



TO: Elizabeth Barton, Associate Registrar,
Michael Dougher, Sr. Vice Provost,
Kate Krause, Interim Dean, University College

FROM: Gregory Heileman, Associate Provost

DATE: August 2, 2012

SUBJECT: Approval of New Baccalaureate Degrees: Bachelors of Liberal Arts (BLA),
Bachelors of Interdisciplinary Studies (BIS) and Minor in Interdisciplinary Studies

CC: Chaouki Abdallah, Provost

The Bachelor of University Studies (BUS), a program administered out of University College, has served UNM since 1969. The Director of the BUS and the Interim Dean of University College have determined that a single BUS degree does not adequately serve our students. They are proposing bifurcating that degree into two distinct bachelors' degrees.

The original BUS allowed students to design their own multidisciplinary major. It accommodated non-traditional students and other students who did not meet the requirements of any single major or degree offered by another college. It gained a somewhat non-rigorous reputation, stigmatizing students who earned the BUS. Currently about one-third of BUS students are pursuing rigorous interdisciplinary programs of study; about two-thirds are seeking a BUS degree as an expeditious path to graduation. These two very separate paths call for separate degrees.

I have reviewed the New Baccalaureate Degree Preliminary Review And Proposal Outline: Major Modification of BUS degree and Creation of New Degree to be offered in University College at UNM (attached) and have found that it satisfies the requirements for preliminary approval of a new Baccalaureate degree. This memo serves as my permission to move forward with development of specific degree curriculum and requirements.

By copy of this memo to Kate Krause, Interim Dean of University College, I instruct her to develop a full proposal that is consistent with the preliminary outline and that complies with all NMHED requirements. That will require timely submission of a Form C for each new degree (the two bachelor's degrees and the minor) and documentation of all elements required by the document titled New Baccalaureate Degree Preliminary Review And Proposal Outline dated January 2008.

Attachment: New Baccalaureate Degree Preliminary Review And Proposal Outline: Major Modification of BUS degree and Creation of New Degree to be offered in University College at UNM

NEW BACCALAUREATE DEGREE PRELIMINARY REVIEW AND PROPOSAL OUTLINE: Major Modification of BUS degree and Creation of New Degree to be offered in University College at UNM

The B.U.S program was created by the faculty in 1969 and has historically been administered through University College. Each year, approximately 900 to 1200 students are enrolled with the B.U.S. program, making it one of the largest degree-granting majors, regularly graduating the second- or third-most degrees of any college each year at UNM. Enrollments fluctuate each semester as many non-traditional students take only one or two courses every other semester as they balance work, family, and school commitments.

Currently students seeking the B.U.S. degree complete all courses required in the University Core Curriculum and design an individual 36+ credit plan of study leading to a baccalaureate degree. Plans of study may be thematically based, or specialized in two or more specific subject areas. These programs of study reflect a broad spectrum of academic areas. While the majority of students focus on several disciplines within the College of Arts & Sciences, many design their curriculum with courses from two or more of UNM's other colleges. The B.U.S. degree program is ideal for students with academic and career aspirations that require inter- or multi-disciplinary study. Other students, particularly those returning to the university after years away, or those with full-time jobs, choose the B.U.S. degree because they have specific job-related academic needs that can be met most efficiently through the B.U.S. program.

1. Program Description

The B.U.S. program needs to re-define itself as the degree completion program that offers innovative and flexible fields of study, that supports many UNM graduation initiatives, that delivers online courses offerings, and that serves the needs of non-traditional student populations that would otherwise be under-served on campus and across the State. The primary structure of this re-definition is the evolution of the current University Studies program into two separate tracks – *Liberal Arts* [multidisciplinary and thematic] for returning and career-oriented students, and *Interdisciplinary Studies* for students who seek an interdisciplinary undergraduate degree.

