Bachelor of Integrative Studies (BIS) Academic Program Review Report August 2007

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Section 1: Program Overview

A. Program Goals

The Bachelor of Integrative Studies program is a flexible degree program designed for students who wish to pursue an interdisciplinary baccalaureate degree in educational areas where Ferris State University has appropriate faculty, facilities, and course work, but for which FSU does not have an existing baccalaureate degree program.

Within the individualized study program, a student could propose a program of study that crosses department or college disciplinary areas in an unconventional manner or creates a new configuration of areas of study.

In short, the program allows students to develop competencies from a variety of disciplines.

There are four concentrations in the BIS program. All require completion of the University General Education requirements; a minimum of 120 credits with a minimum of 40 at the 300 or higher level; a minimum of 30 credits taught by FSU; and all other University graduation requirements.

Option 1 combines an associate degree with a minor area of study.

Option 2 allows a student to combine two or more areas of interest into a program of study.

Options 3 and 4 are suited to adult students returning to the university with significant work experience and clearly defined career goals.

All of the concentrations in the BIS program allow flexibility to students to create a program of study geared toward their career goals. The BIS program was approved by Dean Sue Hammersmith in 1999.

There are no closely related programs to the BIS at Ferris State University. Most of our baccalaureate programs tend to be:

1. Highly focused on preparing students for specific entry-level positions in clearly defined career fields.
2. Highly structured, including both high-credit hour majors and designated minors or general education courses.
3. Unfriendly to transfer or AAS graduates who may wish to pursue a baccalaureate degree outside their initial field of study.

The original proposal to create the BIS limited the focus and scope of the program to nontraditional students. The BIS was approved with four check sheet options, but since the inception of the BIS, the only check sheet that had been used prior to 2006 was the one for nontraditional students. Consequently, Option 3 was the only one for which there was a definitive list of admission criteria. In 2006-07 we began to use the check sheets for Option 1 and Option 2, which were clearly designed for either entering freshmen or the internal student changing to a degree offering more options than a traditional FSU degree. We created three new identifiers for the program concentrations:

1. INSA for Option 1, indicating a completed associate degree.
2. INSM for Option 2, indicating two minors or area concentrations.
3. INST remains the designator for Option 3.

4. INSI for Option 4, indicating industry guidelines.

Admission Criteria

Option 1

Students who have completed an associate degree at Ferris or elsewhere, who have achieved a minimum 2.0 grade point average in their college course work, and who apply for the BIS will be admitted into the program with a registration hold that will be lifted upon completion of the program consultation process.

Option 2

Students meeting Arts and Sciences admission criteria (2.7 Grade Point Average, 18 composite ACT with 17 in reading) who are interested in Option 2 will be admitted into the program with a registration hold that will be lifted upon completion of the program consultation process.

Options 3 and 4

Students applying for Options 3 or 4 will continue to apply under the 1999-2006 process, which includes an essay and letter of support from an employer.

B. Program Visibility and Distinctiveness

Individualized programs of study are popular nationally. We have not conducted a survey of every institution that offers similar programs. We have, however, consulted the following programs in reviewing our program (*denotes Michigan universities):

Ball State University	*Oakland University
Bowling Green State University	Ohio University
*Central Michigan University	*Saginaw Valley State University
City University of New York	University of CA Santa Barbara
DePaul University	University of Massachusetts
*Eastern Michigan University	University of Memphis
Indiana University	*University of Michigan
Kent State University	University of Minnesota
*Michigan State University	University of Utah
*Michigan Technological University	Virginia State University

The degrees at other institutions are variously called "Applied Studies," "General Studies," "Individualized Studies," "Integrative Studies," or "Liberal Studies." All of these degree programs share in common a commitment to general education, flexibility, interdisciplinary study, and a student-centered education.

Ferris State University currently offers a variety of highly structured associate, baccalaureate, and professional degrees designed to prepare students for entry into specific careers. Our current array of degree options is not sufficient to meet the needs of many who wish to transfer to Ferris State University, as well as many who live in the immediate geographic area.

The BIS program allows students to pursue interests in areas that do not currently offer associate or baccalaureate degrees (i.e., modern languages, arts administration, international studies, etc.).

We have few degree options for the FSU AAS graduates who wish to return to school for more general, broadening educational experience or for specific career-related competencies outside their initial area of study.

Graduation with the BIS requires all of the following:

1. Completion of at least 38 hours in the major area of individualized study. The individualized program must include courses from at least two areas with at least 18 credit hours in a single area.
2. Completion of at least 120 semester hours (including up to 60 hours of transfer credits from accredited colleges, universities, community colleges, military schools, and any proficiency credit awarded) with a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or better.
3. Completion of at least 40 semester hours of upper-level (300- or 400-level) course work from accredited four-year colleges or universities. At least 18 of the 40 semester hours must be completed at Ferris State University.
4. Completion of the general education requirements for the Bachelor of Science degree.
5. Completion of an academic minor or completion of an adjunct area with a minimum of 18 credit hours.

C. Program Relevance

The BIS has relevance in providing academic alternatives to qualified students who might otherwise never complete a bachelor degree in traditional programs. It is a program that is relevant to the FSU Mission to be a "leader in innovative learning." Students indicate their appreciation of an available, quality degree which they themselves can design. Furthermore, one of President Eisler's three pillars which characterize FSU is its identity as a student-centered, learner-centered institution. The BIS clearly exists as a student-centered program, exemplified in its goals of program self-design and innovative combinations of study proposed by students.

It is also a relevant program for students who have noted the importance of creating a plan of study to meet their professional interests in ways that existing FSU programs do not. One concern voiced when the BIS was originally proposed in the College of Arts and Sciences through Dean Sue Hammersmith (See Appendix E), was that due to its more general nature, the BIS degree might end up being for students a mere completion degree without significant or appropriate preparation to obtain good jobs or to enter graduate schools. Interestingly, three May 2007 BIS graduates noted in their exit interviews (Appendix A) the importance of selecting the appropriate BIS track as well as designing and planning courses to match career and academic goals. This emphasis on program design, along with a clearly articulated plan of coursework matching career plans, is important both to maintaining a high program quality and to completing the BIS in a timely and successful manner.

One student emphasized that his self-designed BIS program in fact prepared him for acceptance to graduate school at Arkansas Technical University which he will enter this fall. Another student highlighted that the BIS is an advantage for her since now she can apply for "other positions," and she also feels prepared for graduate school. For her the BIS, as she put it, is "a stepping stone" to her academic and professional goals.

D. Program Value

In the Inquiry Interview Surveys (Appendix C), twelve of nineteen students who were admitted in 2006-07 responded that without a degree program such as the BIS they would have few or no options for completing a degree. The BIS program has value in that it provides a reasonable alternative degree program for students who otherwise would leave FSU for another institution; would likely not finish any degree at FSU or anywhere; would have no/few other timely degree completion options; or would continue to be passed over for jobs.

Students inquiring about the BIS during 2006-07 cited three main reasons accounting for their interest in the BIS:

1. high number of credits, ranging from 97-152 credits for the twelve of nineteen students who commented on this;

2. unfeasibility of traditional FSU degree programs (due to internships, lockstep sequences, lack of off-hour offerings, etc.);

3. long-range goal of graduate study.

From the data reported in the 109 inquiry interviews conducted from Fall 2006 to Spring 2007 (Appendix C), it is clear that there is an interest in and a need for a degree program for students with unique academic situations, with a desire to design individualized programs tailored to specific career intentions, and with the reasonable expectation of completing a degree in a timely manner without "starting over." As one student noted "I wouldn't finish till 2011 with any other traditional BS degree," and this with 100 credits already in hand.

Section 2: Perceptions of the Program

A. Graduate Follow-up Survey

The graduate survey (Appendix A), designed by the PRP, was sent as an email attachment to fourteen BIS graduates, and six surveys (42%) were returned. The survey consisted of seven questions in an objective response format, including a subsection of scale-item responses (weak to strong), as well as four open-ended questions.

Because of the unique nature of the BIS in preparing students through a self-designed program of study, the survey also included items addressing respondents' purposes for enrolling in the BIS program, competencies and skills acquired through the program they designed, and the timeliness of their degree completion.

