FY 2006 Technology Fee Proposal

Submitting Organization: University Educational Technology Services (UETS)
Major Unit: Information Systems and Technology
Department: Digital Media Services

Contact Person: Karen Oates or Julian Allen or Nathan Reetz
E-Mail: USGKDO@langate.gsu.edu or joallen@gsu.edu or nreetz@gsu.edu
Telephone: 404-463-9174 or 404-651-3595 or 404-463-9800

1. Project Short Title

Digital Aquarium Hardware Upgrades and Student Assistants

2. Total Requested

$395,138

3. Executive Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Description (three or four sentences)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Digital Aquarium, Georgia State’s innovative and extremely successful open access multimedia laboratory, is requesting funding to upgrade obsolete multimedia production workstations with high-end Apple G5 workstations, provide Student Assistants for the lab, increase storage server capacity, and provide additional digital video, photo and audio equipment for students to check-out.</td>
</tr>
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4. Project Description

The Digital Aquarium, Georgia State’s innovative, open access, multimedia laboratory is a huge success (Please refer to Attachment 4 “Acknowledgements”). In order for the Digital Aquarium to fulfill its mission and to continue to set the standard for multimedia resources and support, the Digital Aquarium must upgrade its aging workstations with high-end Apple G5 workstations.

In order to continue offering its current resources and services, the Digital Aquarium must employ a team of Student Multimedia Specialists. These Student employees permit the Digital Aquarium to operate seven days a week. The Aquarium sets a high standard for customer support and patron satisfaction. It is vital that the Digital Aquarium receive continued funding for its Student Assistant staff.

An integral part of the Digital Aquarium is our equipment checkout program. Our digital video and photo cameras allow students to add multimedia content to their class work. In order to meet the demands of our booming equipment checkout services, the Digital Aquarium is requesting additional digital video, photo, lighting and audio equipment for student use.

To keep pace with rapidly evolving multimedia technologies, our workstations require new peripherals (card readers, USB2.0 ports, headphones, and MiniDV decks).

Further, we will upgrade our facilities to include equipment for leading edge HD video. This proposal includes funds to purchase 3 Sony HD cameras and 3 HD video decks.

With the successful rollout of a local storage area network, the Digital Aquarium is requesting additional hard drives to increase our storage server capacity, thus permitting the lab to store and back-up more student projects.

If this is a request for continued funding for a previous year’s award, indicate the outcomes and results of the prior award(s).
5. Record the review numbers assigned by IS&T and Facilities. Their assessments must be included in Sections 16 and 17.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IS&amp;T Review # IST06-018</th>
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<tr>
<td>Facilities: CBSAC and Planning &amp; Facilities Review # 13764-05</td>
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6. Relevance to Regents Guidelines

Identify specific Regents guidelines that justify this proposal’s funding:

[1] Technology fee revenues should be used primarily for the direct benefit of students to assist them in meeting the educational objectives of their academic programs.

[3] Technology fee revenues should be used for hardware and Network related expenditures that include support of general purpose or special purpose laboratories used by students for body productivity and more discipline related activities.

[4] Technology fee revenues may be used for training of students and, to a lesser extent, staff and faculty.

7. Relevance to Strategic Plan(s)

The “Georgia State University Information Technology Strategic Plan” based on the “University Strategic Plan” has many direct references to the need for computer facilities for students.

As part of the planning process, a Vision for Information Technology Effectiveness at Georgia State University has evolved. The major goals and initiatives presented later in this plan reflect this vision. The vision is that: Technology-enhanced education will be noticeably enhanced because both the appropriate classroom facilities and other instructional technologies and support are available to faculty and students;

Two of four University Goals are

5.2 A University Goal: Technology-enabled Faculty, Staff and Students
   5.2.4 Provide Effective Information Technology Services for Students:

5.3 A University Goal: Technology-enhanced Education
   5.3.1 Establish Appropriate Levels of Technology in Classrooms:

If the University is to achieve the goal of technology-enhanced education, along with faculty training and development, it must equip its classrooms and laboratories appropriately.

   5.3.2 Ensure Availability of Information Technology Resources for Students:
   Current policy is to provide open-access computer laboratories for students…The second problem is the absence of an established plan for systematically replacing the technology in these classrooms and laboratories. A replacement funding system based on a reasonable lifetime should be established for the near future.

