transformative Education program at Curtin University (Australia) serves primarily students from countries around the Indian Ocean, who receive support from their governments to study for a higher degree and have gone on to establish innovative educational programs in their home countries.

b. The CCT Program receives an average of four inquiries per year about whether the Program offers a doctoral degree (in addition to CCT graduates who seek a doctoral program). A number of alumni from MassArt's Art Ed. and DMI programs who have gone on to doctoral programs (or plan to) have conveyed that they would have preferred (would prefer) an interdisciplinary doctorate (like RLADe).

c. Items a and b above are in line with increasing numbers of employers seeking managers and team leaders who have pursued learning that took them in new directions from their original specialty. Such leaders are prepared to guide personal and professional change in others. RLADe would provide an affordable alternative to high-priced options in the private sector or associated with private universities that offer short courses, formal programs, or high-profile initiatives around learning about learning, such as the Society for Organizational Learning that emerged from MIT and the Learning Innovations Laboratory based at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. More generally, the RLADe PhD addresses key conclusions of recent Council of Graduate Schools reports (<http://www.fgereport.org> & <http://www.pathwaysreport.org>) regarding the changing demographics of graduate education and the need to better prepare students who pursue it to change professions (<http://1.usa.gov/1m3bImp>) or improve their employability, including work outside the academy.

d. Undergraduates and Masters students increasingly take indirect paths through their education (<http://bit.ly/1fCwM4x>) or end up in professions that depart from their original degrees. RLADe graduates would be well suited to serve as their mentors, either in faculty roles or outside educational institutions.

e. There are mid-career professionals who are prepared to pay for a PhD, which, if the RLADe student is granted advanced standing for 33 credits, would cost c. \$25K. (An oft-cited figure is that 40% of PhD students borrow money to pay for their studies at an average of \$37K.)

## **V. Major resource implications**

*The RLADe Program would entail minimal new resources or faculty.* Under the Self-supporting Revenue model, students would pay their way, either through their current salaries, external funding, or student loans. Enrollment of RLADe doctoral students in dissertation-level courses would cover buyout of instructors from another teaching assignment and any small studio charges (at MassArt, during the summer). Any net revenue (after relevant overhead %) would be allocated to cover buyouts for one course release/year for each of the RLADe co-directors and (subject to Colleges' policies) one course release for any faculty member after chairing four RLADe dissertation committees through to completion. Given the buyout arrangement, no specifically RLADe faculty hires would be planned. After RLADe reaches its steady state around year 5, each institution would need 5-6 buyouts each year. No specifically RLADe administrative positions would be planned, given that program publicity would be provided by existing staff at CAPS and MassArt, admissions would be led by the co-directors (who receive a course release), academic advising would be done by dissertation chairs (who receive a course release in due course for that), grant support would be provided by existing staff at UMB and MassArt, and other administration could be covered by existing staff at CCT and MassArt's Art Education. The home units would provide office space and computers for existing faculty and staff, for any new faculty hires who might have some assignments bought out by RLADe, and for any new staff hires who might have some responsibilities to RLADe. After allowing a modest budget for awards to graduate students for conference travel, guest speakers in courses, equipment needs, charges for use of exhibition space, projections based on an initial cohort of 10-12 show positive net revenue, which, if carried over, would cover lower revenue were any cohort to matriculate on the low side. Enrollment of RLADe doctoral students in foundational courses offered by Masters programs would not factor into RLADe revenue and expenditure.

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<sup>1</sup> **Partnership.** The proposed parameters of the partnership, in brief, include: The PhD is awarded by UMass, but if MassArt were approved to offer doctoral degrees, the partners would propose that it become a joint PhD. In the meantime the partnership with MassArt would be formally acknowledged in publicity and diplomas. Each institution would have to give five years' notice of intention to withdraw, which ensures that neither students nor the other institution could be left in the lurch. Institutional autonomy would be preserved (e.g., regarding foundation course content, accreditation of Masters programs, course schedules, staffing, income, and budgets). Inter-institutional transfers of funds would be limited to buyouts for MassArt faculty teaching dissertation-level courses. Coordination would occur through a Program Committee (see note 2), for which each institution would select three faculty members, including a faculty co-director from each institution. The MassArt faculty on the Committee or teaching dissertation-level courses would be granted adjunct status at UMass Boston. The Program Committee would convene internal and external advisory groups to meet at least twice per year. The internal group would be drawn from faculty from UMass Boston and MassArt who teach CTE courses or advise on dissertation committees, together with the various Deans (or their designees). The external group would consist of leading national and international figures who would bring diverse perspectives to the evolution of the Program's approach to Creative and Transformative Education.

<sup>2</sup> **Core faculty.** The Program Committee composition is yet to be determined. The faculty involved to date in preparing this proposal are as follows (with \* indicating non-availability for the Program Committee were the doctorate to be approved):

Orin Davis (PhD, Claremont Graduate University), CCT Program, UMass Boston, starting 2014

[Lois Hetland](#) (EdD, Harvard), Art Education Department (Chair), MassArt

[Jan Kubasiewicz](#) (MFA, Łódź), Dynamic Media Institute (Director), MassArt

[Dan Serig](#) (EdD, Columbia), Dean of Academic Programming and Art Education Department, MassArt

Carol Smith (PhD, Harvard), Psychology Department (Associate Chair) & CCT, UMass Boston\*

[Peter Taylor](#) (PhD, Harvard), CCT Program (Director) & Public Policy PhD Program, UMass Boston

[Ann Torke](#), (MFA, UCSD), Art Department (Chair, 2014-15), UMass Boston\*

<sup>3</sup> **MassArt** is the only publicly funded, freestanding university of art and design in the country. From its inception, MassArt has innovated in art and design education, educating teachers who focus on the career development of students as well as promote in their communities deep engagement with the visual arts and design. The Art Education department's rigorous, field-based programs enable students to develop dual expertise as artists and educators. Most alumni continue to produce and exhibit work. Graduates have inquired about extending their professional development through a doctoral program that continues the dual foci on art and education. The partnership with UMass Boston would make this possible. The RLADE program matches the emphasis of the next MassArt five-year strategic plan on developing innovative, internationally-recognized, educational programming in the visual arts and design; promoting diversity of viewpoints, students, faculty, and research; providing citizens of the Commonwealth with career development; and fostering economic and cultural development through innovative and creative practices that break new ground in how citizens respond to complex challenges and imagine new opportunities.