

"Only the dreamer can change the dream."

John Logan
(Kehl, 1983)

Chapter 4

THE CURRICULUM



As faculty teaching in the Liberal Studies Program, our goal is to assist you as you plan and implement a degree program within a non-traditional academic framework. We view self-responsibility for learning as a legitimate and exciting process that emphasizes directing your own educational process. We rely heavily on your participation as an adult learner with important and valid life experiences, knowledge, opinions and values.

The Integrated Core: Boyer Categories

The categories that provide the framework for your degree is based on those offered by Ernest Boyer in *College: The Undergraduate Experience in America*. These categories are not mutually exclusive. Courses that best fit the overall objectives of a liberal studies degree often overlap into several categories. A self-designed liberal studies degree does not impose distribution requirements; the objective is to build a well-rounded baccalaureate degree that takes into account all previous college-level learning, including lower-division courses and relevant life experience. "General education is not a single set of courses. It is a program with a clear objective, one that can be achieved in a variety of ways." (Boyer, p. 101)

Examples of course that meet each of these categories can be found at the LIS website under <http://www.uis.edu/liberalstudies/curriculum/index.html>

IDENTITY: THE SEARCH FOR MEANING

Ultimately, the aim of common learning is the understanding of oneself and a capacity for sound judgment. Knowledge is significant when it shows us who we are as individuals and citizens, and touches the hopes and fears that makes each of us both unique beings and a part of corporate humanity. Sound judgment at its best brings purpose and meaning to human lives. Who am I? What is the purpose of life? What are my obligations to others; what are theirs to me? The answers to these questions are notoriously elusive but the questions are impossible to avoid. They are an essential part of the search for identity and the quest for meaning. (Boyer, p. 98)

LANGUAGE: THE CRUCIAL CONNECTION

The sending and receiving of sophisticated messages set human beings apart from all other forms of life. As humans, we take infinite pains to reflect on and interpret our experiences. We capture feelings and ideas with symbols and send them on to others through a process we call language. Language, in its many manifestations, is at the heart of understanding who we are and what we might become. What are the theories of the origins of language? How do symbol systems shape the values of culture? How has language, through great literature, enriched our lives and enlarged our vision? Where are the possibilities and problems introduced by the information revolution? Learning about the power of language in human experience and becoming proficient in more than one language are, we believe, essential aspects of the integrated core. (Boyer, p. 92-93)

WORK: THE VALUE OF VOCATION

Except for a handful of individuals, no one can choose not to work. Everything we know about a society suggests that work choices are exceedingly important in shaping the values and social relations of a time. The characteristics of a culture can, in fact, be defined by looking at work: who works; what work is valued; how is it rewarded; how do people use their leisure time? It is important for colleges to help students to consider the universal experiences of producing and consuming, and put their work in larger context. (Boyer, p. 97-98)

HERITAGE: THE LIVING PAST

The human species uniquely has the capacity to recall the past and anticipate the future. Through these remembrances and anticipations today's reality is shaped. In an age when planned obsolescence seems to make everything but the fleeting moment remote and irrelevant, the study of

history can strengthen awareness of tradition, of heritage, of meaning beyond the present, without which there is no culture. It is imperative that all students learn about the women and men and the events that have contributed consequentially to our own history and to other cultures, too. (Boyer, p. 94)

NATURE: ECOLOGY OF THE PLANET

All forms of life on the planet Earth are interlocked. No core of learning is complete without introducing students to the ordered yet symbiotic nature of the universe. For this discovery, science is the key. It is through science that students explore the elegant underlying patterns of the natural world and begin to understand that all elements of nature are related. Beyond the processes of nature, common learning also must include a study of how science and technology are joined, and consider the ethical and social issues that have resulted from this merger. (Boyer, p. 96)

