

A Student/Faculty Guide
to the
Liberal and Integrative Studies Degree Program

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LIBERAL AND INTEGRATIVE STUDIES DEGREE PROGRAM

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PREFACE

A manual of this nature develops out of a rich academic history that includes countless contributions by students, faculty and their supporters; it is a testimony to their vision for and commitment to learning as empowerment.

This manual represents the research, enthusiasm and commitment of many learners and faculty members. Thanks go to Terry Peters, Dr. Jan Droegkamp, Dr. Ron Ettinger, Betsy Irwin, II, Dr. Annette Van Dyke, Dr. Ed Cell, Dr. Vibert White, Yo-San Blythe, Janene Grace, and Lula Lester for their ongoing support and feedback regarding this project.

Holly J. McCracken,
Original Author

You have come here to find what you already have.

A Buddhist Aphorism
(Steinem, 1992)

Chapter 1:

INTRODUCTION TO GRADUATE STUDIES

We introduce you to general graduate studies at UIS with the university catalog's philosophy statement about graduate studies. Throughout your academic program you should develop intellectual autonomy within your chosen field, demonstrating the abilities to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate relevant knowledge in that field. As a graduate student you share responsibility for increasing knowledge within your chosen field, with the university community and degree program faculty. Graduate education:

- assumes the acquisition of specific content knowledge, including recognition of the significant terminology, facts, theories, issues, findings and generalizations within a field of study;
- encompasses comprehension of the intellectual history, methods of inquiry and standards of judgment used in the given field;
- promotes the acquisition of ethical meanings of research in a discipline or a profession.

A student receiving a master's degree will be able to:

- analyze in a logical manner ideas in a field of study by breaking down materials into constituent parts, organizing ideas and relationships between ideas, expressing these relationships, recognizing unstated assumptions, distinguishing facts from hypotheses, and distinguishing statements of cause from statements of effect;
- synthesize diverse ideas to form an integrated whole relevant to a field of study by arranging and combining elements and parts into patterns or structures;
- make judgments about the value of relevant materials, including the appropriateness and adequacy of any qualitative and quantitative methods used in its compilation, by employing a standard of internal or external appraisal. In evaluating the accuracy of a communication, students will integrate theories, works of recognized excellence, facts and generalizations germane to a field; and,
- convey ideas, feelings and experiences through scholarly writing and discussion with others.

You will develop a proposal or plan of work that includes ways of testing hypotheses, analyzing the factors involved, modifying the hypotheses based on new factors or considerations and, making generalizations based on findings. You will, then, have the ability to communicate both this process and your subsequent findings to others.

The Master of Arts Degree Through the Liberal and Integrative Studies Department

The LNT degree program is based on the assumption that, as a graduate degree candidate, you have the fundamental knowledge and skills of the undergraduate degree, and that you are able to apply these competencies in a graduate 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 merge rigorous analysis with creative synthesis. This integration of convergent and divergent thinking, complemented by mature judgment, should characterize work within individual courses throughout your graduate degree program.

Graduate Admission

Individuals with bachelor degrees from accredited colleges and universities are eligible to apply for admission to graduate programs at University of Illinois at Springfield. Full admission to graduate studies may be granted to students who have earned an undergraduate degree with a minimum undergraduate grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale (3.5 on a 5.0 scale) and who have met all specific degree program requirements.

Students are eligible for admission to the LNT degree program on a **conditional basis only, after** meeting the following application requirements:

- completing the LNT degree program application (available in the LNT department office University Hall Building (UHB) 3038;
- obtaining two positive references;
- completing a two to three page personal essay;
- attending an interview with LNT faculty;
- meeting the deadlines for the application procedures.

If you, as a graduate applicant, have an undergraduate grade point average of less than 2.5, consideration for admission to the graduate program requires the completion of an additional eight hours of course work at the 500-level with a grade of “B” or better. These hours must be completed **before permission to enroll in LNT 501, Graduate**

Colloquium, will be granted. As a graduate student you may count a maximum of 12 semester hours in courses taken prior to beginning the LNT degree program.

Transfer Credit at the Graduate Level

UIS may accept up to 12 semester hours of graduate-level work completed at other accredited institutions. However, only those credit hours with a grade of “B” or better that are accepted for transfer by the **program** will be accepted by the university. Requests to transfer credit for courses bearing a grade such as “P” or “CR” (credit) must be supported by certification from the institution or instructor that the course work was of at least “B” quality. All transfer credit to be applied to the graduate degree must have been earned within the five years preceding the first graduate course taken at UIS in pursuit of that degree. Exceptions to the provisions of this policy may be granted by the LNT department on a case-by-case basis. For hours over the 12 hour limit, students must petition the LNT department after they have gained a recommendation from their degree committee.

Academic Standards

➤ **Academic Load**

For purposes of tuition and fees, a student enrolled for 12 or more semester hours of coursework 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.

Any graduate student who wishes to enroll for more than 18 semester hours during the fall or spring semesters or more than eight semester hours during the summer term must submit a completed student petition form to the Office of Admissions and Records.

A graduate assistant’s normal load is 16 to 24 hours for an academic year, usually eight to 12 hours per semester. A graduate assistant may register for four to six hours during the summer term, tuition free. Graduate assistants who wish to enroll for more than 24 hours in any academic year must have the approval of their academic advisers, an LNT department representative and the Dean of the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

A student in the Graduate Public Internship program enrolls for 10 hours per semester. Interns may enroll for four hours during the summer, tuition free.

➤ **Graduation Grade-point Average**

Graduate students must achieve an UIS cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.0 to receive the Master’s degree.

➤ **Grades Acceptable Toward Graduate Degrees**

Graduate students may apply a maximum of eight hours of “C” grades toward a degree, provided that each hour of “C” is balanced by an hour of “A.” The LNT program will determine whether or not “C” grades in a specific concentration requirement are acceptable toward the degree. Under the credit/no credit option, “CR” represents work equivalent to a letter grade of “B” or better. **Graduate students registering in 400-level courses are expected to perform at a higher level than undergraduates in the same course.** Individual instructors of 400-level courses specify the criteria for awarding graduate-level credit. These may be qualitative (higher standards for written work and/or contributions to group discussion) or quantitative (additional work).

➤ **Satisfactory Progress**

For full-time students, the university defines satisfactory progress as completion of 12 semester hours (six in summer terms) with a grade-point average of 3.0 or better per semester of enrollment.

➤ **Academic Probation**

At the end of any semester in which a graduate student has a UIS cumulative grade-point average of less than 3.0, s(he) is placed on academic probation; courses taken for credit/no credit do not count in calculating this average. Non-degree seeking students are exempt from this policy. In addition, students who accumulate 12 hours or more of “incompletes” (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 academic 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**

Graduate students may repeat graduate course work once (excluding the master’s project or thesis credit) on a non-penalty basis. 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 Degree Requirements

To earn a master's degree through the Liberal and Integrative Studies degree program you must fulfill the following requirements:

- earn a minimum of 42 credit hours at the graduate level, 12 of which must be at
- the 500-level (all but 12 semester hours must be earned at UIS);
- complete a minimum of four hours of LNT elective courses;
- complete course work with a cumulative UIS grade point average of at least 3.0;
- complete LNT 501, "Graduate Colloquium;" and, LNT 521, "Liberal and Integrative Studies;"
- complete the master's project or master's thesis;
- complete the graduation contract;
- pay a graduation fee of \$55 (subject to change).

Waivers

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

Grading Option: Credit / No Credit

The Liberal and Integrative Studies degree program allows students to choose a traditional grading scale or a credit/no credit option for each course except LNT 501 and LNT 521, 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 an 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 graduate student's work represents a grade of "B" 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.

- complete course work with a cumulative UIS grade point average of at least 3.0;
- complete LNT 501, “Graduate Colloquium;” and, LNT 521, “Liberal and Integrative Studies;”
- complete the master’s project or master’s thesis;
- complete the graduation contract;
- pay a graduation fee of \$25 (subject to change).

For More Information

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

Admissions	206-6626, University Hall Building (UHB), 1080
Registration	206-6709, University Hall Building (UHB), 1080
LNT Department	206-6962, University Hall Building (UHB), 3038
Dean of Liberal Arts/Sciences	206-6512, University Hall Building (UHB), 3000

“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 AND INTEGRATIVE STUDIES (formerly INO) DEGREE PROGRAM: AN OVERVIEW

You have decided to participate in the Liberal and Integrative Studies degree program (LNT) because, through discussion with faculty and advisers, you concluded that a non-traditional degree program will 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 and Integrative Studies degree 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, that the skills or knowledge we have acquired through participation in degree programs will be useful to us in practical ways. We have built our lives around experiences from which we have 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 have learned is as important as **what** we have learned. (Rogers, 1980).