Excerpts from the “University Strategic Plan”

f. Technology

A goal is to become and remain current in the application of computing and information technologies. All students should have ready access to computing resources and an opportunity to develop information management skills for lifelong learning.
The Digital Aquarium is an open-access, multimedia laboratory; accessible to all students at Georgia State, regardless of academic major or technology skill levels. The services and equipment offered at the Digital Aquarium directly support the academic requirements of many diverse departments and support a large number of students studying under those departments. There are currently no other open-access facilities available on campus providing the high-end multimedia computing equipment necessary to meet these demands. The Digital Aquarium is open to assist students during the business hours of the Student Center.

During the past year, the Digital Aquarium has continued to increase its services to the student body. This is shown in constantly increasing numbers of student sign-ins, equipment checkouts and workshop attendance at the lab over the past three and a half years. The Digital Aquarium has become a valuable asset to the campus not only for its unique software and hardware offerings, but also for the learning opportunities available to all Georgia State students.

The Digital Aquarium sponsors, advises, and on occasion, hosts campus activities for many diverse student organizations on campus. These include Cinefest, SpotLight, the Student Government Association, technology focused groups, student film projects, student television pilots, cultural groups and events, athletic teams, fraternities, sororities and Home Coming.

The Digital Aquarium is now featured on most campus tours, such as INCEPT tours, providing opportunities to recruit top-tier students to Georgia State. The Digital Aquarium has also hosted many prestigious guests from the local and national press, including: US New and World Report, CNN, the Atlanta Journal Constitution, the Signal, GSTV, Album 88.9, PeopleTV and GPTV. Our open access policy is what sets us apart from other laboratories. We can continue to raise the bar of excellence in services and support with the items requested in this proposal.

Please review Attachment 2, “Digital Aquarium Metrics” for thorough outcomes and results of last year’s Tech Fee award.

Please review Attachment 3, “Classes Enhanced by the Digital Aquarium” for a list of departments, and their classes, that will be directly enhanced by the continuation of an open access multimedia production laboratory:

Please review Attachment 4, “Acknowledgements” for comments and letters from students, staff and faculty regarding the role of the Digital Aquarium on campus.
9. Justification of Funding Requirements for Fiscal Year 2006

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10. Consequences of Partial Funding

Only 75% funded: Funding for Student Assistants has not been reduced. A support staff is required for the continued operation of the Digital Aquarium. The Digital Aquarium Student Assistants are exceptional multimedia instructors, and set the highest standard for customer support. The remaining Hardware Upgrade supplies in this proposal are still viable at 75%. Eight (8) of our student multimedia workstations will not be upgraded. Next year the Digital Aquarium will submit another Tech Fee proposal for workstations not replaced this year. Warranties on our existing workstations have expired.
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**Total:** $333,834.00

Only 50% funded:

Funding for Student Assistants has not been reduced. A support staff is required for the continued operation of the Digital Aquarium. The Digital Aquarium Student Assistants are exceptional multimedia instructors, and set the highest standard for customer support.

The remaining Hardware Upgrade supplies in this proposal are still viable at 50%. Eight (8) of our student multimedia workstations will not be upgraded. Next year the Digital Aquarium will submit
another Tech Fee proposal for workstations not replaced this year. Warranties on our existing workstations have expired.

Unfortunately, we will not be able to afford 30” Apple Displays for our workstations. They will be replaced by 23” Flat Displays, a smaller version of the same monitor. This disadvantage is that students will not have as much screen space for working with video and animation programs such as Final Cut Pro, Pro Tools, Maya, Flash and After Effects. Larger screens also make working on graphic design projects much more efficient, in programs such as Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign. Larger monitors permit students to work with multiple HD video windows, and/or multiple applications, at the same time.

At 50% funding the Digital Aquarium will not be able to provide students with enough video cameras, microphones, and lighting kits to meet our current demands. The Digital Aquarium’s equipment checkout program is very successful with both students and faculty. Our digital video and photo cameras allow students to add multimedia content to their class work. Currently we do not have enough video cameras, photo cameras and light kits to meet the demands of our students.

Furthermore, digital video cameras have evolved much in the past four years. At 50% funding, the Digital Aquarium will not be able to provide new SONY HDV high-definition cameras to students.