In addition, the survey included items related to three broad areas that are aligned with the BIS program goals:

- the graduates' perceptions about the flexibility of their BIS programs of study;
- the graduates' perceptions of the relationship between their professional goals and how the design of the graduates' BIS program met/is meeting these goals;
- the graduates' perceptions of the quality of advisement.

Graduate Survey Responses
n=6 (of 14; 42% return rate)

Rate the following areas of the BIS program on a scale of 1 (weak) to 5 (strong)					
1	2	3	4	5	Statement
			1	5	The BIS Program offered me a flexible program of study for my professional and/or academic goals.
			1	5	The BIS Program allowed me to design an interdisciplinary plan of study otherwise not available at FSU.
			3	3	The BIS Program allowed me to develop competencies from a variety of disciplines.
		2	1	3	The BIS allowed me to design a program of study that included new areas of study/professional preparation (e.g., homeland security).
			1	5	The BIS allowed me to complete my studies in a timely manner.
			1	5	The received helpful advisement from the BIS advisor/program coordinator.
			1	5	The advisor allowed me to design a suitable program of studies.
			1	5	Overall, the BIS program prepared me to achieve my professional goals/objectives.
		1	1	4	Overall, the BIS program helped me to acquire the skills needed for my professional and/or academic pursuits.
			1	5	The BIS allowed me to (or will allow me to) advance in my profession/job.

Graduates' perceptions about flexibility of BIS programs of study

All six graduates responded positively about the flexibility that the BIS offered, rating these survey items highly. They see the BIS as an alternative degree program allowing flexible, interdisciplinary design, and timely completion.

The surveys indicated several reasons students desired a flexible program:

1. high number of credits in hand
2. last degree/credits were earned a long time ago
3. many credits non-transferable to desired degree program (e.g., Business Administration)
4. full-time employment

Four of the six graduates began the program when it was essentially a one-track program, aimed at serving nontraditional students. One graduate summarized her satisfaction with the flexibility it afforded her: "Program itself is a wonderful opportunity for students like me (older and only had associates from way back and work full-time)."

Graduates' perceptions about the relationship between professional goals and BIS individual program design/degree

The surveys suggest that the BIS degree has led graduates to fulfill a professional goal. This is significant to the BIS program and purpose. Four of the six identified "career advancement" as their purpose in enrolling in the BIS.

Because BIS graduates design individually tailored programs, their BIS degrees represent a wide array of curricula and, consequently, a wide variety of professions. The survey results show that for all six graduates, the BIS prepared both to achieve their stated professional goals and to advance in their respective jobs.

The PRP wanted to know what types of courses, minors, and/or programs of study BIS students were designing for themselves. The BIS combined programs of study for these six graduates represent:

- seven minors (art history, communication, psychology, business, human resources, sociology, CIS)
- three areas of concentration (education, management, fine arts)
- three colleges (CAS, COB, COEHS)
- three BIS program options: four in Option 3, one each in Option 1 and 2

All six graduates reported that the BIS helped them acquire a job or advance in a job. One graduate noted: "I have had interview opportunities that I may not have been eligible for before and I was just offered and accepted a Healthcare management position I may not have qualified for before." In addition to making a difference in jobs, for at least one graduate, the BIS made a difference in her pursuit of further education.

Of the five respondents indicating their current employment, all are in some form of management.

Perceptions about program advisement

Student advisement—whether from CAS where BIS was housed until 2005 or from the Department of Languages and Literature where it is now housed—was highly rated by all six respondents. As the graduate comments indicate, the communication was helpful and appreciated.

Recommendations for improving the BIS program

Two graduates recommended more publicity and promotion of the program. One student noted that "it seemed like a big secret when I first applied." Another graduate suggested more course offerings after 5 p.m. for full-time nontraditional students. Three surveys indicated "none" in their responses to this question.

Overall, all the graduate surveys reported a high degree of satisfaction with the BIS program.

B. Employer Follow-up Survey

No survey was conducted for this item. Rather than following an established program curriculum with a specified skills set, students in the BIS design individualized programs which prepare them for, and lead to employment/advancement in, a wide variety of professional settings (VISTA management employee, counseling office assistant manager, healthcare division manager).

Because BIS students are prepared for any number of career paths and because the BIS degree also serves graduates in their career changes, job advancement, and graduate school entrance, an employer survey may not be as instructive for the BIS program. This continues to be under discussion.

C. Graduating Student Exit Survey

In April 2007, exit interviews (Appendix A) for the BIS were conducted with three May 2007 graduates by Reinhold Hill, Department Head of Languages and Literature. During the interview, students were asked twelve questions pertaining to their academic and professional plans after graduation, the value of the BIS, kinds and value of courses, skills acquired, overall preparation for future work, quality of BIS advisement, and recommendations for improving the BIS program.

Though a small sample, the exit interviews reinforced several items that were noted in the graduate follow-up surveys. For example, the May 2007 graduates valued the flexibility of the BIS, especially for "working adults" and for "students who have changed careers."

Through exit and graduate follow-up interviews, students emphasized the value of designing an individualized program of study and of pursuing a degree that incorporates the high number of credits already held. The current BIS program coordinator, Dr. Christine Vonder Haar, in conducting 109 inquiry interviews during 2006-07 (Appendix C), reported that this discussion about each student's proposed program is essential to student success and to program quality overall. Such a discussion with BIS applicants, along with continued advisement, seems directly related to the BIS student's successful and timely graduation.

D. Student Program Evaluation

Student Survey

The PRP designed a survey (Appendix B) which was sent to sixteen students enrolled in the BIS Fall 2006 and Spring 2007. Twelve of sixteen were returned (75%). The majority of respondents held senior academic status.

N=12 (75% return rate)					
1 weak -> 5 strong					
1	2	3	4	5	Statement
	1		3	7	The BIS Program offers me a more flexible program of study than a traditional degree program.
		2	4	5	Overall, the BIS will help me to acquire the skills I will need for my professional and/or academic goals.
	1	2	1	7	The BIS Program is allowing me to design an interdisciplinary plan of study otherwise not available at FSU
	1	3	2	5	The BIS Program is allowing me to develop competencies from a variety of disciplines.
	2	4	2	3	The BIS is allowing me to design a program of study that includes new areas of study/professional preparation (e.g., homeland security)
			2	9	The BIS advisor/program coordinator has been helpful.
			3	8	The BIS advisor/program coordinator is helping me to design a suitable program of study.
			5	6	The BIS degree is allowing me to complete my studies in a timely manner.
			2	9	The BIS program is allowing me to achieve my academic goals.
Academic Status: 10 seniors; 1 did not indicate status					
Option: three in Option 1; three in Option 2; four in Option 3					

The majority of students found the program to be more flexible than traditional degree programs and believed that the BIS would help them to acquire skills needed for their professional and/or academic goals (ranking the program strong or very strong in these areas). They recognized and appreciated the fact that the BIS allowed them to design an interdisciplinary plan of study otherwise not available at FSU. There was a more even distribution of responses to the question of the BIS allowing students to develop competencies from a variety of disciplines and allowing for the design of a program that includes new areas of professional preparation, suggesting that at this point, the degree options available are more traditional in nature as opposed to experimental or innovative.

The responses were overwhelmingly favorable in regard to the help afforded by the program coordinator, time taken to complete the degree, and the ability to achieve one's academic goals.

Of interest is the number of credit hours students have in hand upon entering the BIS. Of the eleven students admitted in 2007, only two had fewer than 100 credit hours accumulated. The credit hours upon entry ranged from 128 to 148. The same pattern held true for the 2006 admits whose credit hours ranged from 113 to 148. This pattern suggests that the BIS is serving a need for students who have successfully completed a significant amount of coursework yet have not completed a degree.

E. Faculty Perceptions

Since there are no BIS program-specific faculty, a survey of faculty perceptions was not conducted. The courses taken by BIS students reflect a wide range of academic minors and concentrations, and therefore the faculty who teach BIS students come from multiple colleges and programs. Such a survey would not be feasible or instructive for the BIS program.

F. Advisory Committee Perceptions

There is currently no BIS Advisory Committee, though the question of the need for and usefulness of an advisory board has been under discussion this past year.

Section 3: Program Profile

A. Profile of Students

Student demographic profile

The PRP decided to use Banner data since it was difficult to obtain the institutional student profile data listed by prefix (INST, INSA, etc.) In May 2007, we compiled information first from individual student file folders where there was documentation of BIS program admission between 2003 and 2007. Secondly, we searched Banner data for relevant and accessible demographic information on these students as it was available.

