

## UNIT REPORT

**Letters Arts & Social Sciences-  
Academic - APR Self-Study Report  
by Academic Unit/Department**

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## Program Mission

### Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences Mission Statement

**Program Mission Statement:**

The academic programs that are housed within the College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences comprise the Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences academic arm of the college. Our mission is to prepare broadly educated individuals capable of open inquiry, critical thinking, and effective communication, who understand and are responsive to the needs of individuals and society. Students are prepared to become knowledgeable, contributing citizens in a world of diverse cultures and contexts. Beyond learning how to discover, analyze, and integrate knowledge across disciplines, graduates come to value lifelong learning as the basis for excellence in any endeavor.

## Program Goal (add a minimum of 3 program goal "plan items")

### Goal 1. Unique Curricular Opportunities

**Goal Statement:**

Develop unique curricular opportunities for students interested in interdisciplinary themes.

**Alignment to UI Strategic Plan Goals:**

Innovate (Goal 1): Scholarly and creative products of the highest quality and scope, resulting in significant positive impact for the region and the world.

**Indicators/Metrics to Evaluate Progress:**

Student-facing information about multiple curricular opportunities for INTR developed and in use.

**List of Actions the Program Will Take to Achieve Goals :**

Develop clear INTR degree pathways that fit student interests and career goals.

**Goal Achievement Level:** Not Met

### Goal 2. Fiscal Support

**Goal Statement:**

Increase funding for co-curricular programming within those disciplines that are housed in the academic arm of CLASS rather than in individual departments/units. The intent is to allow a greater number of students to benefit from programming related to these disciplines.

**Alignment to UI Strategic Plan Goals:**

Engage (Goal 2): Suggest and influence change that addresses societal needs and global issues, and advances economic development and culture.

**Indicators/Metrics to Evaluate Progress:**

Budget appropriations to interdisciplinary minor programs for curricular and extra curricular programming needs.

**List of Actions the Program Will Take to Achieve Goals :**

Collaborate with the college and other units to ensure ongoing funding for existing and newly proposed programs moving forward.

**Goal Achievement Level:** In Progress

### Goal 3. Cultivate Opportunities

**Goal Statement:**

Build a network of faculty and professionals that can cultivate opportunities to provide transformative experiences for our students.

**Alignment to UI Strategic Plan Goals:**

Transform (Goal 3): Increase our educational impact.

Cultivate (Goal 4): Foster an inclusive, diverse community of students, faculty, and staff and improve cohesion and morale.

**Indicators/Metrics to Evaluate Progress:**

Number of student internships developed to provide transformative professional experiences.

Number of students participating in internships.

Number of units and faculty engaged in internships.

**List of Actions the Program Will Take to Achieve Goals :**

Develop paid internship agreements with Development, Marketing and Communications, Recruitment, and Career Services.

Increase the visibility of internship opportunities by communicating to students, advisers, and faculty that an array of internship opportunities are available.

**Goal Achievement Level:** Not Met

## Student Learning Assessment Report (add one "plan item" for each major, degree, and/or certificate offered by dept)

### General Studies (BGS)

**Assessment Report Contact:** Interim Associate Dean Dr. Folwell

**Program Changes in Past Year:**

In the past year, due to COVID and turnover in the AD office, no changes were undertaken for BGS.

**Learning Outcomes are Communicated to All Students in Program (check box if true):** true

**Learning Outcomes are Communicated to All Faculty (check box if true):** true

**Optional: Framework Alignment:** N/A

**Import Outcomes Data (from Anthology Outcomes):**

3.

**Writing Skills**

The student will be able to communicate an understanding of a complex idea in written form.

Academic Year 2020-2021: **General Studies (B.G.S)**

Term: **Overview**

Exceeded		100%	5
Met		0%	0
Partially Met		0%	0
Not Met		0%	0

4.

**Planning Skills**

The student will be able to articulate their career goals and their plans to achieve them.

Academic Year 2020-2021: **General Studies (B.G.S)**

Term: **Overview**

Exceeded		60%	3
Met		0%	0
Partially Met		0%	0
Not Met		40%	2

**Summary of Student Learning:**

Ultimately for the writing skills learning outcome all students exceeded expectations. However, for the planning skills learning outcomes, the majority exceed though 40% did not meet expectations.

**Summary of Faculty Discussion:**

Upon reflection, the student learning outcomes could be improved and aligned with DQP. In addition, the inconsistency with which BGS students enrolled in the INTR 401 course, which is our primary assessment point in the program, should be addressed by making INTR 401 a required course in the BGS curriculum. Course assignments used for assessment should be revised and also aligned with DQP learning outcomes.

**Summary of Changes/Improvements Being Considered:**

Curricular changes will be made to require INTR 401.