Various authors and 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 have had in our world impact directly upon the ways we integrate information, that is, how we have 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 audibly 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 impacts the kinds of instruction or teaching methods that will 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 their 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 LNT degree 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 have achieved to design new experiences. In early consultation with members of the LNT faculty, you will discuss the role experiential learning can play in meeting your particular learning needs and goals.

Program Overview

The Liberal and Integrative Studies degree 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. LNT 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 LNT degree 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. Department 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 degree program features. LNT 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 LNT student, you may draw upon the resources of the entire university in selecting courses and faculty advisers.

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 a self-directed, autonomous learner; these assumptions about learning comprise the philosophical foundation of non-traditional learning processes, such as Liberal and Integrative Studies degree program.

Depending upon your choice of possible learning options available to students in the Liberal and Integrative Studies degree 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.

The Importance of Clear and Inclusive Writing

Written communication is extremely important in describing your learning plans and needs. Learners have often had courses which discuss the mechanics of writing, such as grammar, punctuation or spelling; however, in addition to the technical aspects of writing, we feel it is important to discuss language and the implications for language in written communication.

Language is a very powerful social and political tool. It is the means by which you make your voice, opinions, and presence known to others. Through the use of language we know and communicate about who is included as well as who is excluded within a culture. For example, if we make a statement such as “Man’s search for meaning has continued throughout history,” what exactly are we discussing? Are we discussing man’s search for meaning; if so, what about woman’s search? And, to which men are we referring; **all** men’s? Are we including people of color in our discussion, people of different ages and abilities? Who exactly **are we discussing?**

Academic writing demands that your use of language be clear and objective. To achieve this standard it must be non-sexist (that is, you must include both men and women in your discussion, when it is a general discussion), and non-biased (that is, you must avoid evaluating specific groups of people in your writing, unless your research design indicates clearly and specifically those aspects that you intend to evaluate). Simply put, it requires that you consider **your position as the writer** (that is, the social, ethnic, class, age, etc., groups that you represent), and **who will be reading your writing** (i.e., who is your audience).

The OWL at Purdue (Online Writing Lab) provides information about selecting appropriate language. <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/608/01/> This content includes examples of language to avoid as well as suggested ways to reword your thoughts so that they may be present more clearly and without bias.

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, and takes one of the following three forms:

- **including another person’s writing in one’s own essay;**
- **paraphrasing of another person’s work;**
and/or
- **presenting 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.

For more information, please read the UIS Academic Integrity Policy
<http://www.uis.edu/campusenate/AcademicIntegrity.htm>

Important Resources

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

The **Center for Teaching and Learning**, <http://www.uis.edu/ctl/>, located on the 4th floor in Brookens Library, 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. You are strongly encouraged to become familiar with this important and useful resource.

The **library**, <http://library.uis.edu/>, also located in Brookens Library, has a large collection of books, periodicals, and reference books. If you are uncertain with how to locate particular topics or authors in the library, stop 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 and Integrative Studies degree 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 anytime, you have questions about the any aspect of the program, contact one of the LNT 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:

DEGREE PROGRAM PROCEDURES

The degree proposal 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 proposal is a developmental process which, in and of itself, demonstrates the acquisition of new learning while building on past competencies. You will complete your degree proposal as the major written product of **LNT 501, Graduate Colloquium**, earning four credit hours upon its completion.

As we have previously discussed, in a traditional program the curriculum is designed by the faculty alone; however, in the LNT degree program you initiate the design process, in conjunction with your adviser and committee members. During your initial semester in the program, you will establish a relationship with your faculty adviser who will work with you throughout your academic program. You will work with your adviser and your LNT degree committee (the members of which you select) to design a degree proposal, including a curriculum, unique to your educational career and personal goals. The committee members share the responsibility for the design of your degree proposal, guiding you as your course of study is developed, and certifying, as qualified professionals and academicians, that the proposal meets the expectations for graduate-level learning in the chosen field of study. The **“Contract for A Liberal and Integrative Studies Degree Proposal”** (the pink form) validates your individualized curriculum, in accordance with the curriculum approval process.

You have the option to revise your original degree proposal in light of new knowledge, experience, or opportunities. These revisions may be reported at those times when you convene your committee, or at other times as necessary. Such revisions require the approval of your adviser/chair and committee.

Components of the Proposal

The degree proposal contains a detailed account of your past achievements and current goals, a statement of your educational goals and learning needs and your proposed curriculum. The components which constitute your curriculum reflect the range of your learning skills and activities; the design of the degree proposal must include the acquisition of new graduate learning.

The degree proposal consists of the following components:

1. **Cover Page**
2. **Table of Contents**
3. **Autobiography**
4. **Goals Statement**
5. **Philosophy of Education**
6. **Learning Needs Statement**
7. **Narrative Curriculum/Learning Strategies describing each university course to be pursued, including:**
 - **Course Title**
 - **Brief Rationale for Inclusion in the Degree Program**
 - **Amount of Credit Hours to be Earned**
 - **Curriculum Summary Schedule/Timeline**
8. **Inventory of Learning Resources**
9. **List of Committee Members**
10. **Signed Contract (see copy in Appendix D of this manual)**

The Degree Committee

➤ **How to Identify and Select Your Degree Committee**

As we have previously discussed, you are responsible for recruiting a committee and for designing your degree proposal. During LNT 501, “**Graduate Colloquium**,” (but not later than one semester following the completion of LNT 501) you should identify and recruit the following persons as committee members:

- **Your LNT faculty adviser (normally your LNT 501 instructor);**
- **Two additional UIS graduate faculty members who represent your academic goals;**
- **Research specializations (preferably outside the LNT department faculty);**
- **and,**
- **Two students, peers, or co-workers who represent your academic specialization and/or who are interested in your field of study.**

Before you begin your Master’s Project (or Thesis), the Dean of the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences will appoint a “Dean’s Representative” to your degree committee. This representative will act as an “outside committee member,” participating in the final stages of the plan and adding additional expertise to the committee.

➤ **Committee Composition**

In choosing faculty members to participate on your degree committee, note that proper professional standing and competence to advise students are required by the LNT department. One member of the committee represents the LNT degree program and acts as the chair of the committee. Two additional committee members representing the academic community should be recruited on the basis of their interests and expertise.

Students must only use UIS graduate faculty for their degree committees to fill faculty roles. Students may use faculty from other universities to serve as peers. Students must choose from a list of graduate faculty as published by each UIS College in any given academic year. A graduate faculty must have an appropriate terminal degree of equivalent; must be full-time tenure track or tenured faculty; must have a current record of scholarship consistent with standards set by their college; and, for continuing eligibility, must have demonstrated a commitment to fulfilling responsibilities of graduate education.@ (UIS Senate legislation)

Should you wish to draw upon the expertise of an individual who is not a member of the graduate faculty, you must make a request to the Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences. A form has been created to serve that purpose. Make sure and discuss your choice with your LNT adviser. The form will be signed by the LNT Chair and forwarded to the Dean, accompanied by the individual's résumé. Check with the LNT secretary to see if there is a résumé on file for the person you are choosing to serve as an independent study supervisor or degree committee member. The Dean of the College of Liberal Art and Sciences can approve the use of a faculty member outside of the College for the sole purpose of serving as an LNT degree committee member or independent study supervisor.

All graduate committees that have been appointed prior to the adoption of this policy will remain in place.

There are no requirements for academic credentials for peer members of the degree committee.

Prior to Convening Your Degree Committee

Discuss your educational goals with potential committee members and provide them with copies of your degree proposal. You may request that they assist you as you refine and implement your proposal. Inform your academic adviser about each member's experience and expertise as appropriate to your educational goals and field of study. Include any other factors that influenced your selection. Describe your search process and the anticipated impact the committee members will have on meeting your academic and professional goals.

Roles and Responsibilities

➤ Your Responsibilities in Working with Your Degree Committee

You, as the student and organizer, are responsible for coordinating and reporting all of your academic activities and plans, and for initially determining the overall academic and professional goals which guide your degree proposal. It is extremely important that you communicate in a consistent and timely manner with all committee members, keeping them up-to-date regarding your progress and any changes that you may have in your degree proposal.

➤ The Role of Your LNT Adviser

Following admission to the university, you will be advised to enroll in LNT 501. The instructor of your section will be assigned as your faculty adviser. Your adviser will work with you in identifying potential committee members. S(he) is available to help you and the committee interpret LNT 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 faculty adviser.