The results are provided in a table (Appendix D) which includes each student's year of admission to the program, cumulative GPA, total credit hours through Spring 2007, ACT/SAT where available, and gender. Other demographic data were not readily available or accessible.

The data indicate thirty-five students applied and were admitted to the BIS between 2004 and 2006. There are fourteen males and twenty-one females. One student is currently on probationary status due to low GPA. Eight students are listed by designators other than INST for unknown reasons.

Quality of students

As the data indicate (Appendix D), the students who apply to the program represent a range of academic ability. The quality of students in the BIS program is good, with an average GPA of 3.10. From the thirty-five student records, the following information about GPAs is noted:

25 (71%)   2.5+
19 (54%)   3.0+
11 (31%)   3.5+

All of the students who apply to the BIS are academically qualified, and the majority have above average GPA records. Students come to the BIS with strengths in different academic, applied, and professional disciplines, reflecting in turn their varied goals for career and continued or graduate study.

One suggestion the PRP considered is to analyze the differences in GPA, i.e., comparing their BIS grade progress with their previous program achievement. Anecdotally, several students reported (and grade records confirm) an increase in academic motivation after entering the BIS. They explained that prior to the BIS, they had multiple program changes, had personal situations preventing or interrupting study, or had high numbers of credits without a degree completion in sight. However, they noted, the BIS offered them an alternative degree completion program with "an end in sight."

Other Measures to Assess Quality of Students

In addition to the program data (Appendix D), other measures to assess student quality include:

1. Application letter (rationale and proposed program of study)
2. Resumes (leadership, awards, skills, etc.)

3. Inquiry Interview data
   (motivation, independence, ability to articulate academic/professional goals, design a program, and provide a rationale)

Requirements established in 2006 for all students seeking BIS admission include a multiple-step process (#3 above) which can be another means of assessing student quality.

These steps are no easy entry into the program, and students who do apply spend time and demonstrate seriousness of purpose to produce the written materials, to meet with advisors, and to propose a program. These procedures may account, in part, for the low rate of the following:
1. an individual's program changes, e.g., minors/concentration (only two such requests Fall 2006);
2. course substitutions;
3. transfers out of the BIS (only one in 2006-07)

NOTE (above data taken from program change forms and course substitution forms).

With these procedures, typically only those who meet eligibility requirements and who demonstrate a seriousness of purpose, actually apply to the program.

Since the BIS relies on existing FSU programs and curricula, the above information does not negatively impact those main campus students' semester-to-semester scheduling. However, for the few out-of-state students or for students who must rely on offerings online or off-site locations, course scheduling and availability can present challenges:
- completing in a timely manner
- acquiring the needed 30 FSU credits
- acquiring the 40 credits at 300+ level

Similar challenges may occur for nontraditional students who are full-time employees needing evening classes. One graduate suggested "more offerings after 5 p.m. to 'cater' to the working population."

Employability of Students

The four-option BIS program is new, and the number of recent graduates is small, so it is difficult to determine the relationship between the BIS and students' employability.

However, from the small sample of Winter 2006 graduates (Appendix A), we know that all six indicated that the BIS allowed them to advance in a job.

Additionally, two May 2007 graduates in their exit interviews emphasized that the BIS allowed them to apply to graduate schools.

Several students seeking the BIS came to the program as full-time employees and applied mostly for Options 1 and 3. The inquiry interviews (Appendix C) revealed that most of the 109 students inquiring about the BIS this past academic year did so for the following reasons related to career/academic goals:

1. to obtain a particular job or achieve a career goal
2. to enter graduate school
3. both to obtain a better job and to start graduate school

Graduate and exit surveys seem to bear these out.

B. Enrollment

Anticipated fall enrollment for the program

The anticipated enrollment for the BIS program in Fall 2007 is twenty-three students. There is some uncertainty about this number due to the active/inactive status of many BIS students, especially non-traditional students, full-time working adults, and those who will take courses at other institutions for transfer credits.

Increase or decrease in enrollment and student credit hour production (SCH) since last program review

This is the BIS program's first review. However, SCH is not relevant to the BIS since students enroll in courses and programs across multiple colleges and their programs and minors.

Applicant number, number and percentage of accepted (as of May 2007)
Applicants Spring/Summer 2006   10
Applicants Fall 2006   11
Applicants Spring 2007   7

As of May 30, three applications are in progress for Fall 2007.

Of twenty-eight applicants between Spring 2006 and Spring 2007, 100% were accepted to the program.

In reviewing this rate of acceptance, we noted a likely explanation for the high rate is the time spent in the BIS admission screening process -- interviews and program application requirements. Typically only seriously minded and highly motivated students end up applying. Of the 109 inquiries about the BIS this year, 82% ended up not applying for various reasons, including ineligibility, lack of motivation, pursuit of another FSU program, or finding that the BIS was not a good fit.

On the other hand, of these same 109 inquiry interviews, nineteen (17%) resulted in actual applications and subsequent admission to the BIS program. The admissions interviews, though time consuming, are proving a reliable screening process.

Enrollment number and percentage of enrolled from accepted

From the data obtained from Banner (Appendix D), and based on the information from the inquiry interviews through May 2007 (Appendix C) the PRP determined the following regarding enrollment:
19   applicants accepted between Fall 2006 and May 2007
12   of these 19 were full-time students who enrolled one or both semesters
 7   of these 19 were part-time students who enrolled one or both semesters
100% of the nineteen accepted students enrolled in one or both semesters this year.

Current enrollment goals, strategy, and efforts to maintain, increase, or decrease the number of students in the program

Although it is not a goal to recruit students because of the program's nature and purpose, the BIS does need to publish information in varied and accessible ways. Current types of publicity (Appendix H) include the FSU webpage, a letter to graduates with associate degrees (2006), and a broadsheet copy of the webpage information for mailing purposes.

In addition, the program is publicized internally through college and department meetings and with college counselors. In 2006, the program coordinator met with all academic counselors at their May meeting. Plans for 2007 include meeting again with all college counselors as well as with some individual program advisors, especially in programs with higher numbers of BIS inquiries.

Goals for Increasing Publicity

1. Enhance FSU webpage.
2. Create updated brochure through CAS.
3. Work with Academic and Career Counselors, the community college fair, and other such sources.
4. Meet annually with academic counselors; individual counselors as needed.
5. Target program coordinators/advisors with higher number of inquiries/applicants.
6. Communicate with extension campuses and UCEL administrators

Efforts for Maintaining Current Students

1. Close, regular advisement
2. Recruit additional faculty advisors to assist with growing enrollment

C. Program Capacity

Appropriate program enrollment capacity, given available resources, regulations, and limitations

The program's capacity for enrollment is limited only by faculty advisement.

The newly designed BIS program in 2006 originally anticipated fifteen students enrolled per year. The actual numbers between Spring 2006 and Spring 2007 were nearly twice this at twenty-eight (Appendix D). Because of the number of inquiries (averaging four per week) and because of intense advisement related to the individualized programs, much time is required on the part of the program coordinator.

The program shows steady growth in its first year with the new four-option offerings. As a necessary alternative degree program that holds value for growing numbers of students, the BIS would benefit from additional faculty advisors to ensure continuity of program growth and quality.

D. Retention and Graduation

The annual attrition rate (number and percent of students in the program)

Because of the newness of the expanded BIS options in 2006, attrition rates are not readily available or at this time particularly meaningful. This will need to be observed annually as the program continues to grow.

We can note that of the nineteen students admitted between August 2006 and May 2007, only one student contacted the program coordinator to withdraw from the BIS.

The current program coordinator is determining ways to track and record retention and attrition data, especially as there is a steady flow of students who transfer from other institutions, students who are changing programs from within FSU, and still other students who are returning to FSU after long periods of inactive status. Such record-keeping presents challenges.

The program's current goals, strategy, and efforts to retain students

The primary strategy for current student retention is advisement and regular contact with students, especially through telephone conversations and email, but also in-person meetings with the program coordinator for on-site students.

Anecdotal evidence of success in retaining students is the well-articulated plan of study proposed by students and approved by the program coordinator. For example, only two students of the twenty-eight enrolled BIS students this past year requested a significant modification in their program of study (changed minor). Retaining students and completing the degree in a timely manner are related to students' monitoring of the BIS program option and of their individually proposed plans.