At 50% there will not be enough funding to increase the capacity of our storage server.
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<td></td>
<td>Manfrotto Pro Video Tripod (525MVB Black), w/Bogen Pro FluidHead (503) and Softcase w/Shoulder Strap</td>
<td>$795.00</td>
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<td>Sony HVR-M10U HDV VCR Compact Player/Recorder w/Built-In LCD Monitor, Records and Plays</td>
<td>$3,299.00</td>
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<td>Basic Digital Photo Camera Kits</td>
<td>SONY CyberShot 4-mega-pixel, Cases, Batts, Charger</td>
<td>$495.00</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$4,950.00</td>
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<td>Audio Suite Upgrade</td>
<td>Digi 002 Factory System with Control Surface</td>
<td>$2,695.00</td>
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<td>Storage Server</td>
<td>400GB Hard Drives for XRAID Storage</td>
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<td>Student Assistants</td>
<td>Student Assistant Multimedia Managers</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$156,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>$291,127.00</td>
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</table>
11. Standard Dollar Amounts

Apple Macintosh systems exceeding $1,520 must be specifically justified:

Students come to the Digital Aquarium to experience the highest standard in multimedia resources and support. Unfortunately, many other computer labs on campus currently offer faster workstations than those at the Digital Aquarium. Fast dual-G5 multimedia workstations cost more than standard PowerMacs, because they are capable of producing high-end multimedia in a shorter amount of time and support an environment where students can run several digital media applications simultaneously.

Many of the software programs offered in the Digital Aquarium require the fastest workstations available. Programs such as Apple Final Cut Pro, Apple DVD Studio Pro, Adobe After Effects, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe InDesign, DigiDesign Pro Tools, and Alias|Wavefront Maya are all professional software titles offered at the Digital Aquarium that require the fastest workstations.

As multimedia software progresses and the creativity of students evolve, certain tasks demand processing power far exceeding normal requirements. For example, a typical Word document is less than 1MB. A file containing five minutes of video footage is larger than 1GB and many projects require hours of video content. Working with such large files requires the fastest workstations available and must utilize especially large hard drives.

All professional multimedia applications require rendering, the process of compositing pixels or data. For example, applying an audio filter to a five-minute voice track, color correcting a ten-minute video clip, compressing a one-hour MPEG2 video for DVD, or animating a 3D environment with multiple objects, textures and lighting. Rendering is one of the most complicated tasks a workstation can provide. The Apple dual-2.5GHz G5 workstations requested in this proposal will be able to complete complex tasks, such as rendering, much faster than our current dual-800 G4 workstations (at least 4x faster). Thus accelerating a one-hour render to only fifteen minutes.

Specifically, programs such as Apple Motion, Apple Final Cut Pro 5, and Alias|Wavefront Maya require video cards which are generations ahead of the video cards installed in the current workstations at the Digital Aquarium. Programs offering real-time previews (such as Photoshop, After Effects, Maya3D, and Final Cut Pro) will be able to provide more real-time effects and better quality previews.

12. Standard Replacement Thresholds

The Digital Aquarium can recycle and continue to use our existing workstations. Our current workstations are not capable of running emerging real-time video, audio and 3D technologies. However, these older workstations can still be used for graphic design, web design, scanning, logging, downloading pictures, and many other common tasks. The workstations in current use should not be surplused. More efficient use of space in the Aquarium will permit the ten (10) existing Apple dual-800mHz G4 workstations to continue to be utilized by students. The G4 workstations will continue to be use as Scanning Stations, Graphic, Web and Audio Design workstations.

The ten (10) existing DELL workstations will be clustered into a multiprocessor Render Farm. The Render Farm will be used to render large video, audio and 3D files overnight for students. The Render Farm will also be able to compress large video files for DVD authoring. The Digital Aquarium will work with UETS, the Computer Science department, DAEL (Digital Art and Entertainment Lab) and other multimedia labs on campus to provide rendering services – free of charge – for students.

See Section 11 (Justification for non-Standard Dollar Amounts) for specific details and requirements for multimedia production workstations.

The Digital Aquarium will continue to use its existing workstations. It is not necessary to include attachments regarding workstation replacement.

13. Prerequisite, Non-Technology Fee Funding: Not Applicable

14. Matching Funds: Not Applicable
15. Staffing and Other Support Availability

Georgia State University, IS&T and UETS rely solely on Tech Fee funding for all employees of the Digital Aquarium.

