



COMPREHENSIVE ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

Note: Enter "NA" wherever data are not applicable or not available for the program under review.

Program Characteristics

Academic Program Name: **Interdisciplinary Studies**

Degree: **Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)**

Program CIP Code: 30.0000

School and Department: **Liberal Arts/Department of Communication**

Time frame for this review: **Fall 2013 – Spring 2018**

Date of last internal review: **First Review**

Current date program reviewed for this report: November 30, 2018

Program Goal Statement and Student Learning Outcomes

Program goal statement:

The Bachelor of Arts in interdisciplinary studies lends students with a range of academic interests the curricular flexibility to satisfy their learning goals, whether those goals entail adapting to ever-changing requirements of the work world or further study at the graduate level or in professional programs. The program will benefit nontraditional students who are already in the workplace but need a baccalaureate degree to advance in their careers to gain tangible benefits, such as job promotions, and will allow these students to maximize previously earned credits.

Prior to the beginning of the junior year or upon declaration of the major, interdisciplinary studies majors are required to submit a well-reasoned plan of study to their faculty advisor. As a part of this plan, students will choose an overarching theme (e.g., cross-cultural leadership, gender studies, communication and crime, communication and professional writing), propose the course work that supports the theme, and articulate their intellectual interest or career objective that guides and justifies the selected course of study. The plan will also include the student's immediate and long-term professional goals as well as the student's academic goals. Once the plan of study is approved by the student's faculty advisor, a copy will be submitted to the chair of the Department of Communication. As a part of their senior seminar, students will assess the extent to which their individual program and the skills and knowledge gained from the selected courses helped them achieve their personal and professional goals and will offer suggestions to strengthen the program for future majors.

Overarching goal:

- The Bachelor of Arts degree in interdisciplinary studies offers students an intellectually diversified, multidisciplinary course of study as an alternative to the traditional single-discipline major, lending students with a range of academic interests the curricular flexibility to satisfy their learning goals or career objectives.

Program outcomes:

1. Students will gain acceptance into graduate or professional schools or find or continue employment related to their degree plan.



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2. Students will express satisfaction with the quality of their program of study.
3. Students will agree that their critical thinking, written communication, oral communication, and research and technology skills increased as a result of their program of study.

Student learning outcomes:

1. Students will design an interdisciplinary program of study in which selected discipline-based courses contribute in a purposeful and well-reasoned manner, articulating an intellectual interest or career objective that justifies the plan of study.
2. Students will successfully design and implement an interdisciplinary research project culminating with a written report or portfolio.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to think critically through their research and writing.
4. Students will demonstrate competence in written communication, producing well-organized writing that meets conventional standards of correctness and presents substantial material.
5. Students will demonstrate an ability to use research and technology effectively in communication and scholarship.



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Brief Assessment of Previous Program Review

Outcome of previous program review (brief narrative statement).

The program began in Fall 2013; consequently, this is its first comprehensive program review.

What improvements have occurred since the last program review or assessment?

The program now requires students to complete ENGL 3000: Writing for the Social Sciences and Education before taking the senior capstone course. This change was put into place to provide students with better preparation for the capstone paper requirement.

Another improvement is the requirement for students to have at least a 2.0 grade point average to register for the senior capstone course.

What changes or revisions have been made to the program, its curriculum, or its program/student learning outcomes since the last program review? Please include a follow-up discussion of the previous review's action plan?

This is the first program review for the Bachelor of Arts in interdisciplinary studies. However, the department added a communication concentration to the degree. This concentration was very popular with students who wanted to earn a bachelor's degree in communication before it was approved by the Board of Regents in 2016.



