

Agendum  
Oakland University  
Board of Trustees Formal Session  
June 29, 2010

**BACHELOR OF ARTS IN LIBERAL STUDIES**  
**A Recommendation**

1. **Division and Department:** Academic Affairs, College of Arts and Sciences (CAS).

2. **Introduction:** The Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies (BALS) program is an innovative, rigorous interdisciplinary undergraduate liberal studies program that will be housed in the College of Arts and Sciences, as is the existing Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (MALS) program. The program was developed by a diverse group of CAS faculty members who were appointed by Dean Ron Sudol. The degree program includes a rigorous foundation sequence of two courses: LBS 100 (Exploration of the Arts and Sciences) and LBS 200 (Interdisciplinary Approaches to Liberal Studies). The core of the degree program builds on the existing strength of CAS interdisciplinary concentrations or an appropriate combination of two CAS minors and includes a relevant disciplinary methods course. The program culminates in a two semester thesis experience: LBS 495 (Senior Thesis I) and LBS 496 (Senior Thesis II). Depending on the core choices, the total credits for the major will range from 44 to 56. As is the case for the MALS program, a faculty director will work with a faculty executive committee to approve program core options, to advise students, and to monitor all other academic aspects of the BALS program.

Building on the long-standing tradition and mission of the College of Arts and Sciences to educate students broadly for life-long learning, the BALS program will provide to traditional, first year college students the opportunity to use existing high quality programs to design a unique interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary undergraduate experience as a solid foundation in support of their future educational and professional goals. The outcomes of this program include enhanced abilities in critical and analytical thinking and writing in addition to the development of creative and collaborative abilities. The ability of students to work on important problems across disciplines will position them well for a challenging, changing and ultimately satisfying future. The BALS program will allow incoming first year students with passions in more than one area the opportunity to explore multiple disciplines before committing to a disciplinary major or choosing to stay interdisciplinary via the BALS major.

The BALS program is very different in mission, scope and design from the existing university-wide Bachelor of Integrative Studies program that works primarily with nontraditional transfer students. It is also different from the long-standing CAS Independent Major, a very small, completely customized program. Most of our sister institutions have an undergraduate liberal studies program; they are very diverse in

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structure. The OU BALS program has unique foundation courses and a very significant capstone thesis. The OU program is also very efficient; only four new courses are proposed. The great majority of credits will come from courses that are already being offered.

3. **Previous Board Action:** The Board of Trustees approved the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies in 2001.
4. **Budget Implications:** The budget is built on small, incremental numbers of new students and is projected to generate positive revenue from the beginning. Expenses include staffing of the four new courses as well as appropriate library, infrastructure, supplies and services, and faculty development funds to support College-wide training on interdisciplinary teaching and research.
5. **Educational Implications:** Several parameters indicate that incoming college students do not want to be restricted to one discipline of study. Currently over 17% of OU students choose a major and a minor or do a second major. ACT survey of recent Michigan high school graduates reveals that the group with the highest average ACT score is the group seeking "cross disciplinary studies." This program should allow OU to be competitive for highly motivated, creative first year students who do not want to be put in a disciplinary box. Furthermore, proposed faculty development associated with this program will bring to campus national leaders to discuss the how and why of interdisciplinary scholarship and learning. These are important conversations that are occurring at institutions across the country; the College of Arts and Sciences is committed to fostering those discussions on our campus.

At both the university and College level, this program resonates with our core values of innovation and creativity, excellence, knowledge and discovery, and student success. This program will enhance the university goal of providing the "best" distinctive undergraduate education, as it reinforces our passion for knowledge, learning and opportunity for life-long success.

6. **Personnel Implications:** A faculty director will be recruited from existing faculty within the College. Stipend funds as well as faculty overload or part-time faculty replacement are included in budget. If the program thrives as anticipated, a new full-time faculty position will be requested no earlier than year three of the program.
7. **University Reviews/Approvals:** The proposal for the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies has been reviewed and approved by the College of Arts and Science Assembly, the Oakland University Senate, and the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost.

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**8. Recommendation:**

WHEREAS, the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies is consistent with the spirit and mission of Oakland University's 2020 Strategic Plan; and

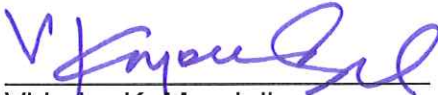
WHEREAS, the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies will provide a unique opportunity to meet the needs of creative, passionate first year students; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees authorizes the College of Arts and Sciences to offer a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost will complete annual reviews of the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies to evaluate academic quality and fiscal viability to determine whether the program should be continued.

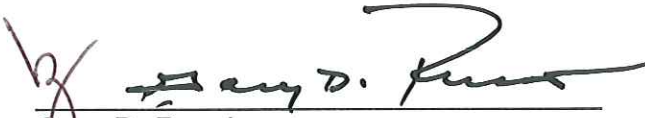
**9. Attachments: Attachment A—Proposal for a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies.**

Submitted to the President  
on 6/11, 2010 by



Virinder K. Moudgil  
Senior Vice President for  
Academic Affairs and Provost

Recommended on 6/10, 2010  
to the Board for approval by



Gary D. Russi  
President

**PROPOSAL FOR A BACHELOR OF ARTS  
IN LIBERAL STUDIES**

**Submitted by**

**The College of Arts and Sciences**

**Submitted November 2, 2008**

**Revised April 8, 2009**

**College of Arts and Sciences Committee on Instruction**

**Revision submitted: April 10, 2009**

**Approved: April 20, 2009**

**College of Arts and Sciences Assembly**

**Submitted: September 22, 2009**

**Approved: November 17, 2009**

**Senate Steering Committee**

**Submitted: December 1, 2009**

**Revision for Senate: April 12, 2010**

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## SUMMARY

The College of Arts and Sciences proposes an interdisciplinary undergraduate liberal studies program (Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies) to be initiated in the 2010-11 academic year. Like our existing Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (MALS) program, this is an innovative and rigorous interdisciplinary approach to undergraduate education. The objectives of this program are in harmony with the goals of a liberal education: that is, to cultivate the individual's ability to integrate diverse fields of human knowledge and activity. The outcomes of this program include enhanced abilities in critical and analytical thinking and writing in addition to development of creative and collaborative abilities. Beginning undergraduates can explore multiple disciplines before choosing a traditional disciplinary major. Those students seeking a truly creative and unique undergraduate program may decide to pursue the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies (BALS) degree. This program will not duplicate the Bachelor of Integrative Studies program.

The degree program includes a rigorous foundation sequence of two courses: LBS 100 (Exploration of the Arts and Sciences) and LBS 200 (Interdisciplinary Approaches to Liberal Studies). The core of the degree program builds on the existing strength of CAS interdisciplinary concentrations or an appropriate combination of minors and includes a relevant disciplinary methods course. The program culminates in a two semester thesis experience: LBS 495 (Senior Thesis I) and LBS 496 (Senior Thesis II). As is the case for the MALS program, a tenure track faculty director will work with a tenure track faculty executive committee to approve program core options, to advise students, and to monitor all other academic aspects of the program.

The BALS program will allow creative undergraduates seeking broad liberal studies experience the opportunity to develop cross-cutting skills that will position them for a dynamic future. The liberal studies program is targeted to first year college students with passions in more than one area. The program resonates with university emphasis on innovation and creativity, as it provides a "distinctive undergraduate experience."

The budget is built on small, incremental numbers of new students and is projected to generate funds sufficient for the support of the four program-specific courses as well as to provide some infrastructure for CAS interdisciplinary programs. In addition, faculty development in the area of interdisciplinary teaching and learning will be supported. Additional faculty support will be provided by graduate assistants.

## 1. Program Description

### a. Program Goals

Building on the long-standing tradition and mission of the College of Arts and Sciences to educate students broadly for life-long learning, this proposed Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies (BALS) program will provide to traditional, first year college students the opportunity to use existing high quality programs to design a unique interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary undergraduate program as a solid foundation in support of their future educational and professional goals. The general goals of the BALS program echo those that were articulated recently in the report entitled *College Learning for the New Global Century* (1) which recommends in sum “an education that intentionally fosters, across multiple fields of study, wide-ranging knowledge of science, cultures, and society; high-level intellectual and practical skills; an active commitment to personal and social responsibility; and the demonstrated ability to apply learning to complex problems and challenges.” This program will not duplicate the Bachelor of Integrative Studies program.

