

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**  
**REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION**

**COMMITTEE:** Academic Affairs

**NO:** AAC 14-55

**COMMITTEE DATE:** June 10, 2014

**BOARD DATE:** June 17, 2014

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**APPLICATION OF WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY TO AWARD THE BACHELOR  
OF ARTS/SCIENCE IN LIBERAL STUDIES**

**MOVED:** The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the application of **Worcester State University** to award the **Bachelor of Arts/Science in Liberal Studies**.

Upon graduating the first class for these programs, the University shall submit to the Board a status report addressing its success in reaching program goals as stated in the application and in the areas of enrollment, curriculum, faculty resources, and program effectiveness.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 9(b)  
Contact: Winifred M. Hagan, Ed.D., Director for Educator Policy

## **BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**June 2014**

### **Worcester State University Bachelor of Arts/Science in Liberal Studies**

#### **INTENT AND MISSION**

The proposed Bachelor of Arts/Sciences (BA/BS) in Liberal Studies (LS) is intended to focus on the intellectual and character development of students, through learning content knowledge, creative thinking and the methods and intellectual processes of critical thinking and the scientific method. Worcester State University (WSU) intends that in addition to this, the proposed LS major, will help increase college completion rates by enabling students who have made partial progress, to craft a customized, academic program and complete their undergraduate studies with a meaningful and relevant degree. It is planned that the proposed program will support the university's mission and provide WSU students with a flexible, customized alternative to existing programs of study thereby addressing issues of retention and completion.

The proposed LS major is intended to assist students develop flexible and individualized academic programs of study, fostering new and innovative curricular combinations that will build on institutional, faculty and students' strengths and interests. It is also planned that the use of retention and e-portfolio tools in the proposed program will help connect WSU students to employment opportunities and post-baccalaureate education.

The WSU Board of Trustees approved the proposed LS program on January 21, 2014. The letter of intent was circulated on January 22, 2014. Framingham State University provided commentary supporting the program as distinctive and expressing concern regarding LS student needs for more labor intensive advising. WSU responded that one of the strategies that will help advising will be to identify, recruit, and train additional interested faculty advisors. WSU expects to be able to identify which specific minors and concentrations most students will choose to build their programs of study and will reallocate advising loads within academic departments for these faculty members who have been identified as Liberal Studies advisors. WSU underscored its' commitment to evaluate the need for advisors and staff support if enrollments exceed initial projections. All Liberal Studies advisors will go through training in the design of the program. The assessment of the program is designed to specifically include advising effectiveness. The proposal emphasizes that "exceptional student advising will be at the core of the program and will determine its success." WSU is planning to meet the labor-intensive advising needs presented by this major.

#### **NEED AND DEMAND**

##### *National and State Labor Market Outlook*

In a 2013 report, 95% of employers say they give hiring preference to college graduates with skills that enable them to contribute to innovation in the workplace and 93% of employers say that a demonstrated capacity to think critically, communicate clearly, and

solve complex problems is more important than a candidate's undergraduate major. More than 75% of employers report the need for higher education to place more emphasis on critical thinking, complex problem solving, written and oral communication, and applied knowledge. A full 80% of employers agree that, regardless of their major, all college students should acquire broad knowledge in the liberal arts and sciences and 83% of employers say an electronic portfolio would be useful to indicate that job applicants have the knowledge and skills they need to succeed.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Student Demand*

WSU retention statistics show that 8-9% of students who leave after the third and fourth year do so because they have lost interest in the major that they were pursuing, never settled into one major, or failed to meet the requirements of a major. The proposed LS major will provide a curricular mechanism for these students to use their earned credits toward a degree and graduation. WSU indicates that this group represents approximately 75 students and if 1/3rd move into the LS major, the program will have 25 full-time students the first year and over 100 within four years. WSU also indicates that students from Worcester County with some college credits but no degree may choose to apply to the LS program as a degree-completion bridge to advance in their career path. In February of 2014, a survey was sent to currently enrolled non-matriculated, matriculated, undeclared, and adult students. Seventy-nine students responded with 68% indicating interest in the proposed LS program.

