

Bachelor of Integrative Studies (BIS)

Academic Program Review Report

August 2013

PROGRAM REVIEW PANEL

Roxanne Cullen

Chair and Program Coordinator

Anne Marie Gillespie & Andrew Karafa

Program Participants

Sandy Gholston

Advisory Board Member and BIS Alum

Section 1: Program Overview

A. Program Goals.....	2
B. Program Visibility and Distinctiveness.....	3
C. Program Relevance	4
D. Program Value	6

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. The BIS asks students to focus on multiple capacities that they wish to develop and combine for individualized career paths. While each self-styled program is different, the orientation/capstone experiences and general education core provide commonality. Regardless of concentrations, minors, associate degrees that are combined to create the individual's program of study, the culminating experience requires students to demonstrate four programmatic learning outcomes: 1) exceptional communication skills, 2) presentation skills, 3) self-assessment ability and 4) ability to work successfully in teams. In addition to these, students are asked to formulate their own discipline-related learning outcomes, and then identify the coursework and other experiences that will help them reach those outcomes in their academic plan as well as demonstrate their attainment of competency in the program portfolio.

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.

Students are required to complete the University General Education requirements; complete 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. One course, COAS 495, is required. It is a fully online course that serves as both the orientation and capstone for the program. Students take the course twice, as an orientation to the program and to the concept of integrative studies. During this portion of the course students write about their academic path, define integrative learning, and develop their academic plan complete with individualized learning outcomes. Students take the course again in their last semester. In this portion students develop a portfolio demonstrating their skills and competencies.

The original proposal of 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.

Since the last review of the program we have simplified the checksheet even further to focus on the basic degree requirements rather than a specific option or concentration. All students are coded in INST since there was no real benefit to the multiple codes and tracking students was cumbersome as a result.

Admission Criteria

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.

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

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.).

Since the last program review, we have also added the designation of BIS Fully Online. That has greatly added to the visibility of the program. Of our current enrollment of 93 students, 26.8% (n=25) are in the online BIS. (Fall 2012 data)

The program coordinator also regularly recruits at community colleges and since the previous review we established articulation agreements with Alpena CC and Montcalm CC. The program coordinator is also a member of the Association for Integrated Studies, an organization comprised of program coordinators of interdisciplinary/integrative study degrees.

For additional visibility, the BIS has a Facebook and a Wordpress presence. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the presence of the student's stories of finding the BIS degree that are posted on the CAS website have been valuable recruiting tools as well.

(<http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/colleges/artsands/Arts-and-Sciences/Choosing-the-BIS-degree.htm>)

Another means of program recognition is the publication of *Learner-Centered Curriculum: Design and Implementation*, published in March 2012 by Jossey Bass, co-authored by the program coordinator and an advisory board member. This book explores innovative curriculum design and features the Ferris State University BIS as an example of a learner-centered curriculum.

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. In a paper for COAS 495, the orientation course for the program, a recent student wrote, "I'm diversifying my degree in order to maximize my education," a statement that captures the purpose and relevance of the degree option. 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 learner-centered program, exemplified in its goals of program self-design and innovative combinations of study proposed by students.

In redesigning the BIS after the last program review, we undertook the challenge of designing a model learner-centered program, using constructivist design principles that challenge many of our longstanding rules of curriculum design. In trying to shift out of a paradigm (shifting from an instructional paradigm to a learner-centered paradigm) we first have to learn to see the paradigm we operate in so that we can examine the underlying assumptions that we have taken as fact, our unexamined reality. This was our starting point. There is perhaps no process more rule-governed in academe than curriculum design. When faculty design new programs, they typically consult a curriculum manual that reads like something from the internal revenue service and emphasizes budget and territory more than student learning. The process is usually fairly cumbersome because of the numerous gatekeepers along the way. Curriculum in the instructional paradigm is predicated upon a factory view of education, stemming

from Franklin Bobbitt's early work, *The Curriculum*. Bobbitt likened education to the manufacturing of steel rails. His mechanized conception of curriculum was later refined by Ralph Tyler in what has come to be known as the *Tyler Rationale*, a linear, cause-effect model of curriculum building that became the standard. Curriculum in this model is an inflexible collection of courses arranged in a prescribed linear sequence that assumes a sameness to individuals, the raw material, who will receive information and process it in a like manner in a highly controlled environment.

As we undertook the challenge of creating a learner-centered curriculum design, we identified four assumptions that have guided practices in the instructional paradigm, assumptions that need to be challenged. The first assumption is that curriculum is linear, an additive process by which professors dispense information into the receptive learners in a sequence of stages that builds to a point of completion. The second assumption is that learners will receive this information in the way that it is transmitted regardless of prior knowledge or individual differences. The third assumption is that time is pivotal to learning. Our system of education is obsessed with time and the way to parcel it out throughout a semester, tracking the number of minutes in a contact hour and the number of credit hours in a program. Credit and time have become equivalents, and the credit hour has become the coin of the realm. The fourth assumption is that knowledge is owned, controlled and disseminated according to discipline-specific rules. If a student moves from one discipline to another more often than not, he or she loses credit hours because credit hours---the coin of the realm---do not transfer into the new discipline. There is no credit hour equivalent to the euro.