Specifically, this new program will provide motivated, creative students with the opportunity to focus on two or more areas of study as opposed to a traditional discipline-specific major. As Derek Bok noted in his recent book (6), “...several studies have even found that interdisciplinary programs can produce greater gains in critical thinking than an equivalent number of courses in a single discipline.” Additionally, from their foundational and capstone experiences, the liberal studies student will be well-prepared to work within multiple additional disciplines. Secondly, but not insignificant, this program will serve as an “incubator” for undecided students as they explore educational options within the College. Finally, this program will transform and/or nourish many existing concentrations and minors within the College and will provide impetus for the College to restructure its support system for interdisciplinary programs.

### b. Unique Characteristics of Program

To develop this unique program, a diverse group of faculty was recruited to this effort in the winter of 2006. Those faculty and their departments are listed below.

| <b>Faculty Member</b> | <b>Program Affiliation</b>                         |
|-----------------------|--|
| Ken Elder             | Physics  |
| Stacey Hahn           | Modern Languages and Literatures<br>French Studies |
| John Klemanski        | Political Science                                  |
| Rob Kushler           | Mathematics and Statistics                         |
| Kathleen Moore        | Chemistry<br>College of Arts and Sciences          |
| Eric LaRock           | Philosophy   |
| Kathleen Pfeiffer     | English  |

|                         |                  |
|-------------------------|------------------|
|                         | American Studies |
| Cynthia Sifonis         | Psychology       |
| Sally Schluter Tardella | Studio Art       |

In contrast to many other liberal studies programs, we are not developing any new cores. Rather, we are building on the many diverse, sometimes underutilized, educational opportunities that have been constructed by faculty over the past 50 years. It is hoped that the existence of this unique opportunity for incoming students will stimulate current faculty to develop additional educational options that meet both the interdisciplinary and rigor requirements for this program. The liberal studies program is an exciting, creative opportunity for students to build their futures. It stands in significant contrast to the existing BGS (now BIS) program which serves nontraditional students and allows them to package their prior coursework with current classes into an individual self-designed program.

This program will be based on two unique foundational liberal studies courses: LBS 100 (Exploration of the Arts and Sciences) and LBS 200 (Interdisciplinary Approaches to Liberal Studies). These foundational courses must be taken prior to achievement of junior standing. The core of the program will be an interdisciplinary concentration that meets particular criteria or a combination of two minors, again meeting particular criteria. To provide the student with a more narrowly focused set of skills, each student will take a discipline-specific methods course. This course will be chosen in consultation with the BALS advisor. The culmination of the program will be an intense two semester capstone sequence: LBS 495 (Senior Thesis I) and LBS 496 (Senior Thesis II).

As the collection of concentrations and minors ebbs and flows with faculty creativity, the tables below articulate some appropriate concentrations and minors from the 2008-09 undergraduate catalog. This list is not inclusive and is subject to change. Actual student options for their individual program core will be at the discretion of the BALS Executive Committee.

| <b>Interdisciplinary Concentration</b> | <b>Total Credits</b> | <b>300+ Credits</b> |
|--|----------------------|---------------------|
| Environmental Sciences                 | 28                   | 20                  |
| Urban Studies                          | 28                   | 28                  |
| American Studies                       | 28                   | 12+                 |
| Religious Studies                      | 28                   | 12-20               |
| Criminal Justice                       | 28                   | 20+                 |
| Film Aesthetics/History                | 28                   | 12+                 |

For the concentrations with a range of 300-level credit options, BALS students would need to meet the 20-credit requirement.



| Possible Minor Pairings  | Total Credits | 300+ Credits |
|--------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Communication            | 20            | 12+          |
| Political Science        | 20            | 8+           |
| International Studies    | 20            | 8+           |
| Entrepreneurship (SBA)   | 18            | 18           |
| Chemistry                | 20            | 8+           |
| Anthropology             | 20            | 12+          |
| Judaic Studies           | 20            | 16           |
| Women and Gender Studies | 20            | 16           |
| Biology                  | 20            | 8+           |
| Psychology               | 24            | 8            |

c. Comparison with Other Liberal Studies Programs

Undergraduate programs in liberal studies do not have a monolithic profile across the country or throughout the state. While there is a well-established accreditation body for graduate-level liberal studies program (Association of Graduate Liberal Studies Programs), there is not such a group at the undergraduate level. As seen in the table below, there are many different models among our sister institutions. Not all programs that are labeled liberal studies are designed for FTIAC students like our program. Many of those in the table below are more akin to the mission of our Bachelor of Integrative Studies program which is targeted to nontraditional students.

| College/University              | Program                                | Structure                            | Degree                   | Target                            |
|---------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Grand Valley State University   | Liberal Studies                        | College of Interdisciplinary Studies | BA/BS in Liberal Studies | Traditional<br>Nontraditional     |
| Wayne State University          | Interdisciplinary Studies              | Unit of CLAS                         | BIS                      | Nontraditional, evening courses   |
| Michigan Tech                   | Liberal Arts                           | Humanities Department                | BA in Liberal Arts       | Traditional                       |
| University of Michigan          | Individual Concentration Program (ICP) | CLSA                                 |                          | Traditional                       |
| Northern Michigan University    | Liberal Arts                           |                                      | BA/BS in Liberal Studies | Nontraditional, employed students |
| University of Michigan-Dearborn | Liberal Studies                        | CASL                                 | AB/BS in Liberal Studies | Traditional                       |

d. Comparison with Other OU Programs

The BALS program is designed to be attractive to FTIAC students with interests in multiple areas of study. The core options for the program are our long-standing interdisciplinary concentrations and traditional minors. In contrast, the long-standing Oakland BGS (now BIS) program has served non-traditional students by helping them develop individualized programs that include the diverse college credits that have been accumulated over a period of years. As noted in the catalog “the Bachelor in Integrative Studies is an alternative to a traditional degree.”

Along these lines, it is worth noting the College of Arts, Science and Letters at the University of Michigan-Dearborn houses both types of degrees: the liberal studies program for traditional students seeking a flexible interdisciplinary path to their degree and the general studies program designed for transfer students who seek a college degree without losing previous coursework.

The proposed BALS program also differs from the long-standing independent major option with CAS. That program will remain as a possible route for a highly-motivated undergraduate who desires to focus in an academic area not served by a major program. That program serves a small number of students on a one-by-one basis.

2. **Rationale for the Program**

a. Complexity of Today and the Future

With exponential growth of knowledge and technology, today’s students are facing a very complex, yet exciting, future. While the liberal arts and sciences have been the traditional bedrock of our higher education system, the model of studying in depth in a single discipline is not going to serve all students today or in the future. Rather, the cross-cutting, life-long skills that accrue from broad liberal studies will be what make students adaptable to their challenging future. *Facilitating Interdisciplinary Research*, a recent report from the National Academies (2), recommends that:

“Undergraduate students should seek out interdisciplinary experiences, such as courses at the interfaces of traditional disciplines that address basic research problems, interdisciplinary courses that address societal problems, and research experiences that span more than one traditional discipline.”

This current advice was preceded by Karl Popper’s 1963 admonition (3) that “We are not students of some subject matter, but students of problems. And problems

may cut right across the borders of any subject matter or discipline.” Oakland University faculty heard the call decades ago and come forth with excellent interdisciplinary programs, many of them in the form of concentrations.

The national discussion about the importance of liberal education is summed up by comments from David Kearns, former CEO of Xerox, when he notes: “We are reminded that the real challenge of today’s economy is not in making things but in producing creative ideas. Today, the race goes not just to the swift, but to the inventive, the resourceful, the curious. And that is what a liberal education is all about” (4).