### **OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED PROGRAM**

#### *Duplication*

Among Massachusetts state universities, Framingham State, Salem State, and Westfield State have liberal studies majors. They have similar structures and range in required credits from 36 to 45 credits. In the UMass system, Dartmouth has a Liberal Arts degree with two concentrations and a total of 36 credits. Southern Connecticut State University also has a bachelor's in Liberal Studies. These programs have shown significant increases in enrollments for the liberal arts major in the last 5 years.

Institution	Enrollment Increase	Total Number of Liberal Studies Graduates
Framingham State University	(unavailable)	91 (2009-2012)
Salem State University	26% increase (2008-2012)	87 (2007-2012)
Westfield State University	(unavailable)	317 (2010-2013)
Southern CT State University	78% increase (2009-2013)	816 (2007-2012)
UMass Dartmouth	34% increase (2008-2012)	125 (2009-2012)

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<sup>1</sup> *It Takes More Than a Major: Employer Priorities for College Learning and Student Success* (Washington, DC: AAC&U, 2013)

In the geographic area of Worcester, Anna Maria College has a Liberal Studies degree that requires a minor of 18 credits and then a wide distribution requirement of two courses from each of six schools, for a total of 54 credits. Becker College has a Liberal Arts degree that is a broad range of courses across disciplines totaling 78 credits.

## **ACADEMIC AND RELATED MATTERS**

### *Admission*

Students accepted into the proposed program will meet the standard undergraduate admissions criteria for all other majors at WSU. The criterion for admission will be determined by whether the student is first-time first-year applicant, transfer applicant or non-traditional applicant. Incoming first-year and transfer students will be required to meet with the Director of Liberal Studies once they are admitted in order to develop a program of study. Current WSU students who wish to be admitted to the proposed program will be required to meet with the Director of Liberal Studies in order to structure academic and professional goals, best use of transfer credits, selection of minor(s) and/or concentrations or the development of a self-designed cluster.

### **Program Enrollment Projection**

	<b># of Students Year 1</b>	<b># of Students Year 2</b>	<b># of Students Year 3</b>	<b># of Students Year 4</b>
New Full Time	5	10	15	20
Continuing Full Time	5	10	20	35
New Part Time	5	10	20	30
Continuing Part Time	10	15	25	45
Totals	25	45	80	130

### *Curriculum (Attachment A)*

The proposed major consists of a minimum of 39 credits. The first Area of Study consists of 18-24 credits that will be completed in one of the University's minor programs. A second Area of Study will consist of 15 or more credits in a minor, concentration or individually designed cluster of classes. All students will take the foundation courses and the capstone course. At least 15 credits must be at the 300-level or above. In addition, there are two major electives that are designed to allow for flexibility within the major. There are three options to earn additional credits for students who wish to graduate with a Liberal Studies with Honors distinction.

### *Field Resources and Internships*

Students will be encouraged to complete Internships and have the option of taking Independent Study courses as long as they are consistent with the requirements of the major/ liberal arts and sciences curriculum. It is planned that students will work with faculty within academic concentrations, Liberal Studies advisors and Career Services in identifying resources for internships, service learning, and civic engagement. WSU Career Services Office is developing new internship opportunities across all academic programs in order to qualify for the Massachusetts Internship Incentive program. These new and existing internship opportunities will be available to all students, including those in the Liberal Studies major. Internships in the proposed program will be established and coordinated in accordance with established WSU internship policies and procedures.

## **RESOURCES AND BUDGET**

### *Fiscal (Attachment B)*

#### *Expenses*

It is planned that the liberal studies students will be selecting courses primarily from existing course offerings at the University therefore faculty costs are expected to be minimal. It is anticipated that a faculty member would be appointed Director of Liberal Studies and receive a 3-4 course release per year with new adjunct faculty hired to teach those courses. In addition, the Director would receive compensation for DGCE summer responsibilities equal to the amount that is paid to Academic Chairs (\$500). There would be faculty expenses to teach courses for the first four years, decreasing after year two, though if enrollments exceed projections, it is expected additional faculty would be hired. An evening coordinator would need to be hired to work with admissions on recruiting and to advise the adult evening students interested in pursuing the LS degree. If enrollments grow, it is expected that a permanent position would be necessary to manage an evening program.

