September 21, 2005

To: Sandra Beeler, Office of Curriculum Registration

From: Maurice Sevigny, Dean College of Fine Arts

Subject: The Jack and Vivian Hanson Arizona Film Institute

It is my pleasure to strongly endorse the attached proposal to formally gain approval to establish the Jack and Vivian Hanson Arizona Film Institute (a.k.a. Hanson Film Institute). I personally worked closely with Vivian Hanson over a decade to secure our largest ever bequest to date for Fine Arts to honor her wish to establish and develop the concept of an institute to address both the artistic and business aspects of film. The proposed institute has evolved over the last several years and has been fine tuned to embellish the existing programs in Media Arts and the business components of the film industry. Given the College of Fine Arts’ primary vision to be a college of professional schools that train students for significant lives in the arts and workforce development in arts related industries, this proposed institute is in concert with our vision for excellence and readiness for a place in the workforce.

The attached proposal has had broad advisory input in its development and was reviewed by and unanimously endorsed by the College of Fine Arts Executive Committee at its September 13, 2005 meeting (minutes attached). The Hanson Institute has been evolving and operating as a pilot initiative program for the past three years and is budgeted from the earnexi interest income from a bequest of seven million dollars. Mrs. Hanson supported several related initiatives for a number of years prior to her death. In the initial years funding was distributed and monitored by a faculty committee and leadership was headed by a three person executive team that developed the vision and mission of the institute to ready itself to recruit an operations director. Last fall we hired an exceptional Program Developer with a long history of successful leadership (bio attached) in the media and film industry who can rally a breadth of personal industry networking to implement and develop the vision and to manage the programming for the Hanson Institute and to work with us to prepare the attached document for formal regents’ approval (a condition of the will for continued funding). An office was established in the new Marshall Building that now houses the Department of Media Arts.
In the past 12 months, Ms. Westover has proven herself to be an able leader and responsive administrator who has done much to market the Institute and to create solid programs forging forward with several outreach partnerships. She is currently expanding partnerships with film projects across campus and in the community. She has begun to successfully recruit members for an impressive national Program Advisory Committee and an Industry Council and has been coached by Brian Biterman, our Associate Dean for Development, to build a solid plan and network for expanded fundraising and Institute advancement.

I want to stress that this Institute is designed to supplement the education of Media Arts and business students with programs in partnership with the Eller College of Management. We also will explore the relationship to Music for Television and Film and the partnerships with other units across campus. The Hanson Film Institute has a different mission and vision from the research center currently being proposed by two former UA faculty members now affiliated with Arizona State University (ASU Center for Film and Media Research). A primary purpose of the Hanson Film Institute is professional development for students. Another purpose is to leverage our land-grant mission to provide learning opportunities for members of the Arizona community. These goals set the Hanson Film Institute apart from the ASU proposal, which states that its "primary commitment is to creating and sustaining innovative activities reflecting the significant cultural, social and economic role that film and media play in shaping new millennium human values and global communities." ASU’s Media Research Center is being proposed as a unit of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Collaborative partnerships are possible and members of the Media Arts faculty have been asked to serve on the ASU Media Center Advisory Board.

In summary, I am most enthusiastic about what this can offer the University of Arizona and in particular the many majors in the film and media arts program. This is a watershed opportunity for Fine Arts faculty and students that has been so generously supported and permanently funded through a major bequest of a dear and generous benefactor.
Vicky Westover

Vicky Westover has been serving as the Program Developer of the Hanson Film Institute at the University of Arizona since September 2004. Vicky, a native of Washington, D.C., has 17 years of professional experience in non-profit management and fundraising, in particular for educational and film organizations. She received training in strategic planning for non-profits through a program sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts. Vicky worked at the Library of Congress in the American Folk Life Center, the Prints and Photographs Division, and as the Assistant to the Curator of Exhibits. As the Executive Director of the Baltimore Film Forum, the Baltimore International Film Festival, and the Baltimore Independent Film and Video Makers’ Competition, Vicky received a Citation from the Governor of Maryland for her work on behalf of the State of Maryland and won numerous awards for her organization. She was an invited guest on then-Congressman Kwesi Mfume’s television show, The Bottom Line, to speak on issues related to African-American cinema.

An exhibiting documentary photographer and published art critic, Vicky holds a BFA, with a major in photography, from the Maryland Institute College of Art. She completed Masters work in American Studies, with a concentration in Anthropology, at the University of Maryland, College Park and she studied photography and film history at Trent Polytechnic in England. Vicky taught film appreciation courses over an eleven year period at the Maryland Institute College of Art, among other institutions, and is the founder of a program that teaches creative video making skills and media literacy to Baltimore City students. She is the founder of the television program, Independent Eye on Maryland Public Television presenting the work of independent filmmakers.

Vicky relocated to Tucson in September 2003 and worked as a Development Consultant for the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America. Her life partner is John Kelley, Station Manager for KUAT and KUAZ, and her son is majoring in film at Emerson College in Boston. Vicky has served on the Maryland State, the Baltimore City, and the Tucson/Pima arts council’s grant panels for visual and media arts and arts in education. She is a co-founder of the to-be-launched Tara Mexicana: Tucson Film Festival and serves on the board of Directors of the Tucson Cinema Foundation.