Bachelor of Liberal Arts [BLA degree]

The first step in this proposal is to change the name from University Studies to Liberal Arts, resulting in a change in the name of the degree from a BUS degree to a BLA degree. The BLA degree would target students who want a broad and well-rounded approach to their studies. Representing approximately two-thirds to three-fourths of the students in the current program, this degree is a multi-disciplinary, theme-based program of study. Students generally take four to six areas from the catalog and build a degree program focused on their academic and professional interests.

For example, “Women & Leadership” is a thematic plan of study where coursework is drawn from History, Sociology, Anthropology, Communication, Psychology and Women’s Studies. Beyond the obvious gender emphasis, students who pursue this track could arrange courses by ethnicity, geography or a particular period in time.

This type of multi-discipline organization of study is very popular with academically mature non-traditional students who are honing or focusing their previously broad distribution of liberal arts and sciences core classes into a long developed interest that is particularly relevant to them personally. The primary challenge these students face in furthering their future academic and career interests and goals after completing this type of program is that the success of each student is completely dependent on that student’s ability to effectively market his or her individualized, multidisciplinary degree — in effect, market the uniqueness of what they have designed.

Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies [BIS degree]

The second step of this proposal is to create a BIS [Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies] degree for creative students seeking a truly interdisciplinary degree. The new BIS degree would take an integrative approach to academic course design under faculty supervision for an intense focus on a new emerging field of study — for example, forensic science. This field of study is interdisciplinary in the sense that the material from two or more disciplines is integrated into a single focus. Between one-fourth and one-third of the students currently in the B.U.S program follow this model when designing their plan of study. Our experience over the last decade is that interdisciplinary students tend to have graduate or professional education (law school or medical school) as a goal more often than their multidisciplinary classmates.

The BIS degree could also offer multiple interdisciplinary “plans of study” pre-designed by a committee of interested faculty to reflect the liberal studies and interdisciplinarity of the program. A faculty mentor would of course, supervise each student. The new concentrations that are faculty designed could reflect the current A&S group requirements, for example: Interdisciplinary – Humanities, Interdisciplinary – Social Science, and Interdisciplinary – Arts & Letters, or could focus on an inherently interdisciplinary issue like sustainability, innovation and technology, or globalization.

The new BIS degree would function much like the proposed Honors degree with one primary difference – it would be available to students who either do not want to participate in the honors degree or cannot qualify for honors admission. Offering the BIS to interdisciplinary-minded students will reinforce the relationships being built between the University Honors program and the disciplines across campus. Because of its interdisciplinary focus, the BIS might increase student participation in the Honors College experience itself.

The proposed timeline is as follows:

Curriculum Workflow process to change the name of B.U.S to BLA: Fall Semester 2012.

Development of Curriculum for IS Major, minor: Fall 2012, to be submitted for Faculty Senate approval Fall 2012.

2. Evidence of Need

The university studies major, or B.U.S degree as it is currently known, is in need of a major revision. When first conceptualized as a broad general studies program in 1969 the name “university

studies” was inclusive of any creative efforts that a student put together toward graduation, and was not allowed to be used as a double-major, completed as a second degree, or include any minor. It is also one of the oldest degree programs of its kind in the country and in many ways has been a model for similar programs nationally.

The need for revision has become clear in the last few years as two distinct populations of student have completed the program to achieve their academic and professional goals. Almost every other university also has a degree program similar to our degree (B.U.S), however almost everyone calls it something different. In fact, only the University of Utah still uses this name. The most widely accepted names at top institutions are the Bachelor of Liberal Arts (BLA degree) and the Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies (BIS degree); this includes educational innovators such as Harvard and the University of California respectively.

Listed in the “Review and Recommendations for University College” (Goering, 2008) a number of UNM initiatives would be significantly and positively impacted by these changes, most notably:

- Online Degree Programs (EU),
- Evening Weekend Degree Programs,
- Staff as Students,
- Graduation Project and other graduation initiatives,
- And the faux/undeclared “majors” in the College of Arts & Sciences.

A number of other student communities would benefit from a revised BLA degree including student-athletes seeking to retain eligibility, transfer students entering with a lot of credits, and “non-rated” ROTC graduates in line for being commissioned in the Armed Forces.

