

Liberal Arts Program Review

May 2009
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Executive Summary

The University of La Verne offers undergraduates the opportunity to major in the interdisciplinary Liberal Arts designation leading to the Bachelor of Arts or Sciences degree. The Liberal Arts program affords students an education interwoven among the arts and sciences, one that requires specified (and heavily upper-division) coursework in the areas of the Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, and Fine Arts. This blend of coursework allows Liberal Arts students precise and considered vantage points through which they can study contemporary global, national, or local issues overlap; in other words, it allows students a specific and more comprehensive entry into very contemporary fields of study that would be limited through traditional discipline-based majors.

There are three aspects to the Liberal Arts curriculum. The first is upper division courses drawn from the four arts and sciences areas totaling 26 units. The second is a core curriculum that draws on three disciplines and totals 20 units; this core curriculum leads to a final ambitious senior project in two parts, a 1 credit Research Methods class (taken the fall of the senior year) and a 4 unit Senior Project course (the Senior Project is evaluated by two faculty in relevant fields relevant and the program director).

Taken together, the Liberal Arts curriculum, which is tailored to each student's needs and interests under the advisement of the program director, leads to students possessing the ability to understand the nature of interdisciplinary studies and its ability to offer more complete understanding of complex issues, while also allowing them to become experts upon interdisciplinary topics of their choosing.

During the 2008-9 academic year, the program has 4 graduating majors and between 10 and 20 declared majors (it is impossible to put a precise number on non-graduating majors in Liberal Arts as there is an ongoing confusion between Liberal Arts and Liberal Studies for students, and as most graduates don't declare Liberal Arts until their junior year of study; this confusion is addressed in the Action Recommendations). Four graduating majors is a generally consistent number for the last five years.

A great deal of flexibility is built into the program which allows students 1-2 years into their undergraduate studies to choose Liberal Arts as a major. The

program, originally conceived as a way to assist off-campus and CAPA students, has become more popular with on-campus students; all 4 graduates this year fit into this last category.

The learning outcomes for Liberal Arts majors include a strong ability to conduct thorough and appropriate research, to understand the manner in which disciplines reinforce one another (and independently are often limited), and to demonstrate a high degree of critical thinking as applied to complex real-world issues.

Program Mission

The Liberal Arts program aims to provide to those students with complex academic interests a chance to create a diverse and integrated major program. The program culminates in an interdisciplinary senior project that reflects students' understanding of the advantages of interdisciplinarity and prepares them for varied and complex critical thinking on current or historical local, national, or global topics.

Program Goals (learning objectives)

The Liberal Arts program expects its graduating majors to be able to:

1. Research and cite appropriate multiple disciplines in written compositions to a specific and clearly-defined purpose.
2. Describe the distinctions between single-disciplinary studies, multi-disciplinary studies, and interdisciplinary studies.
3. Demonstrate how the integration of knowledge from multiple disciplines can provide a more complete analysis of complex issues.

Program Description

Organization

The Liberal Arts program awards an undergraduate Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Sciences degree to students at the University of La Verne. The program is of an interdisciplinary nature and combines the benefits of a

cross-curricular course of study across the arts and sciences. The program is directed by the Liberal Arts Program Director, an Arts and Sciences faculty member (currently a member of the Modern Languages department). Advisement of majors, primarily the creation of majors unique to students and the overseeing of senior projects, is performed by the director.

Courses

The program takes from a large variety of already approved Arts and Sciences courses approved under the stewardship of Dr. Wagoner during her tenure as Liberal Arts Program Director; departments were asked to submit courses they thought had interdisciplinary leanings and upon the review of Dr. Wagoner, these courses were approved as appropriate for Liberal Arts majors. Other courses not pre-approved may also be taken by students as long as they are approved by the current Liberal Arts Program Director; courses are approved based on each student's field of interest and the appropriateness of the course.

Both the core curriculum and the concentration must reflect a blend of student in the arts and sciences, and the concentration must be directly reflected in students' senior project. Because of the nature of this blended program, course offerings always exist, as students are allowed (with the director's approval) to take any courses in the arts and sciences as long as they are varied and generally upper-division (see Executive Summary).

The only program-specific (LA) courses are the senior Research Methods class (LA 390), a one-unit focus on research that prepares students for the second program-specific course, LA 499, the Senior Project class.

The design of ULV's Liberal Arts program is not consistent with all regional interdisciplinary programs and a large function of this is enrollment and the youth of our program. At UC-Riverside, for example, students who major in interdisciplinary studies choose only two areas of emphasis from a wide variety of disciplines (including among 32 American Studies, Biological Sciences, Dance, Economics, Geology, Mathematics, Religious Studies, Sociology, and Urban Studies). At Pomona College, students in interdisciplinary fields declare a specific area of study from a field of choices (including American Studies, Asian Studies, Black Studies, Chicano Studies, among others). At Occidental College, students can choose "Interdepartmental Majors" (including American Studies, Asian Studies, Biochemistry, Diplomacy and World Affairs, and Urban and Environmental Policy). At Cal State-LA, students choose either a concentration (such as

Women's and Gender Studies or Science, Technology, and Medicine) or two 'depth' areas (such as American Studies or Cultural Studies).