Your adviser serves as chair of your degree committee and is responsible for the overall supervision of your program and your progress; however, questions of academic quality may be more appropriately referred to your academic advisers. Send all written communications and documents related to your degree proposal and program to your adviser as the chair of your committee. You can depend on your 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 faculty member. You can obtain these forms from the Liberal and Integrative Studies secretary, the Registrar, or the Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

It is up to you to take the initiative in the academic advising process, arrange appointments with your adviser prior to each registration, and maintain contact with her/him throughout your academic studies. **It is especially important to consult with your 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 meet with faculty advisers prior to your final term of study in order to arrange for all necessary graduation requirements.

➤ The Roles and Responsibilities of Your Committee

Both the chair and members are invaluable for a number of reasons, most significantly for their expertise and knowledge of the generally accepted standards of professional competence in your chosen field as well as their knowledge of your area of study. The committee chair and members discuss the development of your degree proposal with you, exploring its strengths and weaknesses, and making appropriate

recommendations. During the course of your program you are expected to maintain regular contact with members of your committee (academic advisers) and LNT adviser.

Additional Academic Resources

Using a variety of academic resources provides the breadth of viewpoint and expertise appropriate to graduate study. Therefore, academic resource people may be added as deemed necessary by your adviser or committee, either as committee members, consultants, or instructors for tutorials or independent studies.

General Degree Program Guidelines

1. In a degree such as the Liberal and Integrative Studies, you must take responsibility for defining your educational goals, for designing the program of study, and for selecting academic advisers and other committee members appropriate to your program. While LNT advisers may suggest ways and means to identify and select potential committee members and tutors, the decision is yours.
2. The responsibilities of the committee chair and members are academic and advisory.
3. While the degree proposal is your responsibility, we know that all students need direction in designing this plan. The committee's function is to provide advice about generally accepted standards of professional competence in the chosen field. The committee also advises on current research methodologies and research strategies. It takes an active role in the development and assessment of your degree proposal. All committee members examine the degree proposal for weaknesses and offer you feedback in correcting and revising them.

Phases in Completing the LNT Master of Arts

Phase One:

1. Develop your degree proposal (as previously discussed).
2. Select and recruit your degree committee (as previously discussed).
3. Submit your degree proposal to the committee when you are satisfied that it represents a feasible and academically sound program of study. Your LNT 501 instructor will evaluate the degree proposal and, in conjunction with your committee, comment on any part(s) that may require clarification or revision.
4. Hold your first degree committee meeting during or after completing LNT 501. You are required to contract for your degree within one semester of taking LNT 501.

Phase Two:

1. After you contract your degree, proceed with your chosen learning plans and activities.
2. During the course of your academic program, you should contact your committee members from time to time.
3. You always have the option, in the light of new knowledge, experience, or opportunities to revise your original degree proposal. Such revisions require the approval of your LNT adviser and, at the time of your Liberal and Integrative Studies paper, the rest of your committee.
4. As the written product for LNT 521, “Liberal and Integrative Studies,” you will write a major paper, summarizing your learning and the ways it reflects the original goals of your degree proposal. Out of this reflective piece should come a proposal for your master’s project or thesis.
5. Following the completion of LNT 521, you will submit a proposal for a master’s thesis or project. The committee is asked to consider this proposal, suggest any revisions, and make additional recommendations. This proposal ensures that:
 - you have a clear and concise framework for the thesis or project;
 - the quality is acceptable to the committee;
 - the criteria established for the field of study and the expected standards of performance are clear.
6. Schedule your second degree committee meeting during or after completing LNT 521.

Phase Three:

1. Proceed with the researching, writing, and presenting your thesis or project, as outlined in your proposal. Your thesis or project adviser and other committee members (including the Dean’s representative) advise you during the preparation of the thesis or project, **critically commenting on at least one draft before final submission**. One faculty member will act as your thesis/project adviser. This person will most likely be a member of your degree committee but not necessarily so. Chosen by you in conjunction with your academic adviser, the person in this role should have special expertise in both the content and methods you present in your thesis or project content area. S(he) will act as a guide, advocate, and mentor as you develop and complete your thesis or project.
2. After you have completed your thesis or project, submit one copy to each committee member. It is recommended that you allow a minimum of two weeks for their individual review before convening your committee for the third and final meeting. Your committee will use the last meeting to discuss and assess your thesis or project as a group. At this time they will make a recommendation for

graduation. Any member of the committee has the right to question you about the content of your thesis or project, including research, composition, process, etc. They will, at this time, make recommendations as necessary.

3. You and your adviser should communicate throughout each stage of the degree plan process, from initial advising through the evaluation of the thesis or project, and recommendation for graduation. All committee members should feel free to call upon the faculty adviser to discuss concerns that may arise in the course of the program.
4. Hold your final degree committee meeting during or after completing LNT 550/560, prior to your graduation.

Degree Committee Meetings

Generally, an LNT graduate student convenes her/his degree committee three times during her/his academic program, as follows:

SEQUENCE	WHEN HELD	PURPOSE
1 st meeting	During or following completion of LNT 501	To discuss and approve the degree proposal
2 nd meeting	Following completion of LNT 521, during the semester prior to graduation	To discuss the Liberal and Integrative Studies Project, and approve the thesis or project proposal
3 rd meeting	Following the completion of your thesis or project	To approve the thesis or project, or suggest recommendations and corrections, and to sign the "certificate of completion"

General Guidelines for Committee Meetings

1. Careful planning and scheduling for committee meetings is very important due to the difficulty of coordinating meeting times among committee members. Try to give committee members a few weeks advance notice of committee meetings.
2. Distribute any written materials that you want reviewed at your meetings at least one week prior to the meeting. Make sure all your materials are prepared in a "final format:" Typed and double-spaced in the appropriate format for the specific document; be sure to check your spelling, grammar and punctuation.
3. Let your committee members know the purpose of the committee meeting you are convening.

"Trouble-shooting"

As you know, sometimes the most organized of plans can run into obstacles; you can avoid some of these problems by considering the following:

1. In order to anticipate reactions of committee members, keep in contact with them throughout your academic program. Seek their advice and counsel about direction, planning, etc.
2. Many problems can be avoided with careful planning and scheduling; speak with each committee member to confirm meeting times and rooms. Offer a reminder the day before the meeting.
3. **Do not surprise your committee!** For example, if you are planning to significantly change your degree proposal, let members know prior to the committee meetings; do not wait until the meeting to “spring it on them.”
4. If you are having a significant amount of trouble with one specific component of your proposal, speak candidly with your adviser, and feel free to seek assistance from other committee members.
5. In the event that a conflict arises with one of your committee members, seek your adviser’s advice on the best way to proceed towards resolution of the problem.

Miscellaneous Department Policies

1. Students have six (6) years in which to complete their degree requirements. The clock starts ticking with the first course used in pursuit of the degree. If a student brings in a course they took in 1998, takes LNT 501 in 2001 and has the first committee meeting in Spring 2001, the six (6) years start in 1998. Students can petition the department for an extension.
2. **There is a penalty if students do not complete the MA project or thesis in the semester they registered for the credit.** Students must register for a one-credit course for every semester they do not finish. If a student knows that he/she will not be able to complete 550 or 560 in the semester they have enrolled they can petition the department for a leave of absence. If students do not register for the one credit hour for each semester they have been delinquent they will have to pay all of the back tuition before they can graduate. If 4 or more semesters pass by without paying for the one credit hour, students can re-register for the project/thesis. The student will have to submit a new proposal and begin the process again. The LNT adviser will have to make a judgment call whether the student needs to reconvene his/her degree committee.

“Only the dreamer can change the dream.”

John Logan
(Kehl, 1983)

Chapter 4:

THE CURRICULUM

As faculty teaching in the Liberal and Integrative Studies Department, 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 which emphasizes directing your own educational process. We rely heavily on your participation as an adult learner with important and valid experiences, knowledge, opinions and values.

Educational Alternatives

As you develop your degree proposal, educational alternatives such as the following are available:

➤ Other Degree Programs

As an Liberal and Integrative Studies student you are free to explore graduate courses within the full range of courses offered at the university. Although some courses may be limited to graduate majors in a specific discipline, you may obtain permission to enroll by discussing your intentions with the instructor. Courses which list prerequisites are sometimes available to students who have had equivalent courses or professional experience. Courses offered by undergraduate degree programs are not eligible for graduate credit; however, a limited number of 400-level courses may be included in a degree program if appropriate arrangements are made for receiving graduate credit.