ART: THE ESTHETIC DIMENSION

There are human experiences that defy the power of words to describe them. To express our most intimate, most profoundly moving feelings and ideas we use a more sensitive, more subtle language we call the arts. Music, dance, and the visual arts are no longer just desirable, they are essential. And the integrated core should reveal how these symbol systems have, in the past, affirmed our humanity and illustrate how they remain relevant today. Students need to understand the unique ability of the arts to affirm and dignify our lives and remain the means by which the quality of a civilization can be measured. (Boyer, p. 93-94)

INSTITUTIONS: THE SOCIAL WEB

Institutions make up the social fabric of life. We are born into institutions, we pass much of our lives in them, and institutions are involved when we die. No integrated core has been successful if it has not acquainted students with the major institutions--the family, the church, legislative and judicial bodies, for example--that make up our world. The curriculum we have in mind would look at the characteristics of institutions: how they came into being, grow strong, become oppressive or weak, and sometimes fail. The successful approach will always ask what institutions have to do with us, how are we influenced by them, and how we can direct our institutions toward constructive ends. (Boyer, p. 95).

TOOLS AND SKILLS

The Tools and Skills category is not one of the seven areas suggested by Boyer. We have

included it because certain baccalaureate-level learning needs do not easily fit into an interdisciplinary model of general education. Courses and other learning experiences involving math, statistics, research methods, computer skills and library research fall into this group.

THE MAJOR

The Liberal Studies program requires the following structure for all degree plans:

- ▶ 10 hours Liberal Studies core courses
- ▶ 38 hours focused elective coursework
- ▶ Freshmen/Transfer Course Requirements

Liberal Studies Core Courses

In response to the demands of self-directed learning, the Liberal Studies program requires a sequence of colloquia and courses that focuses on the learning process and on the skills and understanding needed for autonomous learning. The purposes of these course requirements are both to guarantee a continuing dialogue between you and your adviser to provide opportunities for you to engage in activities essential to autonomy, namely, integration of learning and assessment of the learning process. The following course descriptions, taken from the current UIS catalog, represent the Liberal Studies program curriculum.

LIS 301: Self-directed Learning (4 hours) Required

Serves as an introduction to the Liberal Studies program and focuses on the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to become a self-directed, autonomous learner. Topics include an examination of collegiate education philosophy, theory and practice; dynamics of power; self-assessment; goal setting; designing effective learning experiences; documenting and evaluating independent learning; organizing learning resources; and designing a liberal studies curriculum. Students design a draft of a degree proposal.

LIS 342 Conducting Liberal Studies Research (2 hours)

This course is designed for the Liberal Studies student who wants to develop skills in critical thinking by conducting web-based scholarly research. The topic will be chosen by the student and will relate to the learning needs identified in the student's degree proposal.

Although a research paper will not be expected as the outcome of this course, the course is structured to prepare you for writing a scholarly research paper.

LIS 360 & 460-Special Topics in Liberal Studies (4 hours)

This course serves as an exploration of general liberal studies topics and topics will vary. For example: Themes in Western Culture was taught summer 2005 and provided an overview of notable themes and thinkers in western culture. Fall of 2007, the course, Stress Public Health and You was offered. Course serves as an LIS elective.

LIS 380: Exploration of Learning Resources (1-6 hours)

This is an independent study exploring a topic within liberal studies or directly related to the student's degree plan. A Journal of exploration process, comprehensive resources inventory, and demonstration of learning (a major product) may be required. This may be repeated for a maximum of 8 hours. There are no formal classes associated with this. A student must complete an **Independent Study Learning contract** with a faculty supervisor. Can be taken once the degree proposal has been accepted. Offered in the fall, summer and spring.

LIS 499 Independent Study: Tutorial (1-6 hours)

This option involves readings or research on trends and current issues in the student's area of study. In consultation with faculty, students define topics integral to satisfying their learning needs. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 hours. There are no formal classes associated with this. A student must complete an **Independent Study Learning contract** with a faculty supervisor. This can be taken once the degree proposal has been accepted. Offered spring, summer or fall.

LIS 451: Senior Seminar (2 hours) Required

The capstone course uses the principles of integration to reflect on degree learning experiences. Students prepare a Liberal and Integrative Studies paper as the final product. Students choosing to do an Honor's Thesis complete their proposal at this time. This is the final course in the LIS degree process. Offered fall, spring and summer online.

