

Program Change Request

New Proposal

Date Submitted: 03/12/25 2:22 pm

Viewing: : **Bachelor of Liberal Studies**

Last edit: 03/12/25 2:22 pm

Changes proposed by: Jessica Followell

In Workflow

1. U Program Review

2. Gen Ed Review

3. 1580-LAS_A Head

4. KV Dean

5. University Librarian

6. COTE Programs

7. Provost

8. Senate EPC

9. Senate

10. U Senate Conf

11. Board of Trustees

12. IBHE

13. HLC

14. DMI

Approval Path

1. 11/06/24 11:16 am
Donna Butler
(dbutler): Approved
for U Program
Review

2. 11/06/24 11:33 am
Gretchen Pein
Baloun (pein):
Approved for 1580
Head

3. 12/12/24 3:15 pm
Stephen Downie
(sdownie):
Approved for KV
Dean

4. 12/13/24 12:00 pm
Tom Teper (tteper):
Approved for
University Librarian

5. 12/13/24 1:21 pm

Suzanne Lee
(suzannel):
Approved for COTE
Programs

6. 12/16/24 1:32 pm
Brooke Newell
(bsnewell):
Approved for
Provost

7. 02/26/25 2:03 pm
Barbara Lehman
(bjlehman):
Approved for
Senate EPC

8. 03/07/25 1:56 pm
Barbara Lehman
(bjlehman): Rollback
to Initiator

9. 03/14/25 11:58 am
Donna Butler
(dbutler): Approved
for U Program
Review

10. 03/14/25 1:53 pm
Melissa Steinkoenig
(menewell):
Approved for Gen
Ed Review

11. 03/17/25 10:50 am
Gretchen Pein
Baloun (pein):
Approved for 1580-
LAS_A Head

12. 03/17/25 2:03 pm
Stephen Downie
(sdownie):
Approved for KV
Dean

13. 03/18/25 11:21 am
Claire Stewart
(clairest): Approved
for University

Librarian
14. 03/18/25 10:41 pm
Suzanne Lee
(suzannel):
Approved for COTE
Programs
15. 03/19/25 8:07 am
Brooke Newell
(bsnewell):
Approved for
Provost

Proposal Type

Proposal Type: Degree (ex. BS, MS)

Administration Details

Official Program Name Bachelor of Liberal Studies

Diploma Title Bachelor of Liberal Studies

Sponsor College Liberal Arts & Sciences

Sponsor Department LAS Administration

Sponsor Name Kristen Sackley

Sponsor Email sackley2@illinois.edu

College Contact	Stephen R. Downie	College Contact Email
	sdownie@illinois.edu	

College Budget Officer Michael Wellens

College Budget Officer Email wellens@illinois.edu

If additional stakeholders other than the Sponsor and College Contacts listed above should be contacted if questions during the review process arise, please list them here.

Stephen R. Downie, Kristen Sackley, Jessica Followell

Does this program have inter-departmental administration?

No

Effective Catalog Term

Effective Catalog Term	Fall 2025
Effective Catalog	2025-2026

Proposal Title

Proposal Title (either Establish/Revise/Eliminate the Degree Name in Program Name in the College of XXXX, i.e., Establish the Bachelor of Science in Entomology in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, include the Graduate College for Grad Programs)

Establish the Bachelor of Liberal Studies in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Does this proposal have any related proposals that will also be revised at this time and the programs depend on each other? Consider Majors, Minors, Concentrations & Joint Programs in your department. Please know that this information is used administratively to move related proposals through workflow efficiently and together as needed. Format your response like the following "This BS proposal (key 567) is related to the Concentration A proposal (key 145)"

This BLS degree proposal (key 1245) is related to the Liberal Studies, BLS Major proposal (key 1246), Global Perspectives Concentration proposal (key 1266), Health and Society Concentration proposal (key 1269), and Management Studies Concentration proposal (key 1270).

Program Justification

Provide a brief justification of the program, including highlights of the program objectives, and the careers, occupations, or further educational opportunities for which the program will prepare graduates, when appropriate.

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) proposes developing and implementing a Bachelor of Liberal Studies (BLS) degree. This degree aligns with the University's Next 150 Strategic Plan for expanded access to higher education and the LAS 2021-2025 Strategic Plan to create innovative learning experiences.

In 1961, the University of Oklahoma established the first Liberal Studies degree program in the country (Caperton, Melissa (Fall 2011). "Our History: the OU College of Liberal Studies". Vantage Point. 8 (1): 3–9). The degree would meet the needs of nontraditional students wanting to continue their education while balancing work and family obligations. Since then, the BLS degree has become an industry-recognized degree designed specifically to support students requiring a nontraditional approach to degree completion. Unlike a more traditional baccalaureate degree (BA, BS), the BLS offers greater flexibility in completion. The BLS degree is ideal for working adults with responsibilities or those who may have started their academic careers but never completed them. This flexibility allows students to balance their education with their personal and professional lives. Unlike a traditional baccalaureate degree that often requires students to specialize in a single major, the BLS degree emphasizes interdisciplinary learning, equipping students with a broad understanding of various fields. By focusing on practical skills and knowledge, the BLS degree prepares students for success in various careers.

