

**You have come here to find what you already have.**

**A Buddhist Aphorism  
(Steinem, 1992)**

## **Chapter 1:**

### **OBTAINING YOUR BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN LIS AT UIS**

The Bachelor of Arts degree in Liberal Studies at the University of Illinois at Springfield is built on more than 35 years of experience with self-designed degrees through the Individual Option at Sangamon State University. This LIS program, created in 1995, continues to offer an opportunity for mature students to design their own degrees; however, the general framework for the baccalaureate degree is based on Ernest Boyer's comprehensive study of higher education conducted by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching published in *College: The Undergraduate Experience in America* (1986). The Liberal Studies Online degree, begun in 1999, offers access to a high quality public education through online delivery methods.

The wheel on the front of this Handbook serves as a model for the liberal studies BA. Seven of the categories are taken from Boyer's organizational scheme for general education. We added the Tools and Skills to include those areas of study that offer the tools and skills necessary for survival in the twenty-first century. Liberal Studies students have the opportunity to design their own degrees within this general framework. The well-rounded liberal studies degree contains "a program of general education that introduces students not only to essential knowledge, but also to connections across disciplines, and in the end, to the applications of knowledge to life beyond the campus." (Boyer, p. 91)

#### **HOW DOES UIS DEFINE A BACHELOR'S DEGREE?**

A student with a bachelor's degree should be able to comprehend written and spoken communications --from simple narrative to scholarly exposition, novels, and poetry--and should be able to use and apply abstractions, principles, ideas, or theories to concrete situations. Content as well as form is important to a baccalaureate education. The student should have broad familiarity with the social sciences, humanities, sciences, mathematics and English. In addition UIS mandates a special understanding of public affairs in the broadest and most humanistic sense.

The student receiving a bachelor's degree will

1. Be able to recognize significant terminology, facts, theories, issues, findings, abstractions, universals, principles, and generalizations within a discipline; as well as have familiarity with ways

of organizing, studying, judging, and criticizing relevant knowledge in a chosen field, including methods of inquiry, patterns of organizations, and standards of judgment;

2. Be able to use the relevant knowledge within a discipline, through reading, interpreting, and evaluating the appropriate literature, analyzing data, understanding implications, and formulating and defending conclusions; and
3. Demonstrate a mastery of appropriate skills with a chosen discipline and an ability to apply such knowledge and skills, and demonstrate an ability to apply abstractions in concrete situations.

### **LIBERAL STUDIES MISSION STATEMENT**

The Liberal Studies Program is designed to help students develop and plan a course of study that enhances critical thinking and problem-solving skills, inspires living as an engaged and responsible citizen, instills a habit of considering the ethics and consequences of actions, and brings familiarity with a broad and integrated core of knowledge.

#### *Goals for Students*

UIS Liberal Studies Program Faculty developed the following goals to that governments, corporations, the private sector, and academia value.

- Learn the tenets of critical thinking, of communicating, and of reconciling disparate points of view and making decisions together.
- Be engaged citizens who will fulfill their obligation to work in their communities in ways that sustain a democratic and representative form of government that protects citizens' rights and freedoms.
- Be responsible contributors to life who evaluate the consequences of actions, maintain high ethical standards in employment and personal lives, seek ways to open paths to personal and social development, and work in personal and public relationships to create sustainable and harmonious relationships.
- Deepen their understanding and awareness of the world through study of language, art, heritage, institutions, nature, work, identity, and applied skills (tools).
- Learn to integrate learning into a coherent and unified whole, deepen self understanding, and improve problem-solving skills.

Adopted at INO/LIS program meeting 3/7/07

## **THE LIBERAL STUDIES DEGREE**

Liberal Studies offers you the opportunity to design a bachelor's degree consistent with your own educational goals and with institutional goals and resources. To design your degree you select learning activities that use a variety of disciplines to explore answers to life questions. These questions grow out of several themes universal to the human experience. These themes include: connecting with each other through language, art, work and institutions; understanding the present in historical context; discerning all forms of life as interlocked; and achieving a meaningful individual and social identity.