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Student Demographics

| Enrollment | Fall 2013 | Fall 2014 | Fall 2015 | Fall 2016 | Fall 2017 | % Change |
|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Headcount | 6 | 29 | 42 | 32 | 29 | 383.3% |
| FTE | | | | | | |
| Enrolled Full-time | 4 | 22 | 29 | 25 | 17 | 325.0% |
| Enrolled Part-time | 2 | 7 | 13 | 7 | 12 | 500.0% |
| Female | 3 | 12 | 22 | 18 | 8 | 166.7% |
| Male | 3 | 17 | 20 | 14 | 21 | 600.0% |
| Alaskan Native/Native American/American Indian | | | | 1 | | |
| Asian, Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander | | | | 1 | 1 | |
| Black/African-American | 1 | 7 | 10 | 5 | 6 | 500.0% |
| Hispanic | | | | | | |
| Multi-racial | | | | | | |
| Undeclared | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 0.0% |
| White | 3 | 20 | 29 | 21 | 20 | 566.7% |

Analysis and comments on student demographics.

The number of students enrolled in the interdisciplinary studies program has increased by 383.3% since it was first approved in 2013. The program grew quickly at first, but as other degree programs have been added, enrollment has leveled off. Many of the first majors chose interdisciplinary studies so that they could earn the concentration in communication. The approval of the bachelor's program in communication contributed to the decline in majors in 2016.

The large majority of students in the program are male (72.4% in Fall 2017), and many of the majors are athletes that chose this degree because they were transferring in a large number of hours from other institutions. The students in the program represent a number of ethnic and racial groups, with the number of blacks/African-Americans enrolled in the program increasing by 500% in the last five years and comprising 21% of the majors in Fall 2017. While the table suggests that no Hispanics have enrolled in this degree program, the table is misleading, as faculty who teach in the program have worked with students whose heritage is Hispanic. Some students choose not to self-identify their ethnic or racial background, possibly because of the current political climate.



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| Faculty Indicators of Program Quality | Fall 2013 | Fall 2014 | Fall 2015 | Fall 2016 | Fall 2017 | % Change |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| School (not Department) faculty teaching in program Including Areas A-F as the curriculum includes all areas. | 70 | 72 | 78 | 76 | 83 | 18.6% |
| Full-time program faculty | 54 | 53 | 51 | 54 | 58 | 7.4% |
| Part-time program faculty | 16 | 19 | 27 | 22 | 25 | 56.3% |
| Total program faculty | 70 | 72 | 78 | 76 | 83 | 18.6% |
| Percent of program classes taught by full-time program faculty | 94% | 73% | 85% | 74% | 88% | -6 points |
| Gender (full-time and part-time faculty) | Fall 2013 | Fall 2014 | Fall 2015 | Fall 2016 | Fall 2017 | % Change |
| Male | 33 | 36 | 36 | 32 | 40 | 21.2% |
| Female | 37 | 36 | 42 | 44 | 43 | 16.2% |
| Race/Ethnicity (full-time and part-time faculty) | Fall 2013 | Fall 2014 | Fall 2015 | Fall 2016 | Fall 2017 | % Change |
| Alaskan Native/Native American/American Indian | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian, Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Black/African-American | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 300% |
| Hispanic | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Multi-racial | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Undeclared | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| White | 66 | 68 | 74 | 71 | 76 | 15.2% |
| Tenure Status (full-time faculty) | Fall 2013 | Fall 2014 | Fall 2015 | Fall 2016 | Fall 2017 | % Change |
| Tenured | 28 | 29 | 33 | 39 | 40 | 42.9% |
| On-tenure track | 22 | 20 | 13 | 9 | 12 | -45.5% |
| Non-tenure track | 4 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 50.0% |
| Rank (full-time faculty) | Fall 2013 | Fall 2014 | Fall 2015 | Fall 2016 | Fall 2017 | % Change |
| Professor | 10 | 10 | 12 | 14 | 15 | 50.0% |
| Associate Professor | 18 | 22 | 24 | 26 | 26 | 44.4% |
| Assistant Professor | 22 | 17 | 10 | 8 | 11 | -50.0% |
| Instructor/Senior Lecturer/Lecturer | 4 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 50.0% |



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Faculty Indicators of Program Quality

| Highest degree (full-time faculty) | Fall 2013 | Fall 2014 | Fall 2015 | Fall 2016 | Fall 2017 | % Change |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Doctorate | 38 | 41 | 39 | 41 | 43 | 13.2% |
| Specialist | - | - | - | 2 | 2 | - |
| Master's | 16 | 12 | 12 | 11 | 13 | -18.8% |
| Bachelor's | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Associate's/Other | - | - | - | - | - | - |

Provide additional details, analysis, and comments regarding faculty indicators of program quality.