However, some area schools (University of Redlands) offer similar programs to our own in which the major is tailored individually to students, rather than offering them a set of already-designed degree programs.

Faculty

There are two tiers of faculty: general and primary.

General faculty includes all University of La Verne faculty members (as any course has the potential to be approved for the Liberal Arts major).

Primary faculty is the Liberal Arts Program Director, who offers the LA 390 and LA 499 courses as directed studies. The 390 course is offered in the fall and the 499 in the spring, but the courses can also be offered at other times, depending upon student graduation needs.

Majors

Liberal Arts majors for the years 2004-2008

	<u>all campuses</u>	<u>main campus freshmen</u>	<u>degrees conferred</u>
2004:	15	6	1
2005:	18	4	1
2006:	12	3	6
2007:	13	1	4
2008:	12	5	3

Advising

The Liberal Arts Program Director is responsible for advising majors.

Assessment Procedures

The Liberal Arts program is a fairly small major program that has gone under some upheaval in the last two years. As previously noted, it existed under the tenure of Dr. Zandra Wagoner for several years and enjoyed consistency. In Fall 2007, Dr. Wagoner was reassigned and so replaced by Dr. Gerard Lavatori as the Liberal Arts Director. In Spring 2008, Dr. Lavatori went on sabbatical and was temporarily replaced by Dr. Andrea Labinger as Interim Liberal Arts Director. Dr. Labinger retired from the University of La Verne and Dr. Lavatori took on her prior duties as Honors Program Director, so in summer/fall 2009, Sean Bernard, Asst. Professor of Writing became the Liberal Arts Program Director. Because of these fluctuations, it has been difficult finding old contact information for graduated Liberal Arts students, thus making Alumni Surveys an impossible option for assessment.

However, assessment has been strong in other areas. We've devised a Senior Exit Survey (for students graduating in 2009; Appendix 1). We have also devised a Current Student Survey (for non-graduating Liberal Arts students) and a Senior Project Rubric which has been applied to the projects of this year's graduating seniors (Appendix 2) and, retroactively, to projects from prior years (Appendix 3). Faculty and administration with directly experience with the Liberal Arts program have also provided feedback (Appendix 4).

Senior Exit Survey

Background

Gender: Woman Man

Ethnicity: _____

Status at entry:

- _____ a. First-time freshman
 _____ b. Transfer student under 25 years old

University of La Verne Campus you attended

- _____ a. Main campus traditional program
 _____ b. Main campus CAPA - College Accelerated Program for Adults
 _____ c. Off campus site or resident center

Graduation year and semester: _____

General

1. How did you first become aware of the Liberal Arts program?
2. Why did you choose the Liberal Arts major instead of another major?
3. Do you think if more students knew about the Liberal Arts program, more would major in it? Yes No Comment:
4. What are your thoughts on the name of the program? (Make suggestions for name change, if you wish)
5. In your opinion, what are the Liberal Arts program's strengths?
6. In your opinion, what are its weaknesses?
7. Do you think one advisor/director can serve the program and students well?
 Yes No Comment:
8. What types of students might consider majoring in Liberal Arts?
9. Do you think University of La Verne should continue to offer the Liberal Arts major? Yes No Comment:

Curriculum

10. Would you like to see the program offer only specific courses that meet Liberal Arts requirements? Yes No Comment:
11. Should all courses in the catalog, with the director's approval, continue to be options for students? Yes No Comment:

12. How might the senior Liberal Arts sequence – 390, 499 – be improved?

13. How might the Senior Project Committee be improved?

Advancement

14. Indicate below how-well you have accomplished each of the following program learning outcomes, and how important each one is:

a. Research and cite appropriate multiple disciplines in written compositions to a specific and clearly defined purpose.

Not accomplished at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very accomplished

Not important at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very Important

Comment:

b. Identify the underlying questions, different frameworks, tools, perspectives, methods, and contributions of different academic disciplines.

Not accomplished at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very accomplished

Not important at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very important

Comment:

c. Describe the distinctions between single-disciplinary studies, multi-disciplinary studies, and interdisciplinary studies.

Not accomplished at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very accomplished

Not important at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very important

Comment:

d. Identify when an interdisciplinary approach is appropriate to investigating complex issues.

Not accomplished at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very accomplished

Not important at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very important

Comment:

e. Demonstrate how the integration of knowledge from multiple disciplines can provide a more complete analysis of complex issues.