You will be assisted in the selection of appropriate courses in these areas to meet your learning objectives. Given the accelerating rate of change characterizing modern society, program faculty believe that self-directed, life long learning skills are essential to survival in the future.

In designing an individualized curriculum, you will develop skills that promote critical thinking and promote significant learning. You will assume responsibility for integrating your own learning activities and for evaluating and revising your own curricular design. Program faculty facilitate this learning process and promote the autonomy that necessarily ensues.

The LIS Program is based on the assumption that, as an undergraduate degree candidate at the University of Illinois at Springfield, you have acquired previous fundamental knowledge and skills and that you are able to apply these competencies in a liberal studies curricular framework. Such advanced study is typified by the ability to pursue and generate complex levels of knowledge, to engage in self-directed and original inquiry, and to think critically about yourself and your surroundings.

## **ADMISSIONS**

The Liberal Studies Program formally begins with LIS 301 Self-directed Learning, which should be taken during the first semester of a student's junior year. Prior to this, students should work with the advisers to ensure that they have completed the required general education curriculum and the prerequisites required of the upper-level courses they plan to take.

**CAMPUS-BASED STUDENTS** must complete the general education curriculum before receiving permission to enroll in LIS 301. To receive this permission, they must submit a written request to the program office.

The request should be approximately two pages in length and should reflect junior-level writing skills. The request should include:

A clear, concise statement of your academic and/or professional goals.

Why you believe that a non-traditional, interdisciplinary program is the pathway to these goals.  
A discussion of things you have taught yourself outside of an academic environment.

Whenever possible, students should include details and examples to illustrate their ideas. Any problems in previous academic work should be addressed. A full explanation of the problem, as well as a description of the steps taken to correct it, should be included.

## **ONLINE STUDENTS**

Entrance to the Liberal Studies online program is selective and the number of students admitted each semester is limited. The program has posted priority dates for completing the application process. If space remains after the priority date, applications will continue to be reviewed on a monthly basis. If you have any questions about availability, please contact the program coordinator.

Before we can make an admission decision, you must complete the application process:

Fill out the UIS admissions application, including signature sheet and application fee.

Send transcripts from each of your past colleges or universities.

Provide the written statement described below.

Ensure that your equipment meets the university's Computer Requirements (listed below).

The online program does not support lower-level coursework. For this reason, an applicant must be prepared to enter at the junior level. Those who have not yet completed lower-level coursework are encouraged to do so at another college or university of their choice, and then transfer into our program.

The program will consider all of the information provided by the applicant, but pay particular attention to the applicant's written statement and background in general education courses. Applicants must have completed Composition I and II to be admitted to the online program.

Students who are not accepted will be notified as quickly as possible so that they can consider alternatives. In some cases, the program may be willing to admit an applicant for a future semester if he/she is willing to address areas of concern noted in the program review. In these cases, the program will work with the applicant as closely as necessary to assist them.

## **Academic Standards**

### **Academic Load**

**Note: Faculty at UIS plan courses according to this standard: A typical 4-credit-hour**

**course meets 3 ½ hours per week for 16 weeks (56 hours). A typical student spends 2 hours outside of class reading, preparing for exams, writing, etc., for every hour in class (112 hours). So, if you're a typical student, you'll devote 168 hours to a typical 4-credit-hour course. Consider your responsibilities to your family and work to arrive at a reasonable course load.**

For purposes of tuition and fees, a student enrolled for 12 or more semester hours of course work during the fall or spring semesters or six semester hours of course work in the summer term is considered a full-time student. Students enrolled for fewer hours are considered part-time. Most courses at UIS earn three to four semester hours of credit. The normal course load for a full-time undergraduate is four or five courses or 14-16 semester hours. The normal course load for part-time students is one or two courses, or four to eight semester hours.

An undergraduate student who wishes to enroll for more than 18 semester hours during fall or spring semesters or more than eight semester hours during the summer terms must submit a Student Petition form (available <http://www.uis.edu/registration/forms/index.html> or from the Records office on campus) for approval to your LIS advisor and to the LIS Program Director.

