Video Game Developers In High Demand

Unique Education Program Responds To Industry Needs

(NAPSA)—The video game industry is becoming serious business. Over the past three years, video game sales have surpassed Hollywood box office receipts, helping to build an $18 billion industry worldwide. What's more, the digital games industry is expected to grow at an annual rate of 15 to 20 percent, resulting in the need for about 5,000 new hires each year in the U.S alone. Even better, starting salaries average about $50,000 a year.

The rapid growth of this industry means more and more people who grew up playing video games may find that their love of gaming could become their ticket to a successful and rewarding career.

To respond to the demand for artists, software programmers, level designers and others who create video games, the Guildhall at Southern Methodist University (SMU) has created a one-of-a-kind, graduate-level digital games education program, designed to be the world's premier training center for future video game developers.

This education program is anything but ordinary and has been getting significant national attention—from *Business Week* and *Newsweek* to CNN Headline News. Jay Leno even took notice of the program during a recent monologue on "The Tonight Show."

It's also drawing the attention of men and women from around the world, with applications coming from Australia, China, England, Iran, Mexico and the United States.

3-D Graphics by Scott March, Guildhall faculty

Demand is high for artists, software programmers, and level designers as the video game industry grows.

The Guildhall at SMU is an 18-month long game development program that provides a graduate-level certificate of completion acknowledging the gained professional expertise.

Game development luminaries with a vision for this new kind of education curriculum have been key contributors to the Guildhall's concept and design and will remain involved with the program as teachers, tutors and mentors.

Course project requirements enable students to work in small teams to develop three complete games for their portfolios. The program also includes specific tracks of study based upon key industry needs, such as art creation, level design and software development.

For more information, visit the Web site at www.guildhall.smu.edu or call 214-768-9950.