➤ Credit for Prior Learning

The Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) program enables qualified undergraduate and graduate students to receive academic credit for college-level learning acquired outside the classroom. The CPL process is particularly valuable for learners with extensive experience in professions, military service, workshops or seminars, community service and volunteer work, relevant travel and hobbies, and/or independent research.

Interested persons are encouraged to enroll in EXL 501 “Graduate Prior Learning Portfolio Development,” which include an overview of issues relevant to lifelong learning. EXL 501 assists students in preparing a detailed portfolio that describes and documents the learning to be assessed for credit. In preparing portfolios, students identify and analyze their previous learning experiences and develop awareness of their strengths as learners. In addition to classroom work, students may be required to consult individually with appropriate faculty members. Through established procedures, faculty

members assess portfolios, evaluating requests for academic credit in individual areas of expertise. Following completion of EXL 305/501, individuals will also have the ability to earn more credit at a reduced tuition by creating Additional Portfolios. CPL is offered through the UIS Experiential and Service Learning Program.

If you are interested in earning credit for prior learning, contact the CPL office as early in your degree program as possible. You can obtain information about EXL 305/501, assessment procedures, and fees from the CPL office, BRK 482, (217) 206-6695, cpl@uis.edu. EXL 305/501 require a WPI (With Permission of the Instructor) for all students. The courses are offered online every semester, including summers.. Check out the website at <http://www.uis.edu/cpl>.

LNT 599, “Independent Study: Tutorial,” & LNT 580, “Independent Field Project”

As one expression of the university’s commitment to the individual student, faculty members occasionally supervise independent studies in the form of tutorials, LNT 599 and LNT 580. 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 and secure the consent of a faculty member prior to registration. You can choose this option only after you have contracted your degree proposal. See Chapter 11 for more detail.

These courses are offered for variable credit, ranging from 2 - 12 credit hours. Credit for a course at UIS is based on the assumption that a typical 4 credit course meets 3.5 hours/week for 16 weeks (56 hours) and that a typical student spends 2 hours of outside preparation time for every hour in class (112 hours). 56 plus 112 = 168 hours devoted to a 4 credit course. Consult degree program information and your faculty sponsor to determine the appropriate course and number of credit hours for the project you have in mind.

Your faculty sponsor is chosen by you from the graduate faculty on the basis of her/his expertise in the topic of your independent study and her/his willingness to be your sponsor. You might also choose a faculty sponsor who might work best with you regarding your weaknesses. For example, if you tend to procrastinate, schedule regular meetings and find a sponsor who will help you adhere to deadlines.

For each independent study you conduct under the LNT prefix, you must complete an **“Independent Study Proposal” form**. Also known as “blue forms,” these forms are available in the LNT office and must be completed prior to registration for the term in which the project is to be conducted. Submit an “Independent Study Proposal” form that indicates a proposed title, topic, method of study, amount of instructor-student contact and means of evaluation, as well as the level of study and the hours of credit sought. If the faculty member accepts the proposal, s(he) signs a **“With Permission of Dean” (WPD)** form that also must be approved by the appropriate dean and submitted to the Registrar’s office. Consult your sponsoring faculty member to obtain assistance in

clarifying these components of your study. If a resource person outside the university will be involved in your study, s/he should also participate in the planning process.

If you are uncertain about the ways that these types of alternatives can be used as part of your degree proposal, contact your academic adviser. The format of the Independent Study Proposal is discussed in detail in a reading, entitled “Guidelines and Suggestions for the Independent Study Proposal,” found in Chapter 11 in this manual.

Online Courses

Beginning in 1999 UIS began offering courses online, although many universities around the globe began this practice prior to that. This is yet another alternative way for you to choose a course in your field and to participate in a challenging learning environment. Each semester the number of offerings at UIS grows. You can also choose courses to transfer in from the Illinois Virtual Campus at <http://www.ivc.illinois.edu>. Check out this exciting way to access information and resources.

LNT Degree Program Courses

In response to the demands of self-directed learning, the Liberal and Integrative Studies degree 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, your adviser and your degree committee, and to provide opportunities for you to engage in activities essential to autonomy, namely, integration of learning and assessment of the learning process. You must obtain committee approval of your degree proposal within the semester following the completion of LNT 501, “Liberal and Integrative Studies Colloquium.”

The following course descriptions represent the Liberal and Integrative Studies program curriculum. They are taken directly from the UIS catalog; consult the catalog or your adviser for additional information.

LNT 501: Graduate Colloquium (4 hours)

Serves as an introduction to the Liberal and Integrative Studies degree program and focuses on the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to become a self-directed, autonomous learner. Students design effective learning experiences, organize learning resources, and design a graduate curriculum.

LNT 521: Liberal and Integrative Studies (2 hours)

The course applies the principles of integration. Students present a paper relating learning experiences to a common theme or issue and design a master's project or thesis. **Prerequisite: LNT 501.**

LNT 550: Master's Project (1-8 hours)

Closure project required of all MA candidates. Topics must be approved by the degree committee prior to registration. This university requirement may also be satisfied by LNT 560. May be repeated for a maximum of 12 hours. Prerequisite: LNT 521. **Note:** If the project is not completed by the end of the initial semester of enrollment, students must register for one hour on an audit basis in all subsequent semesters until the project is completed.

LNT 560: Thesis (1-8 hours)

Major research and writing project. Topic must be approved by the degree committee prior to registration. This university requirement may also be satisfied by LNT 550. May be repeated for a maximum of 12 hours. Prerequisite: LNT 521. **Note:** If the thesis is not completed by the end of the initial semester of enrollment, students must register for one hour on an audit basis in all subsequent semesters until the project is completed.

LNT 580: Independent Field Project (2 - 12 hours)

Experiential learning project must be directly applicable to the student's degree proposal. Field experience journal and formal presentation of project results required. May be repeated for a maximum of 12 hours.

LNT 599: Independent Study: Tutorial (2 - 12 hours)

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 self-assessed learning needs. May be repeated for a maximum of 12 hours.

MASTER'S DEGREE IN THE LIBERAL AND INTEGRATIVE STUDIES

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

LNT COURSE REQUIREMENTS:	HOURS:
1ST Semester:	
LNT 501: Graduate Colloquium	4 hours
Prior to Final Semester:	
LNT 521: Liberal and Integrative Studies	2 hours
TOTAL CORE:	6 hours
LNT ELECTIVE COURSES:	
LNT 599: Independent Study: Tutorial	2-12 hours
LNT 580: Independent Field Project	2-12 hours
Minimum:	4 hours
GRADUATE CLOSURE PROJECT:	
LNT 550: Master's Project OR	4-8 hours
LNT 560: Master's Thesis	4-8 hours
Minimum:	4 hours
OTHER REQUIREMENTS:	
Additional Courses (at least 12 hours must be at the 500-level)	28 hours
TOTAL HOURS:	42 hours

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 degree committee at the time the degree proposal is approved.

**Do not be satisfied with stories,
how things have gone for others.
Unfold your own myth.**

Rumi
(Keen & Valley-Fox, 1989)

Chapter 5:

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The autobiography, written in LNT 501, “Self-directed Learning,” 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 have assigned meaning to your own life’s story. Your autobiography will provide you with valuable information, useful in developing your academic plan. It will introduce you to your degree committee, enabling them to see you as a unique human being with a history of accomplishments, competencies, needs, and goals which demand more than a “one-size-fits-all” approach to education.

When completed, your autobiography shows how well you have acquired important thinking, analytic and writing skills that are at the core of self-directed education. Autobiographies differ widely in style and format. For example, some read like novels; others are presented in unique formats, demonstrating the use of poetry or song lyrics. Most LNT 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. Writing your autobiography is a unique opportunity for you to re-tell significant life experiences and examine them at the same time. Focus on the uniqueness of your life, search yourself, and reflect on your experiences 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 autobiography, identify basic marker events, 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 LNT degree proposal 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.

You alone decide what information becomes part of your autobiography that will be read by your LNT degree committee members. 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 Autobiography

Many learners have found the autobiography challenging to write. By the time we have reached adulthood, we have often not had the luxury of reflecting on the meaning of our experiences and choices; perhaps we have not had the time or the inclination, or perhaps some memories are just plain painful.

If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed by writing this particular component of the degree proposal, discuss your feelings in class or speak to your LNT 501 instructor; you certainly are not 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 are not 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 have made; they read to find examples of **learning and** the ways you have 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 is not every day that you are 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
(Kehi, 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, as a written product of LNT 501, Graduate Colloquium, 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. (Short-term goals will be discussed in the next chapter.) 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 do not 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 degree in Human Resource Management to learn to be able to move to another job within your organization; to complete a degree in Technology and Mathematics in order to be more effective in your fifth grade classroom). Shorter term goals will be reflected in your statement of learning needs which we will discuss in Chapter Seven of this manual.