Trends in number of degrees awarded in the program

This first year of the newly revised BIS program (four options) has seen an increase in the number of graduates:

Fall 2006............................6 graduates
Spring 2007..........................6 graduates

It is anticipated that six students will graduate in December 2007.

The above numbers (Appendix B) can be compared with previous BIS degrees awarded (2002-05, Appendix A "CAS graduates") when the BIS was essentially a one-track program for nontraditional, primarily full-time working adults

Winter 2002 ....2 graduates
Winter 2003 ....1 graduate
Summer 2004.......................1 graduate
Fall 2004.............................1 graduate
Winter 2005 ....1 graduate
Summer 2005.......................2 graduates
Fall 2005.............................1 graduate

The total number of "old" program BIS degrees awarded between 2002 and 2005 was nine. The number of degrees awarded in the "new" program in its first year alone was twelve. It should be noted that the December 2006 degree numbers include both "old" (three) and "new" (three) BIS program students. Nonetheless, the graduation data clearly indicate a continued program growth.

Number of students enrolled in the program and graduating within prescribed time

The BIS has no prescribed time for graduating, especially as students enter the program at very different stages of progress and with different program goals, as well as with varying (high) numbers of credits.

In the past year, no student has entered or applied to the BIS program as a new, first-time college student (traditional graduating high school senior). In fact, almost all the students who applied to the BIS this past year came with sixty or more credits, several with upwards of 100 credits.

Another factor for timely graduation is the students' status as full or part-time. Option 1 and Option 3 appeal primarily to full-time working adults and returning FSU students with an associate degree in hand.

Average length of time to complete the program

The six graduate surveys (Appendix A) indicate a wide range of completion time periods, from three years to only one semester.

Also, data about the most recent graduates in May 2007 reveal that the average length of time for completion was 2.8 semesters:

4 graduates:	Two semesters to complete from time of BIS admission
1 graduate:	Three semesters to complete from time of BIS admission
1 graduate:	Six semesters*

*This student is a full-time FSU employee and a nontraditional student who enrolled in the "old" BIS track in 2004, completing Option 3. Four of the other five graduates transferred to the BIS program with high numbers of credits and applied to the newer options (INSM and INSA).

E. Access

Program's actions to make itself accessible to students

The program is probably most accessible to students through its practice of accepting applications to the program throughout the year.

Several students and graduates noted with appreciation that the BIS is the one program that finally accepted most of their previous credits, including both FSU credits and other institutional credits (Appendix A, Appendix B).

The BIS is accessible to students as it provides a flexible program that allows creativity in self-design of a program based on the student's career and academic plans/goals.

Most 2006–07 BIS students enrolled on the main campus, but there were two out-of-state students who took online classes (business course, ENGL 321) for completion of their degree. At least two students took FSU classes in Flint, one took classes in Traverse City, and several opted to take equivalent courses at other institutions and transfer the credits.

Online classes seem to be an increasingly important option for BIS students, especially for those from off-site areas who are full-time working adults (e.g., Detroit, west Michigan, Kalamazoo area, etc.).

Effects of these actions on the program

BIS students can remain off-site and even out-of-state and still complete an FSU degree they otherwise would not be able to pursue or obtain.

F. Curriculum

Although the BIS has no fixed curriculum (the intent is to allow students to integrate areas of study), there are program requirements and guidelines for each of the four options that assist students in designing programs. The check sheets (Appendix G) for the four program options provide guidelines for individual curriculum design and completion.

G. Program requirements

Overall program requirements include:

1. Completion of at least 38 hours in the major area of individualized study. The individualized program must include courses from at least two areas with at least 18 credit hours in a single area.
2. Completion of at least 120 semester hours (including up to 60 hours of transfer credits from accredited colleges, universities, community colleges, military schools, and any proficiency credit awarded) with a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or better.
3. Completion of at least 40 semester hours of upper-level (300- or 400-level) course work from accredited four-year colleges or universities. At least 18 of the 40 semester hours must be completed at Ferris State University.
4. Completion of the general education requirements for the Bachelor of Science degree.
5. Completion of an academic minor or completion of an adjunct area with a minimum of 18 credit hours.

The four options check sheets (Appendix G) indicate the particular guidelines for individual course plans.

H. Quality of Instruction

The BIS does not have faculty unique to the program but instead relies on faculty in a variety of programs, courses, and minors across the university. We did not have the need or the means to assess instruction related to the BIS.

The graduate exit surveys (Appendix A), however, did include a question asking students to identify any courses they found particularly useful or helpful. Among courses noted were the Technical Professional Communication capstone course ENGL 499, communication classes, and biology. These same exit interviews revealed that a strength of the BIS program is careful program planning (individualized program).

I. Composition and Quality of Faculty

There are no faculty unique to the BIS program.

J. Service to Non-Majors

There are no courses or services provided to non-majors.

K. Degree Program Cost and Productivity Data

There is no available institutional data on the average degree program cost of the BIS nor credit hour production. This data is not applicable to the BIS as there is no credit hour production, nor does the BIS have courses or faculty to produce this kind of data.

L. Assessment and Evaluation

During this first year of the newly designed BIS program, exit interviews of graduating seniors have been one means of program assessment.

Currently a follow-up survey is being designed, as a partner assessment to the inquiry interviews, to be conducted with continuing students and with current year graduates. This will provide a pre-program and post-admissions assessment measurement.

The program review cycle and the yearly annual administrative reviews will be a means of program evaluation as well. Other assessment measures are under discussion.

M. Administration Effectiveness

Adequacy of administrative and clerical support for the program

The administrative support for this past year has been very good. The College of Arts and Sciences has provided assistance for current Program Coordinator Christine Vonder Haar in a number of ways. Rick Kowalkoski, who served as program coordinator prior to 2006, provided mentoring and assistance to Dr. Vonder Haar throughout the first year of the new BIS.

Also in 2006, Dr. Katherine Miller and Interim Associate Dean Reinhold Hill provided information and guidance for Dr. Vonder Haar as she set up the program. CAS Dean Matt Klein provided a budget (for visits to other colleges to observe their programs, program publicity, etc.) for the transition to the new version of the BIS. One-course equivalent reallocated time ($2700 per semester) along with $500 for program-related expenses was provided for the program coordinator.

Throughout this first year, both Dr. Hill and Academic Counselor Rick Kowalkoski continued to provide support in a number of ways including when there were questions about student application and eligibility, program inquiries, transcript evaluations, student records, credit and course equivalencies and exceptions, and transfer students. Both Dr. Hill and CAS Admissions Director Angie Mishler helped with admissions guidelines for a smooth process for applicants to the BIS.

Department of Languages and Literature provides clerical assistance through Melissa Wilkinson, Gayle Driggers, and Debra Vance. In addition, as Department Head, Dr. Hill actively supported and publicized information about the BIS program, for example by including it regularly on the agenda at department meetings.

Efficiency of program and/or department administration

The graduate surveys (Appendix A) indicate that students overall are pleased with the admission processes as well as with the program advisement and communication.

Ability of students to take the courses they need in a timely manner

Again, as indicated by the graduate surveys and the exit interviews (Appendix A), students noted that completing the BIS degree in a timely matter is a strength of the program. In nearly all cases this past year, students were able to take the courses needed and to stay on track. This is primarily attributed to program flexibility allowing students to choose from a number of course offerings in a single field or in two related fields.

Students' close communication and fairly regular advisement, in combination with the program coordinator approval procedures , help to keep students on track in their designed programs.

Occasionally some students find it challenging to take the required General Education courses because they live in areas which make accessibility difficult, have time conflicts due to full-time employment positions, find a lack of adequate online offerings, etc. Most of these challenges, however, were met this past year through FSU online courses or through transfer of courses from other institutions.

Section 4: Facilities and Equipment

Currently, the BIS is housed in the College of Arts and Sciences and is administered by the Department of Languages and Literature. The BIS makes use of existing offices and facilities.

The Department of Languages and Literature also provides facilities and equipment for the BIS. The program coordinator uses her office space for storage, files, and any additional resource materials. The department assists with maintenance of electronic records, with student workers, with office supplies, and with jobs such as copying, faxing, and typing. A digital camera was purchased through department assistance this past year.