This proposal for a BALS program is a response by the College of Arts and Sciences to important national concerns that will affect us all.

b. Relation to Oakland University Strategic Plan

At the institutional level, this program resonates with the university core values of innovation and creativity, excellence, knowledge and discovery, and student success. It is supportive of both the university mission and vision. This program will enhance the university goal of providing the “best” distinctive undergraduate education, as it reinforces our passion for knowledge, learning, and opportunity for success.

The College of Arts and Sciences is passionate about the intellectual and creative empowerment of individuals and has articulated the following as its principal objective:

*The intellectual and creative capacity of the College of Arts and Sciences provides students with multiple opportunities to develop distinctive individualized academic and cultural experiences, serving as a foundation for professional goals, civic engagement, creative problem-solving, and entrepreneurial impulses.*

Through the work of a multi-disciplinary group of faculty, this program has been developed to support this principal objective and as a major component of the College goal of delivering *Liberal, Interdisciplinary, and Entrepreneurship Studies supported by a high quality faculty.*

c. Student Interest/Retention

Review by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment shows that approximately 16% of undergraduates receiving degrees have either a second major or a minor.

## Oakland University Second Majors and Minors

| Year      | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Majors | Minors | Total Degrees | %     |
|-----------|------------------------|--------|---------------|-------|
| 2007-2008 | 42                     | 538    | 3,388         | 17.1% |
| 2006-2007 | 43                     | 479    | 3,212         | 16.3% |
| 2005-2006 | 42                     | 462    | 3,111         | 16.2% |
| 2004-2005 | 35                     | 467    | 2,973         | 16.9% |
| 2003-2004 | 43                     | 442    | 3,049         | 15.9% |
| 2002-2003 | 33                     | 412    | 2,817         | 15.8% |

This observation is a potent indicator of a high level of interest in not being restricted to a single discipline of study. Our existing liberal studies program (MALS), represents over 4% of CAS graduate students (Fall 2009 OIRA enrollment report). For the most recent graduate program open house, almost 7% of potential CAS graduate students identified liberal studies as their program of interest.

Additional information culled from high school students at various admissions events indicates that many of our potential students are thinking about two or three areas of study. Providing those creative students with the opportunity to pursue both of their interests may increase our ability to retain those students.

The recent report by the ACT on the Career and Educational Aspirations of Michigan's 2008 high school graduates included a "cross-disciplinary" category. While the number of students choosing this category was miniscule, their average composite ACT was the highest of all categories for students anticipating 4 years or more of college (5). Relevant data is summarized in the table below.

| Planned Educational Major        | Average Composite ACT |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Cross-Disciplinary Studies       | 23.7                  |
| Letters                          | 23.6                  |
| Mathematics                      | 23.2                  |
| Sciences (Biological & Physical) | 23.1                  |
| Foreign Languages                | 22.3                  |
| Philosophy, Religion & Theology  | 22.2                  |
| Engineering                      | 21.6                  |
| Overall State Average            | 19.6                  |

Clearly, the kind of student anticipating this kind of educational experience is exactly the kind of student we should be recruiting.

- 3. Catalog Copy for Program:** The material below is the proposed catalog copy for the BALS program. It is based on existing copy for the CAS MALS program.

## **LIBERAL STUDIES PROGRAM**

**Director:**

**Liberal Studies Executive Committee:**

**Chief Adviser:**

Based in the College of Arts and Sciences, the liberal studies program is an innovative and rigorous interdisciplinary approach to undergraduate education that is targeted to first year students with passions in more than one area. The objectives of this program are in harmony with the goals of a liberal education: that is, to cultivate the individual's ability to integrate diverse fields of human knowledge and activity. The outcomes of this program include enhanced abilities in critical and analytical thinking and writing in addition to development of creative and collaborative abilities. Beginning undergraduates can explore multiple disciplines before choosing a traditional disciplinary major. Those students seeking a truly creative and unique undergraduate program may decide to pursue the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies degree.

### **Requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies**

The degree requirements include an 8 credit foundation, a core that is a minimum of 28 credits, a relevant methods course, and an 8 credit capstone experience:

1. Foundation: LBS 100 and LBS 200 with a minimum grade of 2.5 in each course. LBS 100 and LBS 200 must be completed prior to junior standing.
2. The program core consists of either a or b:
  - a. An interdisciplinary College of Arts and Sciences concentration that requires at least 28 credit hours, of which 20 credits must be 300-level or above
  - b. A combination of minors from two intellectually distinct areas. Together the minors must have at least 20 credits at the 300-level or above; each minor must require at least 8 credit hours at the 300-level. Both minors must be in the College of Arts and Sciences; under conditions where a student articulates a need to explore beyond the liberal arts and sciences, an exception request will be considered by the faculty executive committee.
3. A discipline-specific methods course that is relevant to student core. This course must be approved by advisor.
4. Capstone: LBS 495 and 496 with a minimum grade of 3.0 in each course.

The Liberal Studies Executive Committee will maintain a current list of concentrations and minors that meet the above requirements. Minor combinations for option b will need pre-approval by the committee. The committee will also monitor student progress in the program and decide on program honors

### **Program honors**

Program honors may be granted to graduating seniors in liberal studies on the basis of high academic achievement (minimum 3.60 overall grade point average) and excellence in the senior thesis (LBS 495/496).

### **Course Offerings**

#### **LBS 100                    Exploration of the Arts and Sciences (4)**

A broad survey of the three major discipline areas: humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. General methods of inquiry will be stressed. Course will be unified by focus on interdisciplinary college theme.

#### **LBS 200                    Interdisciplinary Approaches to Liberal Studies (4)**

Basic preparation for interdisciplinary study. Students develop knowledge, skills and methods in interdisciplinary research on focused topics. Draws on humanities, natural sciences, social sciences and fine arts to prepare students for advanced work in liberal studies. *Satisfies the university general education requirement for a writing intensive course in general education or the major. Prerequisite for writing intensive: completion of university writing foundation requirement.*

Prerequisite: LBS 100.

#### **LBS 495                    Senior Thesis I (4)**

A participatory, interdisciplinary seminar in which students develop topics, establish research parameters, and prepare a thesis proposal. First in a two course thesis sequence.

Prerequisite: Senior standing, LBS 200, and permission of instructor.

#### **LBS 496                    Senior Thesis II (4)**

A continuation of LBS 495. Students complete the research and writing of their liberal studies thesis papers and presentations, which synthesize their preceding liberal studies work, in this participatory, interdisciplinary seminar. *Satisfies the university general education requirements for the capstone experience. Satisfies the university general education requirement for a writing intensive course in the major. Prerequisite for writing intensive: completion of the university writing foundation requirement.*

Prerequisite: Senior standing, LBS 495, and permission of instructor.

5. **Assessment Plan:** This plan is being reviewed by the University Committee on Assessment.

### **Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies (BALS) Program Assessment Plan**

1. Oakland University Mission, relevant goals:

Regarding Instruction:

“ . . . strong core of liberal arts . . . basis on which undergraduates develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes essential for successful living and active, concerned citizenship . . . specialized curricula prepare students for post-baccalaureate education, professional schools or careers directly after graduation.”

2. Relevant Goals of BALS Program:

To educate students across multiple fields of study

To cultivate intellectual and ethical judgment in students

To teach students to research effectively in more than one discipline

To give students skills to deal effectively with the complexities of an increasingly global and diverse society

To prepare students for additional post-graduate education and a full range of careers which embrace civic engagement, social responsibility, and leadership

3. Student Learning Outcomes:

Based on program goals,

- Students will demonstrate superior critical reasoning skills
- Students will demonstrate creativity in approach to problems
- Students will demonstrate the ability to research in more than one discipline
- Students will propose how to address issues arising from the interdisciplinary nature of their research
- Students will demonstrate high quality written and oral presentations skills

4. Methods of Assessment

Direct Measures

The BALS Program will be assessed annually from three specific student projects, one at the intermediate level and two at the advanced level. The following guidelines will be used. Each Assessment Committee member will be asked to evaluate papers and oral presentations, and to rate each project on a scale of 0.0 - 4.0 in each of the five desired learning outcomes outlined in section 3. Numerical ratings will have the same meaning as in the Oakland University grading system: 0.0 = totally unsatisfactory, 1.0 = passing but unsatisfactory, 2.0 = satisfactory, 3.0 = good, 4.0=excellent.