Think of your educational and career goals within the context of your life purpose and goals. Some students have stated this lifelong purpose as an introduction to their goals statement: my lifelong goal is to make this planet an environmentally safer place to live; my goal is to continue to work for peace and justice; I want to nourish family and community relationships.

You may also want to take this opportunity to think of other educational, financial, relationship, spiritual or personal goals. Students have expressed a desire to go to law school, to learn Spanish, to continue to seek the truth, to travel and learn about other cultures, to continue being a supportive friend or parent, to remain active in community development activities, etc. To isolate our educational and career goals often can feel artificial. Try to think about your life goals in a holistic way.

Conclude the statement with a description of the degree which you would like to pursue. Choose a tentative degree title which accurately reflects your goals and your understanding of the professional or academic areas which you seek to study. Review your goals statement as you continue developing your degree proposal, and make revisions as necessary. Consult your LNT adviser and other faculty to assist you in your educational planning.

“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 thoughts about which learning processes best suit you at this point in your graduate 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 which seem to have worked well for you given the variety of learning objectives and subject matter which you have experienced.

Consider and discuss the implications for your approach to learning contained in each of the assigned texts for LNT 501. 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, “Make 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 teacher’s 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 "our 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 which was helpful or, on the other hand, you may have encountered ideas which are incompatible with your own philosophy. Comment on such ideas in this paper. Finally, you may wish to explore the relationship between your philosophy of graduate education and the choices which you are about to consider in the next chapter of the degree proposal.

**“I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.”**

W.B. Yeats
(Kehl, 1983)

Chapter 8:

THE LEARNING NEEDS STATEMENT

As previously discussed, the goals statement is grounded in your significant learnings and accomplishments from the past providing your vision of the future and your personal goals, and academic program as one aspect of those goals. In contrast, the learning needs statement focuses upon specific short-term goals of your academic study which are implied by those academic goals. It builds upon information introduced in the goals statement, and specifically discusses those areas of proficiency common to others engaged in a graduate study of your academic concentration, weighing those against the skills and knowledge that you already possess; now that you have expressed your goals, what do you need to learn to obtain them? Consider learning needs to be those areas in which you need additional skills, knowledge or experiences, and include a discussion of the learning needs associated with the degree title which you have chosen.

Developing An Awareness of Your Learning Needs

After you have discussed the goals for your academic experience, thereby identifying your degree emphasis and specialization(s), discuss those aspects of that emphasis and specialization(s) that you need and/or want to learn about; you have already begun to do this by identifying your educational goals. Now, break that educational goal into more specific objectives, smaller and achievable components (or courses) that compose your degree proposal. For example, if the primary emphasis in your degree proposal is women’s studies, what are those academic areas that someone who has a graduate degree in women’s studies should know about and be able to discuss? If your specialization within that emphasis is women’s history, what are the more specific areas in which you need to focus your degree? **What do you need to learn?** Move beyond your own speculation and consult with experts in the fields relevant to your goals.

To further articulate a perspective on the knowledge and skills you need for your chosen field of study, inventory those which you already possess. This awareness will enable you to weigh your current knowledge against that which is required by the academic and professional fields in which you are studying. With this knowledge you can determine those aspects of learning which you want to develop and/or refine. What areas of knowledge and skills do you need to develop to refine your degree program? In your search to determine your learning needs, note which of the areas of knowledge and skills need moderate development, and which ones need extensive development, or which skills you already possess.

Gather any and all relevant information, advice and expertise on the interdisciplinary area which you have chosen to pursue. Consult with faculty members and other experts who have some familiarity with the area. Consult other college catalogs and professional accrediting bodies which may exist in related areas.

The learning needs statement should include a summary of your exploration and a discussion of your findings, including any contradictory advice. Add your opinions and decisions about appropriate learning objectives within the context of your current competencies and deficiencies. A summary listing of learning needs associated with the degree along with those which have been met should complete this section.

“Include the knower in the known.”

Julian Jaynes
(Kehl, 1983)

Chapter 9:

THE INVENTORY OF LEARNING RESOURCES

Before you enrolled in LNT you probably explored the UIS catalog and other resources available to augment your learning process. As a component of the degree proposal, the inventory of learning resources identifies those people, organizations, associations, books/articles, internet sites and noncredit activities (e.g., participating in conferences) that you consider potentially useful in the development of a comprehensive academic curriculum in your specialization.

The purpose of the inventory is to help you clarify for yourself and to inform your degree committee members about those resources that will support and strengthen your developing knowledge and skills as you progress through your degree program. While your initial list may be general, your inventory should grow and become more specialized as you become aware of additional opportunities statewide, nationally or internationally. If you are uncertain where to start in compiling your inventory, speak to your adviser, committee members, or other students and faculty members who share your interests and specializations and who may have awareness of prominent spokespeople, significant scholarly works, or major professional organizations in your field.

Your inventory should name each entry by its title, address, phone number(s), contact person(s), and your rationale for including it. Previous LNT students have included such resources as individuals, professional organizations, libraries, research facilities, or other universities in their inventories. In addition, students should include a “core” bibliography which helps define the field implicit in the degree title.

As previously mentioned, it is expected that your inventory will grow and/or change throughout your degree program. Although there are no minimum or maximum numbers of resources to include, you should generally include a variety of resources, and a reasonable selection. Names of UIS faculty should be listed with a brief description of their relevancy for your degree. You should also provide brief titles and/or descriptions of relevant qualifications of other persons listed. As with each component of your degree proposal, be sure that you keep your committee members informed of any changes that occur.

“Sit, walk or run, but do not wobble.”

Zen
(Kehl, 1983)

Chapter 10:

THE NARRATIVE CURRICULUM

The narrative curriculum, also referred to as Learning Strategies, describes **all courses** (e.g., credit for prior learning, independent field projects, tutorials, courses transferred from other universities, etc.) that you plan to include as part of your degree program. As such, it provides your degree committee with an overview of your entire degree program in a concise and descriptive way. There are two components to the narrative curriculum.

Part One: Courses and Rationale

➤ **Course number and Course title:**

Use the title of the course listed in the UIS catalog. In the event that you are taking an independent study or tutorial, **name the emphasis of your study in title format.**

➤ **Your Rationale:**

Use the description of the course listed in the UIS catalog, **and be sure to add your rationale for including the course in your degree proposal.** As stated above, if you are taking an independent study course or tutorial, describe the emphasis of your study.

➤ **Number of credit hours:**

Include the number of credit hours for each of the courses that you will be taking.

Use this format in describing all courses that you are including in your degree proposal, including:

- **University requirements;**
- **LNT program requirements; and**
- **LNT program electives.**

Part Two: Summary Curriculum List

When you have completed a detailed presentation of your curriculum and rationale, summarize the information **on a single page**. The **summary curriculum list presents a concrete picture of your time frames for completing your degree**. Simply list the courses (course numbers and titles only) that you plan to take according to a tentative calendar. Try to obtain information about those courses which are offered on a cyclical basis (e.g. every Spring, every three years, etc.) in order to anticipate appropriate sequencing and availability.

By presenting your degree curriculum in an organized, narrative manner you will be able to stay focused and directed during your degree program. Further, you will let your degree committee know that you are proceeding through your program in a thoughtful and methodical way. It is not unusual to revise your degree plan once, or several times during your academic program as you become aware of additional resources and/or opportunities. Careful and thoughtful planning at the onset allows these types of transitions to occur smoothly and thoughtfully.

Chapter 11:

INDEPENDENT STUDIES

Guidelines and Suggestions for Independent Study Proposal: An Overview

LNT 580 and LNT 599 offer opportunities to design various types of independent studies. All are offered for variable credit, ranging from 2-12 credit hours. Credit for a course at UIS is based on the assumption that a typical 4 credit course meets 3 1/2 hours a week for 16 weeks (56 hours) and that a typical student spends 2 hours of outside preparation time for every hour in class (112 hours). $56 + 112 = 168$ hours. Consult department information and your faculty sponsor to determine the appropriate course and number of credit hours for the project you have in mind.

Your faculty sponsor is chosen by you from the graduate faculty on the basis of her/his expertise in the topic of your independent study and her/his willingness to be your sponsor. You might also choose a faculty sponsor who might work best with you to stimulate your learning. For example, if you tend to procrastinate, find a sponsor who will work with you on overcoming this.