At present, the BIS does not require additional equipment or facilities.

A. Instructional Environment

The BIS program relies on existing facilities, classrooms, and instructional spaces.

B. Computer Access and Availability

There are no designated computer labs or computers specifically for the BIS. Program students have access to university labs available to all students and to computers and labs within their programs of study.

C. Other Instructional Technology

The current university computing resources provide services to meet BIS student needs. Some students noted in their surveys that online courses can be limiting to the off-site, out-of-state students, especially to fulfill particular requirements: a) that one's last course be from FSU; b) that one must obtain at least 30 credits from FSU; or c) that 18 of the 300+ level credits be from FSU.

FSU's offerings of online and distant site course offerings will become an increasing need for these kinds of BIS students as their numbers grow.

D. Library Resources

The BIS relies on existing library resources for BIS students' program of study. No assessment of library resources for BIS program needs has been undertaken.

Section 5: Conclusions

A. Relationship to FSU Mission

The newly designed BIS degree with its four options is proving to be a program in line with Ferris State University's mission to provide opportunities for "innovative learning." The BIS allows students to create and propose cross-disciplinary study aligned with intended professional work. An example is the student who put together a program in student affairs administration as a foundation and preparation for graduate school: education and leadership classes, a minor in professional/technical writing, and selected business management courses.

As an alternative degree option for motivated students with unique program needs, the BIS serves a student population that might not otherwise be able to pursue a bachelor degree. FSU has always had the purpose of preparing students for careers and providing Michigan with well-trained professionals in a number of fields, including newly emerging fields. When Michigan economic outlooks change or when unique professional areas emerge (such as homeland security), FSU has had a long tradition of responding to these needs. However, when courses are available but degree programs are not, students may opt for the BIS to design a degree incorporating a number of relevant areas of study.

Ferris currently holds as one of its three pillars the goal of becoming a student-centered institution, and the BIS with its emphasis on a student-designed study plan reflects the essential elements: student responsibility for learning, collaboration with faculty/advisors in program design and completion, and active engagement in the processes.

The BIS leadership should continue to work toward the goal of engaging students in campus activities by incorporating an emphasis on engagement in institutional activities as part of its student advisement and degree completion goals.

B. Program Visibility and Distinctiveness

The BIS is the only degree of its kind at FSU: it is unique in its potential for an interdisciplinary curriculum, for new or unconventional approaches to a plan of study, for flexibility, and for alternative bachelor degree options.

The program review reveals a growing need for this kind of degree, especially for students who pursue traditional associate degrees and who are well-trained for their intended professional work but find themselves being passed over for jobs because they do not hold a bachelor degree. A good indication of this is the high number of inquiries about the BIS this past year from full-time working adults who were FSU associate degree graduates in areas such as dental hygiene, nuclear medicine, sonography, and business. These returning students expressed gratitude in being able to apply to a program that not only accepts most of the very high number of credits they hold but also allows a program design that builds on and expands upon their foundational associate degrees and their significant work experience since degree completion.

The visibility of the BIS has increased in the past year, and the program leadership should continue its efforts to provide information especially to students—both current and former—as well as to university-wide program coordinators, academic counselors, advisors, and the public. The program review data revealed that the two most significant sources of information about the BIS were faculty and counselor referrals and the FSU webpage, respectively.

One goal for improving information availability for 2007-08 is to increase the publicity about the BIS through the following actions:

- Create a BIS brochure
- Meet with college counselors and academic/career counselors
- Meet with deans and program coordinators in colleges with a high number of student inquiries
- Review/modify FSU webpage as needed
- Investigate publicity possibilities for FSU alumni
- Investigate publicity possibilities for community colleges with which FSU has articulation agreements

The BIS should continue to increase visibility of the program by providing a variety of sources of information.

C. Program Value

With over one hundred inquiries and with nearly twenty new students admitted in its first year as a four-option program, the BIS clearly is being recognized by students, and the faculty and counselors who refer them, as a valuable program option.

The BIS also brings a new or added value to existing FSU programs by providing students a pathway to jobs and career interests other than those for which the more traditional degree is designed. For example, admission data show that two BIS students and one currently applying to the BIS, all came from the School of Education. As freshmen they were interested in becoming school teachers. However, through their campus involvement and work-study, especially FSU's Student Leadership and Activities office, these students discovered an interest in and passion for educational leadership in other areas besides public school education. These three are now pursuing careers in student leadership and activities in higher education through programs such as VISTA, jobs such as Americorps, and graduate studies in student affairs personnel. Their previous significant course work in teacher education is not "lost," but rather now provides an excellent foundation for their self-designed BIS program.

Another indication of the BIS program value, in addition to its service to current and former FSU students, is its service to a growing number of students who have never attended FSU and who are from a number of regions in Michigan and other states. Recent examples of the latter include inquiries from Wyoming, Iowa, and Tennessee.

In interviews with the program coordinator, these non-Michigan residents report that, after extensive online searches, they find Ferris to be one of only a handful of institutions that offers alternative degree programs and one that accepts most of their credits as part of a proposed program of study. A recent example is a student from Tennessee who has over 100 credits, mostly science and nursing credits through in an ROTC scholarship program. However, for personal reasons and because she has moved from place to place with her military spouse, she was never able to complete her degree. She has applied to the BIS and intends to finish through a proposed program of FSU online coursework in a combined concentration of business and health/science courses. Though the numbers of non-Michigan students are small, the data show they are growing.

Overall, the first year of the newly designed four-option BIS program indicates the need for and value of such a degree at Ferris State University.

D. Enrollment

The 2006 program proposal (Appendix F) for the four-option BIS stated an anticipated enrollment of at least fifteen students per year from new student enrollments, transfer student enrollments, and degree-completion students. The actual enrollment exceeded this number in its first two semesters.

Throughout 2006-07 the number of inquiries remained steady, averaging four per week during fall and spring terms for a total of 109 inquiries, with nineteen of these applying for admission. All nineteen were admitted to the BIS.

For 2007-08, it is anticipated that the number of inquiries and the number of enrolled students will equal or exceed the 2006-07 numbers.3

E. Characteristics, Quality and Employability of Students

From the data, we found that academically the BIS students overall were average to above average as evidenced by their cumulative GPA records. The gender makeup is two-to-one, females to males. Other demographic information was not easily or uniformly accessible.

Regarding characteristics of program students, all of the BIS applicants this year were transfer students either from within FSU or from other institutions. This year, for the first time in the BIS, there were Option 1 and Option 2 students. Option 1 students tended to be former FSU associate degree graduates, non-traditional, and part-time students. Option 2 students tended to be traditional, full-time students transferring from other FSU programs and having a very high number of credits in hand but with no degree completion in sight. The greater number of both Option 1 and Option 2 students tended to transfer from programs within the College of Education and Human Services and from the College of Allied Health.

Because there is careful screening of students both inquiring about and applying to the BIS, the quality of those who end up applying to the program is very good.

One observation of the PRP in this first-time review is the need for establishing careful student and program records. Overall, it was often a challenge to obtain the demographic information for BIS students as indicated by their INST designator, and as a result, the data that were obtained came through a name-by-name search of the Banner system data.

We noted several factors that may account for difficulty in tracking demographics and academic status as BIS (INST) data:

- The newness of the four-option program and its designators (INST, etc.)
- Students' irregular and part-time enrollment patterns
- frequent and ongoing transfer of courses from other institutions
- transfers from other programs within FSU
- year-round admissions to both FSU and the BIS

The program coordinator is encouraged to continue with her goal of designing a database for contact information, correspondence records, current BIS activity/enrollments, as well as ongoing program review data.

As the four-option BIS program is so new, we have not yet been able to assess the kinds of employment graduates undertake. The graduate surveys we received from some of the former one-track BIS degree indicate that five students are currently in a management role in several different fields including business and health employment.

There are data on the current BIS students' *intended* careers/employment because students are asked to identify these in their application letters and during their admissions interviews. However, this data on specifically identified careers or jobs have not yet been reviewed. This information should be assessed, not only for overall program quality, but also for tracking how well the students' self-designed programs of study are preparing them for their career goals and employment after graduation.

The need for and usefulness of follow-up employment data on BIS graduates is currently under discussion.

F. Quality of Curriculum and Instruction

Though there is no set curriculum for the BIS, each of the four options has set guidelines which require satisfactory completion for graduation.