Curriculum design that is aligned with learner-centered principles recognizes the learner's need to construct meaning, thereby questioning the assumption that learning is a linear process that is the same for all students. Because students construct meaning, their prior knowledge plays a significant role in their construction of new knowledge. A constructivist approach takes into account the recursive nature of learning that takes place as learners reconsider their understanding of knowledge over time. Tagg described the difference between the instructional and learner-centered view of time in regard to learning, saying that in the instructional paradigm time is the constant and learning is the variable and the opposite is true in the learner-centered. The goal of a learner-centered curriculum is to foster learner autonomy in order for students to develop strategies for life-long learning and transfer skills from one context to another.

In designing the BIS we challenged these four assumptions and created a degree program that is non-linear (there is no single entry point nor is there an established progression of courses), accounts for individual differences and prior learning, and accepts credits from multiple disciplines. It is integrative by design and focuses on varieties of knowledge and learning environments. The key features that underpin our design are sharing power with the students, creating community, and infusing assessment throughout the process in order to create coherence and to monitor student progress toward achieving learning outcomes. Integrative design combines one's vertical knowledge with his or her horizontal knowledge. By vertical we mean traditional academic knowledge and by horizontal we mean one's personal knowledge

gained through experience. The point where these two intersect is where relevance is achieved and relevance is key to learner motivation.

The design of our curriculum is based upon this premise. The unifying element is the ongoing assessments that weave together the fabric of each individual's unique program design.

The rise of *studies* like cultural studies, women studies, popular culture, minority studies, urban studies, etc. has given integrative design visibility. These interdisciplinary programs focus on a central theme examining the theme or problem from multiple disciplinary lenses. They tend to include arts and sciences disciplines like psychology, sociology, humanities, and literature. Our program, while housed in the college of Arts and Sciences, is not limited to those disciplines. In fact, a large number of students begin the program with an associate degree, often in a technical field.

D. Program Value

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. Since the recent development of the online version of the program, more students have enrolled who have selected Ferris's program over a competing degree elsewhere because of the flexibility and student ownership of the program design. In more frank terms, we have moved from being a program of last resort to a program of choice.

The value of the program is recognized by students who have completed or who are completing the degree who recruit others to the program. Similarly, program coordinators and student advisors from across campus, recognizing the viability of the program have referred students. The flexibility of the degree has proven to be a positive feature for student athletes in order to maintain their NCAA eligibility. Additionally, we get referrals from our community college partners on a regular basis.

Degrees Conferred

2008-09	14
2009-10	22
2010-11	24
2012-13	43

Section 2: Perceptions of the Program

A. Graduate Follow-up Survey	2
B. Employer Follow-up Survey	4
C. Graduating Student Exit Survey.....	4
D. Student Program Evaluation	6
E. Faculty Perceptions	4
F. Advisory Committee Perceptions	5

A. Graduate Follow-up Survey

The graduate survey (Appendix A), designed by the PRP, was sent as an email attachment to 39 BIS graduates, and 12 surveys (31%) 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.

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

1	2	3	4	5	Statement
				12	The BIS Program offered me a flexible program of study for my professional and/or academic goals.
				12	The BIS Program allowed me to design an interdisciplinary plan of study otherwise not available at FSU.
			1	11	The BIS Program allowed me to develop competencies from a variety of disciplines.
			1	11	The BIS allowed me to complete my studies in a timely manner.
			3	9	The received helpful advisement from the BIS advisor/program coordinator.
				12	The advisor allowed me to design a suitable program of studies.
				12	Overall, the BIS program prepared me to achieve my professional goals/objectives.
				12	Overall, the BIS program helped to acquire the skills needed for my professional and/or academic pursuits.
			1	11	The BIS allowed me to (or will allow me to) advance in my profession/job.

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.

While we do not have employer survey findings, we do have “employer” impressions of the 17 students who have completed internships. The Internship sites include:

GCCard Headstart, Flint MI
Northern Michigan Sports Medicine, Petosky, MI
FSU Rankin Art Gallery, Big Rapids, MI (2)
LTBB of Odawa Indians, Harbor Spring, MI (2)
Genesee County Community Action Resource Dept., Flint, MI
FSU Athletics Gridiron Club, Big Rapids, MI
FSU Athletics, Big Rapids, MI (2)
Michigan Film Office, Lansing, MI
Apple Valley Natural Foods, Kalamazoo, MI
World Security Institute’s nonprofit organization, Global Zero, Washington DC
Ferris Tennis Camps, Big Rapids, MI
Sports and Fitness Club, Lansing, MI
Curly’s Auto Service, Sturgis MI
Department of Corrections, Grand Rapids, MI

In response to the question, Please project the interns’ changes for future success in this field, 16 were rated “excellent” and 1 was rated “good”.