For each independent study you conduct under the LNT prefix, you must complete an Independent Study Proposal. (Forms are available in the LNT office and must be completed prior to registration for the project.) With this proposal you will describe what you want to learn, how you intend to learn it, and how your learning will be evaluated. Consult your sponsoring faculty member to obtain assistance in clarifying these components of your study. (If a resource person outside the university will be involved in your study, s/he should also participate in the planning process.)

The Independent Study Proposal Form asks you to draw on skills you have utilized in creating your degree proposal. Specifically, it directs your attention to the following questions:

- What do you want to learn? (Objectives)
- Why do you want to learn it? (Rationale)
- What resources are available for you to draw on? (Resources)
- How do you plan to use the resources to meet the objectives? (Work Plan)
- How will you evaluate the effectiveness of your work? How will you document your learning? (Evaluation/Documentation)
- When will you accomplish this learning? (Tentative Schedule)

Specifics: How to Develop a Proposal

➤ **Objectives**

The goal is to write objectives that are clear, understandable, and realistic. Can you state clearly and in detail what you want to learn? To formulate your learning objectives, ask yourself: Which learning needs from my LNT degree proposal can I meet in this project? What information and understanding do I want to acquire? What skills do I want to learn or improve? Why? To clarify further your objectives, continue by asking yourself: What attitudes do I want to develop or change? Why? How and where will I use this information, skill, or attitude? How much of it do I need? How will I behave differently or what will be changed when I am finished? What do I want to be able to do when the project is finished? How many learning objectives do I want to set? How much time do I really have?

Learning objectives maybe stated in a variety of ways. Some can refer to specific skills and levels of competence. Others may be more general, and exploratory, perhaps becoming clearer as you proceed. Many behavioristic approaches require that objectives be stated in terms of specific, measurable, behavioral outcomes. It may be helpful to think of learning objectives in terms of the discrepancy between where you are now and where you would like to be in the future with respect to a particular competence or ability or level of understanding. Precise outcomes may or may not be useful to you.

Objectives are often written in the form of observable activities which you will be able to do at the project's completion. Describe what you intend to learn using verbs such as identify, distinguish, compare, contrast, solve, differentiate, write, construct, apply, describe, demonstrate, communicate, draw, role play, list, critique, etc. Not all learning needs can be described adequately in this way, as the totality of that experience is more than information, skills, and attitudes.

➤ **Rational**

When you have completed the objectives section, ask yourself, "Why do I want to learn this?" Your answer should place the objectives within the larger context of your educational goals. How do your objectives relate to your overall degree plan? Refer to your Autobiography, Goals, and Learning Needs from your LNT degree proposal.

Which Learning Needs are you meeting within the framework of this independent study? Why do you need to acquire this information/skill/attitude? How is your Independent Study Proposal congruent with some component of the larger picture presented in your degree proposal?

➤ **Resources**

What relevant resources (people, internet, books, films, laboratories, agencies, etc.) do you have available? You may find it helpful to identify some of these resources

by thinking of specific activities you will engage in to accomplish your learning and then, to ask what resource each activity makes use of. Attach lists of relevant materials (bibliography, film lists, etc.) to your Proposal.

➤ **Work Plan and Tentative Schedule**

How do you plan to use the resources and facilities to meet your learning objectives? Each learning objective should be addressed by one or more learning activities. Each activity should correspond to one or more of your stated learning objectives. Traditional approaches include attending lectures, participating in small group discussions, reading and expressing your reactions on paper or in discussion groups, examination, laboratory experiments, painting, photography, etc. Non-traditional approaches might include travel and discussion, film or videotape production, “hands-on” experience, writing a book or manual, building or creating something, keeping a journal, organizing a conference, etc.

When you have a tentative plan, consider a time frame. Try to stay within the framework of the university semester. Under “Tentative Schedule” indicate when the various activities of your plans will take place and when you will complete work on the concrete components of the plan. Schedule may be daily, weekly, and/or monthly task completion dates and/or specific deadline or performance dates. Include the frequency of contact with your faculty sponsor and the proposed completion dates for various stages of the project.

The work plan should reflect your thinking about how you are actually going to carry out your learning project. What logical sequence will you follow? What step-by-step procedure will you develop to complete your study?

➤ **Evaluation/Documentation**

What evidence will you produce to demonstrate to yourself and others that you have achieved your objectives? Documentation will largely consist of the products you have created as a result of your learning activities. These products may include research papers, copies of surveys, transcripts of interviews, video or audio tapes, maps, reports, letters sent and received, samples of work, products of artistic activity, records of experiments, performances, journals, etc. Discuss documentation methods with your faculty sponsor.

What criteria will be used to evaluate each piece of evidence? Criteria may differ for each learning objective and for each piece of evidence. Some criteria traditionally used in evaluating academic work include scholarliness and comprehensiveness of a written work, frequency and substance of journal entries, relevance of research completed, correctness of grammar or math, presence or absence of specified qualities in a performance, number of survey forms completed, usefulness of study notes, etc.

If you experience difficulty in selecting criteria, ask yourself what aspects, traits, or characteristics of this piece of evidence are most important or meaningful and are most likely to clearly demonstrate that you achieved your learning objective?

Having selected criteria, what standards will you apply as you look at them? Standards imply judgment in terms of the criteria along a scale of values in order to determine the quality of that which is being judged. To set standards, ask what quantity or what degree of the specified criteria must be present (or absent) in the evidence in order to determine attainment of the learning objective. Ask: what level, how close to the ideal, how many, how few, how frequent, how fast, how clear, how graceful, how much, how long, etc.? Confer with your project evaluators about criteria and standards early in your study.

Your faculty sponsor usually will be the person to evaluate the evidence of your learning. External resource persons with whom you have worked closely could also be evaluators, as could peers or others with experience in the topic. Your faculty sponsor will take your criteria and documentation into consideration in order to assign a grade for the course.

As you progress in your learning, you may wish to make changes in your Independent Study Proposal. Very often our ideas change as we work on a project. Simply consult with your faculty sponsor (and any other key resource persons) when you need to modify your description of the work you intend. Substantial departures from your original proposal must be negotiated with all parties involved. Amended proposals may have to be submitted.

➤ **Helpful Hints**

LNT faculty strongly recommend that you and your faculty sponsor schedule a series of conferences to pace your reading or research, to set deadlines, and to commit yourself to a time frame.

Be realistic about how many hours you have to spend on your project. What other demands on your time are there? Are you trying to do more than you have time or energy for? How much can you reasonably accomplish in the time available? Students planning an independent study for the first time often try to do too much. Determine what is central to your goals and what, however, relevant, is peripheral and focus your initial efforts on the central. Then if time permits and it still seems appropriate, you can turn to some of your less important concerns. Of course, you will want to avoid the other extreme of making your project so narrow that it achieves only part of what you most wanted to do.

Then, too, your project need not be overly conventional. You may find it helpful to engage in fantasy as a means of stimulating thoughts and ideas.

The more fully we are conscious of dreams, daydreams, fantasies — i.e., free associations — the more likely we are to be in touch with what our total organism desires....Potent action arises when the organism is in touch with the fullness of its desire, has explored in imagination and fantasy the probably results of alternative acts, and has taken the risk of decision and commitment to one among many possibilities.

(Sam Keen, *To a Dancing God*)

Independent study should be a learning experience in which you challenge yourself, grow, and develop new skills and ideas. Then, too, while your resource people will be concerned to keep you mindful of appropriate standards, you can generally count on them as wanting most of all to be helpful and supportive. Do not be afraid to be adventuresome.

**“The difference between the right word and the almost right word
is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug.”**

Mark Twain
(Kehl, 1983)

Chapter 12:

THE LIBERAL AND INTEGRATIVE STUDIES PROJECT PAPER

As we have discussed, the self-designed degree process at UIS promotes reflection and integration. The degree proposal requires that you **plan** an integrated curriculum, describing your rationale for each course and learning project you propose. The liberal and integrative studies project (LISP) asks you to make a **retrospective assessment of** your learning experiences and offers the opportunity for modifying your degree proposal. Developing the liberal and integrative studies project paper is completed within the context of LNT 521, “Liberal and Integrative Studies,” as such, it is completed toward the end of your degree program. **The liberal and integrative studies project paper must be shared with your committee members upon completion.**

The liberal and integrative studies project paper should add a “scholarly dimension” to your degree proposal; that is, this paper should attest to the intellectual depth you have developed as a result of participation in your academic program. As you reflect upon your learning:

- Describe the courses you have taken;
- Mention the books you have read;
- Quote from writers who have had the most profound impact upon your learning;
- Discuss the contradictions you have discovered;
- Indicate common threads which may help integrate the different ideas, approaches, theories, etc.;
- Discuss the implications of your learning in terms of insight, discoveries, and modifications of your degree plans (list specific changes in your degree proposal which you desire your committee to consider); and,
- Attach a bibliography listing those sources which formed the basis of your discussion.