### **Grade-point Average**

Undergraduate students must achieve an UIS cumulative grade-point average of at least 2.0 to receive the bachelor's degree.

### **Academic Probation**

At the end of any semester in which an undergraduate student has a UIS cumulative grade-point average of less than 2.0, s(he) is placed on academic probation; courses taken for credit/no credit do not count in calculating this average. In addition, students who accumulate 12 hours or more of "incomplete" (signifying that work for a specific course has not been completed within the designated time frame, usually one semester) are subject to probation.

Students on probation may enroll for up to 12 hours credit in the subsequent semester (six hours in the summer term), provided an Academic Probation Registration form is completed with appropriate signatures. Students placed on academic probation for two successive semesters will be suspended from the university and must wait two semesters before petitioning for re-admission. Students with exceptional circumstances may appeal immediately to the Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

### **Repeating Courses**

Students may repeat course work although some academic programs may have restrictions on the number of times a particular course may be repeated. The grade and hours earned when the course is

repeated will appear on your transcript. The first grade entry will be deleted from the transcript and will not count in determining the grade-point average. Subsequent repeats can only be recorded as audits, which bear no hours or grade points.

### **General University and Program Requirements**

To be awarded a bachelor's degree through the Liberal Studies Program from UIS, you must fulfill the following requirements:

- **Earn a total of 120 hours** (combining transfer hours and a minimum of 30 hours at UIS). At least 48 credit hours must be earned at the upper division level.

NOTE: A student may include as many as 72 lower division hours in the degree if a petition (Student Petition form can be found at: <http://www.uis.edu/registration/forms>) is approved by the LIS advisor and the program *at the time of contracting the degree plan* to include lower division courses above 60 hours (previously earned credits or future coursework). To be considered, the petition must include:

1. a rationale as to how the lower division course(s) could be considered Junior/Senior level coursework (Building upon previous learning and including a level of critical thinking and sophistication expected at the upper division level;) and,
  2. a rationale as to how the coursework complements the student's learning needs and meets LIS degree requirements.
- Satisfy general education requirements (see UIS catalogue).
  - Satisfy University Requirements as follows:

**Incoming Freshmen:** Complete ECCE coursework according to the General Education requirements.

**Transfer students entering summer 2007 semester and prior:** UIS requires 12 semester hours of courses focusing on public affairs and services topics. These can be chosen from two of the following three types of course areas:

*Liberal Studies Colloquia (LSC)* – multidisciplinary courses that engage important issues having significance beyond a single discipline. Each semester, a number of different colloquia are offered. There are no prerequisites for any of these.

*Public Affairs Colloquia (PAC)* – each semester a number of different PAC courses are offered to provide interdisciplinary exploration of contemporary public issues. There are no prerequisites for any of the colloquia.

*Applied Study and Experiential Learning Term (AST)* – Similar to an internship, the applied study term teaches students to learn from experience, acquire skills characteristic of lifelong learners, and develop abilities to apply academic learning to practical problems.

**Transfer students entering fall 2007 semester and beyond** may take LSC and PAC courses as electives but will not be required to complete the 12 hours of credits listed above. Instead, these students will be required to complete the following list of Engaged Citizen Common Experience (ECCE) requirements:

**U.S Communities (3 hours)** – courses should broaden a students’ knowledge about substantial, distinctive, and complex aspects of the history, society, politics, and culture of United States communities.

**Global Awareness (3 hours)** – courses should help students understand and function in an increasingly interdependent and globalizing environment and to develop an appreciation of other cultural perspectives.

**Engagement Experience (3 hours)** – courses provide structured opportunities for students to integrate knowledge, practice, and reflection in the context of engaged citizenship. Opportunities include Applied Studies Term, Credit for Prior Learning, service-learning courses, research projects, and study abroad.