C. Graduating Student Exit Survey

The PRP designed a survey (Appendix B) which was sent to students enrolled in the BIS Fall 2012 and Spring 2013. The respondents held senior academic status and were enrolled in the capstone COAS 495 course. They were able to post their responses anonymously to a discussion thread.

Fall 2012 92% response rate								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Statement	
					3	19	The BIS Program offers me a more flexible program of study than a traditional degree program.	
			1		4	17	Overall, the BIS will help me to acquire the skills I will need for my professional and/or academic goals.	
					3	18	The BIS Program is allowing me to design an interdisciplinary plan of study otherwise not available at FSU	
				1	3	18	The BIS Program is allowing me to develop competencies from a variety of disciplines.	
					1	21	The BIS advisor/program coordinator has been helpful.	
				1	1	20	The BIS advisor/program coordinator is helping me to design a suitable program of study.	
					3	19	The BIS degree is allowing me to complete my studies in a timely manner.	
				1	2	20	The BIS program is allowing me to achieve my academic goals.	

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. 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.

E. Faculty Perceptions

There is only one required course of all students, COAS 495. This course is taught fully on-line by the program coordinator each semester. Therefore, no faculty survey was conducted.

F. Advisory Committee Perceptions

The Advisory Board is comprised of the FSU General Education Coordinator, the Dean of Instruction from Montcalm Community College, the Associate Provost for Students and Instruction at Alpena Community College, the Dean of Arts and Sciences from Governor’s State College, and an Alum from the program. The Board meets annually, selects the scholarship recipient, and offers guidance for the program.

The advisory board was surveyed regarding the role of the board, the perceptions of the program and the performance of the coordinator. Below are the results of the survey, indicating that the program is necessary, that students meet defined competencies and that the coordinator is knowledgeable and keeps the board apprised of program information.

Survey Results

The BIS allows students to develop competencies from a variety of disciplines

Not at all	Somewhat	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Rating Average
-	-	-	16.7%	83.3%	4.83

The Coordinator keeps the advisory board informed about the program

Not at all	Somewhat	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Rating Average
-	-	-	16.7%	83.3%	4.83

The program coordinator is well informed and knowledgeable in regard to the program and the students

Not at all	Somewhat	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Rating Average
-	-	-		100%	5.00

The Advisory Board plays an important role in the success of the program.

Not at all	Somewhat	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Rating Average
-	-	16.7%	50.0%	33.3%	4.17

The advisory board has broad representation

Not at all	Somewhat	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Rating Average
-	-	-	50.0%%	50.0%	4.50

The advisory board has a well defined role

Not at all	Somewhat	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Rating Average
-	-	16.7%	66.7%	16.7%	4.00

The BIS student meet programmatic competencies

Not at all	Somewhat	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Rating Average
-	-	-	66.7%	33.3%	4.33

The BIS is a necessary Degree Option

Not at all	Somewhat	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Rating Average
-	-	-	-	100%	5.0

Section 3: Program Profile

A. Profile of Students.....4

B. Enrollment.....6

C. Program Capacity.....7

D. Retention and Graduation6

E. Access.....8

F. Curriculum.....8

G. Program Requirements.....8

H. Quality of Instruction.....9

I. Composition and Quality of Faculty9

J. Service to Non-Majors9

K. Degree Program Cost and Productivity Data.....9

L. Assessment and Evaluation9

M. Administration Effectiveness9

A. Profile of Students

Although the BIS is a program that is open to freshmen, it is rare that a freshman elects or is allowed to enter the BIS. The majority of students enter the program from three different sources. Nearly 40% are internal transfers. These students may be electing the BIS after: 1) having completed an associates degree at Ferris, 2) experiencing dissatisfaction with their current program, 3) determining a career focus that is not available in current programming at Ferris.

The second largest group of students is those (36.5%) who transfer to the BIS from another institution. Over the past three years considerable effort has been made to develop connections with area community colleges. We have a cohort of students in Alpena completing the degree and numerous students from Montcalm CC, Muskegon CC, and Grand Rapids CC. The program coordinator has visited these schools and established connections with educational counselors at the sites. Our own off-campus sites are also assisting in recruitment, particularly in Lansing and Traverse City and we anticipate additional students from these areas in the coming years.

The third group of students enrolled in the BIS is readmits. Many of these students have been out of school of a decade or more. Some have returned to Ferris only to find that the program they left unfinished no longer exists, or through word of mouth, they have learned of the BIS and have decided to come back and finish a degree. A fair number of these students have found that advancement in their workplace is contingent upon a bachelor's degree, so that has stimulated them to investigate options, and more often than not, the BIS is the most attractive option either because it can be obtained online or because the majority of previously earned credits will be accepted toward the degree.