Not accomplished at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very accomplished

Not important at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very important

Comment:

15. What are your future plans?

16. How has the Liberal Arts major helped prepare you for those plans?

Current Student Survey

Background

Gender: Woman Man

Ethnicity: _____

Status at entry:

- _____ a. First-time freshman
 _____ b. Transfer student under 25 years old

University of La Verne Campus you attended

- _____ a. Main campus traditional program
 _____ b. Main campus CAPA - College Accelerated Program for Adults
 _____ c. Off campus site or resident center

Graduation year and semester: _____

1. How did you first become aware of the Liberal Arts program?
2. Why did you choose the Liberal Arts major instead of another major?
3. Do you think if more students knew about the Liberal Arts program, more would major in it? Yes No Comment:
4. What are your thoughts on the name of the program? (Make suggestions for name change, if you wish)
5. In your opinion, what are the Liberal Arts program's strengths?
6. In your opinion, what are its weaknesses?
7. Do you think one advisor/director can serve the program and students well?
Yes No Comment:
8. What types of students might consider majoring in Liberal Arts?
9. Do you think University of La Verne should continue to offer the Liberal Arts major? Yes No Comment:
10. Would you like to see the program offer only specific courses that meet Liberal Arts requirements? Yes No Comment:
11. Should all courses in the catalog, with the director's approval, continue to be options for students? Yes No Comment:

Liberal Arts Senior Project Rubric

Committee: Please use this rubric to evaluate the senior project by scoring each area according to chart at bottom. Please include comments (on form or project itself) to explain your grade.

Interdisciplinarity: Is the work appropriately interdisciplinary*? score: _____

Clarity: Are the topic and goal clear throughout? score: _____

Entirety: Have *all* elements been properly addressed? score: _____

Argument: Does the author advance his/her own viewpoint? score: _____

Research: Does the author research all appropriate disciplines? score: _____

Depth: Are the main points well-considered and supported? score: _____

Overall Grade: _____

Rubric: 5: Done completely, intelligently, with no room for improvement.
 4: Done completely and intelligently. Very few areas could be improved.
 3: More complete than incomplete. Several areas need clear improvement.
 2: More incomplete than complete. Most areas need improvement.
 1: Fails to fulfill the area being graded.

**Interdisciplinary* being defined as combining the approaches of multiple disciplines.

Findings

Those who have had dealings with Liberal Arts – students and faculty alike – unanimously believe that the program offers a unique academic blend essential to the University of La Verne. Everyone surveyed in this review believes that if more students were aware of the uniqueness the degree offers, more would take advantage of it. The greatest drawback with the Liberal Arts program is that very few people have had dealings with it; after a disconcerted effort from Eric Bishop several years ago to inform students of its existence, the program is now fairly anonymous.

Part of the anonymity stems from the program's name. As mentioned in the gathered materials, there exists at La Verne a "Liberal Studies" major within the College of Education. Beyond the program's resemblance to that degree in name, "Liberal Arts" is also vague in title, as it clearly defines neither the essentially interdisciplinary function of the major nor the individually tailored degrees. Further, "Liberal Arts" is a misnomer: the program's students can and do design degrees involving the social and natural sciences.

Beyond the naming issue, the Liberal Arts program has many strengths, none as profound as its flexibility. At times this flexibility leads to major-students who opt for the Liberal Arts only because they haven't been able to focus on more clearly outlined degree programs; this is rare but a logical outcome when a degree can be drawn from undefined areas. It is far more common, though, for Liberal Arts students to come to the program not out of desperation but out of a desire for a more complex degree that doesn't fit into any one discipline or area of study. No other major program at La Verne begins with what is essentially a blank slate. As long as the program director clearly communicates and assures that this blankness is an opportunity for students to tailor a complex academic degree (rather than assembling loose pieces for the sake of meeting graduation requirements), the flexibility ensures that the Liberal Arts degree has a great deal of academic integrity. Current undergraduates have entered the Liberal Arts program because it allows them to specifically prepare for future fields – nursing, dental school – where other academic degrees do not. Current undergraduates have entered the Liberal Arts program because it allows them to study their area of interest – German Studies, American Studies -- in an interdisciplinary fashion not afforded by other degrees.

One finding is that the goals of the program have not – until this review – been completely defined. This is reflected in the current and retroactively graded Liberal Arts senior projects. These projects show a wide-range of learning and ability: some projects are impressively strong in terms of critical thinking, research, and interdisciplinarity while others are more loosely assembled, resembling discipline-specific reports rather than interdisciplinary analyses. By defining the program's goals in the process of this review, we believe that it will be easier to instill clear expectations for students – and, too, that the students' capstone projects will reflect higher ability. The inconsistency in the senior projects can also be attributed to the recent continual shift in program directors – a lack of continuity impacts students-advisees as this degree, arguably more than any other at La Verne, is dependent on the communication between the program director and the students. A third and perhaps even larger reason is the specifically interdisciplinary coursework within the major – or, more to the point, the lack of interdisciplinary coursework. Currently, there are only two Liberal Arts classes offered at La Verne and required in the major. As reflected in this review, there is a near-consensus that the one-unit 390 Research Methods class is obscure to students and program directors both. This course can be better defined. The goals of the 499 Senior Project course, however, are much clearer: to create a senior project that excels in exhibiting the program's (newly established) outcomes as well as those areas defined by the new Senior Project Rubric. However, communication between students and their faculty committee members (beyond the Liberal Arts director) is an area of concern, as students and faculty-committee members both have expressed frustration over unclear expectations and duties.