**ECCE Elective (3 hours)**

**ECCE Speakers Series (1 hour)**

- Receive certification of adequacy of communications skills from the LIS program (certification is awarded upon satisfactory completion of LIS 301).
- Complete LIS 301, LIS 451 and a minimum of four hours of LIS elective courses.
- Complete course work with a cumulative UIS grade point average of at least 2.0
- Complete your degree contract proposal and a liberal and integrative studies paper, which must be approved by the LIS Director.

- Complete the Graduation Contract (See <http://www.uis.edu/graduation> for deadlines) and receive approval from LIS advisor and LIS Director.
- Pay a graduation fee of \$25 (subject to change)

### **Waivers**

It is possible to obtain waivers for program requirements. If you feel that you qualify for a course waiver, or are in an exceptional circumstance, consult your LIS advisor.

### **Grading Option: Credit / No Credit**

The Liberal Studies Program allows students to choose a traditional grading scale or a credit/no credit option for each course except LIS 301, LIS 342, LIS 380, LIS 499, and LIS 451, offered on a credit/no credit basis only.

Students may select the credit/no credit ("CR/NC") grading option when they register. They may also register such intent with the Office of Admissions and Records before the course is three-fourths completed, or on or before the last day to withdraw; no changes are acceptable after this designated date.

Credit is awarded under the credit/no credit grading option when the undergraduate student's work represents a grade of "C" or better. When a student's work is not equivalent to the relevant grade, a grade of "NC" is recorded on the transcript.

Courses taken under the credit/no credit grading option are not included in the calculation of the grade-point average. For courses taken under this option, the symbols "CR," "NC," and "W" are recorded on transcripts as appropriate.

## **FAQs**

### **Can I change my academic advisor?**

In most cases, a student's LIS 301 instructor is assigned as their academic advisor. This does not insure that a student and their advisor will be personally compatible or that the advisor's academic discipline will coincide with the student's interests. For these reasons, you are free to change your academic advisor although we do ask that you postpone such a change until your LIS 301 degree plan has been approved. For a full list of possible academic advisors, please refer to the faculty information on the LIS program website. You should contact the faculty member to make sure that they are able to take on additional advisees. If they are agreeable, you should complete the Undergraduate Selection/Change of Major/Minor and/or Adviser Form which you can find on the registration website under the R and R Online Forms link.

### **How do I change my major?**

If you should decide to change your major, you may do so by completing the Undergraduate Selection/Change of Major/Minor and/or Adviser Form which you can find on the registration website under the R and R Online Forms link. You should contact your new program's office to arrange advisement before registering in future courses.

### **How do I drop a class?**

Before you drop a class, it is a good idea to contact your instructor to discuss your concerns since it may be possible to resolve these issues without dropping the course. If you decide that dropping the course is your best option, you may do so using the same system that you used to register. Dropping a class may have a negative impact on your financial aid. If you are receiving financial aid or scholarships, you should contact the financial aid office before dropping a class.

### **Is there a deadline for dropping a class?**

Yes. You should consult Drop/Withdrawal Policy which is published every semester. If you wish to completely withdraw from a semester, without being responsible for tuition or fees, you must drop before the first day of the semester. You may withdraw from all courses once the semester begins, but you will be charged a percentage of your tuition and fees. This percentage increases each week until the 10<sup>th</sup> week of the semester, at which point you will owe full tuition and fees. The absolute final day to drop a class is the Friday of the 13<sup>th</sup> week of the semester – the exact date is published each semester in the Drop Withdrawal Policy. As long as you remain enrolled, you may also add ad/or drop classes for the first two weeks of a semester. Your final tuition will be based upon your enrollment at the end of that two week period.

### **Is there a deadline for changing my grading option from a letter grade to credit/no credit?**

Yes, the final day to change your grading option is the Friday of the 13<sup>th</sup> week of the semester – the exact date is published each semester in the Drop Withdrawal Policy. It is worth noting that it is not always possible to change your grading option. Some programs will not allow a student to take their offerings with the credit/no credit option. Conversely, some classes may only be taken under the credit/no credit option.