Of the 93 students enrolled in Fall 2012, 58 (62.3%) are main campus students. Over one-quarter of the students (26.8%) are fully online. The fully online option has been available for one year and the numbers have steadily increased, and we anticipate more students to select that option in the future.

The ethnicity of the students is consistent with the diversity of students campus-wide. The majority, however, are adult learners who are transferring in the equivalent of an associates degree or more. The GPA breakdown is a little misleading. The readmits (nearly one-quarter of the total number of students) are many times returning students who left or were dismissed a decade or more ago. As they will admit, they were not serious when they were here previously, or as one student wrote, "I had a beer in one hand and a frat boy in the other;" or as another predicted, "I had a pilot's license, a plane and I belonged to a fraternity. There was no way I was going to graduate!" They return to us as mature adults who are highly motivated and serious student and also frank about their mistakes; however, the sins of the past affect the overall GPA, so oftentimes the overall GPA does not reflect the current work of the student.

BIS Fall 2012 Demographics
(as reported in Banner)

*The Banner Report for Fall 2012 indicates 60 students (64/5%) are Continuing; however, this is not accurate because once a student has been enrolled and reenrolls the following semester the student is coded Continuing, even if he/she was a transfer, internal transfer or readmit.

Degree Code	N= 93	%
Continuing	0*	0 %
Internal Transfer	36	38.7 %
Transfer	34	36.5 %
Readmit	23	24.7 %
Campus Code	N=93	%
Main Campus	58	62.3 %
Online	25	26.8 %
Alpena	9	9.6 %
Traverse City	1	1.0 %
Class Level	N=93	%
Frosh.	1	1.0 %
Soph.	6	6.4 %
Jr.	23	24.7 %
Sr.	63	67.7 %
Ethnicity	N=93	%
White	78	83.8 %
Black	6	6.4 %
Native Amer.	2	2.1 %
Asian	3	3.2 %
Hispanic	1	1.0 %
Multicultural	3	3.2 %
Transfer Hours		
1-15	12	
15-30	6	
30-60	19	
60-100	22	
100+	15	
GPA	N=86*	%
3.6+	12	13.9 %
3.0-3.6	13	15.1 %
3.0-3.5	20	23.2 %
2.0-2.9	39	45.3 %

<2.0	2	2.3 %
------	---	-------

*New Transfers do not yet have an FSU GPA

B. Enrollment

There has been a steady increase in enrollment since the last review of the program. The following table illustrates that increase.

Year	Spring	Summer	Fall
2013	105		
2012	76	43	93
2011	66	42	64
2010	35	26	77
2009	14	13	21

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

The program is publicized internally through college and department meetings and with college counselors. We have increased our web presence both with the CAS website and the Off Campus website, a Facebook presence and a Wordpress presence. Additionally we have a Youtube video in production. We have created brochures that recruiters distribute.

As the program has grown in recent years, our personal liaisons with departments and units has increased our enrollment. We regularly receive inquiries from students who have been advised to seek out the BIS by College of Business, College of Education and Human Services, and College of Allied Health and of course our own College of Arts and Sciences as well as off campus site advisors. We also have a developing relationship with athletics. Asst. Coach Sparky McEwen has been using the BIS to recruit football players and we developed a brochure targeted directly to athletes. We also developed a set of program options that might be attractive to veterans and are pursuing that possibility. The relationship we have developed with area community colleges has also been fruitful and we have tried to maintain those relationships by inviting colleagues from those campuses to sit on our advisory board.

Goals for Increasing Publicity

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

6. Continue to advertise online option
7. Work with Veteran's Affairs

Efforts for Maintaining Current Students

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

C. Program Capacity

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

There are no real limitations on enrollment capacity since we have no faculty, equipment, or lab requirements.

D. Retention and Graduation

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

We have had very few students leave the program. No Banner data was available to give an exact number; however, the steady increase in enrollment suggests that we are able to compensate for any attrition that does occur.

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

We are an advising-intensive program. The program coordinator and additional faculty advisors spend considerable time meeting with advisees and discussing their plans and progress.

Trends in number of degrees awarded in the program

The number of graduates has steadily increased since the last APRC review.

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.

Average length of time to complete the program

The majority of students complete within three to four semesters. An exact figure is not

available; however, it should also be noted that there are a number of Ferris employees working on this program who are only able to take one, sometimes, two courses per semester.

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 .

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.

The addition of an online version of the program has greatly increased accessibility.

It should also be noted that the program coordinator has worked closely with disability services and the counselors from that area have recruited a number of students for the program.

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

Since the last review a required orientation/capstone course has been developed, COAS 495. Students are required to take the course twice, first at the outset of their program and a second time in their last semester. This course provides coherence and community. In the orientation portion of the course, students reflect upon their previous learning, develop an academic plan, articulate the meaning of integrative studies, and read about the rapid changes in the conception of "jobs" and "work" which makes the BIS highly relevant as a career option. When the students take the capstone portion of the course, they develop a portfolio/website that demonstrates their multiple skills and talents and defines their integrative learning experience.