Student projects to be evaluated:

- a. Copies of the second assigned student papers will be collected at the end of each LBS 200 class and kept in a dossier in the departmental office.
- b. Copies of final thesis papers will be kept from all LBS 496 students

c. Review of all oral presentations from LBS 496 Symposium. Symposiums will be videotaped and digitally archived.

The following potential rubric is adopted from the current approved MALS rubric:

**Assessment of Final Research Papers in BALS Core Courses (LBS 200, 496)**

**Academic Year** \_\_\_\_\_ **Evaluator** \_\_\_\_\_

**Rating System: 4.0 = High; 0.0 = Low; N = No evaluation**

**Papers should demonstrate:**

| Paper | Critical Reasoning Skills | Creative Approach | Multiple Research Methods | Addresses Interdisc Issues | High Quality Commun | Comments |
|-------|---------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|----------|
| 1     |                           |                   |                           |                            |                     |          |
| 2     |                           |                   |                           |                            |                     |          |
| 3     |                           |                   |                           |                            |                     |          |
| 4     |                           |                   |                           |                            |                     |          |
| 5     |                           |                   |                           |                            |                     |          |
| 6     |                           |                   |                           |                            |                     |          |
| 7     |                           |                   |                           |                            |                     |          |
| 8     |                           |                   |                           |                            |                     |          |
| 9     |                           |                   |                           |                            |                     |          |

Indirect Measure:

Exit survey of all LBS 496 students, (see attached)

**5. Individuals Responsible for Assessment**

An Assessment Committee will be formed consisting of the BALS director, a BALS Executive Committee member, and one faculty teaching within the BALS program.

**6. Procedure for Using Assessment Results to Improve Program:**

The Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies (BALS) program will be assessed every year. Initial assessment will commence with the completion of the first section of LBS 200; complete assessment will not be possible until the first group of students completes LBS 496. The Assessment Committee will present assessment results to all BALS faculty in an annual fall meeting. After faculty discussion of assessment findings and committee recommendations, improvements will be in place prior to the following winter term.



## EXIT SURVEY

### Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies (BALS) Majors

Please answer the following questions, and return this form in the envelopes provided. The envelopes will not be opened until all grades have been submitted for courses in the current term. Responses will be anonymous.

#### Numerical answers, Learning Outcomes

On a scale of 0 to 4, with 0 indicating total dissatisfaction with the outcome and 4 indicating the best possible outcome, assess how well your Oakland University education helped you to improve your skills in the following areas:

| Category   | Circle the appropriate number for each question |      |      |      |                |
|--|---|------|------|------|----------------|
|  | Excellent                                       | Good | Fair | Poor | Unsatisfactory |
| Verbal skills  |   |      |      |      |                |
| 1. Writing   | 4   | 3    | 2    | 1    | 0              |
| 2. Oral presentation   | 4   | 3    | 2    | 1    | 0              |
| Research: Rate your ability to   |   |      |      |      |                |
| 3. analyze ideas   | 4   | 3    | 2    | 1    | 0              |
| 4. find source material  | 4   | 3    | 2    | 1    | 0              |
| 5. use bibliographies and databases  | 4   | 3    | 2    | 1    | 0              |
| Critical thinking: Rate your ability to                                    |   |      |      |      |                |
| 6. assess the value and reliability of secondary sources                   | 4   | 3    | 2    | 1    | 0              |
| 7. use information from other sources to formulate an argument of your own | 4   | 3    | 2    | 1    | 0              |
| 8. develop original ideas  | 4   | 3    | 2    | 1    | 0              |
| 9. compare ideas across disciplines  | 4   | 3    | 2    | 1    | 0              |

Written answers (you may continue on the back or on an extra sheet if necessary)

10. Which of your courses in the BALS Program at Oakland University do you think were most helpful, and why?
11. What changes would you suggest that could improve this program?
12. The learning outcomes that we currently evaluate in these assessments are verbal skills, research ability and critical thinking. Do you think these are appropriate outcomes to consider? Could you suggest others?
13. We currently evaluate student learning outcomes by reviewing papers from LBS 200, the written thesis from LBS 496 and the Oral Presentation given at the BALS Symposium as well as these exit surveys. What suggestions could you make for other ways that we could assess learning outcomes?

6. **Library review:** Professor Shawn Lombardo has reviewed the new courses proposed for this program and prepared a recommendation for library support (see appendix b). The library recommendations have been built into the proposed budget. As this program is based on long-standing, well-established concentrations and minors, required additional resources are modest.

## 7. Budget

|   | Acct. | Budget<br>Year 1 | Budget<br>Year 2  | Budget<br>Year 3  | Budget<br>Year 4  | Budget<br>Year 5  |
|---|-------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Revenue Variables:</b>                     |       |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Headcount                                     |       | 10               | 20                | 30                | 40                | 50                |
| Average credits per year per major            |       | 30               | 30                | 30                | 30                | 30                |
| <b>Total Credit Hours</b>                     |       | <b>300</b>       | <b>600</b>        | <b>900</b>        | <b>1200</b>       | <b>1500</b>       |
| Undergraduate (lower)                         |       | 300              | 400               | 500               | 600               | 750               |
| Undergraduate (upper)                         |       |                  | 200               | 400               | 600               | 750               |
| Graduate                                      |       |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| <b>Total FYES</b>                             |       | <b>10.00</b>     | <b>20.00</b>      | <b>30.00</b>      | <b>40.00</b>      | <b>50.00</b>      |
| Undergraduate (cr.+30)                        |       | 10.00            | 20.00             | 30.00             | 40.00             | 50.00             |
| Graduate (cr.+24)                             |       | 0.00             | 0.00              | 0.00              | 0.00              | 0.00              |
| Doctoral (cr.+16)                             |       | 0.00             | 0.00              | 0.00              | 0.00              | 0.00              |
| <b>Tuition Rate Per Credit Hour</b>           |       |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Undergraduate (lower)                         |       | \$ 252.50        | \$ 252.50         | \$ 252.50         | \$ 252.50         | \$ 252.50         |
| Undergraduate (upper)                         |       | \$ 275.00        | \$ 275.00         | \$ 275.00         | \$ 275.00         | \$ 275.00         |
| Graduate                                      |       | \$ 472.50        | \$ 472.50         | \$ 472.50         | \$ 472.50         | \$ 472.50         |
| <b>Revenue</b>                                |       |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Tuition                                       |       | \$ 75,750        | \$ 156,000        | \$ 236,250        | \$ 316,500        | \$ 395,625        |
| Other   |       | \$ -             | \$ -              | \$ -              | \$ -              | \$ -              |
| <b>Total Revenue</b>                          |       | <b>\$ 75,750</b> | <b>\$ 156,000</b> | <b>\$ 236,250</b> | <b>\$ 316,500</b> | <b>\$ 395,625</b> |
| <b>Compensation</b>                           |       |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| <b>Salaries/Wages</b>                         |       |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Faculty Inload Replacements (\$4,000/section) | 6301  | \$ 8,000         | \$ 16,000         | \$ 32,000         | \$ 40,000         | \$ 48,000         |
| Faculty Salaries                              | 6101  | \$ -             | \$ -              | \$ 55,000         | \$ 55,000         | \$ 55,000         |
| Faculty Overload                              | 6301  |                  | \$ 8,500          | \$ 8,500          | \$ 8,500          | \$ 8,500          |
| Part-time Faculty (\$4,244/section)           | 6301  |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Visiting Faculty                              | 6101  |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Administrative (director stipend)             | 6201  | \$ 8,500         | \$ 8,500          | \$ 8,500          | \$ 8,500          | \$ 8,500          |
| AP-incremental CAS adviser                    | 6221  |                  | \$ 4,500          | \$ 4,500          | \$ 4,500          | \$ 4,500          |
| Clerical                                      | 6211  |                  |                   |                   | \$ 35,000         | \$ 35,000         |
| Wages (part-time clerical)                    | 6401  | \$ 7,500         | \$ 10,000         | \$ 16,000         |                   |                   |
| Student                                       | 6501  |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Graduate Assistant Stipends                   | 6311  | \$ 6,500         | \$ 13,000         | \$ 19,500         | \$ 26,000         | \$ 32,500         |
| Out of Classification                         | 6401  |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Overtime                                      | 6401  |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| <b>Total Salaries/Wages</b>                   |       | <b>\$ 30,500</b> | <b>\$ 60,500</b>  | <b>\$ 144,000</b> | <b>\$ 177,500</b> | <b>\$ 192,000</b> |
| Fringe Benefits                               | 6701  | \$ 1,800         | \$ 5,331          | \$ 28,969         | \$ 45,775         | \$ 46,295         |
| <b>Total Compensation</b>                     |       | <b>\$ 32,300</b> | <b>\$ 65,831</b>  | <b>\$ 172,969</b> | <b>\$ 223,275</b> | <b>\$ 238,295</b> |
| <b>Operating Expenses</b>                     |       |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Supplies and Services                         | 7101  | \$ 1,500         | \$ 4,000          | \$ 4,000          | \$ 4,000          | \$ 4,000          |
| Media subscriptions/connections               | 7101  |                  |                   | \$ 1,000          | \$ 1,000          | \$ 1,000          |
| PR materials                                  | 7101  | \$ 4,500         | \$ 2,000          | \$ 2,000          | \$ 2,000          | \$ 5,000          |
| Faculty Development Workshops                 | 7101  | \$ 20,000        | \$ 20,000         | \$ 15,000         | \$ 15,000         | \$ 15,000         |
| Cultural events                               | 7101  | \$ 1,000         | \$ 2,000          | \$ 2,000          | \$ 2,000          | \$ 2,000          |
| Facilities Rental (\$200/cr)                  | 7101  | \$ -             | \$ -              | \$ -              | \$ -              | \$ -              |
| Graduate Assistant Tuition                    | 7101  | \$ 7,560         | \$ 15,120         | \$ 22,680         | \$ 30,240         | \$ 37,800         |
| Travel  | 7201  | \$ 1,000         | \$ 3,000          | \$ 3,000          | \$ 6,000          | \$ 8,000          |
| Telephone                                     | 7301  | \$ -             | \$ -              | \$ -              | \$ -              | \$ -              |
| Equipment                                     | 7501  | \$ 3,000         | \$ 3,500          | \$ 3,500          | \$ 3,500          | \$ 3,500          |
| Library                                       | 7401  | \$ 3,060         | \$ 2,941          | \$ 3,136          | \$ 3,347          | \$ 3,575          |
| <b>Total Operating Expenses</b>               |       | <b>\$ 41,620</b> | <b>\$ 52,561</b>  | <b>\$ 56,316</b>  | <b>\$ 67,087</b>  | <b>\$ 79,875</b>  |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>                         |       | <b>\$ 73,920</b> | <b>\$ 118,392</b> | <b>\$ 229,285</b> | <b>\$ 290,362</b> | <b>\$ 318,170</b> |
| <b>Net</b>                                    |       | <b>\$ 1,830</b>  | <b>\$ 37,608</b>  | <b>\$ 6,965</b>   | <b>\$ 26,138</b>  | <b>\$ 77,455</b>  |