WSU expects an initial \$15,000 would be needed to generate collateral and marketing materials for the major. In addition, WSU anticipates approximately \$10,000 per year to cover web-based advertising and radio ads and \$500 per year is anticipated for instructional materials and library resources.

#### *Revenues*

It is expected that with the exception of start-up marketing costs, revenues will be derived solely from tuition and fees. Revenue income based on the enrollment projections was calculated based on full-time students taking 12 credits at the current costs of \$130 per credit for tuition and \$114.50 for fees. Part-time student revenue income was based on 6 credits at the same rates.

### *Faculty and Administration (Attachment C)*

It is expected that current faculty resources will initially be adequate to serve the needs of the new major and that WSU may require additional faculty resources as the major grows.

A part-time director is planned to manage the interdisciplinary nature of the LS major made up in part of existing minors and other existing courses grouped into concentrations. The director will be a full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty member and will receive an appropriate number of courses releases and summer compensation to perform this duty. A LS committee made up of faculty from across the campus will support the director's activities, serve an academic oversight role and provide advising as well as course of study support and approval for the majors. New courses for the major will be taught by faculty across the disciplines who have been approved by the LS committee.

#### *Facilities, Library and Information Technologies*

It is planned that the LS major will use existing minors, concentrations and courses with the current resources in the Library serving the needs of the major. The Library Director has agreed to support holdings development to serve the students in the LS major.

Information technologies to support the new Liberal Studies major currently exist and include a laptop policy, smart classrooms, campus-wide wireless, Starfish Retention software and e-portfolio software.

It is not expected that additional facilities will be needed to serve the major at the onset of its offering.

#### *Affiliations and Partnerships*

It is anticipated that WSU will market the proposed degree to MA businesses as a cohort-based degree completion program. The WSU Center for Business & Industry will be charged, in part, with connecting with community business leaders to discuss how the Liberal Studies major can be used by a business's employees to complete their bachelor's degree and so both advance the employees' careers and bring needed education and skills to the business. It is anticipated that the Liberal Studies degree will contribute to partnerships between the university and public and private industries. It is planned that partnerships will be developed and defined following approval of the degree.

## PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Measurable Objective</b>	<b>Strategy for Achievement</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
The Liberal Studies major will support the university's mission and its academic and institutional priorities	<p>Track and improve:</p> <p>Growth in numbers of students in the major (full-time, part-time, day, and DGCE); also their level of engagement</p> <p>Grow the number of participating faculty and/or faculty additions; also their level of engagement</p> <p>LS major persistence, retention and graduation rates</p> <p>Create alignment map of institutional mission vs. LS major goals and student learning outcomes</p>	<p>Work with campus and community stakeholders to market the new major, recruit faculty, and collect the first 5 years of data. Initial target populations are twofold: strong students looking for an independent-designed major and students likely to withdraw before graduating because they are unable to fit patchwork of credits or multiple interests into a single existing major. However, the program will stay alert for other/unforeseen groups who might benefit or who express interest as well.</p>	Initial data collection: Academic Years 2014-2017  Analysis and review, Academic Years 2017-2019  First Program Review 2019-2020
The Liberal Studies major will support and remain responsive to student needs; the major is committed to assisting students develop flexible and individualized academic programs of study	<p>Analyze trends in interdisciplinary pairings</p> <p>Identify areas for expansion or further development</p> <p>Support effective interdisciplinary pedagogy</p> <p>Support effective advising within the major</p>	<p>Evaluate student programs of study each year</p> <p>New faculty hires and academic programs, as they develop</p> <p>Provide faculty enrichment through training, workshops, relevant publications, conferences, and other faculty development opportunities on and off campus</p> <p>Identify, recruit, and train interested faculty advisors and board members</p>	At the conclusion of each academic year / ongoing basis  At minimum, in WSU Winter and Summer Faculty Institutes each year  Ongoing basis, as needed
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Measurable Objective</b>	<b>Strategy for</b>	<b>Timetable</b>