Action Recommendations

1. Rename Liberal Arts as “Special Interdisciplinary Major.”
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.
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).
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.
5. Have continuity in the directorship.
6. Look into the possibility of creating templates for specific major-areas (such as *American Studies*, *Cultural Studies*, *Nursing*, etc).

Appendices

Appendix 1: External Review

Dr. April Bullock

**External Peer Review
Liberal Arts Program
University of La Verne**

April Bullock
Associate Professor
Department of Liberal Studies
California State University, Fullerton

Summary

The program under review is an interdisciplinary undergraduate program in the Liberal Arts. The program is designed to provide students with a highly individualized course of study that allows them to investigate contemporary issues and fields of study that would be limited if approached from traditional disciplinary perspectives. Students complete coursework in the Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, and Fine Arts, most of which is at the upper division level. Both breadth and depth are ensured through an individualized study plan created with the approval of the program director that includes upper division courses in all four areas of study, a core curriculum in Liberal Arts that draws upon three areas of study, and a substantial senior project that is evaluated by two faculty members from appropriate fields and the program director. This combination of flexible individualized study plans and careful advising and oversight by the program director and outside faculty members is one of the greatest strengths of the program.

Students are able to choose the Liberal Arts major after completing one to two years of undergraduate study. This is important as students choosing the Liberal Arts major need to time to discover their interests and ultimate goals. This Liberal Arts major is also useful to students whose chosen career paths are not well served by traditional disciplinary majors (this point will be addressed further in the Action Recommendations).

This review is based on the Liberal Arts program review completed in May, 2009, by program director Sean Bernard, course materials from the core curriculum, a visit to a class meeting of Liberal Arts 200—Foundations of Interdisciplinary Studies (2/18/2010), and conversation with the program director.

Learning outcomes and Assessment Procedures

The Program Learning Goals include:

1. Research and Cite appropriate multiple disciplines in written compositions to a specific and clearly defined purpose.
2. Describe distinctions between single-disciplinary studies, multi-disciplinary studies, and interdisciplinary studies.
3. Demonstrate how the integration of knowledge from multiple disciplines can provide a more complete analysis of complex issues.

In order to assess how well these goals have been met, the program has instituted a variety of procedures. An exit survey administered to students in 2009, a current student survey, and a senior project rubric that has been applied to 2009 projects as well as projects from previous years' graduates. The program director also sought out feedback from faculty and administrators who have had experience with the program.

Due to the small size of the program, only two exit surveys were returned in 2009. The questions on the survey are well conceived and move from general inquiries about the place of the Liberal Arts program on the LaVerne campus and the motivations for students choosing the program, to more specific questions about the curriculum and the students' future plans, to a self assessment of how well students feel they have fulfilled the program goals. Students appreciated the flexibility and diversity of the program, and felt that it helped them to find meaning and worth in pursuing studies not directly associated with a specific career path. They valued the ways in which the program required them to be self-motivated, and gave them the support they needed to pursue their passions. They felt less sure about how well they had mastered the second program goal. My own experience in a similar Liberal Studies Program at CSU Fullerton suggests that this is one of the biggest challenges in interdisciplinary undergraduate programs. The Liberal Arts Program has created a new core course, Liberal Arts 200, in part to address this deficiency. Providing a core course that students take early in their college experience should help give Liberal Arts students a better foundation in interdisciplinary study so that as they take courses in the traditional disciplines they will develop a better understanding of disciplinary, multi-disciplinary, and interdisciplinary approaches and the distinctions between them. Student responses to the survey also expressed some concern over confusion between Liberal Arts and the Liberal Studies major that is primarily designed to prepare students for a career in elementary education. This will be addressed in the Action recommendations.

The current student survey also appears to be a very appropriate instrument for assessing the overall program. Because it is administered to current students it does not include the section of questions specifically addressing the program Learning Goals. Instead, it is focused on gathering data on current majors and on how and why they chose the major, as well as questions about the adequacy of advising and course offerings.

The newly developed Liberal Arts Senior Project Rubric is a positive and very useful addition to the program's assessment strategy. Because this is a highly individualized program in which students will be working with a range of faculty potentially drawn from any department or discipline on campus, having a set of criteria that every evaluator can employ and that students are also familiar with before they begin their projects is critical.