8. **Budget Narrative:** The budget projects ten new students per year in this program. There are expectations that many other students will move from undecided or other majors; however, the budget is not built upon the migration of students from other programs. Compensation for this program is mainly for part-time replacements for tenure track faculty. In year three, we are proposing the hiring of a full-time faculty member who will have major teaching responsibility in the program. We are estimating the following number of sections of the 4 courses associated with the program as follows:

| <b>Courses</b> | <b>Year 1</b> | <b>Year 2</b> | <b>Year 3</b> | <b>Year 4</b> | <b>Year 5</b> |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Total Sections | 2             | 4-5           | 8-9           | 10-11         | 12-13         |
| LBS 100        | 2             | 2             | 3             | 3             | 4             |
| LBS 200        |               | 2             | 3             | 3             | 4             |
| LBS 495        |               | 1             | 2             | 2             | 3             |
| LBS 496        |               |               | 1             | 2             | 2             |

As the program is initiated, we anticipate that faculty from many of the College's 16 departments will be eager to participate. Since we don't expect any one department to bear the burden of extensive faculty participation, it is reasonable to replace faculty with part-time instructors and/or overload compensation. This is much in the way the Honors College operates. Other compensation is requested for increasing clerical assistance as the program develops with a full-time C-T in place beginning in year 4. Increasing numbers of graduate assistants are requested each year. Initially these students will come from the MALS program; they will bring significant interdisciplinary skills and knowledge. The graduate assistants will be faculty liaisons and student mentors; in addition, they will assist in writing intensive classes. An administrative stipend is also requested for a faculty director of the program.

Operating expenses are anticipated to include standard supplies and services with extra funding for promotional materials in the first couple of years. In addition, modest funding for events and resources is included as is appropriate travel expenses for the director and/or other participating faculty. Tuition expenses for the graduate assistants are included. Significant funds have been allocated for on-campus faculty development workshops to assist in building interdisciplinary skills and confidence in faculty. We have also included the requested library budget.

## 9. References

1. Association of American Colleges and Universities, *College Learning for the New Global Century*, a Report from the National Leadership Council for Liberal Education & America's Promise. (Washington, DC: AACU, 2007), 4.

2. Committee on Facilitating Interdisciplinary Research and Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy, *Facilitating Interdisciplinary Research* (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2005), 4.
3. Popper, KR, *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge* (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), 88.
4. Doyle, Denis, Introduction to *Reclaiming the Legacy: in defense of liberal education* (Washington, DC: The Council for Basic Education, 2000), vi.
5. ACT High School Profile Report: The Graduating Class of 2008 Michigan ([www.act.org/news/data/08/pdf/states/Michigan.pdf](http://www.act.org/news/data/08/pdf/states/Michigan.pdf)), 24.
6. Bok, Derek, *Our Underachieving Colleges: A Candid Look at How Much Students Learn and Why They Should Be Learning More* (Princeton University Press, 2006), 138.

#### 10. Appendix Material

- a. Concise course syllabi
- b. Library report
- c. Letters of support
- d. Representative liberal studies programs
- e. Executive committee structure/process

## Appendix A: Concise course syllabi

### **LBS 100: Exploration of the Arts and Sciences**

**Catalog Description:** A broad survey of the three major discipline areas: humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. General methods of inquiry will be stressed. Course will be unified by focus on interdisciplinary college theme.

**Course Description:** The purpose of this course is to introduce BALS majors, as well as students who are as yet undecided, to the major discipline groups in the College of Arts and Sciences, as well as the methods of inquiry employed within the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. There will be general overviews provided by the instructor of record as well as discipline-specific sessions provided by faculty colleagues from the three areas. Class format will be lecture and discussion. Students will be able to see how diverse disciplines can relate to an overarching interdisciplinary topic.

**Course Content and Objectives:** The semester is divided into six general areas of exploration:

- Civilization
- Foreign Language/Global Cultures
- Communication, Language, Literature
- Behavioral and Social Sciences
- Life Science, Physical Science, Mathematics
- Creative Arts and Humanities

**Learning Outcomes:** Students will demonstrate:

- knowledge of cultural and historic traditions in the liberal arts
- understanding of the various methods of inquiry inherent to the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences
- ability to understand similarities and differences across disciplines
- an awareness of ethical and social issues in various disciplines
- a commitment to the open attitude necessary for a creative approach to problem solving
- an ability to actively participate in discussions

### **Assignments**

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| Quizzes    | 60% |
| Discussion | 20% |
| Attendance | 20% |

### **Possible Texts:**

Community book (depends on theme)  
Text packet of selected readings

## **LBS 200: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Liberal Studies**

**Catalog Description:** Basic preparation for interdisciplinary study. Students develop knowledge, skill and methods in interdisciplinary research on focused topics. Draws on humanities, natural sciences, social sciences and fine arts to prepare students for advanced work in liberal studies. *Satisfies the university general education requirement for a writing intensive course in general education or the major. Prerequisite for writing intensive: completion of university writing foundation requirement.*  
Prerequisite: LBS 100

**Course Description:** The course will introduce students to interdisciplinary topics and methods. Content is introduced in the first half of the semester through readings, discussion and informal writing. In the second half of the semester, students apply interdisciplinary approaches to the topics through analytical papers and oral presentations.