We have also designed an Allied Health Sciences track for students trying to complete requirements for Nursing or Pre-Med curricula, or are preparing for admission to Physical Therapy, Physician Assistant, and other Allied Health programs on North campus. The BLA would offer an alternative to the highly competitive admission eligibility of these programs at the Nursing and Medical School.

NOTE: We have recently been approached to create a similar track for the Law Enforcement career field by San Juan College, and an additional Allied Health track for Santa Fe Community College. In support of these recent developments, the new BLA program could be a perfect 2+2 completion companion to many additional UNM Branch campus and CNM Associate-level degrees, based on discussions Associate Dean Skipp has had with senior administrators at these institutions.

3. Program Content and Quality

Curricula and Courses; Student Services

We propose three changes to the current University Studies degree [B.U.S], with a name change, the creation of a new major/minor, and the allowance for use with existing minors. This division of University College would offer

- a multidisciplinary bachelor’s degree, or major [BLA];
- an interdisciplinary bachelor’s degree, or major [BIS]; and
- an interdisciplinary minor [IS].

The BLA/BIS degrees will continue to operate as the current B.U.S degree does in terms of admission to, advisement in, and graduation from both majors, with a few specific changes to Catalog requirements (detailed description will follow in this section). Additionally, a specific curriculum (course) will be the senior capstone project that will be required of all BIS majors and interdisciplinary minors. Any new courses will be developed for review and approval by the Faculty Senate contingent upon Provost approval of this proposal.

Multidisciplinary Major in Liberal Arts [BLA]. The BLA degree as it is being proposed is essentially the same as the current B.U.S degree with a few specific requirement changes. The addition of an exit essay will allow for more meaningful outcomes assessment. The reduction in program residency from 36 to 21 credit hours will keep from penalizing students who, while having met all other graduation requirements, stop out for three or more semesters and have to start residency again. The degree will require:

- 128 credit hours, 50 of which must be upper-division;
- 36 credit-hour plan of study; and
- 21 credit-hour residency in BLA program (*last 21*); and
- Entrance/graduation essays (250/500 words) describing plan of study goals and outcomes; and
- 3 credit hours of Service Learning or Community Based Learning (designated) courses.

Students choosing this major are expected to be returning non-traditional students who are preparing for the workforce or are currently in the workforce. The broad multidisciplinary nature of the major will prepare students for the workforce where a degree is necessary for employment or potential career development on a more advanced career track.

Major in Interdisciplinary Studies [BIS]. The new BIS degree is the option, under the current B.U.S degree, less frequently used to prepare motivated students for advanced or creative learning opportunities. The creation of this degree specifically targets students who require or would benefit from closer collaboration, including research projects, with a faculty mentor or faculty-led problem solving teams. The degree will require:

- 128 credit hours, 50 of which must be upper-division;
- 36 credit-hour plan of study; and
- 36 credit-hour residency in BIS program (*last 36*); and
- Entrance essay (250 words) describing plan of study goals; and
- the approval of a faculty mentor(s); and
- 6 credit hours of Service Learning or Community Based Learning (designated) courses.
- completion of a substantial Capstone Project (approved by the faculty mentor).

Students choosing this major are expected to be both traditional and non-traditional students who want to design an individualized program to prepare for unique or advanced learning experiences – including international, cooperative or professional schools. The focused nature of the major and apprenticeship-like experience with a faculty member will better prepare students for advanced study.

Minor in Interdisciplinary Studies. The interdisciplinary studies minor will be similar to what is currently required of the interdisciplinary studies major, and will be awarded to students who complete 21 hours of designated courses. This curriculum will allow creative students who are not in an interdisciplinary major to broaden their academic experience while obtaining a bachelor's degree in their chosen discipline.

Senior Capstone course. A senior capstone seminar will be designed to distill and reflect upon the interdisciplinary experience of each student in the program leading to the creation of a skills portfolio. Other capstone courses offered through other majors will also be allowed to satisfy this requirement.