### **What are the pros and cons of the credit/no credit option?**

Credit/no credit courses are not included in the grade point average calculation so this option may be helpful if you are having trouble in a course and trying to preserve a high GPA. On the other

hand, to earn credit in a credit/no credit course, you must earn a higher grade than you would need in a traditionally graded course – you could earn credit with a D- in a traditionally graded course but you would need at least a C to earn credit in a credit/no credit course. While the LIS program allows you to take all of your courses credit/no credit, you should consider this option carefully, particularly if you are considering a graduate degree or would like to graduate with honors.

When you apply to a graduate program, that program will want to assess your academic skills and will likely rely upon your GPA as a major factor in this process. Having too many credit/no credit courses on your transcript may make it difficult for a future program to adequately assess your skills, so you should use this option sparingly. You must have at least 30 graded UIS hours to earn graduation honors. You must have at least 8 graded hours in a given semester to be considered for the Dean's list.

### **For More Information**

For more information about specific UIS policies or procedures, contact:

- ▶ Admissions                      217-206-4847, University Hall Building, Rm. 1080
- ▶ Registration                    217-206-6174, University Hall Building, Rm. 1094
- ▶ LIS Program                    217-206-6962, University Hall Building, Rm. 3038
- ▶ Dean of Liberal Arts/Sciences    217-206-6512, University Hall Building, Rm. 3000

All offices can be contacted through the UIS homepage at [www.uis.edu](http://www.uis.edu)

The UIS mailing address is: Liberal Studies Program, University Hall Building, Rm. 3038, University of Illinois at Springfield, One University Plaza, Springfield, IL 62703-5407.

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**217-206-8352**

[lis-ga@uis.edu](mailto:lis-ga@uis.edu)

**Office: UHB 3043**

## **Other important resources**

Technical Support

217-206-7357

[techsupport@uis.edu](mailto:techsupport@uis.edu)

Office: HSB 127

Illinois Virtual Campus

217-244-9531

[ivc@uillinois.edu](mailto:ivc@uillinois.edu)

LIS Website

[www.uis.edu/liberalstudies](http://www.uis.edu/liberalstudies)

**"A [person] who had studied at many metaphysical schools came to Nasrudin. 'I hope you will help me,' s(he) said, 'because I have spent so much time studying at these schools.'"**

**" 'Alas!', said Nasrudin, 'you have studied the teachers and the teachings. What should have happened is that the teachers and their teachings should have studied you!' "**

*Sufi Wisdom from The Pleasantries  
of the Incredible Mulla Nasrudin  
(Steinem, 1992)*

## **Chapter 2:**

### **THE LIBERAL STUDIES PROGRAM: AN OVERVIEW**

You have decided to participate in the Liberal Studies program (LIS) because, through discussion with faculty and advisers, you concluded that a non-traditional degree program would be the most rewarding and valuable way for you to obtain an academic degree. Consider your decision to proceed thoughtfully and understand thoroughly the nature of the task you face, the commitment it requires, and what you can expect to learn in the process. It is a major undertaking, which requires a commitment of time, and intellectual and emotional energy to integrate and synthesize personal and professional experiences, and academic and professional goals into a self-designed academic program.

#### **Learning and the Liberal Studies Program**

Adults share certain expectations in order to consider an educational experience legitimate and rewarding. As learners we need to feel that there are purposes to our educational pursuits and that the skills or knowledge we've acquired through participation in degree programs will be useful to us in practical ways. We've built our lives around experiences from which we've learned and want to feel that these experiences will be validated and valued in academic settings. (Knowles, 1987) And, as we have acted as sources of information for others, we want to know that we can be learning resources for others in educational settings. Finally, we generally believe that how we've learned is as important as what we've learned. (Rogers, 1980)

Various educators have theorized about the variety of ways in which people learn. For example, some theorize that an individual's learning style is directly related to her/his cognitive style and

development. (Knox, 1987) Others suppose that one's learning style evolves from her/his ethnic, class or gender experiences. (Belenky, et al., 1985) A central theme on which many of these authors and educators appear to agree is that one's range and depth of experiences shape the ways in which s(he) feels comfortable and confident to learn. The experiences that we've had in our world impact directly upon the ways we integrate information, that is, how we've learned what we know.