**Course Content and Objectives:** In LBS 200, students develop the ability to approach topics from an interdisciplinary perspective. Potential themes include:

- Globalization
- Environmental Systems
- Global Human Systems
- Commodity/Consumerism
- Iconography/Semiotics/language

In the second half of the semester, students address one of these topics integrating two or more discipline methodologies.

**Learning Outcomes:** Students will demonstrate

- understanding of the essence of select interdisciplinary topics
- ability to make critical and analytical connections between various disciplines
- understanding of ethical issues and social responsibilities inherent in select topics
- demonstrate creativity in problem solving
- ability to clearly articulate concepts, including supportive research
- ability to write analytically
- an understanding of various methods of research in a variety of disciplines

### **Assignments**

|                                     |     |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Written papers, including revisions | 40% |
| Oral presentations                  | 30  |
| Journal                             | 10  |
| Participation                       | 10  |
| Attendance                          | 10  |

### **Possible Texts:**

Klein, JT (1996) *Crossing Boundaries: Knowledge, Disciplinarity, and Interdisciplinarity*, University Press of Virginia  
Repko, A (2008) *Interdisciplinary Research: Process and Theory*, Sage Publications

## LBS 495: Senior Thesis I

**Catalog Description:** A participatory, interdisciplinary seminar in which students develop topics, establish research parameters, and prepare a thesis proposal. First in a two course sequence.

Prerequisite: Senior standing, LBS 200, and permission of instructor

**Course Description:** LBS 495 is the first of two final courses for BALS majors and represents a culmination of a rigorous academic program of interdisciplinary learning. The emphasis in Senior Thesis I is on the development of an original cross disciplinary thesis topic, establishment of research parameters, and organization and preliminary writing of the thesis paper.

**Course Content:** Seminars include invited guest speakers, attendance at relevant lectures, symposiums on and off campus, lecture response papers, and extensive thesis proposal writing. In LBS 495, you will develop the framework for your thesis ideas, culminating in a written proposal an original thesis topic. Final Proposals must include a bibliography, and written and visual prototypes for creative endeavors. By the mid-semester, you must have identified a faculty mentor who has agreed to work with you on your thesis. In subsequent term, LBS 496, the focus is on finishing the research and writing the thesis paper. Your entire thesis, from proposal to finished product, must meet high scholarly standards. It must be approved by both the thesis professor and your professor mentor. The resulting scholarly product serves as a measurable indication of the student's synthesis of all preceding BALS coursework.

**Learning Outcomes:** Students will demonstrate:

- Critical and analytical thinking
- Independent thinking and self-determination in the research, discovery and implementation process
- Problem analysis and understanding
- Team work and collaboration
- Understanding of ethical, moral, and social responsibilities inherent to thesis topic
- Ability to clearly articulate thesis concept from project start to finish
- Ability to research in more than one discipline
- Ability to develop original ideas

### Assignments

|                                       |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Draft Thesis Proposal/Components      | 20% |
| Event Response Papers                 | 10  |
| Participation/Collaboration/Mentoring | 15  |
| Attendance                            | 5   |
| Final Thesis Proposal                 | 30  |
| Oral Presentations                    | 20  |

### Possible Texts:

Repko, A (2008) *Interdisciplinary Research: Process and Theory*, Sage Publications



## **LBS 496: Senior Thesis II**

**Catalog Description:** A continuation of LBS 495. Students complete the research and writing of their liberal studies thesis papers and presentations, which synthesize their preceding liberal studies work in the participatory, interdisciplinary seminar. *Satisfies the university general education requirements for the capstone experience. Satisfies the university general education requirement for a writing intensive course in the major.*  
Prerequisite: Senior standing, LBS 495, and permission of instructor.

**Course Description:** In LBS 496, you will continue your in-depth interdisciplinary research, and complete the writing of your thesis. As you become more immersed in your work, you will continue to meet with your faculty mentor, thesis professor, graduate assistant, and fellow thesis students to exchange ideas, review drafts and critique visual elements.

**Course Content:** Students are expected to be prepared to participate actively and communicate their ideas effectively during group discussions and in response to student and instructor presentations. Critical dialogue is an integral part of this course. Your degree of involvement and your ability to speak out and evaluate the ideas of peer presenters will be reflected in the quality of the projects of your classmates, as well as the quality of your own thesis project. Once initial oral presentations are made, all Senior Thesis candidates become active participants in the presented research of their peers, providing research assistance, conceptual analysis, and general support.

**Learning Outcomes:** Students will demonstrate:

- Critical and analytical thinking
- Independent thinking and self-determination in the research, discovery and implementation process
- Problem analysis and understanding
- Team work and collaboration
- Understanding of ethical, moral, and social responsibilities inherent to thesis topic
- Ability to clearly articulate thesis concept from project start to finish
- Ability to research in more than one discipline
- Ability to develop original ideas

**General Education Cross-Cutting Capacities:** Effective communication, social awareness

### **Assignments:**

|                                       |    |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Thesis Abstract/Draft                 | 10 |
| Final Thesis                          | 30 |
| Event Response Papers                 | 10 |
| Participation/Collaboration/Mentoring | 15 |
| Attendance                            | 5  |
| Oral Presentations                    | 30 |
| <b>Possible Texts:</b> TBD            |    |

**Appendix A**  
**Library Materials Budget to Support BA in Liberal Studies**

|  | Year 1             | Year 2             | Year 3             | Year 4             | Year 5             |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Monographs                                 | \$ 800.00          | \$ 500.00          | \$ 500.00          | \$ 500.00          | \$ 500.00          |
| Journals <sup>1</sup>                      | \$ 260.00          | \$ 280.00          | \$ 300.00          | \$ 325.00          | \$ 350.00          |
| Support for ejournal packages <sup>1</sup> | \$ 2,000.00        | \$ 2,020.00        | \$ 2,040.20        | \$ 2,060.60        | \$ 2,081.21        |
| <b>Total</b>                               | <b>\$ 3,060.00</b> | <b>\$ 2,800.00</b> | <b>\$ 2,840.20</b> | <b>\$ 2,885.60</b> | <b>\$ 2,931.21</b> |

<sup>1</sup>Includes an annual 8 percent inflationary increase

**Appendix B**  
**Journal Recommendations to Support BA in Liberal Studies**

| Journal Title   | Format         | Indexed In   | Cost             |
|---|----------------|--|------------------|
| Literature and History                                      | print + online | Humanities Abstracts; InfoTrac; Am: H&L; MLA   | \$ 159.00        |
| Raritan: A Quarterly Review                                 | print          | Humanities Abstracts; America: H&L; International Bib. of Theatre & Dance; MLA; InfoTrac | \$ 40.00         |
| Salmagundi: A Quarterly of the Humanities & Social Sciences | print          | Humanities Abstracts; Philosopher's Index; America: H&L; MLA; Social Sciences Abs        | \$ 44.00         |
| Southern Humanities Review                                  | print          | Humanities Abstracts; Arts & Humanities Citation Index; MLA; InfoTrac                    | \$ 15.00         |
|   |                |  | <u>\$ 258.00</u> |

*International, Philosopher's Index, PsycInfo, Sociological Abstracts, SportDiscus and Web of Science*) as well as more broadly-focused indexes such as *Humanities Abstracts, Social Sciences Abstracts, General Science Abstracts, WilsonSelectPlus* and *Academic OneFile*. These databases should be sufficient to support the research needs of students enrolled in a Liberal Studies program.