This proposal includes $156,000.00 for Student Assistants. In order to continue offering its current resources and services, the Digital Aquarium must have Student Assistants. It is vital that the Digital Aquarium receive continued funding for its Student Assistant staff.

This proposal does not include any staff positions. The Digital Aquarium has been pre-approved for one full time staff member, Nathan Reetz, an Educational Technology Specialist, who reports directly to the Manager of the UETS Digital Media Group, Julian Allen.

16. Space Availability and Impact on Facilities
   This project does not impact facilities.

17. Impact on Computing/Networking/Security Infrastructure
   This project does not impact Computing/Networking/Security Infrastructure.

18. Post-Project Assessment Criteria

19. Review and Acknowledgements:
   Please refer to Attachment 4 “Acknowledgements from Students, Staff and Faculty”
Stating the performance criteria used to determine the need to replace equipment is crucial. Be sure to indicate the software that must run effectively on the specific machines and the associated performance level (responsiveness, etc.) required for the software to be effective.

Students come to the Digital Aquarium to experience the highest standard in multimedia resources and support. Unfortunately, many other computer labs on campus currently offer faster workstations than those at the Digital Aquarium. Fast dual-G5 multimedia workstations cost more than standard PowerMacs, because they are capable of producing high-end multimedia in shorter amounts of time.

Many of the software programs offered in the Digital Aquarium require the fastest workstations available. Programs such as Apple Final Cut Pro, Apple DVD Studio Pro, Adobe After Effects, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe InDesign, DigiDesign Pro Tools, and Alias|Wavefront Maya are all professional software titles that require the fastest workstations available.

Providing fast and reliable hardware makes the daily operation of the Digital Aquarium more efficient and productive, which in-turn improves the satisfaction of our student patrons. As multimedia software progresses and the creativity of students evolves, certain tasks demand processing power far exceeding normal requirements. For example, a typical Word document is less than 1MB. A typical video file is larger than 1GB, a factor of 1000! Working with such large files requires the latest software and the fastest workstations available.

All professional multimedia applications require rendering, the process of compositing pixels or data. For example, applying an audio filter to a five-minute voice track, color correcting a ten-minute video clip, compressing a one-hour MPEG2 for DVD, or animating a 3D environment with multiple objects, textures and lighting. Rendering is one of the most complicated tasks a workstation can provide. The Apple dual-2.5GHz G5 workstations requested in this proposal will be able to complete complex tasks, such as rendering, much faster than our current dual-800 G4 workstations (at least 4x faster). Thus accelerating a one-hour render to only fifteen minutes.

Specifically, programs such as Apple Motion, Apple Final Cut Pro v5, and Alias|Wavefront Maya require video cards which are generations ahead of the video cards installed in the current workstations at the Digital Aquarium. Programs offering real-time previews (such as Photoshop, After Effects, Maya3D, and Final Cut Pro) will be able to provide more real-time effects and better quality previews.

Explain how the performance criteria listed above relate to your unit’s organizational mission and its ability to deliver the intended service effectively.

The Digital Aquarium is Georgia State University’s premiere open access multimedia laboratory for students. Students come to the Digital Aquarium to experience the highest standard in multimedia resources and support. Unfortunately, many other computer labs on campus currently offer faster workstations than those at the Digital Aquarium.

The Digital Aquarium puts students’ Tech Fee monies back into the hands of students. The Digital Aquarium delivers high-end resources and high-quality support that directly contributes to the academics of our students. The Digital Aquarium is a showcase room where all students can put their Tech Fees to work.

Our open access policy is what sets us apart from other laboratories. We believe that we can get the Digital Aquarium and Georgia State more national press, if we have the hardware upgrades to
Identify the specific minimum hardware or software required to have the equipment or systems perform to the level identified in the criteria above.

In order to succeed at our mission, to provide Georgia State University students with the highest standard of multimedia resources and support, the Digital Aquarium requires the fastest workstations available. The Digital Aquarium is requesting Apple G5 dual-2.5 GHz workstations, with 4GB of memory, 500GB of storage, a DVD/CD superdrive, and state-of-the-art video cards.
The following is a list of metrics for the Digital Aquarium:

**Number of students:**
The Aquarium measures the number of students using the unique resources of this lab over time to determine the utilization of the lab.
- 20,220: The total number of student sign-ins from June 2004 – Dec 2004
- Our 50,000th student patron will enter the Aquarium in the Spring 2005 semester.
- More than 1200 students have taken the Audio Suite workshop as of Dec 2004.