The number of full-time Liberal Arts faculty teaching in the interdisciplinary studies program has remained relatively stable throughout the five years of this review period, showing a modest 7.4% increase. While the total number of faculty teaching in the program has increased by 18.6%, this increase is largely comprised of part-time music faculty who teach the applied lessons coursework that can count in Area F of the interdisciplinary studies program. The 6-percentage point decline in the number of courses taught by full-time faculty can be attributed to two factors: more full-time faculty are teaching upper-level courses in the relatively new bachelor's programs in interdisciplinary studies, communication, and psychology, and more part-time faculty are teaching music courses that can apply toward fulfilling Area F degree requirements.

Though the number of black/African-American faculty has increased by 300%, the increase is based on an increase from 1 full-time faculty member to 4 faculty members (two full-time and two part-time), making the increase seem larger than it really is. The majority of faculty are white, and the percentage of male and female faculty is quite close (48% male and 52% female).

The stability of the faculty can be seen in the increase in the number of full-time faculty who are tenured, a 42.9% increase. The percentage of faculty on-tenure track declined by 45.5%, as the majority of these faculty went on to earn tenure. While the number of non-tenure track positions has increased by 50%, this change is not significant since the change represents an increase of only two positions.

Other indicators of quality and stability are the increased percentages of the number of faculty who are now full professors (a 50% increase) and associate professors (a 44.4% increase). Since there has been very little faculty turnover in Liberal Arts, the decrease in the number of assistant professors is largely the result of the number of faculty who have been promoted in the last five years. Still another indicator of program quality is the increase in the number of full-time faculty who have earned doctoral degrees, a 13.2% increase between 2013 and 2017.

Still other indicators of faculty quality are the high student evaluations that Liberal Arts faculty average each year. The 2017-2018 student evaluation average was a strong 4.57 on a 5-point scale. In addition, these faculty members have a strong presentation/publication record (74% published or presented last year for a



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total of 137 presentations/publications) and a strong professional development record (100% participated in over 643 activities).



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Indicators of Measures of Quality

| Student Input | Fall 2013 | Fall 2043 | Fall 2015 | Fall 2016 | Fall 2017 | % Change |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Mean ACT score | 22 | 19.5 | 18.4 | 20.5 | 20.9 | -5.0% |
| Mean SAT score | 462 | 487 | 468 | 465 | 499 | 8.0% |

If applicable to your degree program, provide any additional external quality assurance data/information or results (e.g., professional accreditation results, National Survey of Student Engagement [NSSE], market rankings, etc.).

The Bachelor of Arts in interdisciplinary studies is not accredited by any specialized accrediting agencies, nor are there market rankings for this program. While the mean ACT scores have declined by 5%, the SAT scores have increased by 8% in the past five years.



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Indicators of Measures of Quality

| Student Output | Fall 2013 | Fall 2014 | Fall 2015 | Fall 2016 | Fall 2017 | % Change |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Exit scores on national/state licensure (If applicable) | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Graduating majors' mean GPA | n/a | 2.73 | 3.24 | 3.05 | 2.68 | -1.8% |
| Employment rate of graduates/Entering graduate professional programs | n/a | 57% | 75% | 70% | 67% | +10 points |
| Number of students entering graduate/professional programs | n/a | See above | See above | See above | See above | n/a |

Describe the extent to which students have achieved current program outcomes during this program review cycle (most recent year).

