

## INFORMATIONAL REPORT

### **REVISIONS FOR THE NEW PROGRAM: THE BACHELOR OF GENERAL STUDIES**

At the June 21, 2019 meeting of the Board of Governors, the proposal for a new Bachelor of General Studies in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences was approved. During the committee discussion, CLAS was asked to provide a revised document to the Academic Affairs Committee that addressed questions and concerns raised about the program rationale, admission and graduation requirements, and the secondary admissions process. Below are the revisions to the program proposal.

#### **Revised Rationale:**

CLAS, with the support of Provost's Office, seeks to establish a Bachelor of General Studies. As proposed, the Bachelor in General Studies is an undergraduate graduation pathway without a traditional academic major. General Studies graduation pathways (sometimes titled “Applied Studies” or “Individualized Studies”) are offered by many institutions. Some colleges and universities specifically gear these pathways towards students who may not otherwise finish their college degrees, and for whom a Bachelor in General Studies may truly be the only option for completion. Some institutions also purposely keep General Studies requirements to a minimum in order to serve local professionals who need a Bachelor’s degree but do not need expertise in a specific major.

This degree will enable CLAS and Wayne State to continue to support and honor the work students have done in the past, and do upon their return, without certifying expertise in a specific field that may well have undergone considerable change since a student first started. Historically, Wayne State has enrolled many students who, despite considerable time and money spent at WSU, have left campus without a degree. Often, they have come quite close to degree completion. Students' incomplete academic careers frequently span many years, even decades, due to part-time or intermittent enrollment because of work, family, and financial factors. It is not uncommon for students who began at WSU in the 1960s, or were last enrolled in the 1980s (or both), to return to WSU in 2018 or 2019, seeking to complete their degree. We have recently seen a welcome increase in such cases, the result of several developments in the university-- including the Math Competency waiver of 2016 and the Warrior Way Back program, begun in 2018 -- as well as a larger societal push toward degree completion. Welcoming students back fits our mission as a college and a campus of access, in particular for first-generation students.

#### **Revised Admission Requirements:**

Because CLAS wants to ensure that students have explored other specialized degree programs before choosing this degree program, there will be a secondary admissions process to determine students’ eligibility. Students can only apply for entry into the Bachelor of General Studies program after meeting certain minimum criteria. Specifically, eligible students will already have earned:

- Senior-level standing (88 credits or above)
- a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher
- at least three college-level semesters and a minimum of 30 credits at Wayne State
- a combination of both beginning level (1000- and 2000-level) and intermediate level (3000- or above) coursework at Wayne State
- at least 15 credits in intermediate level (3000- or above) coursework, with a 2.0 cumulative GPA or higher
- at least 20 credits within a CLAS-based major (either a current or discontinued major)

Students will be eligible to graduate from this degree pathway upon meeting the listed criteria as well as completing all General Education requirements and College-level requirements, as defined by the University's undergraduate bulletin. Because students invited to the Bachelor in General Studies will have enrolled at Wayne State under assorted bulletins and catalog terms, the goal will be to maximize credits already completed when assessing the completion of General Education or college-level requirements.

**Revised Secondary Admissions Process:**

The CLAS Dean's Office will appoint a small standing committee that will evaluate student applicants and grant admission to students who are eligible for this degree pathway. Tenure-track/tenured faculty and academic staff (e.g., an academic advisor) in CLAS will be represented on this committee, as may advisors in the University Advising Center, to ensure that all groups who have contact with students have input about which students should be admitted to this degree program. Admissions decisions about student eligibility will be made on a rolling basis. Upon admission, General Studies students will be monitored and advised by an advisor appointed by the CLAS Dean's Office, in conjunction with the admissions committee in CLAS, to ensure progress towards graduation. This degree pathway is meant to be small because of its narrow focus and purpose and should stay small over time. The admissions committee will make sure that eligible candidates for this degree are considered against the factors articulated in the program rationale. General Studies students' progress will be evaluated on a semester-by-semester basis.