**Equipment Usage**
Observing equipment reservation logs and documenting student use of equipment in the lab can track the amount of time equipment is in use. The following statistics are from the 2004 Fall Semester:
- 1500 Workstation Reservations
- 1400 Digital Video Camera Check-Outs
- 350 Digital Still Camera Check-Outs
- 300 Light Kit Check-Outs

**Software Workshops**
The Digital Aquarium works with faculty and departments on campus to develop free workshops for students on numerous multimedia software applications such as video editing, audio production, digital photography, graphic design, web design, 3D modeling and animation. Over 700 free workshops were given to Georgia State students in 2004.

**Metrics**
- 50,000 student sign-ins since our grand opening in February 2002
- Seventy (70) free workshops every month for novice and advanced students
- Subjects include: Photoshop, After Effects, Flash, Dreamweaver, ProTools, Illustrator, DVD Studio Pro, Final Cut Pro, iMovie, iDVD, Video Compression, Digital Audio Production, Digital Photography, Digital Video, Advanced Lighting, Wireless Microphones and Mac OSX.
- Each year the Digital Aquarium offers 150 audio production workshops
- More than 1200 students have taken our Digital Audio workshop
- The Digital Aquarium’s Digital Audio Suite has a wait-list over three weeks long - making it the most popular workstation on campus.
- The Aquarium averages forty (40) equipment checkouts per week.
- The Aquarium hosted more than three-dozen academic classes for multimedia software workshops in the 2004 Fall semester
- More than twenty faculty members assigned projects to their classes in Fall 2004 that required resources only available through the Digital Aquarium.
- Every year the Digital Aquarium hosts more than two-thousand (2000) students and their parents on guided tours.
- Students from every college on campus use the resources and support of the Digital Aquarium.
Classes Enhanced by the Digital Aquarium

The following is a list of departments, and their classes, that will be directly enhanced by the continuation of an open access multimedia production laboratory:

Graphic Design
- GRD 4310 Multimedia Design: 20 students/year
- GRD 4400 Design for Film and TV: 20 students/year
- GRD 4600 Senior Workshop: 20 students/year
- GRD 4950 Graphic Design Portfolio: 20 students/year
- GRD 4840 Offered in conjunction with computer science for 3D modeling 2 students/year

Photography
- PHOT 3100 Alternative Process: 12 students/year
- PHOT 4100 Color Photography: 12 students/year
- PHOT 4200 Documentary Photography: 12 students/year
- PHOT 4300 Studio Photography: 12 students/year
- PHOT 4410 Creative Processes and Practice: 12 students/year
- PHOT 4420 Digital I: 12 students/year
- PHOT 4430 Digital II: 12 students/year
- PHOT 4500 Directed Study: 12 students/year
- PHOT 4950 Portfolio: 5 students/year
- PHOT 4980 Special Problems: 5 students/year
- PHOT 8000 Advanced Studio Problems: 16 students/year
- PHOT 8500 Directed Study: 8 students/year
- PHOT 8980 Special Problems: 7 students/year
- PHOT 8990 Thesis Research 5 students/year

Communications
- Postproduction: for undergraduates who shoot in digital video and not film.
- Documentary Film: for undergraduates who make a documentary instead of writing a paper.
- Acting for the Camera: for graduates and undergraduates who want to edit their work.
- History of Animation: for undergraduates to make an animation instead of writing a paper.
- All acting classes: for students/faculty who want to videotape students' performances.
- All speech classes: for students/faculty who want to videotape students' performances.
- SPCH 3210, Business and Professional Communication, with about 150 students annually;
- JOUR 4610/COMM 6610 Desktop Editing and Publishing with annual enrollment of 100 students
- Interactive Video: for scanning and photographing still images.
- Digital Motion Imaging: for scanning and photographing still images and for dubbing.
- Digital Filmmaking: for dubbing.
- Special Effects: for scanning still images, for animation, for dubbing.
- Desktop Publishing
- Visual Communication
- New Media Research and Production
- Interactive Video Workshop: 15 grad students maximum;
- COMM 8070 Communication Technology: 15 grad students maximum
Acknowledgements from Students, Staff and Faculty

The following comments were taken from letters, emails, and thank you cards the Digital Aquarium and its staff has received.