Results for 2017-2018

Graduating students are surveyed at the end of each semester in their capstone class, INTS 4999. The department chair and faculty follow up with graduates through emails, phone calls, and LinkedIn accounts.

| Program Outcome | Target | Assessment |
|---|---|--|
| 1. Students will gain acceptance into graduate or professional schools or find or continue employment related to their degrees. | In their responses on the Interdisciplinary Studies Program Exit Survey (and in periodic follow-up contacts continuing up through 12 months after graduation), 50% of the graduates will report that they are continuing employment in their current occupation, have found a position related to their degree, or are continuing their education. In follow-up efforts between 3 to 8 months after graduation, 70% will report that they have found employment, are continuing in their current occupation, or are continuing their education 9 to 12 months after graduation. | <p>Target: Partially met.</p> <p>As of July 11, 2018, five of the seven graduates (one graduated Summer 2018, three Fall 2017, three in Spring 2018) had completed the surveys. At this time, this target is only partially met. Some indicated more than one answer.</p> <p>One graduate indicated both continuing education in graduate school and continuing in current employment, one other continuing education, and two others continuing in their current positions. Recent graduates reported that they were working for UNUM, Panera, NRG Energy, Marble Fabricators, a Sheriff's Office, as well as teaching English in China. One graduate indicated he was seeking employment. Thus, 100% of those who responded are working or going to graduate school or doing both. Two graduates did not return surveys. Therefore, 67% of the total sample indicated that they were continuing in their present employment or beginning their graduate education.</p> |

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|--|---|--|
| <p>2. Students will express satisfaction with the quality of their program of study.</p> | <p>Students' level of satisfaction with the program will be measured by their responses on the Interdisciplinary Studies Program Exit Survey questions that pertain to perceptions of faculty and program quality. The survey will be administered in the capstone course.</p> <p>In their responses to Interdisciplinary Studies Program Exit Survey, at least 80% of graduating seniors will indicate that their experience met or exceeded their expectations and will rate the quality of instruction as "Good" or "Excellent."</p> | <p>Target: Partially met.</p> <p>Of the six surveys returned as of June 5, 2018, five of six students (83.3%) indicated that the program met or exceeded their expectations.</p> <p>In reference to the question, "How would you rate the overall quality of instruction by the faculty in the School of Liberal Arts," two graduates indicated "good" and two indicated "excellent." Two indicated "average."</p> <p>In reference to the question, "How would you rate the quality of the program in meeting your personal program objectives?" three indicated "good" and two indicated "excellent." One rated it "poor." This student had transferred into the program in the senior year from a private university and was frustrated that many of his credits could not be applied toward the degree program. This student probably did not feel the same institutional commitment that the others did.</p> |
| <p>3. Students will agree that their critical thinking, written communication, oral communication, and research and technology skills increased as a result of their program of study.</p> | <p>In their responses to the Interdisciplinary Studies Program Exit Survey, at least 80% of graduating seniors will indicate that their critical thinking, written communication, oral communication, and research and technology skills "moderately" or "significantly" increased as a result of their program of study.</p> | <p>Target: Partially met.</p> <p>In reference to the question regarding whether the students believed their critical thinking skills had increased, 100% indicated that the skills "moderately increased" (3 students/50%) or "significantly increased" (3 students/50%).</p> <p>In reference to the question regarding whether the students believed that their written communication had improved, 83% indicated that their skills "moderately" (17%) or "significantly" (67%) increased. One graduate (17%) indicated "slightly increased."</p> <p>In reference to the question regarding whether the students believed their oral communication skills had increased, 67% indicated that their skills "moderately increased" (50%) and 17% "significantly</p> |



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increased." Two students indicated that their skills only "slightly increased."

In reference to the question regarding whether the students perceived that their research and technology skills had increased, 83% indicated that their skills had "moderately" (50%) or "significantly" (33%) increased, while one indicated "slightly increased" (17%).

Describe the extent to which students have achieved current student learning outcomes during this program review cycle (most recent year).

During the 2017-2018 academic year, graduates met or exceeded all program-specific student learning outcomes. See details in the table below. Previous years' findings can be found in Weave online for each of the years covered by this program assessment.

