

Concerns expressed in the committee's discussion:

- concern that the BALS proposal may duplicate the Bachelor's in Integrative Studies (BIS);
 1. Please see the chart below that compares the two programs. They are clearly different in design and structure.

Program Feature	BALS	BIS
Designed for FTIAC students	yes	no
Required 100-level course	LBS 100	none
Required 200-level course	LBS 200	none
Required 400-level courses	LBS 495, 496	HS 402
Defined academic core	Yes: 2 minors or an interdisciplinary concentration	No: student defined, may include a minor
Major credits	44 credit minimum	28 credit minimum
Thesis required	yes	no
GPA requirements	LBS 100, 200: minimum of 2.5 LBS 495, 496: minimum of 3.0	HS 402: minimum of 2.0
Multi-disciplinary methods course	Yes: LBS 100	no
Disciplinary methods course	Yes: TBD	no
Interdisciplinary methods course	Yes: LBS 200	Yes: HS 402

- concern that the BALS proposal itself cites academic works from scholars in integrative studies and not liberal studies; why are no liberal studies association or scholars cited?
 1. As stated in the proposal there are no “liberal studies” associations that accredit undergraduate programs. The Association for Integrative Studies, for instance, is “an interdisciplinary professional organization founded in 1979 to promote the interchange of ideas among scholars and administrators in all of the arts and sciences...” Among the programs listed as members one finds assorted labels: interdisciplinary, integrative, liberal studies; one also finds programs

serving FTIAC students and/or nontraditional students. The Association for General & Liberal Studies is a group focused on quality general education, not an interdisciplinary liberal studies major. Through the College of Arts and Sciences, Oakland University is a member of the Liberal Education & America's Promise (LEAP) initiative developed by AAC&U. The proposal is grounded in the principles of that initiative as noted in reference 1.

- concern that the BALS program, although a liberal studies program, is not strictly confined to the college but rather cuts across the university which is the mission of BIS;
 1. We understand that the BIS program is sensitive to this; however, we are not about restricting student options or about keeping SCH in the College. On a more practical level, students can register for courses if they meet the prerequisites. Minors are poorly controlled. Furthermore, many of the school minors include CAS courses.
- concern over the potential lack of structured curriculum for the BALS program;
 1. We do not understand this concern. The BALS program is well structured based on innovative new foundation and capstone courses and on long-standing academic cores.
- skepticism that the BALS program will serve as a feeder for the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (MALS) program;
 1. We don't think the proposal suggests this. We do hope that GA positions associated with the budget may be attractive to MALS program applicants/students. The MALS program would be strengthened in that way.
- concern that the primary distinction drawn between BIS and BALS are the student demographics that they are intended to serve (FTIACS vs Non-traditional);
 1. That is an important distinction; however, there are many structural differences as shown on chart. The BALS students are grounded in disciplinary and interdisciplinary methods beginning in their first year. This does not happen in BIS until the senior capstone experience.

2. The BALS capstone experience focuses on the integration of disciplinary knowledge and methodology to obtain new knowledge that could not be obtained from any singular discipline. Integration in the BIS program appears to be more focused on a personalized journey toward service for others. Both are valuable but distinctly different endeavors.
- concern that the enrollment numbers are unrealistic, in light of the “miniscule” number of students aspiring to cross-disciplinary study (p. 9, para. 3); and
 1. The anticipated number of BALS students will lie somewhere between the “miniscule” number of outstanding students and the 16% of OU students who indicate an interest in more than one discipline. New program budgets are adjusted annually based on actual enrollment.
 - concern about the inaccurate portrayal of BIS in the proposal
 1. What is inaccurate?

B. The following questions were posed:

- Is there a survey of student interest available for this program?
 1. The College agrees with the recent recommendations of the Senate ad hoc committee on new program proposals that “surveys vary vastly in quality and provide little useful information on what will actually happen when the new program is initiated.” As noted above, OIRA data documents a significant interest in studying more than one area.
- What is the precise distinction between an independent major and a BALS?
 1. The independent major is an “individually tailored major in place of one of the departmental majors”. Independent majors are rare and have no relation to each other. In contrast, the BALS students have structured foundation and capstone courses together and are constructing their core from existing minors and concentrations.
- Will this program allow students to simply avoid hard choices regarding their program of education and future career? Alternatively, will the choices presented by the

program be overwhelming to first-time students (FTIACs)?