Stan Anderson
Faculty, Graphic Design
"I appreciate the incredible After Effects demo which you gave to me and the 18 students of my Senior Graphic Design class. You were thorough, well versed and personable as you covered an incredible amount of instructional information regarding AfterEffects. I personally want to commend you on how well prepared you were by giving us printed materials to take with us. Thanks again for the insightful workshop in Final Cut Pro this past week. It's just what the grad class needed in order to get them going. It is a great pleasure to have such a wonderful working relationship with those of you at the Digital Aquarium and I applaud you on your academia success."

Rebecca Klein
Faculty, Graphic Design
"That was a big help, to both my students and myself. I have a feeling they'll definitely be taking advantage of some of your resources."

Niklas Vollmer
Faculty, Documentary Film
"I never did get to formally thank you for all of the help with my Documentary Film class last semester. Thanks for all of your help with the Final Cut Pro and GL1 workshops. We greatly appreciated the workshops, additional aquarium staff assistance, and access! The students are excited and are raring to dive in!"

The Welcome Center
"Thank you so much for all of your help and assistance with the Presidential Scholarship Day. Your cooperation and willingness to help were truly a blessing. I can only hope the University knows what an amazing employee they have!"

April Lawhorn
Instructor, Honors Program
"We enjoyed your presentation when the Honors FLC visited the Digital Aquarium."

Cathy Byrd
Gallery Director, School of Art & Design
"Thank you for your tremendous support for the gallery and especially this last project!"

Kija Sanders-McMurtry
Instructor, Honors Program
"Your presentation for the GSU 1010 Honors class was great yesterday and I appreciate you working with our schedule. The students were excited to learn what about this resource on campus. I just want you to know that I think that you are a good resource to the University and will happily encourage students to utilize your facility."

Paula Eubanks
Faculty, Art & Design
"Many, many thanks for the tour and introduction to the digital aquarium. My students are very enthusiastic about using the lab and we look forward to our workshops on using the cameras and Dreamweaver."

Craig Dongoski
Faculty, Art & Design
“I am writing to thank you for all the help and guidance you have given to the students in my class ‘intervention/Invention’. You have been very generous in your support for this rather experimental class involving sound/video media. Your knowledge of the technology has aided us considerable. I, along with the students, have also appreciated how accessible you have made the Digital Aquarium facilities feel. It is a valuable resource and your professional expertise allows us to tap into its potential.”

Eric Panter
Student Film Maker
“Thanks man. You rock. I couldn't pulled it off w/o you.”

Vanessa Olavd
Senior, RE/MGT
"I take this opportunity to express my gratitude for all the help the Digital Aquarium gave me with a final project. The entire staff was exceptional!!"

George Dean
Public Relations SpotLight
“I really appreciate you allowing SpotLight use the wireless laptops. Everything went well! Again, I truly appreciate your concern and cooperation.”

Anonymous Student
“All of the staff is most helpful and patient. They make what can be a frustrating experience, tolerable. Many thanks for the assistance in preparing my materials for screening."

Mary Hocks
Faculty, English
“Thank you for presenting two workshops to the students in English 3135 Visual Rhetoric Class. Students mentioned learning useful information about Photoshop and they are eager to continue working in the Digital Aquarium. I also greatly appreciate your willingness to reschedule these sessions at the last minute. I am looking forward to working with you again soon.”

Liz Throop
Faculty, Graphic Design
“I want you to know what a tremendous support I have been receiving from Nathan Reetz and the Digital Aquarium. The Aquarium has provided a crucial link for my students by giving them a solid yet succinct overview of how sound work in Macromedia Flash. His remarks were geared to their specific needs and backed up with on-screen demonstrations. He seems to be a rare bird who learns software easily but can gear his training to even the most technology-shy students. Nathan also gave students a general orientation to the lab and had a student assistant show them how to use ProTools. My students confirmed that both demonstrations were excellent and geared to their needs. Be assured that the Digital Aquarium is serving crucial pedagogical needs in addition to being the coolest place on campus. I sense an evolving “critical mass” of knowledge, software, and hardware coming together at the Digital Aquarium, so that students can hang out at school and exchange information informally. This kind of environment moves formal instruction ahead tremendously and contributes to campus life as a whole.”