		<b>Achievement</b>	
The Liberal Studies major will help students from diverse groups develop both individually and academically	<p>Develop clear and realizable policies to guide students, instructors and advisors in interdisciplinary academic program design</p> <p>All LS students will utilize e-portfolios for integration of their learning and reflection</p>	<p>Create and strengthen linkages to on-campus programs that serve diverse student groups, such as Commonwealth Honors Program (honors), LEI (Latino students), CLEWS (Service learners), Academic Success Center (undeclared majors)</p> <p>Employ our campus's existing LiveText e-portfolio system</p>	<p>Policies: within 2 years of program launch, with faculty board involvement</p> <p>E-portfolios: begin with the initial cohort of students in AY 14-15</p>
The Liberal Studies major will connect WSU students to employment and other real-world opportunities to graduate students prepared to enter the workforce or post-baccalaureate education	<p>Collect and analyze:</p> <p>Job placement rates</p> <p>Graduate school placement rates</p> <p>Number and quality of meaningful workforce partnerships</p>	<p>Develop partnerships both on and off campus relevant to program needs and interests</p> <p>Work with Career Services, Writing Center, and employ other resources to help students articulate their skill set for appropriate postgraduate venues</p> <p>Seek feedback from program alumni and community workforce partners to re-align with emerging opportunities</p>	<p>At the conclusion of each academic year / ongoing basis</p>

## **EXTERNAL REVIEW AND INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE**

The proposed program was reviewed by Shari M. Evans Ph.D., Interim Associate Dean and Associate Professor/Director of the Liberal Arts Program at the College of Arts and Sciences, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and by George Chigas Ph.D., Coordinator of Liberal Arts Program and Lecturer in Cambodian Language and Culture, Department of Cultural Studies, University of Massachusetts Lowell. Both reviewers found that the flexibility, timeliness, value for multiple student populations, and inclusion of both a major capstone and an e-portfolio to be strengths of the proposed program. At the same time, they found that the flexibility of the program presented challenges regarding student learning outcomes, the efficacy of the program electives and the depth of study in academic areas. Both reviewers stressed the need for applied learning opportunities and internships within the program and the need for active, engaged and thorough student advising. Both reviewers cautioned that enrollment projections may be underestimated and that WSU should be prepared to reassess based on this possibility.

WSU responded that the intentional flexible design was developed to respond to the varied needs of multiple student populations. WSU emphasized its attention to careful oversight, intense training for faculty advisors, a creative approach to assessment, a high level of student engagement and the importance of self-advocacy. Regarding electives and depth of study WSU pointed out that students would earn between 39-49 credits in specific areas of study and adding more would impede flexibility. This is also consistent with the average of 42 elective credits in other programs throughout the institution. WSU developed a 5-year assessment plan to provide continual assessment of program quality, relevance and effectiveness. Regarding Internships and experiential learning opportunities, WSU is currently undergoing an evaluation of the institution's internship policies and procedures and is working towards the goal of having every student in every major complete at least one applied learning experience before graduating. It is planned that students in the Liberal Studies major will have the opportunity to take advantage of internships, service learning, field-work, faculty led short-term study aboard experiences and undergraduate research. In response to concern about rapid growth WSU anticipates a soft launch in the Fall of 2014 working with currently enrolled matriculated and non-matriculated students. It is expected that recruiting will not begin until the Fall of 2015. If applications and enrollments exceed expectations, the WSU administration has committed to reviewing the structure of the major including the Director's role, faculty requirements, and advising demands with additional resources allocated and offset by revenue gains.

## **STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION**

Staff thoroughly reviewed all documentation submitted by **Worcester State University** and external reviewers. Staff recommendation is for approval of the proposed **Bachelor of Arts/Science in Liberal Studies**.