To maintain a high quality of all aspects of the BIS as an academic program option, the role of the program coordinator and advisors is to monitor the admissions process; to approve programs of study that do not duplicate existing FSU programs and that meet a student's individual academic and career goals; to provide ongoing advisement for current students; and to maintain records for program assessment and improvement. Our review of the data and of the overall development of the BIS program this past year indicates that these roles have been carried out with measurable success.

A question and discussion point that came up this past year was related to the purpose and effect of designating an equivalent of a capstone course for the BIS (currently stipulated on the check sheets as the "integrated studies program requirement: any approved 300 or 400-level course"). One proposal was to include with this requirement a student statement which would reflect how well selected courses and overall program design matched or aligned with the student's original academic and professional goals upon BIS admission. This issue remains under review, and a goal for the next year is to articulate a clear purpose and intended outcome for this capstone requirement. Such an articulation might also provide guidelines for advisement when the student must designate the capstone course.

G. Composition and Quality of Faculty

There are no faculty unique to the BIS program.

H. Advisory Board

Although there currently is no advisory board, the question was raised whether or not such a board would be helpful for program quality and improvement. One suggestion is to consider BIS graduates who might serve on such a board. This discussion of an advisory board should continue during the next academic year.

I. Resources

As a program that relies on existing facilities, faculty, and curricula, the BIS currently requires no additional resources in these areas.

By far, the most important resource needed is personnel for program advisement.

The high number of BIS inquiries and the increasing number of actual applicants, create a heavy advisement load for the program coordinator. We happily note that in April 2007, Dr. Roxanne Cullen became a BIS advisor, assisting with student advisement. Also, a student aide was recently enlisted to assist with various tasks.

To maintain high program quality, the program coordinator should continue to have faculty advisement assistance especially if the program numbers remain the same or increase.

Section 6: Appendices

APPENDIX A: Graduate Surveys

Graduate Survey/Exit Interview and Responses
BIS Graduate Student Survey 2007

N=6 (of 14; 40% return rate)

BIS Graduates 1999–2007 College of Arts and Sciences

Graduation Semester	Number of Graduates
Winter 2002	2
Winter 2003	1
Fall 2004	1
Summer 2004	1
Fall 2005	1
Summer 2005	1
Winter 2005	1
Summer 2005	1
Winter 2006	6
May 2007	6

1. What semester did you apply to/begin the BIS? (see #2)

2. When did you graduate from the BIS?

Beginning Year	Completion Year
Unsure	December 2005
Unsure	December 2006
1999	2002
2003 (Fall)	December 2004
2006 (Fall)	December 2006
2006 (Fall)	December 2006

3. What BIS Option did you complete?
    Option I: 1
    Option II: 1
    Option III: 4

4. What official minors, if any, did you complete, and/or what approved concentrations of study, if applicable?
    - Art History minor with Fine Arts concentration
    - Communication minor with a Psychology minor
    - Business minor with Education concentration
    - Human Resources minor with Management (business) concentration
    - Sociology minor
    - CIS minor

5. Were you a full-time or part-time student?
    Part-Time: 4
    Full-Time: 1
    Both: 1

6. Purpose: "I enrolled in the BIS Program primarily to. . ." (circle one)

    4   a. complete a bachelor's degree for career advancement
    1   b. to complete a degree for graduate school entrance
    1   c. to complete a degree for which FSU had no set program of study
    0   d. Other (please specify)

7. Rate the following areas of the BIS program on a scale of 1 (weak) to 5 (strong)

1	2	3	4	5	Statement
			1	5	The BIS Program offered me a flexible program of study for my professional and/or academic goals.
			1	5	The BIS Program allowed me to design an interdisciplinary plan of study otherwise not available at FSU.
			3	3	The BIS Program allowed me to develop competencies from a variety of disciplines.
		2	1	3	The BIS allowed me to design a program of study that included new areas of study/professional preparation (e.g., homeland security).
			1	5	The BIS allowed me to complete my studies in a timely manner.
			1	5	The received helpful advisement from the BIS advisor/program coordinator.
			1	5	The advisor allowed me to design a suitable program of studies.
			1	5	Overall, the BIS program prepared me to achieve my professional goals/objectives.
		1	1	4	Overall, the BIS program helped to acquire the skills needed for my professional and/or academic pursuits.
			1	5	The BIS allowed me to (or will allow me to) advance in my profession/job.

Open-Ended Questions

1. How was your ease of transfer into the BIS program (may include the following: a) admission to FSU, including transcript receipt, transcript reviews, online or paper application process, timeliness of notification/communication by FSU; b) admission to BIS; c) communication with or contact by BIS personnel; c) program transfer within FSU; etc.)

   The initial quest to transfer was difficult. I don't know if that was because it was a fairly new program or what. I also think it should be promoted more. It seemed like a big secret when I first applied (2003).

   The process was very uncomplicated and smooth. I also had plenty of assistance if I had any questions or concerns.

   Communication with or contact by BIS personnel; it was easy and she was terrific and helpful.

   Transition into BIS was easy—great communication with my educational counselor, ------

   Excellent!

   It was very easy. I made an appointment with ----- and we mapped out what I needed to do. I was finished in record time.

2. Has the BIS made a difference in your professional situation? (may include how it helped advance in job, pursuit of further education, etc.)

   Yes, helped achieve job upgrade which included salary increase of $7000.

   Absolutely, it has allowed me to continue my education. I am preparing to graduate with a terminal degree this year.

   I have had interview opportunities that I may not have been eligible for before and I was just offered and accepted a Healthcare management position I may not have qualified for before.

   Helped me obtain a job.

   I used many ideas from the coursework in my current position and will continue to do so. The networking with FSU faculty is great!

   Yes, I was able to apply for a position that required a Bachelors Degree. I got the job.

3. How would you describe your overall satisfaction with the BIS program?

Program itself is a wonderful opportunity for students like me (older and only had associates from way back and work full-time)

Superbly satisfied.

I am very satisfied so far. I am also very grateful for the help I received in bringing all my classes together to achieve the BIS degree. Thank you.

Very satisfied. Appreciate that this program was available.

Excellent—I would have had many credits that were not transferable to a traditional major like Business Administration and would not have completed.

For a non-traditional student like myself, it made more sense to use this program than any of the others offered. I had many, many credits but no degree. The BIS program was able to take the credits I had, plus a few more credits, and turn my long road of education into a degree. Then I was able to apply for jobs that require a BS in any field.

4. What recommendations do you have for improving the BIS Program?

Promote it more.

None

I do not have any, I was assisted to every extent that was needed.

None—is perfect for a non-traditional who has a full-time job! More offerings after 5 p.m. to "cater" to the working population. I have the skills and experience…I just needed the degree—Thanks!

I would recommend more advertising of this degree to people who have just gotten out of the service or are in the reserves. I would also advertise it toward people like myself who have many credits but no major that can utilize these credits.

Additional information

Current Employment of Graduates
- VISTA (volunteer but stipend through Michigan Campus Compact) 40+ hours/week.
- Assistant Office Manager (Counseling Office)
- FSU Administrative Assistance
- Division Manager (Mobile Diagnostics Division, healthcare company, Detroit)
- FSU Professional

APPENDIX B: Student Survey and Responses

Program Review: BIS Enrolled Students Survey

This year the BIS program at Ferris State University is completing a self-study evaluation as part of the University's program review process. One step in this process is to collect information from our current students. The Program Review Panel for the BIS program would appreciate your candid responses to the following questions.

Please complete the survey questions and return this form as soon as possible to Dr. Christine Vonder Haar, coordinator, BIS Program, Languages and Literature Department, ASC 3032.

---

1. What semester/year did you apply to the BIS?_____
2. What is your current academic status?   freshman   sophomore   junior   senior
3. What BIS Option are you pursuing? Option I (applied or tech associates plus minor); Option II (2 minors or approved concentrations); Option III (fulltime employee 3+ years—approved open curriculum).
4. What official minors are you pursuing?_____ And/OR What approved concentrations?_____
5. Are you a full or part-time student?_____ Are you enrolled currently?_____
6. What semester/year do you anticipate graduating from the BIS program?_____
7. I learned about the BIS program through…(circle one)
     a. FSU website
     b. College Counselor/Advisor
     c. Faculty member
     d. Student
     e. Other (please specify)_____

8. I enrolled in the BIS Program primarily for the following reason…(circle one)
     a. to complete a bachelor's degree for career advancement
     b. to complete a degree for graduate school entrance
     c. to complete a degree for which FSU had no set program of study
     d. Other (please specify)_____

9. Rate the following areas of the BIS program on a scale of 1 (weak) to 5 (strong):
     1   2   3   4   5   The BIS Program offers me a more flexible program of study than a traditional degree program.