4. Governance Structure

As a division of University College, the Liberal Arts & Interdisciplinary Studies programs will be overseen by an Associate Dean and staffed by 3 Senior Academic Advisors.

Administrative and support services will be provided by the University College structure.

Minimum personnel requirements will be the following:

1. Associate Dean,
2. 3 full-time advisors dedicated exclusively to Liberal Arts, and Interdisciplinary Studies (2 currently).

5. Required Resources

Associate Dean

The current Associate Dean is nationally certified as a Master Advisor, Career Development Facilitator, and a Workforce Development Professional and in this role trains Advisors especially at the branch campuses and EU education centers. In this role the AD meets with departments and programs campus-wide and system-wide to develop and manage curriculum. Additionally, he reviews petitions and exceptions and resolves curricular discrepancies, reviews all certifications for graduation, probation and suspension, honors designations, athletic eligibility, and military commissioning. He also develops all new initiatives for continued program development.

Senior Academic Advisors

The current team of two senior academic advisors will need to be augmented by one additional advisor to continue providing quality counseling for students in the BLA/BIS majors to meet NACADA guidelines. Interdisciplinary advisement is more time intensive than academic advisement in traditional degrees in that knowledge of degree completion requirements is not the only goal for students. Each student's individualized program of study must be developed and approved. Knowledge of post-collegiate requirements (graduate programs and workforce skills) as well as knowledge of and cooperation with other interdisciplinary campus programs are a necessity. For example, international study abroad programs, cooperative education initiatives, and corporate and governmental internships are a necessity to prepare truly interdisciplinary students with the skills required to compete in the real world following graduation. To achieve *deep integrative learning* academic advisors must assist students in translating their classroom experiences to life beyond the university.

Please refer to Appendix A for Cost Estimates.

6. Projected Enrollment

When initially formulated in 1969 enrollment in the B.U.S degree was projected to be approximately 300 students. The student response to this creative initiative exceeded all expectations by swelling to more than 1500 students in the first year.

While this is not likely to occur in the current population, the change of name and requirements may provide initial increased enrollments, as perceptions of the degree will change significantly among students, staff and faculty. I expect that enrollments will stabilize at our current count of between 900-1200 total students over the next few years – 700 to 900 in the BLA, and 200 to 300 BIS students.

In addition, collaboration with Research Service Learning and the Center for Academic Excellence and Leadership Development will allow for additional opportunities for students as minors are developed in those areas. Other interdisciplinary programs on campus – i.e. Peace Studies, Sustainability Studies, Holistic Health, Social Justice, among numerous others – will provide students with creative curricula to draw on to create BLA/BIS plans of study as well as complementary minors to pair with majors in traditional departments.

The current BUS practice of using existing minors from across campus to build these concentrations is one way to reduce the impact of this change on other departments. Institution of the BIS will not require departments to offer more sections of courses than they currently offer. With more students participating in the existing departmental minors these faculty would see a higher degree of student participation, rather than just an influx of more students.

Appendix A: COST ESTIMATION

Admin Professional Staff			
Associate Dean - SAC and course buy-out	\$75,000	<i>Salary is currently in the B.U.S budget</i>	<i>New Funding</i>
Technical Staff			
Sr. Academic Advisors (3) [\$36,000 ea.]	\$108,000	<i>2/3 salaries (\$66,000) currently in the B.U.S budget</i>	Additional funding required = \$42,000
Other			
Supply and Equipment Budget	\$10,000	<i>\$6,000 currently in the B.U.S budget</i>	Additional funding required = \$4,000
TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS	\$193,000		\$46,000

Changes Not Addressed

Under the pre-Banner classification of undergraduate students in University College there are three primary divisions of students –

- **College 16** (degree-granting programs),
- **College 12** (degree seeking undergraduates), and
- **College 14** (non-degree undergraduates & graduates).

The BLA/BIS proposal above only deals with students listed as “College 16”.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Associate Dean Tracy Skipp, tjskipp@unm.edu, 505 414-9214 (cell#).