2017-2018

| Student Learning Outcome | Target | Assessment |
|---|---|--|
| 1. Students will design an interdisciplinary program of study in which selected discipline-based courses contribute in a purposeful and well-reasoned manner, articulating an intellectual interest or career objective that justifies the plan of study. | <p>Students in INTS 4999 will write a paper in which they analyze the degree to which they believe their program of study successfully contributed to their immediate professional goals, intellectual interests, and long-term career objectives/goals. The paper will also address the strengths and weaknesses of the program as well as what could have been done differently (e.g., courses they would have liked to have taken as a part of the degree program).</p> <p>A minimum of 70% of students enrolled in INTS 4999 will earn a 70% or better on the self-reflection paper in which they analyze the degree to which they believe their program of study successfully contributed to their</p> | <p>Target Met: In INTS 4999, a hybrid course taught on the main campus in Fall 2017 and Spring 2017, 100% (7/7) of the students earned 70% or better on a self-reflection paper in which they analyzed the degree to which they believed that the interdisciplinary studies major helped them meet their immediate professional, educational, and personal goals. The average grade was 93%.</p> |

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|---|---|---|
| | <p>immediate professional goals, intellectual interests, and long-term career objectives/goals and address the strengths and weaknesses of the program.</p> | |
| <p>2. Students will successfully design and implement an interdisciplinary research project culminating with a written report or portfolio.</p> | <p>Students will demonstrate the ability to design an interdisciplinary research project by preparing a three-page research proposal/outline.</p> <p>A minimum of 75% of students will earn a 70% or better on the research proposal/outline in INTS 4999.</p> | <p>Target Met: In INTS 4999, a face-to-face class taught on the main campus in Fall 2017 and Spring 2018, 100% of the students demonstrated the ability to design and implement an interdisciplinary research project through composing a three-page research proposal/outline that culminated with a written report.</p> |
| <p>3. Students will demonstrate the ability to think critically through their research and writing.</p> | <p>Students will be evaluated on their ability to think critically by submitting a 10-page draft of the research proposal, which should include the rationale, literature review, and historical context for the topic they are researching.</p> <p>A minimum of 75% of students enrolled in INTS 4999 will earn a 70% or better on the critical thinking component of the 10-page draft of their research paper.</p> | <p>Target Met: In INTS 4999, a face-to-face course taught on the main campus in Fall 2017 and Spring 2018, 100% of the students met the target of earning 70% or better on the 10-page draft of the research proposal, which included the rationale, literature review, and historical context for the topic they were researching.</p> |
| <p>4. Students will demonstrate competence in written communication, producing well-organized writing that meets conventional standards of correctness and presents substantial material.</p> | <p>Students' competence in written communication will be measured by the writing component scores on the final draft of the research papers.</p> <p>A minimum of 75% of students in INTS 4999 will earn a 70% or better on the writing component of the final draft of their research papers.</p> | <p>Target Met: In INTS 4999, a face-to-face course taught on the main campus in Fall 2017 and Spring Semester 2018, 100% of the students earned 70% or better on the writing component of the final draft of their capstone research paper.</p> |
| <p>5. Students will demonstrate an ability to use research and technology effectively in</p> | <p>Students' ability to use research and technology will be demonstrated through an oral</p> | <p>Target Met: In INTS 4999, a face-to-face course taught on the main campus in Fall 2017 and Spring</p> |



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| <p>communication and scholarship.</p> | <p>presentation of their research findings, during which they must clearly convey what they found and do so using some form of presentation software (e.g., PowerPoint, Prezi).</p> <p>A minimum of 75% of students will earn a 70% or better on the research presentation in INTS 4999.</p> | <p>2018, 100% of the students demonstrated their ability to use technology, specifically presentation software, to communicate their research findings in an oral presentation.</p> <p>All of the students delivered excellent presentations, complete with proficient use of PowerPoint. They demonstrated competency in explaining ideas, research terms, and concepts and in delivering presentations worthy of "conference" presentation.</p> |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|

Indicators of Measures of Quality

If available, provide additional information and/or results of other indicators of quality related to student output such as completer satisfaction surveys, employer satisfaction surveys, stakeholder satisfaction surveys, completion and continuation rates, attrition rates, starting salaries of graduates, etc.