### **Journals**

Overall, the library's journal collection should be sufficient to support the proposed BA in Liberal Studies. In recent years the library has been able to expand its journal holdings through subscriptions to multidisciplinary electronic journal packages from publishers such as Cambridge University Press (more than 230 titles in the humanities, sciences and social sciences), Elsevier (whose *Freedom Collection* contains more than 1500 titles in a broad range of disciplines), Duke University Press (with 29 titles in the humanities and social sciences), Sage (400 humanities and social science titles), Springer-Verlag (1450 science titles), Wiley Blackwell (approximately 1000 titles in the sciences and social sciences) and Oxford University Press (170 journals). The library also maintains subscriptions to the complete *JSTOR* and *Project Muse* collections of scholarly journals. In fact, through these publisher packages the library now provides access to most of the journal titles that were recommended in the library collection evaluation for the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies in 2000. Unfortunately, the library struggles each year to pay for these expensive journal packages, which totaled more than \$675,000 in FY08. It is in the interest of students in the proposed program that funding is provided to support continuing access to these resources; therefore, partial funding, including an annual eight percent inflationary increase, is built into the proposed library materials budget for these journal packages.

In addition, there are a few interdisciplinary journals - primarily focused on research in the humanities and social sciences - to which the library does not currently subscribe and which are widely held by other libraries. A list of these relatively inexpensive titles is provided in Appendix B and a line item for journal subscriptions, with an annual eight percent inflationary increase, is included in the five-year budget for library materials (Appendix A); currently, most of these titles are available only as print subscriptions, although the library will obtain online access to these and other periodicals whenever possible. This list may be modified in consultation with the director of the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies program once the program is established.

C: Julie Voelck, Dean, Kresge Library  
Ronald Sudol, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences  
Linda Benson, Director, Master of Arts in Liberal Studies Program

## Appendix B: Library Report



Kresge Library  
Rochester, Michigan 48309-4401

### MEMORANDUM

**To:** Kathleen Moore, Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

**From:** Shawn V. Lombardo, Collection Development Coordinator, Kresge Library  
Beth Kraemer, Library Liaison to the Liberal Studies program

**Date:** October 10, 2008; revised November 6, 2009

**Re:** Library collection evaluation to support proposed Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies

This library collection evaluation for the proposed Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Liberal Studies is based upon a brief description of the program's course offerings and an analysis of the library's current holdings. Because 28 credits of the proposed BA in Liberal Studies are to be taken from existing undergraduate courses in other majors, it is clear that the library has many resources to support the research and teaching requirements of students who enroll in the program. Below is a brief summary of the strengths and needs of the library as well as a five-year library materials budget that will be used to fill gaps in the library's collection.

#### Books

The library grows its monograph collection in a number of ways. The library's approval plan with a major book vendor provides for the regular acquisition of books that support Oakland's curriculum. In addition, each department or School is allocated funds to spend on books and other materials to support the research and teaching needs of students and faculty. In the past, the library also has purchased collections of eBooks to support online and distance education courses; some of these eBook collections are discipline-specific; others are multi-disciplinary in coverage.

Currently, the library liaison to the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program coordinates with the program director each semester to purchase materials needed to support the curricula of the Liberal Studies graduate courses, whose topics may vary from semester to semester. The library proposes a similar arrangement for the undergraduate program to ensure that the subject focus of each course is supported with library materials. Modest funding for the purchase of monographs is included in the library materials budget for the proposed program (see Appendix A). In the first year of the program, it would be beneficial to purchase materials to support the two core courses in the program – LBS 100 and LBS 200 - through the acquisition of books on interdisciplinary research methodologies. Therefore, additional funding for monographs in year one was included in the budget.

#### Indexes

The library maintains online subscriptions to the major discipline-specific indexes (including *America: History and Life* and *Historical Abstracts*, *Art Abstracts*, *CINAHL*, *Engineering Village*, *Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts*, *MLA International Bibliography*, *Music Index*, *MathSciNet*, *PAIS*

## Appendix C: Support Letters

### MEMORANDUM

September 28, 2009

TO: Kathleen Moore  
Associate Dean, CAS

FROM: Linda Benson  
Director, MA in Liberal Studies

RE: Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies Proposal

As director of the M.A. in Liberal Studies (MALS) program, I write to express my support for the new Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies degree currently being proposed for Oakland University.

This new degree constitutes an exciting option for those undergraduate students seeking to combine divergent academic interests in a program that encourages an interdisciplinary approach to learning, rather than following the traditional model of a major and minor. As currently proposed, the degree is built on a strong liberal arts foundation consisting of two lower division courses (LBS 100 and LBS 200) that introduce the program and provide students with an understanding of interdisciplinary methods. These are followed at the upper division level by two semesters focusing on the senior thesis (LBS 495 and LBS 496). These components, combined with the student's choice of methods course(s) and electives chosen from the traditional disciplines across the university, make this a rigorous new degree program that will appeal to self-motivated and creative undergraduates wishing to structure their education in ways most meaningful to them.

Given the increasing interdisciplinarity that marks research throughout academe today, the proposed degree also resonates with a growing trend to draw on multiple disciplines for problem solving. Preparing students to cross traditional disciplinary boundaries and combine learning from diverse fields will contribute to a growing phenomenon that promises to offer new insights valued in many disciplines, from the humanities to the sciences.

Students who hold the B.A. in Liberal Studies may also choose to continue their interdisciplinary work at the graduate level through the MALS program—a development which I would very much welcome. If MALS students also undertake a role in the liberal studies undergraduate program, as suggested on page 17 of the proposal, this may also enhance enrollments for MALS in years to come.

The time, effort and great care which has gone into planning and developing this new and creative undergraduate program are to be commended, and I join my colleagues in supporting this innovative proposal.

To: College of Arts and Sciences  
c/o Kathleen Moore, Associate Dean

Nov. 2, 2009

Dear Kathy,

I support the new Interdisciplinary Bachelor of Liberal Arts (BALS) Program as it is outlined in the attached proposal because I believe that it will provide students with a unique opportunity for intellectual scholarship outside the isolationism of individual disciplines, and it will foster collaborations among faculty of different departments. It should lead to creative forms of inquiry, and allow students to challenge conventional social paradigms.

Ethan Kleinberg, in, "Interdisciplinary Studies at a Crossroads" (*Liberal Education* 94.1 2008), warns that interdisciplinary studies should not seek to create a new discipline of its own which would lead to the very isolationism and fragmentation that it seeks to avoid. Kleinberg notes the importance of interdisciplinary programs as one of the dominant paradigms of the twenty-first century in higher education. The popularity of such programs is not justification in itself, however. We need to understand the advantages and limitations of interdisciplinary programs and keep the objectives in mind.

Multidisciplinary fields are two or more disciplines coming together, often to solve a problem that neither can completely address. However, this is not interdisciplinary; "interdisciplinary" connotes independence from artificial constructs that tend to dominate traditional departments. The requirements should be flexible and diverse, but not free from the rigors of well-defined majors. For example, we do not want to lose Chemistry and Biology majors to an interdisciplinary major that exempts them from P-Chem or Calculus. It appears that you have addressed this possible pitfall thoughtfully in the learning outcomes and by requiring various advisors to sign off on the students' curricula.

As the Director of a multidisciplinary and somewhat interdisciplinary Environmental Science Program, I can appreciate what can be gained from an interdisciplinary program. I have grown personally by being placed among colleagues in Chemistry and Geology. Most of my research projects have been collaborations with faculty in different science disciplines. In addition, I have written grant proposals with colleagues in Philosophy and Nursing without success, but learned in the process that unlikely partnerships can generate fresh perspectives among all involved. The BALS Program would offer more choice for students and their involvement on special projects should foster a good rapport with faculty, thereby offering incentive for faculty to engage more closely with students. Best regards in this endeavor,



Linda Schweitzer  
Chemistry and Environmental Science  
289 SEB TEL Extension 2092

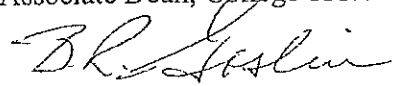


Exercise Science Program

School of Health Sciences  
Rochester, Michigan 48309-4482  
(248) 370-4038 Fax: (248) 370-4227  
www.oakland.edu

## OAKLAND UNIVERSITY MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Kathleen Moore, Ph.D.  
Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

**FROM:**   
Brian R. Goslin, Ph.D.  
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**CC:** Ken Hightower, Ph.D., Dean, School of Health Sciences  
Richard Rozek, Ph.D., Associate Dean, School of Health Sciences

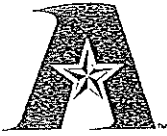
**SUBJECT:** Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies

**DATE:** 11/3/08

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I note with interest that the College of Arts and Sciences is proposing a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies program. A Minor in Exercise Science would fit into your proposed program very well given that you intend students in this program to engage in "an education that intentionally fosters, across multiple fields of study, wide-ranging knowledge of science, cultures, and society; high-level intellectual and practical skills; an active commitment to personal and social responsibility; and the demonstrated ability to apply learning to complex problems and challenges." The Minor in Exercise Science is 22 credits, of which only 8 credits of required courses are below the 300 level. Students can complete the Exercise Science Minor with a minimum of 8 credits, up to a maximum of 14 credits at the 300+ level, depending upon electives selected.