Addressing the Equity Gap in Higher Education

In the U.S., a significant number of college students, particularly Black and Latinx students, begin but do not complete a four-year degree (National Student Clearinghouse Research Center "Some College, No Credential Student Outcomes" 2023). The BLS degree will specifically target this population by offering an accessible and flexible pathway to a bachelor's degree. Access to online courses eliminates geographical barriers and caters to the needs of non-traditional students, such as working adults and caregivers, who manage work and family obligations. The BLS initiative addresses equity gaps in educational attainment and fosters greater opportunities for historically marginalized students.

Programmatic Advantages for Student Success

The BLS degree offers a unique blend of academic exploration and focused learning. Students will explore a diverse range of subjects within the liberal arts and sciences while simultaneously building a solid foundation in core disciplines. Collaborating with dedicated advisors, students select a concentration that aligns with their interests and career goals. Furthermore, the degree is transfer credit friendly as it was designed to account for the significant number of credit hours that transfer students may articulate in, providing flexibility while maintaining a clear pathway to graduation.

Expected Outcomes and Institutional Impact

The implementation of the BLS degree will create multiple positive outcomes. The BLS degree

will prepare graduates for careers and occupations in education, government, non-profit organizations, business, and more. Additionally, graduates may pursue further educational opportunities such as advanced degrees, specialized certifications, or professional programs. The BLS degree will increase access to a four-year degree for underserved student populations, leading to improved completion rates for historically marginalized students. By establishing this innovative degree, the College of LAS is committed to creating transformative learning experiences that bridge equity gaps in higher education and empower students from all backgrounds to achieve their academic goals.

Instructional Resources

Will there be any reduction in other course offerings, programs or concentrations by your department as a result of this new program/proposed change?

No

Does this new program/proposed change result in the replacement of another program?

No

Does the program include other courses/subjects outside of the sponsoring department impacted by the creation/revision of this program? If Yes is selected, indicate the appropriate courses and attach the letter of support/acknowledgement.

No

Program Features

Academic Level Undergraduate

What is the longest/maximum time to completion of this program?

8 years

What are the minimum Total Credit Hours required for this program?

120

Is this program part of an ISBE approved licensure program?

No

Will specialized accreditation be sought for this program?

No

Does this program prepare graduates for entry into a career or profession that is regulated by the State of Illinois?

No

Delivery Method

This program is
available:

On Campus and Online - 2 program types. Students can receive the entire program either on campus or online. Students can choose to take courses in either modality.

Describe the use of this delivery method:

As described above, student can choose to take courses in either modality.

Budget

Will the program or revision require staffing (faculty, advisors, etc.) beyond what is currently available?

No

Additional Budget
Information

Not applicable for a degree proposal. The Liberal Studies major (key 1246) is the first major associated with this degree.

Attach File(s)

Financial Resources

How does the unit intend to financially support this proposal?

Not applicable for a degree proposal. The Liberal Studies major (key 1246) is the first major associated with this degree.

Will the unit need to seek campus or other external resources?

No

Attach letters of
support

Library Resources

Describe your proposal's impact on the University Library's resources, collections, and services. If necessary please consult with the appropriate disciplinary specialist within the University Library.

Not applicable for a degree proposal. The Liberal Studies major (key 1246) is the first major associated with this degree.

EP Documentation

EP Control Number EP.25.047

Attach Rollback/
Approval Notices

Non-EP Documentation

U Program Review
Comments

Rollback
Documentation and
Attachment

DMI Documentation

Attach Final [U Program Review comments key 1245 BLS Bachelor of Liberal Studies](#)
Approval Notices [Degree 9_17_2024.docx](#)

Banner/Codebook
Name

Program Code:

Minor	Conc	Degree	
Code	Code	Code	Major
			Code

Senate Approval
Date

Senate Conference
Approval Date

BOT Approval Date

IBHE Approval Date

HLC Approval Date

DOE Approval Date

Effective Date:

Program Reviewer
Comments

Brooke Newell (bsnewell) (08/30/24 4:31 pm): Rollback: Per request from Jessica

Brooke Newell (bsnewell) (09/17/24 10:18 am): U Program Review Comments attached in the DMI Documentation section.

Brooke Newell (bsnewell) (09/17/24 10:39 am): Rollback: Rolled back per request of sponsors

Brooke Newell (bsnewell) (10/10/24 8:40 am): No U Program Review Comments

Stephen Downie (sdownie) (10/24/24 3:36 pm): Rollback: Per sponsor's request.

Brooke Newell (bsnewell) (11/06/24 7:58 am): No U Program Review Comments

Barbara Lehman (bjlehman) (03/07/25 1:56 pm): Rollback: As discussed at the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) meeting on Monday, March 3, 2025, SEC recommended that the BLS proposals (EP.25.047-051) be returned to the sponsors. SEC requested the BLS proposals not include an exception to reduce the language other than English (LOTE) requirement.