## ATTACHMENT A: CURRICULUM OUTLINE

<b><i>Required (Core) Courses in the Major</i></b>		
<b>Course Number</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Credit Hours</b>
LS 300	Liberal Studies capstone	3
Various	Existing Minor	18-21
Various	Existing Minor OR Concentration OR Self-Designed Cluster	15
	<b><i>Sub Total Required Credits</i></b>	36
<b><i>Elective Courses (Total # courses required = 0 ) (attach list of choices if needed)</i></b>		
LS 190	Introductory Liberal studies	3
LS 290	Intermediate Liberal Studies	3
LS 390	Advanced Liberal Studies	3
LS 400	Liberal studies Honors Thesis	6
LS 401	Liberal Studies Honors Research Project	6
LS 402	Liberal Studies Honors Creative Work Portfolio	6
	<b><i>Sub Total Elective Credits</i></b>	[0]
<b><i>Distribution of General Education Requirements</i></b>		
Arts and Humanities, including Literature and Foreign Languages		# of Gen Ed Credits
Mathematics and the Natural and Physical Sciences		[0]
Social Sciences		[0]
<b><i>Sub Total General Education Credits</i></b>		[0]
<b><i>Curriculum Summary</i></b>		
Total number of courses required for the degree	12	
Total credit hours required for degree	36	
<b><i>Prerequisite, Concentration or Other Requirements:</i></b>		

**ATTACHMENT B: BUDGET**

<b>One Time/ Start Up Costs</b>	<b>Cost Categories</b>	<b>Annual Expenses</b>			
		<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>
	Full Time Faculty <i>(Salary &amp; Fringe)</i>	*n/a			
	Part Time/Adjunct Faculty <i>(Salary &amp; Fringe)</i> For LS 190 and LS 490 classes	\$4,668	\$4,668	\$9,336	\$9,336
	Staff Director of Liberal Studies (3-4 course release) Adjunct replacement cost	\$18,672	\$18,672	\$18,672	\$18,672
	Summer Director Compensation	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500
	General Administrative Costs DGCE Evening Coordinator (03 part-time non-benefitted)	\$10,400 10 hrs /wk @ \$20	\$20,800 20 hrs/ wk @ \$20	\$20,800 20 hrs/ wk @ \$20	\$20,800 20 hrs/ wk @ \$20
	Instructional Materials, Library Acquisitions	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500
	Facilities/Space/Equipment				
	Field & Clinical Resources				
\$15,000	Marketing	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
	Other (Specify)				
* no full-time faculty costs as courses will be selected from University offerings					
<b>\$15,000</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$44,740</b>	<b>\$55,140</b>	<b>\$59,808</b>	<b>\$59,808</b>

<b>One Time/Start-Up Support</b>	<b>Revenue Sources</b>	<b>Annual Income</b>			
		<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>
	Grants				

	Tuition	\$27,300	\$50,700	\$89,700	\$144,300
	Fees	\$24,045	\$44,655	\$79,005	\$127,095
	Departmental				
	Reallocated Funds				
	Other (specify)				
	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$51,345</b>	<b>\$95,355</b>	<b>\$168,705</b>	<b>\$271,395</b>

## ATTACHMENT C: FACULTY FORM

Summary of Faculty Who Will Teach in Proposed Program							
Please list full-time faculty first, alphabetically by last name. Add additional rows as necessary.							
Name of faculty member (Name, Degree and Field, Title)	Check if Tenured	Courses Taught Put (C) to indicate core course. Put (OL) next to any course currently taught online.	Number of sections	Division of College of Employment	Full- or Part- time in Program	Full- or part-time in other department or program (Please specify)	Sites where individual will teach program courses
Briesacher, Erika Ph.D., History Assistant Professor		• Various	TBD	School of Humanities & Social Sciences	Part-time	Yes History	• Main Campus
Hangen, Tona Ph.D., History Associate Professor	✓	• Various	TBD	School of Humanities & Social Sciences	Part-time	Yes History	• Main Campus
O'Connell, Sam Ph.D., Visual and Performing Arts Assistant Professor		• Various	TBD	School of Humanities & Social Sciences	Part-time	Yes Theatre	• Main Campus
Tahiliani, John Ph.D., Criminal Justice Assistant Professor	✓ (9/1/14)	• Various	TBD	School of Humanities & Social Sciences	Part-time	Yes Criminal Justice	• Main Campus
Theriault, Henry Ph.D., Philosophy Professor	✓	• Various	TBD	School of Humanities & Social Sciences	Part-time	Yes Philosophy	• Main Campus
Shamgochian, Maureen Ph.D., Biology Professor	✓	• Various	TBD	School of Education, Health & Natural Sciences	Part-time	Yes Biology	• Main Campus