The range of qualities that are assessed in the rubric are appropriate to the program's learning goals and should be very useful to students and faculty, the program director, and future internal and external evaluators.

Program capacity

Since the program's latest internal review important steps have been made to improve curriculum offerings, advising, and faculty-student communications. Several of these stand out. The addition of a new lower-division Liberal Arts course (Liberal Arts 200—Foundations of Interdisciplinary Studies) to the curriculum improves program capacity in several ways. By adding a lower-division course to the major curriculum, interdisciplinary research and writing skills are addressed early in the course of study, thus clarifying some of the program's learning objectives for the students. Because the course is part of the INTD Values Area, it also has the potential to attract students to the major before they have progressed to their junior year. This may help to dispel some of the confusion on campus between the Liberal Arts program and the Liberal Studies program and attract students whose goals and interests make them well suited to the former. My visit to a meeting of Liberal Arts 200 revealed a lively and engaged group of students who responded very well to the guidance of Prof. Bernard. Their topic of study was appropriately interdisciplinary and should serve as an excellent foundation for those students who choose to pursue a BA in Liberal Arts. Since students in the 2009 Exit Survey mentioned that word of mouth was an important form of advertisement for the Liberal Arts program, this too should be enhanced by the addition of LA 200 to the curriculum.

LA 390 and LA 499 make up the rest of the core curriculum in the Liberal Arts program. This two semester sequence, especially once the purpose and content of LA 390 are clarified (as mentioned in the internal Program Review). The development of the Senior Project Rubric along with a review and revision of the LA 390 course are positive developments and signs that the program is reflecting upon the results of their assessment attempts and responding with appropriate revisions of their curriculum.

Student and faculty feedback about the program suggests that no further core curriculum needs to be developed at this time. Since the flexibility and individualized design of the Liberal Arts major is its great strength, all courses in the University catalog should continue to be available for potential use of a study plan. In order to ensure the quality of the individualized plan and the integrity of the major, the program director's advising and oversight role is crucial. Since this is a small program at present one advisor is adequate, however, if the program should experience substantial growth, more faculty advisors would be necessary.

Action recommendations

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. Several additional observations or recommendations might also be considered as the program continues.

In terms of consistency and clarity of program goals and communication with students and faculty, I recommend that the program consider setting up several dedicated areas of study or themes and connecting with faculty who could help the program director with advisement in their area. For example, preparation for Nursing and Dentistry, well-known interdisciplinary fields such as American Studies and others could be identified and included on the program's website and other promotional materials. This would accomplish several things. It would increase the visibility of the Liberal Arts program as preparation for more specific career or academic pursuits (some students may be intimidated by the individualized nature of the program because they cannot imagine how it could be useful to them without some examples), and allow faculty from various departments to become point persons for the Liberal Arts program, providing advising support to the Program Director, and steering potential students to the program.

Visibility and coherence are both important to the continued health and vitality of the program. Many faculty members housed in traditional disciplinary departments are engaged in interdisciplinary research or have had interdisciplinary training, including them in the program in some fairly undemanding but specified way would be a great help. I do not, however, recommend limiting the flexibility of the program for individual students (by, for example, creating more formal concentrations or limiting which courses from the catalog can appear on a study plan) since this is clearly one of the program's strengths.

The campus administration might help develop this pool of interested faculty through hosting social mixers or faculty discussion groups centered on Liberal Arts. The value of a Liberal Arts education is a topic very much in the news, both inside and outside of academia, this interest might be used to spark conversation on campus and to raise the visibility of the Liberal Arts program.

Continuing with the theme of continuity, 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.

While the similarity of the titles of the Liberal Arts program and the Liberal Studies program continues to cause some confusion on campus, 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. Since the Liberal Arts major requires students to take courses across the traditional Liberal Arts fields, for the time being the current program title seems appropriate.

As these action recommendations suggest, I think the two most important steps the program can take to improve and remain healthy are better promotion and communication with students, and better communication and connection with faculty from across campus.

Overall health of the program

The Liberal Arts program clearly provides a unique and very valuable course of study for students at the University of LaVerne whose individual academic interests or career goals are less well served by traditional disciplinary majors. Students have commented that they were able to find and pursue their passions in the Liberal Arts major. Their responses to exit survey questions suggest that they also experience some of the less tangible and easily assessed benefits of a Liberal Arts education—an openness to the world, confidence that they can approach real world problems and issues with a diverse frame of reference and analytical skill.