Also since the last review, an internship opportunity has been added to the curriculum. The internship is recommended, not required, but it has proven to be a popular option. In the fall of 2012 an experimental course was offered, COAS 490: Cultural Competence in Literature and Film.

In an effort to increase enrollment, we have developed partnerships with area community colleges. We established an articulation agreement with Alpena Community College and

currently have a cohort of 20 students completing the BIS in Alpena. In order to facilitate this, the program coordinator worked with the assistant vice president for instruction at ACC to develop a selection of courses that would be offered as a package to assure that students could complete the degree at the ACC campus.

We have also worked to develop a cohort at Montcalm Community College and Grand Rapids Community College. The program coordinator has met with students at each college as well as with the educational counselors and deans of instruction. There are a number of students pursuing the BIS from these campuses; however, they are not following an established program checklist as in the case of Alpena CC.

Since the previous review we have also added the option of the BIS as a fully online degree. CPTS has advertised the program and has published some of the “packages” that we developed for ACC on their website as examples of possible online curricular options.

G. Program requirements

Overall program requirements include:

1. Completion of at least 120 semester hours (including up to 90 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.
2. 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.
3. Completion of the general education requirements for the Bachelor of Science degree.
4. Completion of COAS 495: Orientation and Capstone course
5. COAS 491: internship is highly recommended

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

The only required course is COAS 495: Orientation and Capstone. The program coordinator developed and has taught this course since its beginning. She has had consistently positive student evaluations for this course. (IDEA ratings of 4.6 on average)

J. Service to Non-Majors

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

K. Degree Program Cost and Productivity Data

Academic Year	SCH	SCH/FTEF F+SP
2009-10	48	384.00
2010-11	251	382.11
2011-12	233	913.73

L. Assessment and Evaluation

Program assessment takes place in both the orientation and the capstone of the COAS 495 course. Students develop a portfolio that demonstrates their accomplishment of both the programmatic learning outcomes as well as the individualized learning outcomes that each student designs as part of their academic plan. The program coordinator evaluates each portfolio as part of the assessment for the COAS 495 course using a rubric designed for the process. Following that review, outside faculty review a selection of the portfolios using the same rubric as the program coordinator in order to assure validity of the scoring. Results of these reviews are reported annually to the Program Advisory Board. (see appendix C)

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, Roxanne Cullen in a number of ways. The Dean's Office provides administrative assistance for enrolling students, collecting data, furnishing reports as required. This can sometimes be very time-consuming, particularly in regard to issues that arise with the office of Admissions and Off Campus. The Dean's Office provides release time for the program coordinator and funding for the Advisory Board. The Associate Dean serves as the administrative head for the program.

Program Advisory Council

In an effort to increase administrative effectiveness, at the direction of the Dean Kurtz, a program advisory council has been established to provide on-campus support and guidance for the program. The members of the council were chosen because of their familiarity with the program and the current ties that exist between their program area and the BIS.

J. Randall Groves, CAS/ Humanities [We have had a number of students directed to the BIS from the Philosophy faculty. The program faculty in Humanities has recruited students and teaches a number of courses regularly elected by BIS students]

Lianne Briggs, COB/ Hospitality Programs. [We have had a number of students directed to us from the COB, and several electing to incorporate the HOMT minor and/or certificate as part of their academic plans. Lianne regularly assists in the advisement of these students]

Sandra Alpsach, CAS/Humanities [We have a new track designed to appeal to athletes and the Sports Communication minor is a part of that option. Sandy coordinates that minor.]

Charles “Sparky” McEwen, Athletics Dept. [Sparky is a recent graduate of the program and is a fervent supporter of the program. He is using the BIS as a recruiting tool for athletes. His son is also a student in the program.]

Denise Byrnes, CAHS, [Denise is a recent graduate of the program and an employee in CAHS. We have a number of students who elect to complete the BIS either while waiting for a spot on a wait list for a CAHS associate degree or while completing an associates in CAHS.]

Katherine Harris, CAS, [Katherine is an advisor for the program and has taught the COAS 495]

Lynne Chrenka, CAS [Lynne also serves as an academic advisor for BIS students]

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. The continued increase in enrollment suggests that the administration of the program is effective.

Year	Spring	Summer	Fall
2013	105	45	
2012	76	43	95
2011	66	42	64
2010	35	26	77
2009	17	Na	21

2008	14	13	21
------	----	----	----

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

A. Instructional Environment.....	2
B. Computer Access and Availability.....	2
C. Other Instructional Technology	2
D. Library Resources	2

Currently, the BIS is housed in the College of Arts and Sciences. The BIS makes use of existing offices and facilities.

