

FACULTY AGENDA ITEM

Date: 04/01/2024

Submitted by: Kelly Erby, x. 2018

SUBJECT: New Program - Bachelor of General Studies (BGS) – CIP Code 24.0102

Rationale: We all know students who began a major program of study and then stopped out due to finances, complicated life circumstances, or because they could not pass a particular course or series of courses required for their major. In Shawnee County alone there are 38,000 individuals who have earned some college credit but not a completed degree. These students are likely to have accumulated debt without having secured the financial and developmental benefits afforded to college graduates.

The proposed Bachelor of General Studies is designed to encourage such students to complete a four-year degree at Washburn. It offers a straightforward path to timely graduation by 1) optimizing the number of electives to accommodate earned college credits that may not easily apply to another degree program and 2) providing a flexible curriculum that may be completed in person, online, or through a combination of in-person and online classes.

This is a non-traditional degree that allows greater freedom of course selection than is available in traditional major programs. However, students will need to complete core university graduation requirements common to all baccalaureate degrees, including 120 total credit hours; general education requirements; 60 credit hours earned from a four-year institution; 45 credit hours of upper-division credit; residency requirements; and a minimum GPA of 2.0. Students pursuing this degree will also be required to complete an upper-division English composition course in addition to the two composition courses included as part of general education.

Admission to the General Studies program requires a minimum of 45 credit hours of college coursework earned after high school graduation and acceptance by the program coordinator. The program coordinator will ensure students pursue a more traditional degree when appropriate and will consult annually with advisors in other academic units to stay abreast of requirements other academic degree programs.

The proposed program learning objectives for the degree encourage the development of a wide range of competencies, including problem solving, critical thinking and analysis, and communication. These learning objectives prepare students for the challenges they may face in various professional, civic, and personal contexts. They are skills taught across different disciplines and throughout many parts of the existing Washburn curriculum, particularly in the arts and sciences. This helps to ensure that the program learning objectives will be met even with the flexibility of course selection the degree facilitates.

The program learning objectives will be regularly assessed using artifacts students create in an upper-division composition course, similar to how the critical/creative thinking and written communication university student learning outcomes are currently assessed. This approach to assessment supports the flexible design of the degree and the population of students this degree is intended to serve. Assessing through a portfolio, for example, would not be equitable for students with large gaps in their educational career who might not have access to previous academic work. Likewise, requiring a capstone for every student may not accommodate specific needs and circumstances.

The Bachelor of General Studies degree will enable Washburn to more effectively recruit a distinct subset of returning and transfer students because it offers a straightforward roadmap to degree completion, supporting Washburn's mission to create educational pathways to success for everyone. It will also allow Washburn to compete with other universities who offer a similar non-traditional degree option. The addition of this degree will benefit our community by increasing the number of residents who have college degrees and thereby supporting workforce development, increased income and employment opportunities, civic engagement, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

The Bachelor of General Studies is similar to the Bachelor of Integrated Studies (BIS) in that it does not require a major. However, the Bachelor of General Studies degree will provide greater flexibility than the BIS because it does not require an individualized study plan, pre-approved multi-department study program, or capstone. These requirements of the BIS have necessitated additional coursework for students who already have significant college credits and no degree and can present barriers to recruiting students because they can be complicated to navigate. In recent years, the BIS has been utilized as a degree completion program because such a program is needed at Washburn. But that was not what the BIS was originally designed to be. With a Bachelor of General Studies degree available at Washburn, the BIS could return to its original purpose for students who desire to design their own unique, integrated program of study.

Proposed Catalog Description: The Bachelor of General Studies program is a flexible, four-year degree program that provides a broad educational experience. This is a degree completion option for students who have completed significant coursework but not the requirements of a specific major. College credits that are not easily applicable to a particular major or minor can often be applied to this degree, facilitating time to graduation. Students may seek college credit for non-traditional prior learning experiences by contacting the Center for Prior Learning: <https://www.washburn.edu/academics/prior-learning-assessment/index.html>.

Admission to the General Studies program requires a minimum of 45 credit hours of college coursework earned after high school graduation and acceptance by the program coordinator. The program coordinator will discuss with students whether a more traditional degree would better advance their personal and professional goals.

Program Learning Objectives:

1. Develop a broad understanding of various disciplines, fostering an interdisciplinary approach to problem solving and decision making.
2. Develop and apply critical thinking skills to evaluate and synthesize information, assess arguments, and make informed decisions across diverse subject areas and perspectives.
3. Develop and apply communication skills.

Study Plan: Candidates for the Bachelor of General Studies degree must complete the following requirements:

- A minimum of 120 credit hours, 84 of which must be graded and 45 of which must be at the 300 or 400 level
- All general education requirements
- 300-level English composition course
- Minimum 2.0 GPA
- Minimum of 30 credit hours of the last 45 must be earned from Washburn University
- Minimum of 60 credit hours must be earned from a four-year institution
- There is no minimum requirement for credit hours within the College of Arts and Sciences

List any financial implications: Market research indicates demand for this program in our community and region, and so implementation is likely to result in new revenue. Other public institutions in the region are already offering completion programs with similar flexibility. This addition to Washburn's catalog will enable us to be more competitive in recruiting and graduating adult learners. The degree will be coordinated by the College of Arts and Sciences Deans Office. If the program grows considerably, an additional CAS academic advisor might be necessary, and would be justified by the increased revenue generated.