LIS 471 Honors Thesis (2 hours)

Student must complete an Honor's Thesis Proposal prior to enrollment. This paper demonstrates learning and research in at least 2 of the Boyer categories. There are no formal classes associated with this. A student's LIS adviser must approve the thesis proposal. Must be completed during term of expected graduation. Offered spring, summer and fall.

See the LIS Website for additional classes to meet this requirement.

38 hours of focused elective coursework

Students must choose 38 hours of elective courses that focus on the Boyer Categories. Possible courses that may meet the requirements of these categories include the following:

Online students can review courses that have been taught online at UIS by looking at the **Online Course History** on the LIS website. Since not all classes at UIS are taught every semester, this .pdf file can give you a historical basis for anticipating when courses may be taught. You may need to download Adobe Acrobat Reader to view it.

Self designed themes – you may design their electives around goals for the future. For example, students who plan to continue their education in a graduate program, may use their electives to meet prerequisite course work or learning deficits. Career professionals may wish to enhance their current career with selections that meet their learning needs.

Minor Concentrations – You may choose courses to comprise a minor concentration from a number of minors offered, including Women's Studies, African-American Studies, or International Studies. Check individual program websites to determine the number of hours and courses required.

Teacher Education Preparation--Students wishing to pursue certification from the State of Illinois to become elementary teachers should seek the advice of the UIS TEP program. LIS students have been able to complete the required certification as a minor in the degree contract. The TEP program has its own admissions procedures and deadlines. To obtain more information www.uis.edu/tep or call 217-206-6682.

Multidisciplinary Courses – UIS offers multidisciplinary courses that provide a thematic integration across disciplines. Offered each semester, these are compatible with the general goals of a Liberal Studies Online degree.

Credit for Prior Learning – The Credit for Prior Learning Program offers a course to assist in the development of materials used to assess experiential learning. Through the process of completing AST 301, the Assessment of Experiential Learning gained through extensive work or volunteer experiences, students prepare a written portfolio that includes a series of written essays and documentation.

AST 301 assists students in preparing a detailed portfolio that describes and documents the learning to be assessed for credit. In preparing portfolios, students plan their proposed courses of study in the context of previous learning experiences and attempt to develop awarenesses of their strengths as learners. In addition to classroom work, students consult individually with appropriate faculty members. Through established procedures, faculty members assess portfolios, evaluating requests for academic credit in individual areas of expertise. A university-wide faculty committee monitors the entire CPL process.

The maximum CPL credits that students can bring to the degree are 12 hours. Please make sure you consult with your LIS adviser on how CPL credits will fit into your degree. The program reserves the right to limit the number of CPL credits allowable within the degree and looks for a balance of Boyer categories in the degree plan.

Independent Studies/Tutorials –LIS 499 "Independent Study: Tutorial," & LIS 380, "Exploration of Learning Resources "

As one expression of the university's commitment to the individual student, faculty members occasionally supervise independent studies in the form of tutorials, LIS 499 and LIS 380. These independent studies are intended to supplement, not supplant, regular course offerings. Students desiring to structure one-to-one learning experiences not regularly available but nevertheless relevant to their programs of study must complete an Independent Study Proposal (see Chapter 13 on details) and secure the consent of a faculty member prior to registration. You can choose this option only after the LIS Program has approved your degree plan.

Freshmen/Transfer Course Requirements

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:

Engaged Citizenship Common Experience (ECCE)

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)

NOTE: In some instances, the interdisciplinary nature of the student’s program will suggest the need for educational experiences that total more than the required minimum number of credit hours. The final number of credit hours for the degree must be negotiated between the student and the LIS 301 instructor at the time the degree plan is approved.