For example, some of us may have an affinity for abstract philosophical thought, while others of us prefer to learn through analyzing concrete data. Some of us may prefer to actively apply our learning in new circumstances, while others feel more comfortable observing and reflecting upon situations before actively participating in them. (Knox, 1987) Others of us may rely upon feelings and intuitions to guide our learning processes, while some rely on a carefully-planned, objective presentation of facts; still others may depend upon directly experimenting with and participating in learning opportunities. Although each of us may favor one learning style, we may also use a combination of styles with which to integrate information. For example, we may be able to acquire job skills in a classroom setting in which we are auditorially and visually exposed to new information, as well as in an on-the-job training program where we are required to directly apply our newly-found knowledge.

Because we are constantly confronted with new and changing information and circumstances, an awareness of the ways in which we learn is very valuable. For example, if you are assigned to learn a new skill or piece of information, how do you proceed? Do you ask someone to explain the information to you, and then reflect on its application? Do you jump in, actively experimenting with the new information? Your learning style influences the kinds of instruction or teaching methods that will best support your learning process.

An awareness of the variety of ways in which people learn can also facilitate an understanding of others' learning styles. For example, have you ever been in a class in which the other class members constantly talked to each other? If you are someone who learns from the visual presentation of an instructor, you may have found his or her conversations very distracting. However, it may be that these people shared a learning style that differed from the one with which you felt comfortable; that is, perhaps they learned more from interactive discussion, or from an auditory presentation or exchange. Knowledge of a variety of learning styles can help you understand that people as learners have a range of needs, skills, and styles. This knowledge can also empower you to broaden your own repertoire of skills, accessing a range of abilities to use in individual learning opportunities, as well as in groups.

### **The Capacity for Experiential Learning and the LIS Program**

The assessment and application of experiential learning is essential to designing significant

learning opportunities. The phrase "experiential learning" refers to learning that is derived from situations in which you have experimented with new information and/or skills and directed your own learning process by applying them to new challenges. Dr. Edward Cell (1984, p. 60) notes that, "experiential learning occurs when direct interaction with our world or ourselves results in a change in behavior, interpretation, autonomy or creativity." These learning experiences may focus upon career, family, volunteer, and/or interpersonal areas, or may encompass other areas of specific interest to you. Learning how to learn and acknowledging your learning process are prerequisites to solving new kinds of problems throughout your life and are essential to future decision-making and problem solving. Once you are able to reflect upon your life's experiences, you will be able to use the information and insights you've achieved to design new experiences. In early consultation with members of the LIS faculty, you will discuss the role experiential learning can play in meeting your particular learning needs and goals.

### **Program Overview**

The Liberal Studies program at University of Illinois at Springfield is designed for those students who have clear but unique goals that cannot be met in traditional degree programs. LIS provides the flexibility often demanded by adult learners who want to integrate continuing education with their responsibilities on the job, at home and in their communities. The LIS program allows you to design a course of study that is consistent with your particular goals and needs.

In designing an individualized curriculum, you will develop skills that promote critical thinking by developing and participating in unique and meaningful learning experiences. You will be responsible for choosing and integrating your own learning activities, and for evaluating and revising your own curricular design. Program faculty facilitate and support this learning process, promoting growth in personal autonomy and decision-making.

Individualized self-assessment, independent study, credit for prior learning and participation in decisions about requirements are all program features. LIS faculty strongly believe that it is important for you to make the decisions that will affect your future; although expert advice plays an important role in those decisions, you are responsible for carefully weighing this advice. As an LIS student, you may draw upon the resources of the entire university in selecting courses and faculty guidance.

### **What Problems Have People Encountered?**

An awareness of some of the difficulties experienced by previous learners might be useful to you in making a decision whether or not to pursue a non-traditional academic degree. Because most of us have been educated in the traditions that place the teacher as the center of authority, we may have difficulty assuming responsibility for our own learning to become self-directed, autonomous learners;

these assumptions about learning comprise the philosophical foundation of non-traditional learning processes, such as participation in the Liberal Studies program.