Having read the summary of the proposed Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies program, I would like to offer my enthusiastic support. I think it is a meritorious program, one that lends itself very well to the inclusion of the study of Exercise Science.



THE UNIVERSITY  
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Interdisciplinary Studies

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October 5, 2009

Robert Stewart  
Interim Associate Dean, CAS  
217 Varner Hall  
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Dear Robby:

I have enjoyed our email exchanges about interdisciplinarity and am always excited when I learn that other institutions are interested in developing programs in interdisciplinary research.

The program at UTA continues to prosper, particularly in terms of the number of active majors (722). A recent survey of our recent graduates shows that they are very marketable. We attribute their success in large part to their personalized degree plans which are tailored to their professional or academic goal. We are particularly pleased with the growing number of students who are pursuing graduate study. I have contributed a chapter to a book (just published) that describes the history of our program's development and our plans for future growth. I will forward this chapter in a separate mailing.

In view of our discussions, I thought it would be helpful if I shared some ideas that may assist you and your institution as you move forward.

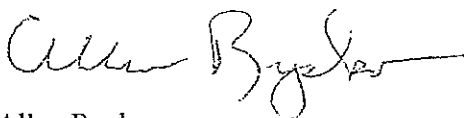
1. The IDS programs that seem to enjoy the greatest success and longevity are those that enjoy strong support from the administration (top down) as well as strong support from a core of interested faculty (bottom up).
2. The program, at least in its formative years, should not be housed in a traditional unit/department unless the program enjoys the strong support of the dean, chair(s) and a significant number of its faculty. I am pleased to hear that the planned initiative at Oakland has the strong support of your Dean. Having this support is critical to the success and growth of your program.
3. A local conception of IDS should achieve consensus before the program is launched.
4. Program outcomes (big picture) should be developed and a strategic plan (3-5 years) formulated. I am including a copy of our strategic plan that we completed in spring 2009 with this letter.
5. A core of explicitly IDS courses with their own rubric (ours is INTS) that are required of all majors (or minors) should be developed so that the program from its inception is seen as a distinct academic field (which it is), providing students with an identity as interdisciplinarians (just as students in other majors have), and providing a common understanding of interdisciplinarity (in terms of its history, theory, concepts, assumptions, and research process).



6. A core faculty and tenure lines in interdisciplinary studies should be developed as soon as possible. This faculty will provide the program with an intellectual "center of gravity," ensure rigor, and produce scholarship that is explicitly interdisciplinary. For example, I am tenured in interdisciplinary studies.
7. The program should become part of (but not dominate) some campus-wide multidisciplinary initiative such as environmental (or sustainability) studies. For example, our campus is developing a minor (which will become a major in a few years) and INTS is contributing at least 3 courses to this curriculum. I was intrigued to hear that you plan to tie the first course in your program on interdisciplinary research to the topic of your annual college theme. This process should afford all departments within your college the opportunity to engage in interdisciplinary endeavors if they wish, and it may assist you in identifying a multidisciplinary initiative or even a set of initiatives that could serve as continual themes for the program.
8. The program should be viewed as additive to the intellectual life of the university by defining interdisciplinarity in terms of process (i.e., a distinctive way to learn, think, and produce knowledge) rather than domain (or "academic turf").
9. Members of the executive committee and interested faculty should read the most significant literature in the field on theory, pedagogy, assessment, curriculum design, and research process. This will facilitate program planning and form the intellectual grounding that a new program needs.

Once you have an executive committee in place, I would be willing to interact with you (either via a teleconference or a face-to-face visit).

Best wishes in this most exciting endeavor.



Allen Repko  
Director  
Interdisciplinary Studies Program  
School of Urban and Public Affairs

## **Appendix D: Representative Liberal Studies Programs**

The following programs illustrate the diverse approach being taken with Liberal Studies programs across the country. There is no one model; there is no one target group of students.

Western Illinois University—Bachelor of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
<http://www.wiu.edu/cas/las/>

Montana State University—Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies  
<http://www.montana.edu/lsdegree/>

California State University Northridge—Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies  
<http://www.csun.edu/~hflst005/>

California State University San Marcos—BA in Liberal Studies  
<http://www.csusm.edu/liberalstudies/>

Colorado State University—Liberal Arts Major  
<http://www.libarts.colostate.edu/info/libarts-major>

University of Central Florida—Liberal and Interdisciplinary Studies  
[http://www.is.ucf.edu/undergrad/undergraduate\\_degrees\\_liberalarts.php](http://www.is.ucf.edu/undergrad/undergraduate_degrees_liberalarts.php)

Bentley University—Liberal Studies Major  
<http://www.bentley.edu/undergraduate/academics/lsm.cfm>

Georgetown University—Liberal Studies  
<http://scs.georgetown.edu/liberal-studies>

San Francisco State University—Liberal Studies Program  
<http://www.sfsu.edu/~ls/>

Wheaton College—Interdisciplinary Studies Program  
<http://www.wheaton.edu/ids/>

Miami University of Ohio—Western Program  
<http://www.cas.muohio.edu/western/>

Iowa State University—Liberal Studies Program  
[http://www.las.iastate.edu/discover/academics/inter/liberal\\_studies.shtml](http://www.las.iastate.edu/discover/academics/inter/liberal_studies.shtml)

Towson State University—Interdisciplinary Studies Program  
<http://www.towson.edu/idis/index.asp>

University of Oklahoma—College of Liberal Studies

<http://www.ou.edu/cls/>

Indiana State University—Liberal Studies Major

<http://www.indstate.edu/libstudy/>

**Appendix E: Anticipated BALS Executive Committee Structure/Process**

The College of Arts and Sciences will launch the BALS program in the same manner as the MALS program. An announcement will be sent to all tenure-track faculty with a description of the director duties and an invitation to apply or submit a nomination. The text below is adapted from the most recent call for the MALS director. The Dean will be assisted in the selection process by the Director of the MALS program (Professor Linda Benson) and a representative from the MALS Executive Committee.

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**Position Description  
Director, Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies Program**

The director for the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies (BALS) program will be a tenured faculty member in the College of Arts and Sciences. The director will be appointed for a three-year term (renewable) by the dean of the college, to whom s/he will report. The program director will chair the five-person Executive Committee that oversees the BALS program. The additional responsibilities of the BALS director include, but are not limited to:

- Curriculum development and scheduling
- Program review and assessment
- Long-range planning
- Development of recruiting materials and strategies
- Student recruitment and retention
- Academic advising for BALS students

The ideal candidates for the position will be skilled teachers and active researchers with the following strengths:

- Interdisciplinary teaching experience
- Ability to develop and coordinate interdisciplinary curriculum
- Demonstrated engagement in interdisciplinary research
- Significant experience in mentoring undergraduate students, including development of writing skills
- Ability to interact with faculty across the College
- Good interpersonal and organizational skills

The program director will receive a one-course per semester release from his/her normal teaching responsibilities and a stipend equivalent to spring/summer salary for a four-credit course.

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Once the Director is in place, s/he will work with the Dean to recruit/select four CAS faculty members to serve on the Executive Committee as representatives of the four College disciplinary areas: natural sciences, humanities, social sciences, and languages and literatures. The Director and Executive Committee will have full responsibility for the BALS program.