**Don't be satisfied with stories,
How things have gone for others.
Unfold your own myth.**

**Rummy
(Keen & Valley-Fox, 1989)**

Chapter 5:

THE LEARNING AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The learning autobiography, written in LIS 301, is a reflective document that provides an overview of significant aspects of your educational, personal, and professional life. It demonstrates your ability to integrate the experiences of your life into a lifelong learning process; that is, it represents the ways you've assigned meaning to your own life's story. Your learning autobiography provides you with valuable information as you develop your academic plans. This will demonstrate to the LIS program that you are a unique human being with a history of accomplishments, competencies, needs and goals which require more than a “one size fits all” approach to education.

When completed, your learning autobiography (generally 8-10 pages in length) demonstrates how well you have acquired critical and analytical thinking skills and writing skills at the core of a self directed learning process. The paper can be written in a variety of styles. Often a theme ties your ideas together. A special quotation or words to a special song can form a focus for your story.

Most LIS students use a chronological order to describe their lives, beginning at birth, presenting some of the highlights of early childhood, and focusing upon significant learning experiences from adolescence through the present. Often students choose to put their own stories into a wider historical (or herstorical) context by explaining what was happening in the world when they were growing up. The depth of your analysis is your call. Some students choose to go into more depth than others. If you remember that the emphasis is on the learning that may help guide how you will approach the task. The LIS program does not require that you bare your soul and secrets to others. It does require that you focus on the learning experiences that have been the foundation for the LIS learning journey known as your BA degree.

Writing your autobiography is a unique opportunity for you to re-tell significant life learning experiences and analyze them at the same time. Focus on the uniqueness of your life to discover central themes that are essential to you. Be uniquely creative and thoughtful as you proceed through your writing process. The suggestions and exercises provided in *Your Mythic Journey* (by Sam Keen and Anne Valley-Fox) may be helpful as you create your story. Select the questions and strategies that are most interesting and useful to you. As you begin to develop your learning autobiography, focus on basic

markers or turning points in your life that were particularly significant to you.

Because you will undoubtedly have a wealth of material to work with as you prepare your autobiography, you will need to be quite selective. Your goal for this piece is to develop a creative analysis of your life's experiences, not simply a narrative resume. When you have identified those experiences that have been of greatest significance to you in your life, you have a framework from which to select appropriate details and organize your reflections. Your major focus should involve your college-level learning history; however, it is also important to consider the overall context of your life experience as you lay the foundation for the academic choices you are about to make.

As you reflect upon your childhood and family, it is important is that you convey your understanding of how key childhood and familial experiences have shaped the person you have become. As you are aware, the LIS degree contract focuses on your academic plan; in your autobiography include reflections upon who you are as a learner. Thinking about your early school experiences and the people who influenced you may assist you in clarifying how you see education and learning in your life. Strive to increase your understanding of how you developed into the learner you are today and those skills and strengths that contributed to your effectiveness as a learner. If traditional approaches to learning have been important to you (e.g., reading books, taking classes, consulting experts) include these in your autobiography.

If work has been the primary focus of your adult life, it may be tempting to make your autobiography a descriptive resume. However, it is important to show how you see your work in the context of your life as a whole. Explore the broader meanings of work in your life to understand how work is related to other components of your life. What have you learned from work that is important to your short and long term goals?

You alone decide what information becomes part of your autobiography. As you reflect on your life, you may consider the full range of personal experiences that you need to explore, but you may decide to keep certain aspects of your history private. Use the experience of writing your autobiography as the context for looking at those questions that seem important to you at this point in your life. As you develop a draft, you will be in a better position to decide what facets of your personal life to disclose.

You will undoubtedly gather more material than you can use in your autobiography. Allow yourself plenty of time to think about your past experiences and explore various ways of organizing the material into a coherent story that conveys your individuality. Consult with family, friends, others writing autobiographies, and instructors to assist you in recalling memories and analyzing their meanings. Photograph albums and other family documents may be valuable resources as you proceed.

As you develop a draft of your autobiography, present a balanced view of yourself, discussing events from a variety of aspects of your life. Pay attention to various components of your experiences (e.g., learning and education, work and career, family and community, and leisure activities), and the ways they are interrelated and have shaped you.