     1   2   3   4   5   Overall, the BIS will help me to acquire the skills I will need for my professional and/or academic goals.

     1   2   3   4   5   The BIS Program is allowing me to design an interdisciplinary plan of study otherwise not available at FSU.

     1   2   3   4   5   The BIS Program is allowing me to develop competencies from a variety of disciplines.

     1   2   3   4   5   The BIS is allowing me to design a program of study that includes new areas of study/professional preparation (e.g., homeland security)

1	2	3	4	5	
1	2	3	4	5	The BIS advisor/program coordinator has been helpful.
1	2	3	4	5	The BIS advisor/program coordinator is helping me to design a suitable program of study.
1	2	3	4	5	The BIS degree is allowing me to complete my studies in a timely manner.
1	2	3	4	5	The BIS program is allowing me to achieve my academic goals.

Open-Ended Interview Questions:

5. How was your ease of transfer into the BIS program (may include the following: a) admission to FSU, including transcript receipt, transcript reviews, online or paper application process, timeliness of notification/communication by FSU; b) admission to BIS; c) communication with or contact by BIS personnel; c) program transfer within FSU; etc.)
6. How would you describe your overall satisfaction with the BIS program so far?
7. What suggestions, if any, do you have regarding the BIS?

Results of Survey of Current BIS Students

N=12 (75% RETURN RATE)

1 = WEAK -> 5 = STRONG

1	2	3	4	5	Statement
	1		3	7	The BIS Program offers me a more flexible program of study than a traditional degree program.
		2	4	5	Overall, the BIS will help me to acquire the skills I will need for my professional and/or academic goals.
	1	2	1	7	The BIS Program is allowing me to design an interdisciplinary plan of study otherwise not available at FSU
	1	3	2	5	The BIS Program is allowing me to develop competencies from a variety of disciplines.
	2	4	2	3	The BIS is allowing me to design a program of study that includes new areas of study/professional preparation (e.g., homeland security)
			2	9	The BIS advisor/program coordinator has been helpful.
			3	8	The BIS advisor/program coordinator is helping me to design a suitable program of study.
			5	6	The BIS degree is allowing me to complete my studies in a timely manner.
			2	9	The BIS program is allowing me to achieve my academic goals.
Academic Status: 10 seniors; 1 did not indicate					
Option: 3 in Option 1; 3 in Option 2; 4 in Option 3					

APPENDIX C: Admission/Inquiry Interviews and Responses

Inquiry Interviews Fall 2006

Note: A BIS Inquiry Interview is a meeting—in person or by phone—with a person interested in and inquiring about the BIS and his/her eligibility

In-person inquiries August-December 2006 were usually 15-20 minute meetings in the Program Coordinator's office. Phone calls were generally shorter. Email responses provided information about the program, eligibility, application procedures, and answers to specific questions asked by the person inquiring.

The following information/data includes only those contacts by potential BIS applicants themselves (not counselors, faculty, advisors, etc. who referred them and may have contacted the BIS Coordinator first).

The inquiries reported here have not yet resulted in applications to the BIS.

Total Number of Inquiries: 40

	In-Person Inquiries	Phone/Email Inquiries	Total
August	2	1	3
September	3	8	11
October	3	8	11
November	5	3	8
December	4	3	7
	17	23	40

Referred by
FSU Admissions 2
Website 5
Dental Hygiene...4
COB..3
CAS Dean's Office 1
CAS Biology...1

Current Academic Status/Program or College
Associate degree in hand or by 07................11
(COB, Welding, Dental Hygiene)
COEHS 2
COB (CIS, Acct, Finance)..............................3
COT (Welding, mech engine, auto, survey) 4
Dental Hygiene faculty 1
Ornamental Horticulture................................1
Applied Biology..1
Pre-Pharm...1
St. Clair CC..1

BIS Program Option Eligibility
(for those who inquired)
Option I..9
Option II 11
Option III..6

Reason for BIS Inquiry
High number of credits.................................. 8
Dissatisfied with current prog for my goals 5
Desire to create marketable degree............... 5
Advancement opportunity 4
Flexibility of BIS.. 4
Out of town/state (former FSU student) 4
Switched majors 2 or more times 4
Not sure 4
No advancement without a BS....................... 3
BS required by current job 3
New career opportunity 3
Currently employed full-time......................... 3
Low GPA in current program 2
Frustrated with idea of starting over 2
Other degrees—time/money not feasible........ 2
6+ years of F/T school 1
Inability to complete an internship................. 1
Desire to obtain masters degree 1
No current BS degree to meet needs............. 1
Had a medical leave from studies 1

BIS Inquiry Interviews: Spring 2007

Note: A BIS Inquiry meeting is conducted—in person or by phone/email—with a person interested in finding out about the BIS degree.

In-person inquiries were usually 15–20 minute meetings in Program Coordinator's office. Phone calls were generally shorter. Email responses provided main program eligibility and answers to specific questions asked by the person inquiring.

The following information/data includes only those contacts by potential BIS applicants themselves (not counselors, faculty, advisors, etc. who referred them and may have contacted the BIS Coordinator first).

These inquiries have not yet resulted in completed applications to the BIS; some applications are in progress for Fall 2007

Total Number of In-Person Inquiries:................ 36
Total Number of Email/Phone Inquiries: 14
Total Number of Inquiries:................................ 50

Breakdown of 36 In-Person Inquiry Meetings (by Month)
January... 10
February 9
March 9
April 5
May 3

Reason for BIS Inquiry
High number of credits 8
Dissatisfied with current prog for my goals 5
Desire to create marketable degree................ 5
Advancement opportunity 4
Flexibility of BIS 4
Out of town/state (former FSU student).......... 4
Switched majors 2 or more times 4
Not sure... 4
No advancement without BS........................... 3
BS required for current job 3
New career opportunity.................................. 3
Currently employed full-time 3
Low GPA in current program 2
Frustrated with idea of starting over............... 2
Other degrees—time/money not feasible 2
6+ years of F/T school 1
Inability to complete an internship................. 1
Desire to obtain masters degree 1
No current BS degree to meet needs 1
Had a medical leave from studies 1

Current Academic Status/Program or College
Associate degree in hand or by 07 11
(COB, Welding, Dental Hygiene)
COEHS 2
COB (CIS, Acct, Finance)............................... 3
COT (Welding, mech engine, auto, survey)...... 4
Dental Hygiene faculty 1
Ornamental Horticulture................................. 1
Applied Biology... 1
Pre-Pharm... 1
St. Clair CC... 1

BIS Program Option Eligibility (for those who inquired)
Option I 9
Option II... 7
Option III.. 4

Referred by
Website.. 7
DenHygiene (Burns) 5
COEHS, M. Cline.. 5
AH Sonography 4
Other BIS students 3
FSU Admissions 2
Rick Van Sant 1
Jeff Ek (Graph Design)................................... 1
Welding 1
COB, VandeMark 1
Biology.. 1
AH/M. Steeno 1
AH, ONeill-Cook... 1
Acad Counseling 1
Assoc mailing (Hill).. 1
Not indicated.. 16

Previous and/or Current Program, College, or Institution (if reported)
COEHS (Biol Ed, BusEd, Eng Ed, AH Ed) 4
Nursing 2
Visual Design 2
Pre-Dental Hygiene 2
Pre-Med 1
Med Tech.. 1
Advertising.. 1
Accounting 1
TVP 1
Social Work 1
ROTC/Military... 1
Optometry Tech.. 1
St. Clair CC 1
CMU 1
Mott CC 1
Lansing CC 1

BIS Inquiry Interviews
(With BIS Students Admitted Academic Year 2006–2007)

N=19 [7- Full-time Students (traditional) / 12 - Part-time Students (non-traditional]

Employment breakdown:
>   3 - FSU full-time employees
>   2 - FSU part-time employees
>   3 - Privately employed full-time dental hygienists
>   3- Privately employed full-time nuclear med
>   1 - Privately employed full-time (dairy farm)

[NOTE: Prior to application/admission into the BIS between September 2006 and May 2007, each of the currently enrolled 19 students met with the BIS advisor. The following 6 questions were asked during the interview. Below is a tally of the information received from the 19 students who eventually enrolled in the program during the 2006-07 academic year].