Format

Most committee members insist upon a typewritten paper, however, there are no specific format requirements. Discuss the issues of style and format with your degree committee members and ask them if they have specific preferences. The three most commonly used style manuals (Turabian, American Psychological Association, and Modern Language Association) are available in summary form at the Center for Teaching and Learning. They are available in their entirety in the library, or may be purchased in the campus bookstore.

Other Suggestions

The following suggestions may further assist you as you develop your liberal and integrative studies project paper.

- Work closely with your academic advisers and LNT 521 instructor.
- Submit a rough draft to and discuss the paper with each committee member prior to preparing a final draft.
- Do not rely upon your memory of your academic experiences as your only resource.
- Review relevant course materials, such as books, papers, or notes, and use them as references while you are writing.
- Remember to name the sources you have referenced in the text of your paper.
- Evaluate how your skills have improved in areas that you identified as critical to your education.

“Life is either an adventure, or it is nothing.”

Helen Keller
(Keen & Valley-Fox, 1989)

Chapter 13:

THE LNT MASTER’S THESIS OR PROJECT

The UIS catalog describes the closure project as follows:

“For master’s candidates the closure project typically functions as a central component around which the self-designed curriculum is structured. Varying according to the student’s goals, the [closure] project is a major scholarly and/or creative effort demonstrating the student’s accomplishment and mastery of the chosen area of study.”

The closure project is not simply a tutorial or independent study (e.g. **LNT 599**). It differs in two ways. First, its content must be central to your entire curriculum. This means that it must build on some of your core course work and/or independent study. Ask yourself “What is the most advanced and important understanding or ability with which I want my curriculum to end?” In other words, **“What do I want as the culmination of the personal and academic growth I will have sought in pursuing my curriculum ?”** By designing your closure project as an answer to either form of this question you will make it central in the intended sense.

The second way in which your closure project will be more than simply another independent study is that it must demonstrate mastery of essential aspects of your curriculum. There are two sides to this demonstration. The first is to show a graduate-level proficiency and understanding. You will be asked in **LNT 521** to prepare for your project by writing a review of the literature, concepts and learning most important to your curriculum. Then, in conducting your project itself, a preliminary part of what you will be expected to do is to make clear its relation to the literature, concepts and learning.

The second side to demonstrating mastery of your “chosen area of study” is to show your ability to do the sort of problem-solving typical of that area. This form of problem-solving is what your instructors mean when they speak of “methodology.” In designing your closure project, the problem may take the form either of a theoretical question that is answered through research or a practical need that is met by applying the ability and knowledge you have achieved through your curriculum.

This theoretical-practical distinction brings us to differentiate between two sorts of closure projects, namely, the **Thesis (LNT 560)** and the **Master’s Project (LNT 550)**. Traditionally, master’s work has culminated in a thesis. The purpose is for the student to demonstrate her/his ability to do scholarly work that contributes reliably to knowledge and understanding.

Such scholarship requires effective use of the methodology or mode of problem-solving (1) of one of the humanities such as history, literature, or philosophy; (2) of one of the sciences such as sociology, psychology, or economics; or, (3) of one of the interdisciplinary subjects such as education or management. Theses in the humanities are based on the use of texts and other documents usually found in a library. Graduate-level theses in the humanities require that you have clearly articulated leading scholarly perspectives on your chosen subject, compared and contrasted them, evaluated them in terms of scholarly criteria, and stated your own conclusions and reasons for them. Theses in the sciences seek (1) to gather and make generalizations from new data (e.g. structured surveys) or (2) to formulate and test new hypotheses. Graduate-level theses in the sciences and social sciences require a somewhat briefer articulation of the scholarly perspectives but also require that your methodology is compatible with accepted standards in the field of your thesis. Theses in interdisciplinary subjects sometimes employ the methodology of one of the relevant disciplines (e.g. Research in education often employs the methodology of psychology.) and sometimes alternate between more than one methodology.

This traditional thesis approach seems more appropriate to some LNT students than to others. While some students benefit especially from engaging in research to generate new knowledge, others are more concerned to deepen their grasp of what they have already learned by applying it. It is to serve the needs of this second group that LNT has created the option of completing a master's project.

The same general requirements that we have discussed concerning the thesis apply to the master's project. The master's project must (1) work with material that is central to your curriculum and (2) be "a major scholarly ...effort demonstrating...mastery of the chosen area of study." This means that the application you create must be something you could not have done without utilizing some major learnings you accomplished in the courses or other credit generating activities that are central to your program of study. It is essential, then, that your project includes written material that shows explicitly the important prior learning at UIS that you are giving an application to. This will involve the same use of a review of the literature as we have described for those doing a thesis. Note that your ability to determine and carry out significant applications of your learning is another indication of your mastery.

Let us consider some project that would **not** meet the criteria we have been discussing. Perhaps you would find it helpful to produce a booklet for use by your clients that discusses, say, child care or group dynamics. If the booklet is one you could have written without having taken some of your key course work at UIS then it does **not** meet the criterion of demonstrating mastery achieved in the subject matter of those courses.

To take a second example, you as a teacher might wish to create a new curriculum for your students. This would **not** meet our criteria if this project did not depend on some of the basic learning achieved in pursuing your curriculum. This project **would** qualify as a master's project, though, if (1) the central aim of your studies has been to update your mastery of the field in which you teach and (2) your curriculum revision makes extensive and complexly reasoned use of your increased mastery.

Consider, finally, that you might have taken an introductory course in computer skills (e.g., software packages) as a peripheral part of your curriculum. You, then, wish to do a project that demonstrates your mastery of those skills by applying them to your work as an educator. This does **not** meet the criterion of working with learning that has been a central component of your degree program. Note, however, that if this project would significantly enhance your mastery of those skills it would be appropriate as an independent study (i.e., LNT 580, “Independent Field Project”) because this does not carry the requirement that it be central to your program of study.

Master’s projects may also take a modified form that combines new research with its application. This research must meet the criterion of being a central component of your curriculum. Begin with a review of the literature that is most important to your curriculum. Next, carry out the new research, then apply it, and, finally, show how the research and application are related to the literature you have reviewed.

Before concluding, we need to consider two additional points. First, although most closure projects will be of the scholarly sort we have been discussing, these projects may occasionally be essentially creative in an artistic or creative writing sense. For this to be appropriate, such creative endeavor must be a continuation and culmination of a central component of your program of study. It will demonstrate mastery in two ways. First, it will do this by its use of the artistic form involved. (This is analogous to problem-solving in the scholarly sense.) Second, it will show mastery by a written review of the essential literature relating to this art form and a written discussion of the project’s artistic product in terms of this literature.

Second, although master’s projects must have a written section they may also utilize other media. For example, some projects have applied computer technology to various curricula. Part of each of these projects has been the development of computer programs for teacher and student use and of written curricula that provide a place for these programs. This has been complemented by a written discussion of principles that should guide such use of computers, principles that have been developed through prior learning.

The main point to bear in mind, as you determine what your closure project will be, is that “closure” means not just something that comes at the end but an achievement that will be a highlight of your entire program of study. Whether it takes the form of a thesis, generating new knowledge and understanding, or of a project, applying knowledge gained in work central to your program of study, it is to be a **major scholarly effort** and to demonstrate **mastery** in terms of both a review of the essential literature and a sound approach to problem-solving.

Making the Appropriate Course Choice

A master’s project (LNT 550) usually, but not always, involves some off-campus activities, for example, in a public agency, school, business setting, laboratory, or studio. The purpose of the project may be to create a useful and/or aesthetic product that can

meet a need for a particular audience outside the university. Examples of products that have been produced as master's projects include school curricula, grant proposals, instructional manuals, art works, works of fiction, computer applications, and evaluations of consumer products or services. If the project does not include a major, graduate-level, written component, you should plan to submit a 10 to 15 page essay in which you discuss how the product itself was produced, how it is related to your course work, and the theoretical framework which forms the basis or foundation for this work.

A thesis (LNT 560) is the more appropriate choice if you are planning to do an academic research project (such as survey research, controlled experiments, participant observation). Or, you may want to use methods of inquiry that are based in one of the academic disciplines, for example, philosophical analysis, historical investigation, or a feminist study emphasizing the use of what are referred to as "secondary sources;" texts and other documents usually found in a library. A thesis is usually addressed to an academic audience in contrast to a master's project which is aimed at a specific audience outside of the university but accompanied by a scholarly paper aimed at an academic audience. Students who plan to continue into doctoral work, or who are interested in teaching in a college setting, should complete a thesis.