Depending upon your choice of possible learning options available to students in the Liberal Studies program, such as independent studies, tutorials, or participation in the Credit for Prior Learning Program, some learners may find working in an unstructured or ambiguous academic environment especially challenging.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarizing means presenting someone else's thoughts, writings or inventions as your own. The UIS catalog states that plagiarism is usually done without proper acknowledgement in one of the following three forms:

- ▶ the inclusion of another person's writing in one's own essay;
- ▶ paraphrasing of another person's work; and/or,
- ▶ presentation of another person's original theories, or views.

If an allegation of plagiarism exists, disciplinary proceedings may be initiated and carried out within the academic program of the teaching faculty in which the alleged offense occurred. In the case that a student is alleged to have committed plagiarism, an instructor may refuse to grade the assignment and record it as no credit. Penalties may include no credit (i.e., failure) in the course as well as recommendation for disciplinary probation, suspension or dismissal from the class, program or the university.

### **Important Resources**

As you develop your degree program plan, there are two very important resources that previous LIS students have found invaluable to their work.

The Center for Teaching and Learning, located on the 4th floor in Brookens on the main campus and at [www.uis.edu/ctl](http://www.uis.edu/ctl), is an academic support service which offers students assistance with math, writing, and English as a second language, at no cost. In addition, student tutors are available to help with a range of subjects. Although the "Center" is helpful to learners who want to improve their current skills and abilities, it is also an important resource for assisting them in editing. We strongly encourage you to become familiar with this important and useful resource.

The library, also located in Brookens on the UIS campus and online at [www.uis.edu/library](http://www.uis.edu/library) has a large collection of materials for use. If you are uncertain as to how to locate particular topics or authors in the library, stop or email someone at the Information Desk; they will be happy to help with specific

questions, or provide you with general information and a tour, if needed.

Feedback we have obtained from students who have previously participated in the Liberal Studies program indicates that it is quite a challenging and growth-producing process. It asks you to use and/or develop writing, editing and proofreading skills; abilities to be introspective and reflective, and to evaluate strengths and weaknesses; verbal communication skills; and diplomacy and negotiation skills.

We hope that you find the process exciting, and thought-provoking. If, at any time, you have questions about the any aspect of the program, contact one of LIS faculty members.

**"One doesn't discover new lands without consenting to lose sight of the shore for a very long time."**

Andre Gide  
(Kehl, 1983)

### **Chapter 3:**

#### **PROGRAM PROCEDURES**

The degree contract plan is a statement of your academic goals and learning needs; it reflects the range of research activities you will undertake and the academic subjects you will study. Designing your degree contract is a developmental process, which demonstrates the acquisition of new learning while building on past competencies. You will complete your degree contract plan as the major written product of LIS 301, "Self-directed Learning."

As we have previously discussed, in a traditional program the faculty alone designs the curriculum; however, in the LIS program you initiate the design process in conjunction with your adviser. During your initial semester in the program, you should establish a relationship with your faculty adviser (generally the LIS 301 instructor) who will work with you throughout your academic program. You will work with your LIS 301 instructor to design a curriculum, unique to your educational, career, and personal goals.

**You have the option to revise your original degree proposal in light of new knowledge, experience, or opportunities. These revisions require the approval of your LIS adviser.**

#### **Components of the Contract**

The degree contract contains an autobiographical account of your past achievements, a statement of your educational goals and learning needs, a resource inventory, and your proposed curriculum. The components that constitute your curriculum reflect the range of your learning skills and activities; the design of the degree contract must include the acquisition of new undergraduate learning and any previous coursework you wish to be part of your 60-hour LIS degree.