In September 2017, graduates from the preceding academic year were contacted by phone and email about their salaries. At that time 60% (6/10) of the 2016-2017 graduates from the Bachelor of Arts in interdisciplinary studies program reported that they had found full-time employment. Four did not respond to multiple attempts to contact them. Two are working in Chattanooga; one in Dalton, GA; one in Ringgold, GA; one in Dallas, Texas; and one in the Tampa, FL, area. They report working at UNUM, Panera, NRG Energy, the Stockroom Supply Company, a realty company and Marble Fabricators, and U.S. Express Logistics. They report salaries as follows: three in the \$25,000-\$34,999 range; two in the \$35,000-\$44,900 range; and one in the \$55,000-\$65,000 range. These are respectable salaries for new liberal arts graduates.

In addition, on graduating student surveys, 83.3% of last year's graduates indicated that the program met or exceeded their expectations.

Describe efforts undertaken to achieve and maintain curricular alignment within the program and currency to the discipline.

When the program started, the INTS 4999 capstone course was taught by individual advisors on an independent study basis, following a standard syllabus. With the approval of the B.A. in Communication, the chair decided to teach the Senior Seminar in Communication (COMM 4999) and the INTS 4999 course jointly, which was done in Fall 2016, Spring 2017, Fall 2017, Spring 2018, and Fall 2018. This arrangement meant that

one professor in the Communication Department coordinated and taught the course and did the necessary assessment for each semester, a much more efficient process than trying to collect the data from four or five professors teaching independent studies. Additionally, the shift in the capstone course has allowed students to pursue primary research, rather than solely secondary research, on a topic they have encountered in their studies. For example, they have done survey and qualitative research on media use and depression, children and smartphones, and teenagers and privacy on social media.

Furthermore, it was noticed in 2015 that students going into the INTS 4999 course were still struggling with plagiarism, source citation, and APA and MLA use. The Essential Areas portion of the interdisciplinary studies curriculum was altered to require ENGL 3000, Writing for Social Sciences, as a prerequisite to the capstone course. At the same time, the chair of the Communication Department noticed that a number of the students enrolling in the capstone course did not have a 2.0 grade point average. Thus, the department began requiring students to have a 2.0 to enroll in the capstone.

In order to facilitate students in their career search, students in INTS 4999 are now required to submit a resume and/or curriculum vitae and are encouraged to have a LinkedIn account, adding the professor or department chair to their network.

Students are required to complete an “entrance essay” when they declare the major. It is sometimes difficult to monitor these essays because students choose the major at variable times, but they are being collected and become part of a capstone assignment that requires graduating students to assess their “planned” program.

A deficiency in the program is that students tend less to think of the major as a planned course of study but as a way to use already accrued credits; in many cases they come in with the majority of the upper-division liberal arts credits already earned, making a “planned” program difficult. To the extent this is not the case for the student, they are advised into a theme or similar discipline in their upper-division credits. Since most liberal arts majors require a 3000-level prerequisite for upper-division classes (such as ENGL 3010 or HIST 3000), students sometimes encounter issues with entrance into certain classes they would like to take; the psychology curriculum is less restrictive in this regard, so students tend to gravitate toward the social sciences for minors and upper-division credits. Health and Wellness and Business for Non-Majors are also popular minors in the interdisciplinary studies program.



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Indicators of Measures of Viability

| Internal Demand for the Program | Fall 2013 | Fall 2014 | Fall 2015 | Fall 2016 | Fall 2017 | % Change |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Number of students enrolled in the degree program | 6 | 29 | 42 | 32 | 29 | 383.3% |
| Number of students who applied to the program (if applicable) | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Number of students admitted to the program (if applicable) | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Percent of classes taught by full-time faculty | 94% | 73% | 85% | 74% | 88% | -6 points |

Describe additional details as deemed appropriate.