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	2
B. Program Visibility and Distinctiveness.....	2
C. Program Value.....	3
D. Enrollment.....	3
E. Characteristics, Quality and Employability of Students.....	3
F. Quality of Curriculum and Instruction	3
G. Composition and Quality of Faculty	4
H. Advisory Board	4
I. Resources.....	6

A. Relationship to FSU Mission

The newly designed BIS degree 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.

Tierney, in *Revisioning Curriculum in Higher Education* said that we cannot consider curricula divorced from the context in which they are situated. Our program is situated in a career-focused university where the emphasis has been on employability upon graduation. Ferris was founded for the purpose of retraining displaced lumberjacks 125 years ago when the lumber industry in Michigan collapsed. The focus on jobs has been consistent since that time. We are at an interesting juncture because once again the Michigan economy is making it necessary for many adults to return to the university to reinvent themselves. Both returning adult learners and traditional aged students face a challenging future where jobs and the workforce in general change rapidly. It is difficult to make any guarantees to anyone regarding future employability because the landscape continues to shift. Rather than training for a job in a society that some say is becoming *dejobbed*, we emphasize to our students the need to demonstrate talents and abilities, multiple skills and adaptability, along with the ability to learn and transfer skills to new contexts. Our degree program is in many ways a return to the original mission of the university as articulated by our founder but designed for workers in a new century in an entirely new economy and social reality.

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

Since the previous review, a number of efforts have been made to increase the publicity about the BIS through the following actions:

- Create a BIS brochure
- Meet with college counselors and academic/career counselors
- Review/modify FSU webpage as needed
- Investigate publicity possibilities for FSU alumni
- Investigate publicity possibilities for community colleges with which FSU has articulation agreements
- Develop a Facebook presence
- Develop an Advisory Board
- Develop a Wordpress presence

C. Program Value

The program has evolved into a valuable asset for the University. It is very low in cost to deliver while providing unique academic opportunities for students. It has become both a recruitment tool, bringing students to Ferris who might not otherwise choose the institution, and as a retention tool, providing a pathway to graduation for students who might otherwise leave the institution without a degree.

D. Enrollment

Enrollment is steadily increasing. At the time of the last review, the enrollment in Fall was 17. Each fall enrollment has increased from 17-21-21-77-64-94. The same is true for Spring semesters: 14-17-35-66-76. Our graduation rate is also rising. In 2009 we graduated a total of 12 students, 2010—22 and in 2011 –33. In spring+ summer 2012 we had 24 graduates.

E. Characteristics, Quality and Employability of Students

F. Quality of Curriculum and Instruction

Semester	COAS 495: Orientation/Capstone	491: Internship
Fall 2012	44	1
Summer 2012	22	3
Spring 2012	43	2
Fall 2011	28	6
Summer 2011	20	4
Spring 2011	28	1
Fall 2010	64	0

Summer 2010	0	0
Fall 2009	Ran as experimental course with 14 enrolled	

G. Composition and Quality of Faculty

There are no faculty unique to the BIS program.

H. Advisory Board

One of the recommendations of the last APRC review was to establish an advisory board. We have done so. The original members included:

Mark Curtis, Provost, Alpena CC

Gary Hauck, Dean of Instruction, Montcalm CC

Ric Underhile, Associate Dean of Assessment and Faculty Development, Grand Rapids, CC

Fred Heck, General Education Coordinator, FSU

Sandy Gholston, BIS alum

Reinhold Hill, Acting Dean, CAS

Mark Curtis recently took a new position as President of Great Lakes Basin College and asked to be replaced. His Associate Provost, Nancy Sequin now serves as the Alpena CC representative. Reinhold Hill continues to serve, but is currently Dean of Arts and Sciences at Governor's State College in Illinois.

An additional member, Amanda Swiss, has been added. She is an alum working with the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians. The LTBB is an enthusiastic supporter of the BIS.

The Board meets annually. One of the responsibilities of the board is to select the BIS Scholarship winner each year. They also review select student portfolios.

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

List of BIS Graduates 1999–2007 College of Arts and Sciences

APPENDIX B: Student Survey and Responses

Results of Survey of Current BIS Students

APPENDIX A: Graduate Surveys

BIS APR...Alumni

Frequencies

Prepared by: Institutional Research & Testing, 01/13

Statistics

	N		Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing			
q1.a Offered flexible program of study for my professional and/or academic goals	12	0	4.00	4.00	.000
q1.b Allowed me to design an interdisciplinary plan of study not otherwise available at FSU	12	0	4.00	4.00	.000
q1.c Allowed me to develop competencies from a variety of disciplines	12	0	3.92	4.00	.289
q1.d Allowed me to complete my studies in a timely manner	12	0	3.83	4.00	.577
q1.e I received helpful advisement from the BIS advisor/program coordinator	12	0	3.75	4.00	.452
q1.f The advisor allowed me to design a suitable program of studies	12	0	4.00	4.00	.000
q1.g Overall, the BIS program prepared me to achieve my professional goals/objectives	12	0	4.00	4.00	.000
q1.h Overall, the BIS program helped me to acquire the skills needed for my professional and/or academic pursuits	12	0	4.00	4.00	.000
q1.i The BIS allowed (or will allow) me to advance in my profession/job.	12	0	3.92	4.00	.289

q2 Elaboration of any answers	12	0			
q3 Three areas of strengths	12	0			
q4 Three areas in need of improvement	12	0			
q5 Additional comments	12	0			

