

**Liberal Arts Program
Program Review Action Recommendations (2009)
Action Update
September 2010**

The program was reviewed in 2009. An external program review was conducted and submitted in 2010. Action recommendations were created based upon the findings of both the internal and the external program reviews; the following is an update on the progress that has been made toward those recommendations.

1. Rename Liberal Arts as “Special Interdisciplinary Major.”

Progress attempted/no progress. In Fall 2009, paperwork was submitted to the CAS Curriculum Committee requesting discussion of a program name change and explaining the various reasons behind the request. The request was denied. Our external program reviewer also voiced a similar perspective, stating “I do not recommend any name change at this time. Rather, increasing awareness of the Liberal Arts major, especially through networking with faculty across campus, appears to be the best way of addressing this confusion [between the titles of the Liberal Arts program and the Liberal Studies program].”

2. Streamline the Senior Project Committee by continuing the current use of the Senior Project Rubric and by asking each academic department at ULV for a faculty member to volunteer as de facto Liberal Arts committee member.

Completed (first clause) and abandoned (second clause). The Senior Project Rubric (new in 2009) is still being used successfully, and it provides clear and consistent assessment of senior projects that may be cited in future program reviews. The second item, to ask each academic department at ULV for a faculty member to volunteer as de facto Liberal Arts committee member, was abandoned due to the unnecessary work involved: explaining the nature of such committee work to all department chairs and asking for a volunteer from each department is unnecessary when a very small number of faculty members (2 per student/3 seniors this year/6 faculty members) ever serve as Senior Project Committee members.

3. Redesign the LA 390 Research Methods class as a special-topic based 2-unit INTD course open to non-majors (and still required for majors) that fulfills the INTD Values area. Example courses might be: Los Angeles, Sustainability, or Food Studies. In the revised course, students would engage in an interdisciplinary study of the special topic; for the final project, students would choose and research their own topic area and outline a project paper (thus for majors, the course would still fulfill the preparatory stages of the senior project).

Successfully completed (in altered fashion). The 390 Research Methods class still exists in its prior form and is open only to majors the semester prior to their 499 Senior Project class. However, an introductory course, LA 200: Foundations of Interdisciplinary Study, was designed, approved by the CAS Curriculum Committee, and taught during Spring 2010. The course was open to both majors and non-majors and gave students an introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies at an early stage in their studies, preparing them for future/higher-level INTD work. The redesign work was noted by our external reviewer, “The Liberal Arts program has already taken a number of steps to improve the program in terms of clarity of purpose, coherence, and communication between students, faculty mentors, and the program director.”

4. Promote the Liberal Arts program by participating in freshman orientation, by adding language to university promotional materials, and by continuing and enlarging discussions for an Interdisciplinary Studies Center that will bring together multiple interdisciplinary degree offerings.

Little progress. In terms of participation in orientation, the Liberal Arts advisor does serve as advisor to incoming students who have questions/interest in the Liberal Arts major. There are no promotional materials as yet (the Liberal Arts advisor has put promotional time/effort into the development of a Creative Writing major and related activities). Regarding an INTD Studies Center, discussions were held with the CAS Dean in Fall 2009. Interest in further discussions was expressed by all but more pressing matters have to this point taken precedent.

5. Have continuity in the directorship.

Done. After a year in which two faculty served as program directors, the current director has served for three consecutive years. According to our external reviewer, “. . . having a program director with adequate time and commitment to the program who can serve for a period of years is very important. Since the program director plays such a pivotal role in advising, supervising research projects, and teaching in the core curriculum, a stable position is indispensable. If the major grows, additional release time for advising may become necessary.”

6. Look into the possibility of creating templates for specific major-areas (such as American Studies, Cultural Studies, Nursing, etc).

No progress (this is related directly to #4 and the possibility of a larger INTD program that would house themed-majors; please see explanation there).