1. How referred? (all that apply)
>   BIS website 6
>   CAS (Dean's office; flyer) 4
>   COEHS (M. Cline, L. Ing) 4
>   Another BIS student.. 3
>   CIS (Dept Head) 1
>   Dan Burcham 1
>   Language/Lit (R. Hill) 1
>   FSU Admissions Office 1

3. ....Current academic status/program
>   Associates degree completed 9
>   (Business, Allied Health, Technology)
>   Inactive... 8
>   Active/traditional student 6
>   Active/non-traditional student.......................... 5

>   Previous/Current College or Program (all that apply)
>   Elementary Ed 4
>   Dental Hygiene 4
>   Business 4 (gen, human resources, CNS, marketing)
>   Nuclear Med 3
>   Applied Speech Communication...................... 3
>   Applied Biology.. 2
>   Pre-Pharmacy... 2
>   Technology 2 (automotive, mechanical engineering)
>   CJ.. 2
>   Ed Tech 1
>   Traverse City/Allied Health 1
>   ITT 1
>   Baker College 1
>   Kirtland CC 1

4. ....Interest in the BIS? (all that apply)
>   High number of credits (97-152 cr.) 12
>   Long-range goal of graduate study................ 10
>   *(Allied Hlth, Business, Law, Arts/Science)*

FSU lockstep programs not feasible 10
6+ years undergrad w/out degree 6
Desire to study further 6
Bachelors degree required for new job 5
Frustrated/got passed over for job 3
Desire to combine 2 programs.........................2
Immediate goal to start grad school 2
Distance/geographical issues 2

BIS Program Option Eligibility (at time of interview)
INSA Option I...7
INSM Option II 6
INST Option III 7

5. ....Academic Goals/Plans:
>   Complete degree, using many credits...............7
>   Masters degree...4
>   Enhance academic preparation (job) 3
>   Build on current coursework 3
>   Desire to study but also to finish.....................2

4. ....Professional/Career Goals and Plans:
>   Increase advancement potential 7
>   Enter new career/field of work 5
>   Increase salary potential 5
>   Work in government, law 1
>   Start small business 1

5. ....Why/ how might the BIS be a good match for you? (all that apply)
>   Allows me to complete bachelors degree 19
>   Program flexibility..13
>   I currently have a full-time position................9
>   I'll be more marketable/job opportunity...........8
>   I'm unable to complete internship 7
>   Allows me to tailor a program.........................6
>   Significant finances already spent 5

Better paying jobs 4
Provides a retraining opportunity.................... 3
BIS will use all my credits.............................. 3
Can combine BIS with tech assoc 2
Desire to enter FSU accel nursing prgm 1

Without a degree program such as the BIS...

Likely not finish any degree 4
I can't start over in lockstep degrees 4
I will be passed over for jobs...........................3
I have no other timely acad. option..................2
Am out of state student/few options.................2
Wouldn't finish till 2011 w/trad BS1 (with 100+ credits in hand)

APPENDIX D: 2006–07 BIS Program Review Data

Year Admitted to BIS	Cumulative GPA	Cumulative Hours	ACT/SAT Score	Gender
04	3.26	131.0	17	F
n/a	2.59	150.0	22	M
n/a	2.98	129.0	21	F
06	2.31	143.0	n/a	M
07	3.21	128.98	n/a	M
06	2.98	148.0	16	F
n/a	2.62	109.0	n/a	M
07	3.19	159.0	24	F
06	4.00	88.57	n/a	F
06	3.81	159.01	n/a	M
06	2.11	132.0	12	M
07	2.87	90.0	16	F
05	3.37	59.0	19	M
05	3.74	130.0	n/a	F
07	3.61	130.0	n/a	M
07	3.95	100.0	21	F
07	2.25	65.0	n/a	M
06	3.93	125.0	n/a	F
05	1.93	90.05	n/a	M
n/a	2.47	157.06	n/a	F
07	3.09	133.0	16	M
n/a	2.11	116.69	14	F
07	2.07	147.4	17	M
06	3.19	113.0	n/a	M
06	2.10	142.8	n/a	M
n/a	3.80	83.71	n/a	F
07	2.75	103.69	16	F
07	4.00*	115.93*	n/a	F
07	2.52	148.05	n/a	F
06	3.51	148.0	22	F
06	3.51	75.66	8	F
06	3.48	102.35	n/a	F
05	3.78	164.54	n/a	F
07	3.01	137.59	n/a	F
n/a	3.32	111.67	n/a	F

APPENDIX E: 1999 BIS Program Proposal

APPENDIX F: 2006 BIS Program Proposal

APPENDIX G: BIS Check Sheets

APPENDIX H: BIS Publicity

APPENDIX I: BIS Admissions

APPENDIX J: Institutional Data

APPENDIX K: Yearly Annual Review (YAR)

APPENDIX L: Program Expenses 2006–07

APPENDIX M: Program Coordinator Responsibilities

General Descriptions of Role:

   The Bachelor of Integrative Studies Program is housed in CAS (2002) and in the Department of Languages and Literature (2006). The Program Coordinator, with the student, has the responsibility of determining and approving the appropriate program option (of four options) and course of study. This involves uniquely individualized advisement which requires the greatest part of the Program Coordinator's time. Because the BIS is designed for students seeking flexible, alternative programs of study, vigilance and communication are key for the PC. The PC is the "face" of the program for the student. Significant time is spent in screening the student: academic plans, career/job goals, and proposed programs of study. The PC then approves a program of study accordingly. The following characteristics have been identified as key to the PC role:

- Attends to detail
- Communicates well
- Meets with a variety of people across campus
- Demonstrates a helpful attitude with students
- Advises students effectively (considered crucial)
- Maintains and assures high level of integrity for the quality of both the degree program and the graduates who complete the BIS
- Maintains written records and corresponds as needed

Time Commitment: 10 hours per week (fall and spring semesters)

BIS Program "Start Up" Tasks (Fall 2006)

- Meet with CAS dean and associate dean; CAS counselor; L&L department head,
- Meet with College Academic Counselors (May 2006)
- Create publicity and informational materials (website, flyers, etc.)
- Visit/consult with comparable university/college BIS programs
- Develop mission statement and program outcomes
- Create a user-friendly credit checksheet
- Create an Initial Interview form (questionnaire) for

Ongoing Tasks

   New Applicants/Inquiries:

- Serve as initial contact for student referrals/inquiries about BIS (averages 5 inquiries per week via phone, email, faculty/counselor advisor referrals)
- Work/communicate with CAS admissions officer (A. Mishler, for ease of transfer/admission)
- Communicate with FSU admissions office (J. Becker, to coordinate ease of admission process)
- Conduct initial application interviews (via phone/in person; averages 2-3 per week, heaviest at course registration time and end of term)
- Review and assess new applications to BIS
- Write follow-up correspondence for BIS applicants (letters of acceptance)
- Review/audit transcripts for application
- Create bullet-point (talking points) list as an "in-house" rationale and description for FSU faculty/administrators across campus.

Advisement of program students
- Maintain student/advisee records
- Meet with student especially prior to registration each term (approve coursework in alignment with designated program option)
- Complete graduation audit and form for CAS
- Communicate with program coordinators in other colleges as necessary for student advisement (creating program of studies for 2 minors, course substitution, etc.).

College and University-wide Tasks
- Serve as a liaison with Academic Counselors (attend occasional meetings and phone calls/emails for referrals and related current BIS student advisement)
- Serve as a liaison with Academic and Career Counseling Office (contact via phone, some meetings with Deb Cox for student referrals)
- Report and update to Department Head in Lang/Lit Department and Associate Dean in CAS
- Conduct FSU Program Review (first review conducted: 2006–07)

Other
- Communicate with and supervise any BIS faculty advisors
- Oversee and report items related to annual BIS budget ($500 for 2006)
- Report to Department during its monthly meetings, as necessary
- Keep records related to annual data
- Follow up with graduates and maintain data