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

1	2	3	4	5	Statement
				12	The BIS Program offered me a flexible program of study for my professional and/or academic goals.
				12	The BIS Program allowed me to design an interdisciplinary plan of study otherwise not available at FSU.
			1	11	The BIS Program allowed me to develop competencies from a variety of disciplines.
			1	11	The BIS allowed me to complete my studies in a timely manner.
			3	9	The received helpful advisement from the BIS advisor/program coordinator.
				12	The advisor allowed me to design a suitable program of studies.
				12	Overall, the BIS program prepared me to achieve my professional goals/objectives.
				12	Overall, the BIS program helped to acquire the skills needed for my professional and/or academic pursuits.
			1	11	The BIS allowed me to (or will allow me to) advance in my profession/job.

Open-Ended Questions

1. I believe the BIS program is an incredibly valuable degree option. It allowed me to complete my undergraduate degree requirements when there were no other options open for me. Because of the BIS, I have been able to complete a graduate degree and have secured a position that I truly enjoy.
2. I had initially tried to go the route of a traditional student; however, taking only 1 to 2 classes per semester would have taken me almost 6 years to complete my degree. By utilizing the Integrated Studies option, I completed my degree within 2 1/2 years and was able to advance in my position on campus.

3. The BIS degree was a lifesaver for me! I was so excited when I found out how many credits were accepted from my previous colleges and how cooperative the faculty was to help me attain my degree in the least amount of time. I enjoyed selecting courses that appealed to me and were not curriculum driven.
4. I was caught in the middle of two program coordinators. I was told one thing with the first coordinator and with the switch had to take more classes to finish up.
5. The BIS program is a critical pathway to maintain for those returning to college as a non-traditional student. The "canned" majors do not allow the flexibility necessary for those who have been in the workforce and need to complete a degree.
6. 1. The ability to customize the degree to meet my career goals. 2. The ability to obtain a minor along with the BIS degree. 3. The willingness of Ferris to work with me to meet my needs.
7. Being able to choose from different disciplines to put together an interesting and diverse degree program. Flexibility Cross campus cooperation
8. The program is flexible 2. As a Ferris employee, taking classes 1 semester at a time, it allowed me to graduate with a degree, that I probably would not have obtained in a timely manner. 3. The program allowed me to take 2 associates degrees, combine them into a Bachelors that was useful to the job I have at this time.
9. Flexibility, the ability to use the hours that I had that would fit anywhere else, My advisor.
10. Freedom to combine different courses to create one degree. Maximum usage of my previously obtained credits.
11. Flexibility to match professional goals.
12. Great program for non traditional students returning to school
13. The BIS program allowed me to take a variety of classes to make my education more rounded. The variety of classes which I normally would not have taken and enjoyed them. The program allowed me the time I needed to finish my degree with working full time.
14. The flexibility to design my own BS degree and tailor it to my career This transfer of credits from other institutions allows creativity and flexibility within the schedule & requirements allows non-traditional students or students with "other" interests to complete an undergraduate degree.

Areas that need improvement

- I don't think Ferris HR takes these degrees seriously.
- Not heavily advertised 2. It's seen as an alternative to other degrees
- Change the name to be in alignment with a normal BA or BS degree. Many do not know what a BIS is, even when you attempt to explain it. The "universal" BA/BS would be a better recruitment tool as well. I know I'd ask for a new transcript if you changed it.
- I had very little oversight from an advisor but it's been 8 years since I graduated, perhaps that has changed. I might have walked graduation for my bachelor degree instead of only for my associate's degree on the day of spring graduation in 2004. But it's a moot point: I have the degree and I'm proud of it and pleased that I qualified and succeeded 39 years after beginning my first year in college!
- The only improvement that I think the BIS program needs is more publicity.

- This issue is not specific to the BIS program, but all science classes with a lab are not available in the evening. A student that works full time during the day is forced to take time off from work to complete those requirements.