While the program has thus far generally accommodated a very limited number of students, I suspect that it will grow a bit in the years to come. Clarification of the goals of the program, implementing strategies to make more students aware of the value of the program in terms of personal and intellectual growth and career preparation, and increasing faculty involvement should keep the program healthy. A highly individualized program such as the Liberal Arts major at LaVerne will, for very good reasons, always appeal to a fairly limited number of students. Attracting self-motivated, passionate students is one of the best ways of ensuring the integrity and high quality of the program. The same applies to the faculty who become involved with the program, reaching out to those who already value interdisciplinarity and the Liberal Arts should create the greatest potential for maintaining program quality while also fostering growth in enrollment.

Appendix 2: Senior Exit Surveys

Senior Exit Survey 1

Background

Gender: Woman Man

Ethnicity: _____ White _____

Status at entry:

- a. First-time freshman
 b. Transfer student under 25 years old

University of La Verne Campus you attended

- a. Main campus traditional program
 b. Main campus CAPA - College Accelerated Program for Adults
 c. Off campus site or resident center

Graduation year and semester: Spring 09 _____

General

17. How did you first become aware of the Liberal Arts program?

Through my cousin Zandra who was at the time heading the program and through my mom Marilyn who said I should talk to Zandra due to my indecisiveness

18. Why did you choose the Liberal Arts major instead of another major?

I had to many interests to stick to one major and I love looking at subjects from multiple disciplines to see how they intertwine especially issues such as sexuality. I also choose it because with the variety of courses I had taken it was the quickest way to graduate.

19. Do you think if more students knew about the Liberal Arts program, more would major in it? Yes No Comment: it's a personal degree and I feel like it makes it mean something more that you put yourself into it.

20. What are your thoughts on the name of the program? (Make suggestions for name change, if you wish)

I would change it just because every time I say Liberal Arts people go "so your going to be a teacher" and I'm like uh no. Maybe Interdisciplinary Studies or Diverse something... or I dunno... I just know im not going to be a teacher

21. In your opinion, what are the Liberal Arts program's strengths?

Diversity, personality, interconnectedness, flexibility, and personal freedom to follow ones curiosity.

22. In your opinion, what are its weaknesses?

It's unknown I wish I would have started on it sooner than I did but I didn't know about it.

23. Do you think one advisor/director can serve the program and students well?

Yes No Comment:

24. What types of students might consider majoring in Liberal Arts?

Any that's not sure what they want to do. That feel they don't fit into any major. That their passions don't fit into a strict major.

25. Do you think University of La Verne should continue to offer the Liberal Arts major? Yes No Comment:

Curriculum

26. Would you like to see the program offer only specific courses that meet Liberal Arts requirements? Yes No Comment: Its diversity and flexibility are what make it great.

27. Should all courses in the catalog, with the director's approval, continue to be options for students? Yes No Comment: It's the only way I feel to allow the student to pursue his/her own goals and questions.

28. How might the senior Liberal Arts sequence – 390, 499 – be improved?

Have more deadlines that affect grading.

29. How might the Senior Project Committee be improved?

Maybe allow students to be able to choose prior teachers/advisors that have left the University. Not sure though just an idea.

Advancement

30. Indicate below how-well you have accomplished each of the following program learning outcomes, and how important each one is:

a. Research and cite appropriate multiple disciplines in written compositions to a specific and clearly defined purpose.

Not accomplished at all	1	2	3	<u>4</u>	5	Very accomplished
Not important at all	1	2	3	<u>4</u>	5	Very Important

Comment:

b. Identify the underlying questions, different frameworks, tools, perspectives, methods, and contributions of different academic disciplines.

Not accomplished at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very accomplished

Not important at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very important

Comment:

c. Describe the distinctions between single-disciplinary studies, multi-disciplinary studies, and interdisciplinary studies.

Not accomplished at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very accomplished

Not important at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very important

Comment:

d. Identify when an interdisciplinary approach is appropriate to investigating complex issues.

Not accomplished at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very accomplished

Not important at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very important

Comment:

e. Demonstrate how the integration of knowledge from multiple disciplines can provide a more complete analysis of complex issues.

Not accomplished at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very accomplished

Not important at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very important

Comment:

31. What are your future plans? Not sure... Probably grad school, maybe Peace Corps, I'll let you know when I figure it out

32. How has the Liberal Arts major helped prepare you for those plans? It has helped me figure out that you don't have to have a specific goal in sight to achieve meaning and purpose. As long as you follow your ambitions and keep working although it may feel like an endless pursuit something will come of it maybe even something you never dreamed of being able to do.