An advisory board will be convened to further discuss outcomes in the next cycle.

INTR 401 assignments will be revised.

**Inter-rater Reliability:**

Assessments include primarily objective grade data at this juncture. New assignments will be accompanied by a rubric to ensure consistency across graders.

**Closing the Loop:**

Prior changes are not well articulated and it is difficult given recent turnover to determine how those recommended changes (if completed) had any meaningful impact at this juncture.

**Interdisciplinary Studies (BA/BS)**

**Assessment Report Contact:** Traci Craig, AD

**Program Changes in Past Year:**

In the past year, due to COVID and turnover in the AD office, no changes were undertaken for Interdisciplinary Studies.

**Learning Outcomes are Communicated to All Students in Program (check box if true):** true

**Learning Outcomes are Communicated to All Faculty (check box if true):** true

**Optional: Framework Alignment:** N/A

**Import Outcomes Data (from Anthology Outcomes):**

INTR has a singular assessment point in the senior year. As students historically do not declare or develop their INTR major until their junior year, we manage an assessment in the senior year so that they will have had some time in the program prior to the assessment point.

**Summary of Student Learning:**

As no students were matriculating in INTR, data were not collected and student learning is not summarized here.

**Summary of Faculty Discussion:**

Discussion of assessment broadly led to a primary focus on lack of enrollment in the program.

**Summary of Changes/Improvements Being Considered:**

In order to increase enrollment, changes to curriculum instructions should be considered. In addition, providing sample pathways for students or even templates of possible interdisciplinary foci. A capstone course requirement may also be considered.

**Inter-rater Reliability:**

Given the lack of data and low n, inter-rater reliability was not part of this cycle. However, in the future, rubrics may be employed to gather reliable data.

**Closing the Loop:**

Moving forward assessment efforts will be aligned with DQP learning outcomes, appropriate curricular changes to include a common data collection point, and improved recruitment efforts as well as offering INTR as a retention tool for students who would like to pursue multiple areas of interest and lack time to complete multiple majors.

## Student Achievement

**General Studies Student Achievement****Student Retention:**

Retention of first-year students was lower than expected for 20-21. Historically, retention rates since 2007 have ranged between 65% and 83%. For 20-21, the retention rate was unexpectedly low at 48.5%, we believe this is largely due to the online nature of courses during the COVID-19 pandemic during which face-to-face class meetings were the exception rather than the rule.

We were slightly less likely to retain first-generation students (44.44%) than non-first-generation students (53.13%).

Pell Grant recipients had a retention rate of 40%, direct loan students had a retention rate of 45.45%, and those without pell or direct loan had a retention rate of 63.64%.

White students had the lowest retention rate (44.9%) followed by American Indian students (50%) and Hispanic/Latino students' retention rate (66.67%). African American and International students both had a 100% retention rate. Small populations should be taken into account when interpreting these retention rates.

Academic Support services are critical to retention efforts and our BGS students are more likely to agree (96.3% compared to 92.64% of University students) that academic support services meet the needs of students than students at the University of Idaho.

**Student Persistence:**

Student data is extracted from the internal dashboards and tracked through those University-level systems. 142 of 188 students persisted from Fall 2020 to Spring 2021.

The overall persistence percentage is 75.5%. Examination of IPEDS race data for fall-spring persistence indicates that 72.7% of white students persisted, 70% of Hispanic/Latino students persisted, 100% African American students persisted, 100% Native Hawaiian/PI persisted, and 80% American Indian Alaskan Students persisted. While there are some gaps, they are relatively small and the persistence of diverse populations is in

some cases higher than the overall percentage.

The difference in persistence by sex was minimal with females having a fall-spring persistence percentage of 77.9% and males 73.9%.

In Fall 2020, 52.1% of our majors were pell eligible and 48.9% were first-generation. Regarding age, 80.8% are traditionally aged college students and 19.2% are non-traditionally aged.

#### **Student Completion:**

There were 51 degree-conferrals for BGS in AY 20-21.

Examining data from the 2015-16 cohort (for 6-year graduation rates), we note that 51.30% of the initial cohort of 74 graduated. One student remains in our college but has not yet graduated.

The unique nature of the General Studies program means that we provide students pathways to other degrees. And while 24.3% of the initial cohort did graduate from our college though not in BGS. The remaining 27% of our retained students graduated from other colleges.

#### **Student Postgraduate Success:**

In the senior student survey, 24% of BGS students indicated they had been offered a position compared to only 18% university students overall.

#### **Identify Equity Gaps:**

The General Studies major enrolled a more diverse student population than the university population. In General Studies, 68% of students identified as white, 14% as Hispanic, 5.8% as Black, 2.6% as Native American, and 3% as 2 or more races in the Fall of 2020.