Developing a Project or Thesis Proposal

You will have an opportunity to begin planning your thesis or project in the required course, LNT 521, "Liberal and Integrative Studies," although you may want to begin formulating ideas and discussing them with your degree committee members before this point. Questions about general directions often come up in the first meeting of your degree committee when your degree plan is discussed. However, you cannot register for LNT 550 or LNT 560 until your committee, plus the appointed Dean's representative, has formally approved your proposal and signed the gold-colored form entitled, "**Approval of Liberal and Integrative Studies Project and Master's Project Proposal.**" This normally occurs in a second committee meeting which is scheduled following your completion of LNT 521.

It is not necessary for you to have one of your degree committee members serve as your thesis or project adviser, although this is common. If you wish to work with another graduate faculty member as your thesis/project adviser, it is a good idea to discuss a draft of your proposal with her/him as soon as you have it in order to get essential feedback. Your committee, and the faculty member who will supervise you must approve your proposal.

In general, the proposal should be extensive enough to permit your faculty committee and supervisor to evaluate the scope of the project or thesis, your overall orientation to it, and your capacity to carry it out. The final version of the proposal serves as a contract specifying the work to be done in order to complete your degree. Such specificity protects both you and the faculty members from misunderstandings about what is expected.

The proposal should contain the following sections:

➤ **Cover Page**

List the following information on your cover page: LNT Master's Project Proposal or LNT Thesis Proposal Title, your name, address, phone number, social security number, and the date.

➤ **Title of the Project**

Choose a title that describes what you are doing in as succinct a manner as possible.

➤ **Personal Significance**

This section should include a brief statement (approximately one page) about your reasons for choosing to complete this project. Mention what interested you about this topic specifically, and your expectations for and impact of this project or thesis on your personal, academic and/or professional development.

➤ **Purpose**

In two or three sentences state the overall purpose of the project. If you have several objectives, describe them briefly, in order of their importance. This could be in the form of a question or hypothesis.

➤ **Background (Review of the Literature)**

This section of the proposal should explain the ideas and concepts that are necessary in order to understand your topic. Discuss why the topic is important and identify the audience to whom it is addressed. Include a discussion of existing professional literature that you have read, or other information that you have gathered in preparation for this project or thesis. Describe experiences that you have had that were important to your emerging understand of this topic. In general, briefly demonstrate that you have sufficient understanding of this topic to be able to carry out your study or project. What you elect to include will vary according to your topic and purpose. Three to four double-spaced pages is usually sufficient.

➤ **Methods, Procedures and Activities**

This section should clearly describe how you intend to carry out your project or thesis study. A research study should address issues such as sampling (or selection of participants), data gathering, and data analysis. A philosophical or historical inquiry should address resources and procedures associated with each step of the exploration. A project intended to produce another type of product should describe intended activities, for example, a list of the people with whom you will be involved and what they will contribute; time schedule or a chronology of events; tools you plan to use,

such as training sessions, interviews, or special equipment. The nature of the project will determine what will be needed but the main idea, irrespective of the nature of the project or thesis, is to specify the steps to be taken to accomplish your purpose. It may be helpful to present this section as a numeric listing of the events that you expect to take place in the order in which they will occur. This section should be as thorough as you can make it since any flaws in your planning will create problems for you later. Your faculty advisers may be able to help you identify potential pitfalls in advance.

➤ **Bibliography**

An initial bibliography, including any references cited in the background section, should be included. The bibliography should be in the format that you expect to use in your final draft of the thesis, or in the essay which accompanies your project's product. You are free to select the format, but you should use a standard one, such as the American Psychological Association (APA), Turabian, or Modern Language Association (MLA), and you should use it consistently throughout your document. If you have any questions about your choice of format, or its consistent use, consult with the Center for Teaching and Learning.

➤ **Tentative Outline of the Final Document**

This section of the proposal consists of an outline of the final report that you will submit to your committee. If you are planning a project which will yield a product, you should include a description of what the final product will look like, and what it will include as well as an outline of the 10 to 15 page essay that you will prepare to accompany your product. If you are planning a thesis, you should develop an outline of the proposed chapters that will be included in the final document. This outline may serve as a Table of Contents.

The Proposal Meeting

You should present each member of your degree committee (including the Dean's representative), with a complete draft of your proposal and your liberal and integrative studies paper about two weeks before you have scheduled the meeting in which you will discuss it. Committee members need to have time to read and think about what you are planning so that it can be discussed as a group. You are responsible for scheduling your meeting in consultation with your chairperson/adviser. At this meeting, recommendations will be made regarding the proposed project/thesis. You can expect to be given clear guidelines as to whether or not revisions are expected before approval will be given. The committee signifies approval of your proposal by signing the gold-colored form, "**Approval of Master's Project/Thesis Proposal.**" You cannot register for your master's project or thesis until all members of your committee have signed this form, and it, accompanied by copies of your liberal and integrative studies paper and your proposal, is in your file in the LNT office.

Registering for LNT 550 or LNT 560

You must register for a minimum of 4 credit hours of LNT 550 or LNT 560 in order to get credit for completing your master's project or thesis. In order to register, you must obtain a permission form. This form is called a "WPD" (or, "With Permission of the Dean"), and it is the same form that is used for independent studies. If you have completed an independent study course at UIS, then you are already familiar with the arduous process of getting the requisite signatures. The WPD form must be signed by the faculty member who will serve as your project or thesis adviser, the Chair of the LNT department, and the Dean of the school in which your adviser is located. Since getting all of these signatures is time-consuming, you should begin the process well in advance. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO REGISTER!** Also note that the WPD form will not be processed unless a copy of your proposal, **signed by your thesis/project adviser and by yourself is attached.** This is a university regulation as well as an LNT requirement. Make copies of your materials in case they are lost in processing.

Implementing Your Proposal and Developing Your Final Document

Because you will carry out your project or thesis according to the approved proposal, the more care you give to your proposal, the more likely you are to have a workable plan. You should work with your adviser until you have completed a draft of the document which you agree is ready for the rest of your committee.

All projects must have a written component. Select a particular bibliographic style and use it consistently; this style should be consistent with the same style in which you cite your sources. Follow the outline that was approved by your committee unless changes in it have been discussed. Work closely with your Project/Thesis Adviser. **Try not to surprise your committee.** It may be wise to share draft copies of sections of the project report or thesis as you complete them in order to get feedback and advice in advance of preparing a final version for formal committee review. Using a word processor is a great advantage because it provides an easy way to revise, edit and revise again. Recognize that frequent rewriting is a normal part of the process of completing your degree. An additional meeting of your committee may be scheduled if needed.

Final Oral Presentation

After you have completed your project plus the accompanying essay or your thesis, present a complete final copy to the members of your committee **at least two weeks in advance of your final committee meeting.** You are responsible for scheduling this meeting. When you have agreed on a date and time, contact the LNT secretary to reserve a meeting room. Be certain to notify your committee members of the location of the meeting.

The purpose of the final meeting is to review your project or thesis. Be prepared to present an oral summary of your work and respond to questions from your committee members. Acceptance of your project or thesis will depend on demonstration of

satisfactory completion of the plan laid out in your proposal and on demonstration of capable written and oral communication skills and reasoning.

Acceptance requires unanimous agreement by your committee that your project or thesis is complete. Should agreement not be reached, the committee will agree on procedures through which you can bring the work into conformity with committee members' expectations. At the discretion of the committee, another meeting may be scheduled. You can expect to be given clear verbal guidelines about actions that you should take, and your chair will follow-up with a written statement about committee expectations.

If the committee unanimously rejects your project or thesis, the chair of the committee has the responsibility of integrating each member's concerns into a written statement setting forth the reasons. The best way to avoid this possibility is to keep in touch with your supervisor and committee members about your progress so that you are not surprised by their reactions to your work. Maintain communications with your committee, and keep an open mind about revising your work. Once your project or thesis has been accepted by your committee and your supervisor, members will sign the green form, **“Completion of Liberal and Integrative Studies Concentration.”**

When your project or thesis has been approved, submit two copies to the LNT office, one of which will be forwarded to the university archives for UIS's permanent collection. Your document should be bound together in some way so that it will not come apart. Plastic spiral binding is preferred because metal bindings rust with time, and three ring binders are bulky to store. Your work will be made available for interested readers who wish to know more about your topic. You may also arrange with the library to obtain a hardbound copy of your work.

If you are unable to complete the project or thesis within the semester of initial enrollment, the university requires that you register for one hour on an audit basis in all subsequent semesters until the project or thesis is completed.

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