Senior Exit Survey 2

Background

Gender: Woman Man

Ethnicity: _____ WHITE _____

Status at entry:

- a. First-time freshman
 b. Transfer student under 25 years old

University of La Verne Campus you attended

- a. Main campus traditional program
 b. Main campus CAPA - College Accelerated Program for Adults
 c. Off campus site or resident center

Graduation year and semester: _____ SPRING 09 _____

General

33. How did you first become aware of the Liberal Arts program?
 From another Liberal Arts major
34. Why did you choose the Liberal Arts major instead of another major?
 I couldn't decide what major I wanted and thought that the Liberal Arts major would allow me to take courses in all three of the areas I was interested in.
35. Do you think if more students knew about the Liberal Arts program, more would major in it? Yes No Comment:
36. What are your thoughts on the name of the program? (Make suggestions for name change, if you wish) I think a lot of people get confused about the name and think it is the same thing as Liberal Studies. I think it is a good name for the program but people need to be more aware of it.
37. In your opinion, what are the Liberal Arts program's strengths?
 It allows students to make connections between disciplines which will help students in the future. In reality it is often important to understand more than one area of emphasis and Liberal Arts helps students prepare for this.
38. In your opinion, what are its weaknesses?
 Not a lot of employers are familiar with the major and this makes it difficult to get a job after graduation. It is also a disadvantage when employers are searching the internet using key words because they will not search for Liberal Arts.
39. Do you think one advisor/director can serve the program and students well?
 Yes No Comment: It depends on how many students are in the program. I would say yes as long as the number remains small but if it grows a lot the advisor may need more support.

40. What types of students might consider majoring in Liberal Arts?

Students who are interested in a variety of subjects and do not know which one they want.

41. Do you think University of La Verne should continue to offer the Liberal Arts major? Yes X No Comment:

Curriculum

42. Would you like to see the program offer only specific courses that meet Liberal Arts requirements? Yes X No Comment:

43. Should all courses in the catalog, with the director's approval, continue to be options for students? Yes X No Comment:

44. How might the senior Liberal Arts sequence – 390, 499 – be improved?

I'm not sure

45. How might the Senior Project Committee be improved?

I'm not sure

Advancement

46. Indicate below how-well you have accomplished each of the following program learning outcomes, and how important each one is:

a. Research and cite appropriate multiple disciplines in written compositions to a specific and clearly defined purpose.

Not accomplished at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very accomplished

Not important at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very Important

Comment:

b. Identify the underlying questions, different frameworks, tools, perspectives, methods, and contributions of different academic disciplines.

Not accomplished at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very accomplished

Not important at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very important

Comment:

c. Describe the distinctions between single-disciplinary studies, multi-disciplinary studies, and interdisciplinary studies.

Not accomplished at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very accomplished

Not important at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very important

Comment:

d. Identify when an interdisciplinary approach is appropriate to investigating complex issues.

Not accomplished at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very accomplished

Not important at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very important

Comment:

e. Demonstrate how the integration of knowledge from multiple disciplines can provide a more complete analysis of complex issues.

Not accomplished at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very accomplished

Not important at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very important

Comment:

47. What are your future plans? I plan on going to graduate school.

48. How has the Liberal Arts major helped prepare you for those plans?

The program I am applying to is interdisciplinary so my degree will help me understand some of the concepts behind my masters degree.

Appendix 3: 2009 Senior Project Rubrics

The chart below shows the average scores in each category based on 3 senior projects, each evaluated by 3 committee members, scored using this rubric:

- 5: Done completely, intelligently, with no room for improvement.
- 4: Done completely and intelligently. Very few areas could be improved.
- 3: More complete than incomplete. Several areas need clear improvement.
- 2: More incomplete than complete. Most areas need improvement.
- 1: Fails to fulfill the area being graded.

Interdisciplinary (1-5)	4.375
Clarity (1-5)	4.375
Entirety (1-5)	4.125
Argument (1-5)	4.375
Research (1-5)	4.0
Depth (1-5)	4.125
Overall (1-30)	25.375

Appendix 4: Retroactive Senior Project Rubrics

The chart below shows the average scores in each category based on 11 *retroactively** scored senior projects evaluated by the current Liberal Arts program director using this rubric:

- 5: Done completely, intelligently, with no room for improvement.
- 4: Done completely and intelligently. Very few areas could be improved.
- 3: More complete than incomplete. Several areas need clear improvement.
- 2: More incomplete than complete. Most areas need improvement.
- 1: Fails to fulfill the area being graded.

Interdisciplinary (1-5)	3.1
Clarity (1-5)	4.2
Entirety (1-5)	2.6
Argument (1-5)	3.1
Research (1-5)	2.7
Depth (1-5)	2.4
Overall (1-30)	18.1

*It's important to note that the older senior projects weren't written or directed with this rubric (or the same outcomes) in mind. The lower score is not necessarily indicative of less satisfactory work.

Appendix 5: Faculty Questionnaires

Faculty Questionnaire from Dr. Zandra Wagoner, former Liberal Arts Program Director

Do you think if more students knew about the Liberal Arts program, more would major in it? Why?

Absolutely. This major is perfect for the student who has a variety of interests and the drive to help shape their own degree. This degree is particularly good for the student who has a passion they'd like to follow from a multi-disciplinary perspective. This degree is flexible and creative, and I believe if this major was better advertised, would attract a particular type of student.