The number of students enrolled in the BA in interdisciplinary studies has increased by 383.3% over the last five years. Students do not have to apply to become interdisciplinary studies majors, and the majority of courses are taught by full-time faculty.



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Indicators of Measures of Productivity

| Graduation | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | % Change |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Number of degrees conferred | -- | 1 | 7 | 10 | 10 | 900.0% |
| Total student credit hours earned | -- | 76 | 90 | 117 | 101 | 32.9% |

Describe any institutional-specific factors impacting time to degree.

In the INTS 4999 capstone course, students are required to write an essay assessing the program in terms of their own experience and how the program met their goals. In the most recent semester of the course, as well as in the past, students have reported that the college as a whole does not seem to know about the major. In fact, some have said they would have graduated earlier if they had known about the interdisciplinary studies program. Therefore, it seems incumbent on the Department of Communication to publicize the degree more.

Some attrition may be affected by athletes who chose the program to expedite graduation but have surpassed their eligibility time and were no longer receiving financial aid. However, the very nature of this degree program allows students to maximize previously earned credits toward degree completion.

Evidence of Program Viability

Based on evidence from ALL of the above information, data, and analysis, discuss whether continued resources should be devoted to this program. This discussion must be evidence-based. Your comments should consider external factors and address questions such as the following: Are your students getting jobs? What is the job outlook for graduates? Are students prepared for the jobs they get? How is the field changing? Are program faculty members in contact with employers and getting back feedback on graduates' job performance? Do employers state or suggest a need for changes in the program?

The key question here is whether the program is meeting the goals for which it was created: The Bachelor of Arts in interdisciplinary studies offers students an intellectually diversified, multidisciplinary course of study as an alternative to the traditional single-discipline major, lending students with a range of academic interests the curricular flexibility to satisfy their learning goals or career objectives.

In Fall 2018, there were 27 students registered as interdisciplinary studies majors; four of those will graduate in December 2018, and others have entered the program. The program has grown in enrollment and graduates, rather than decreased, and graduates have found employment and/or entered graduate studies. In addition, the program has met the University System's guidelines for program viability by graduating 10 students each year for the past two years.

Due to the nature of the interdisciplinary studies major, that is, a self-determined and self-designed type of curriculum in the liberal arts, an advisory board of employer stakeholders is not really feasible. However, further study with graduates in terms of employer satisfaction, salary, and graduate job satisfaction would help direct the program in the future.

The Bachelor of Arts in interdisciplinary studies is a viable degree program. It does not incur many costs to the college as there is only one purely interdisciplinary studies required class (the INTS 4999 capstone). No faculty are employed specifically to support this program. There are no accreditation costs, and students choose their classes from already existing offerings rather than specialized courses, thus improving course density in a wide variety of upper-level Liberal Arts offerings. In addition, the program may be attractive to adult students who have stopped or dropped out of college since the degree offers curricular flexibility and ways to maximize previously earned credits.

The Office of Academic Affairs has established a committee to explore the delivery of the interdisciplinary studies degree as a degree-completion option with flexible delivery on weekends and in the evening. The current proposal includes a concentration of upper-level liberal arts electives in communication and a minor in business. The Wright School of Business and the Department of Communication are in support of this option. The USG provided a spreadsheet of students who had stopped out/dropped out since 2013, and that will be used to begin contacting students who might be interested in this approach.

Program Strengths and Weaknesses

Based upon this review, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the program?

Strengths:

1. The program is growing, despite concerns that it would diminish with the beginning of the B.A. in Communication.
2. Students are surveyed every semester on their satisfaction with the program, and these data indicate high levels of satisfaction.
3. The majority of graduates we were able to contact have found employment and/or a place in graduate studies.
4. The program is flexible, especially for nontraditional students and is one of a few majors on campus that is accessible for working adults.

Weaknesses and concerns:

The mean GPA of interdisciplinary studies graduates has gone down from a high of 3.24 in Fall 2015 to 2.68 in Fall 2017, and the degree is sometimes used as a placeholder for athletes who are more interested in playing than in attending classes.