Some Final Thoughts About Writing the Learning Autobiography

Many learners have found the learning autobiography challenging to write. By the time you have reached adulthood you probably have not had the luxury of reflecting on the meaning of your life and your choices; maybe you have not had the inclination to self reflect on memories that may be bitter or painful. If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed by writing this particular piece, discuss your feelings in class or speak to your LIS 301 instructor; you certainly aren't the first person who has felt this way, and chances are others in your class have similar feelings. As a group you will be able to brainstorm about ideas for completing this piece, and to obtain support for your own writing process.

Remember that you control what you choose to include in this document. Note that instructors aren't necessarily looking for "glittering success stories;" although those are valuable experiences, we realize that important life lessons are not often learned easily or without cost. Instructors do not review your autobiography to make judgments about the choices you've made; they read to find examples of learning and the ways you've thought about and applied those learnings to new and different life situations.

Although challenging, many learners find composing this piece a very important experience, valuable long after the class has ended. After all, it isn't every day that you're asked, "how have you lived; what has it all meant; what has your hero's/heroine's journey been?"

**[Wo]man is not the sum total of what [s]he
has already, but rather the sum of what [s]he
does not yet have, of what [s]he could have.**

**Jean Paul Sartre
(Kehl, 1983)**

Chapter 6:

THE GOALS STATEMENT

Now that you have analyzed your past, it is time to consider your future. The development of a goals statement focuses on both the medium- and long-term goals which grow out of your discussion of the experiences, beliefs, values and assumptions presented in your autobiography.

The paper is generally 2-3 pages in length. The goals statement helps you plan your degree program, providing a foundation for deciding on specific courses to include. This section presents the overall context of your vision, aspirations, dreams and/or life goals, even if they don't have direct implications for the degree that you are seeking. Include brief discussions of the social trends and projections of experts in your field(s) of interest.

As a first step in the process of developing a goals statement reflect on your current interests in undertaking new learning activities. Why are you considering undertaking college work at this point in your life? What expectations do you bring to this process? People attend college for a variety of reasons; becoming clear on your most important needs, hopes, and expectations will enable you to use the learning resources the university has to offer as effectively as possible. Articulating and presenting your assumptions and expectations about the future may help you detect erroneous assumptions about the relationship between a particular course of study and potential career opportunities.

Your statement of goals should focus on medium and long range goals (e.g. to complete a LIS degree to be a freelance writer, or a BA degree to move from a clerical to a professional position). Shorter-term goals as they pertain to specific courses and learning needs will be discussed in the section on Learning Needs Statement.

A typical Goals Statement contains three parts:

- 1) What educational goals have you achieved in the past? This will provide a context for the present and the future. You might write about achieving your dream of an Associates Degree, becoming trained as a registered nurse, being certified as an insurance specialist, completing army training with college courses, or the like.
- 2) Why are you in school now? What is your motivation for returning to get your BA degree? Are you at UIS for personal satisfaction, to gain a specific career position, to learn new things?

- 3) What are your future goals? What medium range goals do you have that might be connected to your BA degree? What long term goals do you have that might require more education?

Conclude the statement with a description of the kind of degree you would like to pursue within a liberal studies context. Review your goals statements as you continue developing your degree proposal and make revisions as necessary. Consult your LIS advisor or the UIS Career Service Office for help with educational planning (www.uis.edu/career).

"It is in fact nothing short of a miracle that the modern methods of instruction have not yet entirely strangled the holy curiosity of inquiry; for this delicate little plant, aside from stimulation, stands mainly in need of freedom; without this it goes to wrack and ruin without fail. "

**Albert Einstein
(Rogers, 1994)**

Chapter 7:

PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

For a person about to embark on the journey toward a self-designed degree, this paper helps you consolidate your general thoughts about education and more specifically the learning processes that best suit you at this point in your undergraduate education. Based on your own assessment of past learning, comment on those experiences which have led to significant learning. Consider the conditions and teaching styles that seem to have worked well for you given the variety of learning objectives and subject matter that you have experienced.