What are your thoughts on the name of the program?

The name is confusing because of our Liberal Studies program, but I think it is the right name (it would be better if Liberal Studies could alter their name!). However, it might be good to do some research to see what other institutions are using (I did this once long ago, and most used Liberal Arts, but there may be some alternatives that might be less confusing with Liberal Studies, and one that might communicate the substance of the major. One could even consider "Interdisciplinary Studies."

In your opinion, what is the Liberal Arts program's greatest strength?

It gives students the opportunity to deeply explore a theme or issue that they care about, and to do so from a variety of perspectives. The program also invites student initiative, motivation, and creativity.

In your opinion, what is its greatest weakness?

This major can attract students who have little direction, and can be a dumping ground for unsuccessful students in other majors.

Are the program's resources (one advisor/director) sufficient?

Yes, I believe this program runs well with one advisor/director.

What types of students might consider majoring in Liberal Arts?

Those that have a passion for a particular issue. Those that have interests in multiple disciplines and want to integrate them in a creative way. Those that want to create a major that is perfectly suited to their interests. Those that do not have a particular direction, but would like to complete their degree.

Do you think it's important that ULV offers the Liberal Arts major? Why?

Absolutely. It's a perfect major for some students, and meets a real need.

Do you believe the program should offer only specific courses that meet Liberal Arts requirements -- or that all courses, with the director's approval, should continue to be options for students? Why?

This is a tricky one. Originally, the GE Committee who oversaw the program felt it was important for each department to select those classes that had a broad view of the discipline, rather than courses that explore very specific areas. This was to ensure breadth at the upper division level. However, I always found that I was making exceptions. It seems to me that as long as the advisor and student are negotiating courses together, any upper division course could be an option. That said, there may be a reason to limit certain courses. For the Humanities breadth requirement, we have never approved "experiential art" upper division courses. For art-related courses, the thinking here was that we want students to get upper division knowledge and that this is better achieved in art history/appreciation courses (maybe this is too restrictive). Also, there may be some courses that are clinical or otherwise practical in such a way that the student is getting practical tools rather than breadth of knowledge. If the list of approved courses is eliminated, then I think there should be a description written to replace this list that explains what constitutes a breadth course.

How might the senior LA sequence - 390, 499 - be improved?

I've never been quite clear on what the LA 390 should do? What would be most helpful for students? What will help them decide on a project so they are ready to begin LA 499 the next semester? The REL/PHIL department does their 1-unit course in January. It seems to work well and gets students focused. It might be an alternative option?

How might the Senior Project Committee be improved?

I think it would be good for the Committee to meet at the beginning of the student's project as well as the end. Sometimes it is very hard on the student to be getting multiple feedback from committee members. I think it would be best if Committee members give most of their feedback at a joint meeting (at the beginning and for the "defense") and leave the advisor (or designated person) as the primary feedback person.

Appendix 5.2

Faculty Questionnaire from Dr. Gerard Lavatori, former Liberal Arts Program Director

Do you think if more students knew about the Liberal Arts program, more would major in it? Why?

Yes, I think more students would major in it if it were better publicized because it is a program that allows students a lot of choices. They can create a major composed largely of courses that interest them while still following a broad-based general curriculum.

What are your thoughts on the name of the program?

I think Liberal Arts is appropriate. Something like General Studies is too vague for a major and anything else might be too specific and not represent the breadth of the program. Liberal Arts is a recognized major. People know what it means and it seems to fit the program here.

In your opinion, what is the Liberal Arts program's greatest strength?

It's a good idea for students who are undecided. It gives them some structure and exposure to a good variety of disciplines but a good measure of freedom within the structure.

In your opinion, what is its greatest weakness?

The greatest weakness is the job market or the perceived relation to the job market. Some students might prefer a major that was more directly related to a specific job.

Are the program's resources (one advisor/director) sufficient?

It seemed sufficient to me with the numbers we had when I advised it.

What types of students might consider majoring in Liberal Arts?

I think it would appeal to students who have a broad range of interests and would otherwise try to complete two or three majors.

Do you think it's important that ULV offers the Liberal Arts major? Why?

Yes, it seems an appropriate major. Students at a small, liberal arts college, should have the option of choosing a major which allows them to sample and synthesize various disciplines.

Do you believe the program should offer only specific courses that meet Liberal Arts requirements -- or that all courses, with the director's approval, should continue to be options for students? Why?

I think it's important for students to be exposed to a variety of disciplines, so the structure requiring students to take courses in a number of specific areas is good. Otherwise the program would have a specific focus and it would be something different from Liberal Arts.

How might the senior LA sequence – 390, 499 – be improved?

It seems to be a good sequence, with students preparing to do the research one semester and actually doing the project the next. It's a good two-semester sequence.

How might the Senior Project Committee be improved?

It seems good as it is. It's a good model for interdisciplinary cooperation.