

Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies

College of Professional Studies

October 13, 2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The BS in Interdisciplinary Studies has been developed to replace the BS in Liberal Studies, as currently offered by the College of Professional Studies (CPS). The curriculum has been developed using the BS in Liberal Studies framework, replacing the humanities/social science-focus with an emphasis on communication, leadership, and project management. In conjunction with this proposal, the BS in Liberal Studies will be deactivated.

The BS in Liberal Studies was last reviewed and revised in 2015 as part of the CPS semester-conversion project which launched in Fall 2016. At that time, CPS also deactivated a number of bachelor degrees, including several humanities programs. In an effort to provide students an alternative to the proposed teach-out plans, the BS in Liberal Studies was revised to maximize the number of credits that would carry over from the deactivated programs. The BS in Liberal Studies is also the general degree program for CPS and is intended to provide flexibility for transfer students who may have started and stopped multiple degrees.

As the portfolio of CPS undergraduate degree-completion programs has continued to evolve to meet student/industry demand and to better align with the identity of the college, CPS recognized the need for a more appropriate and aligned general studies program. As part of this evolution, the college deactivated additional programs that no longer met enrollment goals or fit within the mission of the college, replacing them with STEM degrees that are industry-aligned and better suited to a college of professional studies. The proposed BS in Interdisciplinary Studies will better suit the needs of CPS undergraduate degree-completion students who are career-changers or who are looking for ways to refocus their prior academic experiences to meet their current professional goals.

ALIGNMENT WITH UNIVERSITY MISSION

The BS in Interdisciplinary Studies supports the mission of Northeastern University by providing undergraduate degree-completion students a pathway to maximize their experience, both academic and in the workplace, to find direction and to foster the spirit of lifelong learning. It also aligns with Northeastern 2025 vision by promoting the development of the skills to become agile, adaptable, and creative problem solvers demanded by the 21st century's professional market and lifestyle.

OPPORTUNITY & EVIDENCE FOR PROGRAM DEMAND:

Students who traditionally enroll in the BS in Liberal Studies bring significant, and often diverse, transfer credits with them. With development of the BS in Interdisciplinary Studies, the choice

of required classes, both foundational and core, are intended to provide students the opportunity to reflect on their previous academic experiences, identify their strengths, and chart a path forward that is focused on defining and meeting their career goals. The chosen classes also have a high-transfer rate, as they are often introductory or meet general education course requirements for community colleges or other institutions.

This degree will also be attractive to students entering CPS through the partnership with Major League Baseball (MLB). Many of the MLB students who enroll in CPS have three years of undergraduate education in hand, often in degrees that are not offered by the college. The BS in Interdisciplinary Studies will provide those students with the ability to apply their previous course work as the focus of their CPS degree, allowing them both the ability to maximize transfer credits and accelerate time to completion, while not feeling as though they had to abandon their initial major.

The BS in Interdisciplinary Studies will also allow for students in underperforming programs, or programs that are being deactivated, the possibility of changing their major without losing credits or excessively adding time to completion, while still maintaining the focus of their initial degree program.

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE PROGRAM

Currently, the faculty required to teach this program is already employed by the College of Professional Studies. The courses will be delivered by both full-time and part-time faculty under the oversight and coordination of the Faculty Lead for the program.

All of the required courses for the BS in Interdisciplinary Studies are also required by other degree programs, ensuring that the courses will be offered in a regular rotation with a more diverse student population.

As such, the BS in Interdisciplinary Studies does not have a curriculum of its own, so it relies on the Faculty Directors and Lead Faculty of the other undergraduate degree-completion programs to manage the courses, faculty, and quality for their curricula.