#### **Effective Learning Environment and Closing Equity Gaps:**

There are no clear equity gaps identified by age group, race/ethnicity, first-generation status, nor pell grant status. Gaps tend to be small and reverse over the years for which we have data. The lack of a systematic trend points to gaps that may appear at the university level, rather than anything unique to our degree program. In addition, the larger degree of diversity in the major than in the University as a whole means that equity gaps that appear at the university level are likely to have important impacts on our major in particular. We will continue to monitor the data above for trends that could arise in a post-covid environment and also more clearly track online students independently of our on-campus majors.

## **INTR Student Achievement**

#### **Student Retention:**

Due to low numbers data are suppressed for retention in the dashboards. It likely that there were no or only 1 student who was enrolled at any time in the INTR degree in the AY 20-21 school year. We are working on providing

#### **Student Persistence:**

Again low n leads to repression of data that would give IPEDS, SES, or even FG status.

#### **Student Completion:**

There were no students enrolled in the program in 2020-2021.

#### **Student Postgraduate Success:**

There were no students enrolled in the program in 2020-2021. In addition, senior survey data does not allow sorting for the INTR unit due to low numbers.

#### **Identify Equity Gaps:**

No or low numbers of students prevent counts from being revealed for demographic criteria that would allow us to examine equity.

#### **Effective Learning Environment and Closing Equity Gaps:**

INTR students meet one on one with the Associate Dean as well as at least one advisor in their emphasis areas. Thus, there are many people invested in the success of our INTR students and these students are highly motivated to finish their degrees as they often have a clear idea of what they want to pursue after college. Low numbers here mean that equity gaps are difficult to identify and therefore difficult to close if they in fact exist.

## **Demand and Productivity**

### **Demand and Productivity For BGS, INTR, and Minor Programs**

#### **External Demand:**

There is great demand for four-year degrees, and the BGS provides just such a credential for students who have not necessarily found an area in which they would like to focus their education. This broad level of education produces well-rounded and career-ready students able to serve their communities in a wide variety of ways.

The General Studies program serves two distinct groups of students. First, some students are not ready to declare a major, enter General Studies degree program, and then move on to a major in their interest area. In the last eight years, hundreds of students began their academic careers in General Studies, yet only two of these students also graduated with that degree. The second group of students is those who cannot finish a degree in their major of choice for various reasons (e.g., GPA or time limit reasons) but can complete a 4-year degree in General Studies. And this type of students is best represented by the 51 degrees we conferred in 2020-21.

The Interdisciplinary Studies program serves yet another group of students--namely, those who have a clear idea of what they would like to do. These students find their interests fall at the intersection of two or more disciplines and may not have time to complete a double major. Low enrollments here are essentially a symptom of little communication and marketing about this program. Future endeavors will build the visibility of this program to increase enrollments and particularly retain students who find themselves feeling a bit "caught between" majors or interests.

There are eight interdisciplinary minors housed in the college as well: Africana Studies, American Studies, American Indian Studies, Asian Studies, Economics, Naval Science, Religious Studies, and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Overall, these minor programs serve approximately 76 students each semester (68 students in Fall 2020, and 84 students in Spring 2021).

#### **Internal Demand:**

BGS and INTR only offer a single course, INTR 401, that serves as the capstone for the programs. This course provides an opportunity for students to work closely on their professional and career plans with career services, as well as tie their coursework together into a meaningful body of knowledge that will serve their future endeavors.

#### **Credit Productivity:**

The capstone course for INTR and BGS is shared and not required for either major. Given that the course is optional and is often substituted with other capstone courses, the INTR 404 course enrolls approximately 20-30 students per year.

## **Financial Health and Resources**

### **Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences Financial Health**

#### **Financial Health:**

The academic units housed within the Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences academic arm include the following minors: Africana studies, American Indian Studies, Asian Studies, Naval Science, Religious Studies, and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. The Economics (BA), General Studies (BGS), and the Interdisciplinary Studies Degree (BA/BS) also are housed in the Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences academic arm. These programs consist primarily of coursework that serves other majors and sits within those departments.

Each unit relies on college-level funding to provide co-curricular programming for students with interests in these minor discipline areas. The BGS and INTR programs are primarily supported by CLASS ADs and Student Service staff.

In 2020-21, these programs served 195 students in our four-year degree programs and an additional 84 were enrolled in our minor programs in Spring of 2021.

#### **Efficient Use of Resources:**

There are no direct budget lines or allocations supporting these academic programs offerings, and they generate credit hours for units across the college. Thus, the resources sit in units and their efficiency is certainly increased by student enrollment in their courses. Co-curricular programming is sponsored by the college or other units that have an interest in the topical areas that relate to the minors themselves.