The areas of a degree contract that you will work on in LIS 301 are the

1. Learning Autobiography
2. Goals Statement
3. Personal Philosophy of Education
4. Learning Needs Statement

5. Narrative Curriculum, describing each course to be included:
  - ◆ Course Title and Description from the Catalog(s)
  - ◆ Brief Rationale for Inclusion in the Degree Program
  - ◆ Amount of Credit Hours for Each Course
  - ◆ Curriculum Summary Schedule/Timeline
6. Inventory of Learning Resources
7. A Writing Sample and Degree Contract Plan signed by your LIS 301 instructor, yourself and the LIS Director.

- **The Role of Your LIS Adviser**

Following admission to the university, you will be advised to enroll in LIS 301. The instructor of your section will most likely be assigned as your faculty adviser. Your adviser is available to help you interpret LIS procedures, such as allocating credits or planning the experiential aspects of your degree proposal. All administrative procedures in connection with your work are the responsibility of your LIS adviser. He/she is responsible for the overall supervision of your program and your progress; however, questions of academic quality may be referred to academic specialists in a particular department. **Send all written communications and documents related to your degree proposal and program to your LIS 301 instructor.** After completing LIS 301, you can depend on your LIS adviser for clarification and advice on procedures, policies and academic decisions. At any time you may change advisers by completing a "Selection of Faculty Adviser" form with the newly selected LIS faculty member. You can obtain these forms from the Registrar, or online at <http://www.uis.edu/registration/forms>.

It's up to you to take the initiative in the academic advising process. You may want to arrange appointments with your LIS adviser prior to each registration, and maintain contact with her/him throughout your academic studies. It is especially important to consult with your LIS adviser prior to participating in any alternative educational activities, such as the Credit for Prior Learning program, tutorials, independent field projects, etc. Be sure to contact your LIS adviser or LIS staff prior to your final term of study to review graduate requirements.

### **Additional Academic Resources**

Using a variety of academic resources provides the breadth of viewpoint and expertise appropriate to undergraduate study. Therefore, academic resource people may be added as deemed

necessary by your LIS adviser as consultants or instructors for tutorials or independent studies.

### **General Program Guidelines**

- 1. In a program such as the Liberal Studies Program, you must take responsibility for defining your educational goals, for designing the program of study, and for selecting resources appropriate to your program. While LIS advisers may suggest ways and means to identify and select potential resource persons and tutors, the decision is yours.**
- 2. While the degree plan is your responsibility, we know that all students need direction in designing this plan. Outside resources can provide advice about generally accepted standards of professional competence for academic focus areas. Specific faculty also can advise on current research methodologies and research strategies. They might take an active role in the development and assessment of your degree plan if you desire.**

### **Phases in Completing the LIS Bachelor of Arts**

#### **Phase One:**

- a. Develop your degree contract plan (as previously discussed).**
- b. Submit your degree plan to your LIS 301 teacher when you are satisfied that it represents a feasible and academically sound program of study. Your LIS 301 teacher will see that your approved writing sample and degree plan are submitted to the LIS Program for further review by the date grades are due for the semester in which you took the course. You will receive notification when your materials have been accepted by the LIS Program.**

**If for some reason, you are not able to complete the course and submit your degree plan to the Program by the fourth week of the second semester after initial enrollment in LIS 301, the Program will put a hold on your registration. By the beginning of the third semester including summer, you will receive a letter indicating that you are no longer a LIS major. For any of these eventualities, you need to keep in close contact with your LIS 301 instructor/advisor.**

#### **Phase Two:**

- a. After you submit your plan to the LIS Program, proceed with your chosen learning plans and activities.**
- b. During the course of your academic program, you should feel free to contact your adviser from time to time.**
- c. You always have the option, in the light of new knowledge, experience, or opportunities to revise your original degree plan. Such revisions require the approval of your LIS adviser. You submit a revised plan noting the courses being deleted and the substitutes with a brief explanation.**

**Phase Three:**

- a. In the last semester of coursework you will write a major paper, summarizing your learning and the ways it reflects the original goals of your degree proposal in LIS 451, Senior Seminar. Save all your papers, required texts, and other class materials.**
- b. You may choose to write an Honors Thesis as a culminating activity of your undergraduate study. A proposal will be written, shared and approved by your adviser before registering for the course credits.**