1. These students have already made the hard choice not to simply select a major from a currently existing discipline. They are positioning themselves to be on the cutting-edge of interdisciplinary growth and should be in an advantaged position when they apply for jobs or seek graduate positions in disciplinary or interdisciplinary programs. The number of faculty in the college with interdisciplinary backgrounds is growing; we are behind the times in forcing individuals to exist within the silos of isolated disciplines.
 2. This program frees students to be open and creative about their future rather than putting themselves in a disciplinary box. This is certainly in line with the present and future employment outlook.
- What are the employment prospects for BALS graduates?
 1. The Liberal Studies program is not vocational training. Depending on the interests of the individual student, they will be well prepared for professional school (law, medicine) as well as disciplinary, cross-disciplinary, interdisciplinary graduate programs. The skills developed in the BALS program will make the students good candidates for entry level positions related to their core and beyond. Committee members are referred to the CCAS brochure: Liberal Arts & Sciences FAQs.
 - Will the BALS program simply transform existing concentrations into majors? If the BALS program is meant to replace underutilized concentrations, why not work to strengthen those concentrations directly or to develop them into majors?
 1. The BALS program will make use of existing academic programs (concentrations and minors). The movement of any concentration into a major would be outside of the BALS program and would be dependent on faculty interest and university mission. For example, this past year a major in cinema studies was approved; the film aesthetics and history concentration is disappearing. In the case of many concentrations there is already a major in place (eg environmental sciences).
 - How will honors college fit with this program?

1. We anticipate that liberal studies will be an excellent major for honors college students.
- What is meant by “not developing any new cores” (p. 5, para. 1)?
 1. The program proposal itself does not develop any new cores because there are many long-standing, high-quality options already available. As future minors and concentrations are developed by departments and programs, they would be welcome as additional core options for liberal studies students.
 - How does this program relate to Gen Ed, particularly since the program caters to FTIACs?
 1. Like any other FTIAC, BALS students will need to complete the university general education requirement. Unlike, many of our students, we anticipate that BALS students will have a much higher level of appreciation for what we are trying to accomplish with general education, especially after completion of LBS 100.
 - Is there a sample student schedule available?
 1. Please see the proposed schedule for a student choosing chemistry and anthropology as core areas.

Year of Study	Fall Semester	Winter Semester
Freshman 34 credits	LBS 100 (4) WRT 150 (4) MTH 141 (4) CHM 157 (5)	AN 101 (4) WRT 160 (4) MTH 154 (4) CHM 158 (5)
Sophomore 32 credits	LBS 200 (4) MTH 155 (4) CHM 234 (4) SPN 114 (4)	AN 102 (4) PHY 151 (4) CHM 235 (4) SPN 115 (4)
Junior 32 credits (20 300+)	PHY 152 (4) CHM 325 (4) AN 302 (4) IS 250 (4)	CHM 342 (4) AN 374 (4) CIN 150 (4) ENG 303 (4)
Senior 32 credits (16+ 300+)	LBS 495 (4) AN 392 (4) AN 300 (4) Elective (4) (eg CHM 453)	LBS 496 (4) Elective (4) (eg AN 322) Elective (4) Elective (4)

- Where are the places for planning and reflection within the BALS curriculum?
 1. We don't know where these are in other programs, but we anticipate that the foundation (LBS 100 and 200) and capstone (LBS 495 and 496) courses will provide ample opportunity for planning and reflection.
- What is the role of instructors in the thesis courses? Are these instructors required to oversee the thesis of every student in their course? Are these instructors going to be the same from year to year?
 1. The students will identify one or more discipline related faculty mentors (as is done in HC); the instructor for the thesis classes will be working with the class both as a group and individually, focusing on overall quality and interaction. Most departments rotate instructors in their thesis/capstone courses; we anticipate that will be the case for BALS.
- From what unit will the tenure of BALS faculty be granted?
 1. Like all interdisciplinary faculty, BALS faculty will be associated with the department that is the best match for the particular individual. For example, the interdisciplinary quantitative biology faculty hire is being associated with the math department.
- Why is this the opportune movement to launch a new program, particularly one that is similar to an existing program?
 1. The College has many interdisciplinary initiatives. This program is important in terms of student opportunity and faculty development. Furthermore, we do not see great similarity to the BIS program.
- What is the current number of independent majors?
 1. As noted before, this is a rarely used option. Fall count indicated 2 students.
- What are the enrollment numbers for the listed concentrations?
 1. The university has no way of tracking enrollments in concentrations or minors.
- Will the program attract students to the university who would not have come otherwise or will it shift students around?

1. We suspect that it will do both. Certainly, having a new interdisciplinary option for FTIACs will be attractive to the many students who are looking for a way to follow their passion in more than one academic area.
- How were concerns raised in COI addressed prior to moving the proposal to UCUI?
 1. Different groups of faculty have different concerns and levels of comfort. The BALS taskforce was very comfortable in breaking down discipline barriers. COI was more discipline oriented. Any lingering concerns from COI were brought to the CAS assembly for an open, in depth discussion. The BALS program was approved unanimously by both COI and Assembly.