APPENDIX B: Student Exit Survey

N=					
1 weak -> 5 strong					
1	2	3	4	5	Statement
					The BIS Program offers me a more flexible program of study than a traditional degree program.
					Overall, the BIS will help me to acquire the skills I will need for my professional and/or academic goals.
					The BIS Program is allowing me to design an interdisciplinary plan of study otherwise not available at FSU
					The BIS Program is allowing me to develop competencies from a variety of disciplines.
					The BIS is allowing me to design a program of study that includes new areas of study/professional preparation
					The BIS advisor/program coordinator has been helpful.
					The BIS advisor/program coordinator is helping me to design a suitable program of study.
					The BIS degree is allowing me to complete my studies in a timely manner.
					The BIS program is allowing me to achieve my academic goals.
Academic Status: # of credits remaining to graduate					

Graduate Exit Survey

1 (strongly disagree)-----7 (strongly agree)

2. The BIS offers more flexibility than other programs at FSU. 3-4-5-6-7	1-2-
3. The BIS will help me to acquire the skills I will need . 3-4-5-6-7 for my professional or academic goals.	1-2-
4. The BIS is allowing me to develop competencies in a variety of areas. . 4-5-6-7	1-2-3-
5. The BIS advisor/coordinator has been helpful. . 2-3-4-5-6-7	1-
6. The BIS coordinator helped me design a suitable program of study. . 4-5-6-7	1-2-3-
7. The BIS is allowing me to complete my degree in a reasonable time frame. 4-5-6-7	1-2-3-
8. The BIS is allowing me to achieve my academic goals. .	1-

2-3-4-5-6-7

Responses (N=18)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The BIS offers more flexibility than other programs at FSU.							18
The BIS will help me to acquire the skills I will need for my professional or academic goals.				1	1	2	14
The BIS is allowing me to develop competencies in a variety of areas. .				1	2	2	13
The BIS advisor/coordinator has been helpful.			1	1		2	14
The BIS coordinator helped me design a suitable program of study. .	1		1			2	14
The BIS is allowing me to complete my degree in a reasonable time frame.	1				1	2	14
The BIS is allowing me to achieve my academic goals. .			1		1	2	14

Appendix C: Portfolio Evaluation Results

Portfolio Evaluation Results

Fall 2010 (n= 6)

Learning Outcome	No Evidence	Weak Evidence	Evidence that outcome has been met	Evidence that outcome has been exceeded
Communication	0	0	4	4
Presentation	0	1	2	3
Self-Assessment	0	2	0	4
Teamwork	0	2	2	2
Discipline Content	0	2	3	1

Comment: These are the first and individual entered program at very different points; some unable to gather materials from previous educational experiences.

Spring 2011

Learning Outcome	No Evidence	Weak Evidence	Evidence that outcome has been met	Evidence that outcome has been exceeded
Communication			1	7
Presentation		1	2	5
Self-Assessment			2	6
Teamwork				8
Discipline Content			4	4

Comment: Students were given better directions for developing the portfolio. Again, for some students, gathering evidence is a challenge because of the length of time they have been out of school coupled with only needing a few hours to complete program.

Summer 2011 (n=2)

Learning Outcome	No Evidence	Weak Evidence	Evidence that outcome has been met	Evidence that outcome has been exceeded
Communication				2
Presentation				2
Self-Assessment				2
Teamwork				2
Discipline Content				2

Fall 2011 (n= 14)

Learning Outcome	No Evidence	Weak Evidence	Evidence that outcome has been met	Evidence that outcome has been exceeded
Communication			9	5
Presentation		1	8	5

Self-Assessment			9	5
Teamwork		1	8	5
Discipline Content		1	8	5

Spring 2012 (n=12)

Learning Outcome	No Evidence	Weak Evidence	Evidence that outcome has been met	Evidence that outcome has been exceeded
Communication		1	5	6
Presentation		1	5	6
Self-Assessment			1	11
Teamwork		4	5	3
Discipline Content		4	5	3

Fall 2012 (16)

Learning Outcome	No Evidence	Weak Evidence	Evidence that outcome has been met	Evidence that outcome has been exceeded
Communication		2	12	2
Presentation	5	2	7	2
Self-Assessment			14	2
Teamwork	5	2	7	2
Discipline Content		5	10	1

Spring 2013 (n=)

Learning Outcome	No Evidence	Weak Evidence	Evidence that outcome has been met	Evidence that outcome has been exceeded
Communication				
Presentation				
Self-Assessment				

Teamwork				
Discipline Content				

1. Graduates will demonstrate exceptional communication skills as demonstrated by written pieces in the program portfolio, including a personal philosophy statement, a skills assessment statement, as well as selected pieces of writing that demonstrate specific competencies of the individual's academic plan and general education.
2. Graduates will demonstrate exceptional presentation skills both in an oral presentation in the electronic portfolio that demonstrates the individual's specific competencies as outlined in his or her academic plan as well the ability to articulate the interrelatedness of the separate disciplines within the academic plan.
3. Graduates will demonstrate self assessment skills and the ongoing development of those skills in the program portfolio both in reflective journal assignments and semester assessment rubrics.
4. Graduates will demonstrate team building skills as demonstrated through cooperative learning experiences in the orientation and capstone courses as well as individual service learning experiences.

Graduates will demonstrate discipline competencies including knowledge of content area as well as the ability to use the language of the specific disciplines demonstrated through selected works