Consider and discuss the implications for your approach to learning contained in some of the assigned readings for LIS 301. You will want to include a discussion of your learning style and how that fits into your philosophy of learning. Generally this section is 2-3 pages in length.

Carl Rogers described conventional education as having the following characteristics:

1. *The teachers are the possessors of knowledge, the students the expected recipients.* The teachers are the experts; they know their fields. The students sit with poised pencil and notebook, waiting for the words of wisdom. There is a great difference in the status level between the instructors and the students.
2. *The lecture, or some means of verbal instruction, is the major means of getting knowledge into the recipients. The examination measures the extent to which the students have received it. These are the central elements of this kind of education.* Why the lecture is regarded as the major means of instruction is a mystery to me. Lectures made sense before books were published, but their current rationale is almost never explained. The increasing stress on the examination is also mysterious. Certainly its importance in the United States has increased enormously in the last couple of decades.
3. *The teachers are the possessors of power, the students the ones who obey.* (Administrators are also possessors of power, and both teachers and students are the ones who obey.) Control is always exercised downward.
4. *Rule by authority is the accepted policy in the classroom.* New teachers are often advised, "Be sure you get control of your students on the very first day." The authority figure--the

instructor--is very much the central figure in education. He or she may be greatly admired as a fountain of knowledge, or may be despised, but the teacher is always the center.

5. *Trust is at a minimum.* Most notable is the teachers' distrust of the students. The students cannot be expected to work satisfactorily without the teacher constantly supervising and checking on them. The students' distrust of the teacher is more diffuse--a lack of trust in the teacher's motives, honesty, fairness, competence. There may be a real rapport between an entertaining lecturer and those who are being entertained; there may be admiration for the instructor, but mutual trust is not a noticeable ingredient.

6. *The subjects (the students) are best governed by being kept in an intermittent or constant state of fear.* Today, there is not much physical punishment, but public criticism and ridicule and the students' constant fear of failure are even more potent. In my experience this state of fear appears to increase as we go up the educational ladder, because the student has more to lose. In elementary school, the individual may be an object of scorn or be regarded as a dolt. In high school there is added to this the fear of failure to graduate, with its vocational, economic, and educational disadvantages. In college, all these consequences are magnified and intensified. In graduate school, sponsorship by one professor offers even greater opportunities for extreme punishment due to some autocratic whim. Many graduate students have failed to receive their degrees because they have refused to obey, or to conform to every wish of, their major professor. Their position is analogous to that of a slave, subject to the life-and-death power of the master.

7. *Democracy and its values are ignored and scorned in practice.* Students do not participate in choosing their individual goals, curricula, or manner of working. They are chosen for them. Students have no part in the choice of teaching personnel nor any voice in educational policy. Likewise, the teachers often have no choice in choosing their administrative officers. Teachers, too, often have no participation in forming educational policy. All this is in striking contrast to all the teaching *about* the virtues of democracy, the importance of the "free world," and the like. The political practices of the school are in the most striking contrast to what is taught. While being taught that freedom and responsibility are the glorious features of "democracy," the students are experiencing themselves as powerless, as having little freedom, and as having almost no opportunity to exercise choice or carry responsibility.

8. *There is no place for whole persons in the educational system, only for their intellects.* In elementary school, the bursting curiosity and the excess of physical energy characteristic of the normal child are curbed and, if possible, stifled. In junior high and high school, the one overriding interest of all the students--sex and the emotional and physical relationships it involves--is almost totally ignored, and certainly not regarded as a major area for learning. There is very little place for emotions in the secondary school. In college, the situation is even more extreme--it is *only* the *mind* that is welcomed. (Rogers, 1980)

Although the other texts may be somewhat less explicit in their criticism of traditional approaches to education, you may have discovered advice that was helpful or, on the other hand, you may have encountered ideas that are incompatible with your own philosophy. Comment on such ideas in this

section. Finally, you may wish to explore the relationship between your philosophy of undergraduate education and the choices that you are about to consider when defining your needs and learning strategies.