DegreeWorks, although a helpful tool, does not consistently allocate courses in the interdisciplinary studies major. Advisors cannot take the DegreeWorks allocation for granted, and additional time is expended in addressing this issue with the technician in Enrollment Services and in submitting course substitutions.

As mentioned above, overall knowledge of the program's existence is weak and could be strengthened with informational materials to faculty. Faculty and advisors would be the best means for recruiting at this time; we do not wish to take students from their current majors without a good reason.

According to an article in Inside Higher Education (<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/11/13/new-report-shows-colleges-how-bridge-gap-between-liberal-arts-and-work-force>), "While many reports suggest that students should focus on studying marketable skills, the new report identifies career value in liberal arts education, albeit with some tweaks." This article and others argue that employers continue to look for liberal arts graduates, and the majority of courses taken by interdisciplinary studies majors fit into this category. Because of the program's emphasis on variety, oral and written communication skills, research, and critical thinking, graduates who take a proactive approach to their career advancement can craft a program through the interdisciplinary studies major that can address their career path needs.

Unfortunately, in the five-year cycle of this review, we have seen this to be the case at times and not at others. Some students have clear goals (such as seminary or professional studies, teaching English abroad, or moving up to a new position in their current company) while others seem to be biding their time and/or just finding a way to complete the credits for the degree. Improved or more intrusive advising would be beneficial. Currently, five or so faculty members in the Communication Department advise interdisciplinary studies majors with varying success. It may be better, going forward, if the advising is handled by only two faculty members who are thoroughly trained in the program and whose advising responsibilities are restricted to this time-intensive major. Having specialized advisors is important since the program offers an almost infinite variety of options, and DegreeWorks cannot always apportion courses in the correct or best way.



COMPREHENSIVE ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

Finally, the College as a whole should address a way to offer more upper-division courses online or as evening hybrids so that working adults in all majors can graduate more expeditiously.

Recommendations for Follow-Up and/or Action Plans (if needed)

Issue/Concern:

1. Faculty and student misunderstandings and lack of awareness about the interdisciplinary studies program
2. Difficulties in advising majors
3. Need for further research on graduates and income

Specific action(s):

1. Design a flyer for the interdisciplinary studies program.
2. Send a flyer to Liberal Arts and School of Business faculty and professional advisors explaining the major and how it might benefit some of their nontraditional students.
3. Starting Spring 2019, assign any new interdisciplinary studies majors to only two advisors, yet to be named.
4. Conduct outreach for research on graduates' employment and income in January 2019 for inclusion in annual program assessment.

Expected outcomes:

1. A growth in interest and inquiries about the interdisciplinary program.
2. Improved advising and monitoring of course plans.
3. Response rates of greater than 50% in graduate follow-up studies.

Time frame for achievement:

Spring semester 2019

Person(s) responsible:

Barbara Tucker

Resources needed: none.



COMPREHENSIVE ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

Prepared by: Barbara Tucker and Mary Nielsen

Signature: Barbara Tucker Date: Dec. 3, 2018

Dean's Approval:

Signature: Mary T. Nielsen Date: Dec. 3, 2018

Approval of the Chair of the DSC Comprehensive Program Review Committee:

Signature: Mary T. Nielsen Date: 12/3/18

Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) Categorical Summation:

Check any of the following to categorically describe action(s) the institution will take concerning this program.

- Program **MEETS** Institution's Criteria
 - Program is critical to the institutional mission and will be retained.
 - Program is critical to the institutional mission and is growing, or a high demand field, and thus will be enhanced.

- Program **DOES NOT MEET** Institution's Criteria for continuation.
 - Program will be placed on monitoring status.
 - Program will undergo substantive curricular revisions.
 - Program will be deactivated.
 - Program will be voluntarily terminated.
 - Other (Please elaborate):

VPAA Signature: Pat Chute Date: 1/29/19

Patricia M. Chute, Ed.D.
Vice President of Academic Affairs
Dalton State College