Are any other departments affected by this new program: Yes, the program is highly flexible and students may take undergraduate courses from all units of the university and apply them toward this degree. The impacts should be largely positive, as the program's flexibility and diversity will preclude a major burden on any one department.

Proposed Effective Date: Fall 2024

Request for Action: *Approval by AAC/.FAC/FS/ Gen Fac, etc*

Approved by: *AAC on 4/1/2024*

Faculty Senate on date

Attachments: Yes X No _

New Program Proposal

Date Submitted: 03/15/24 1:44 pm

Viewing: : Bachelor of General Studies

Last edit: 04/02/24 8:23 am

Changes proposed by: Kelly Erby (kelly.erby)

Catalog Pages Using [General Studies](#) this Program

In Workflow

- 1. Acad Ops
- 2. Library
- 3. Governance Check
- 4. AA Committee
- 5. Faculty Senate
- 6. General Faculty
- 7. WUBOR
- 8. Final Acad Ops
- 9. Registrar

General Information

Effective Catalog Edition	2024-2025
Department	College of Arts and Sciences
College	College of Arts and Sciences
Division	
Degree Level	Undergraduate
Program Title	Bachelor of General Studies
Degree to be Offered	Bachelor of General Studies (BGS)
Is this program offered completely online?	No
Does this program lead to a teaching certification?	No
Program Code	
Is this program an interdisciplinary program?	No
CIP Code	240102 - General Studies.
Modality	

Approval Path

- 1. 03/15/24 1:51 pm
Beth O'Neill
(beth.oneill):
Approved for Acad Ops
- 2. 03/15/24 1:57 pm
Sean Bird
(sean.bird):
Approved for Library
- 3. 03/21/24 10:28 am
Holly Broxterman
(holly.broxterman):
Approved for Governance Check
- 4. 04/02/24 8:23 am
Holly Broxterman
(holly.broxterman):
Approved for AA Committee

New Program Header

Statement of Justification/Rationale for Offering the Program

We all know students who began a major program of study and then stopped out due to finances, complicated life circumstances, or because they could not pass a particular course or series of courses required for their major. In Shawnee County alone there are 38,000 individuals who have earned some college credit but not a completed degree. These students are likely to have accumulated debt without having secured the financial and developmental benefits afforded to college graduates.

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Program Demand

Market research indicates demand for this program in our community and region (e.g., 38,000 individuals who have earned some college credit but not a completed degree in Shawnee County), and so implementation is likely to result in new revenue. Other public institutions in the region are already offering completion programs with similar flexibility. This addition to Washburn's catalog will enable us to be more competitive in recruiting and graduating adult learners.

Projected Enrollment for the Initial Three Years of the Program

Implementation			
Year 2			
Full-Time Headcount Per Year	NA	Part-Time Headcount Per Year	NA
Full-Time Sem Credit Hrs Per Year	NA	Part-Time Sem Credit Hrs Per Year	NA
Year 3			
Full-Time Headcount Per Year	NA	Part-Time Headcount Per Year	NA
Full-Time Sem Credit Hrs Per Year	NA	Part-Time Sem Credit Hrs Per Year	NA
Employment			
Employment Opportunity Information			

Admission and Curriculum	
Admission Criteria	Admission to the General Studies program requires a minimum of 45 credit hours of college coursework earned after high school graduation and acceptance by the program coordinator. The program coordinator will ensure students pursue a more traditional degree when appropriate.
Total Number of Semester Credit Hours for the Degree	120
Curriculum	

Degree Requirements

Admission to the Bachelor of General Studies program requires a minimum of 45 credit hours of college coursework earned after high school graduation and acceptance by the program coordinator. The program coordinator will ensure students pursue a more traditional degree when appropriate. Candidates for the Bachelor of General Studies degree must complete the following requirements:

Required Courses ^{1, 2}	
General Education Courses ³	34-35
EN 3XX	Upper-Division English Composition Course
Other University Courses Required to Reach 120 Hours	82-83
Total Hours	120

¹ A minimum of 30 credit hours of the last 45 must be earned from Washburn University, and a minimum of 60 credit hours must be earned from a four-year institution. Additionally, a minimum of 84 hours must be graded, and at least 45 hours must be at the 300 or 400 level.

² A minimum 2.0 GPA is required for graduation.

³ More information about general education requirements can be found at <https://catalogedits.washburn.edu/undergraduate/programs-degrees-graduation-requirements/Pathway>

Core Faculty
Faculty Workload Analysis

Faculty Workload Analysis (describe how the course offering schedule and anticipated enrollments correlate to faculty lines)

The degree will be coordinated by the College of Arts and Sciences Deans Office. If the program grows considerably, an additional CAS academic advisor might be necessary, and would be justified by the increased revenue generated.

The program is highly flexible and students may take undergraduate courses from all units of the university and apply them toward this degree. The impacts should be largely positive, as the program’s flexibility and diversity will preclude a major burden on any one department.

Supplemental Files

Reviewer	Holly Broxterman (holly.broxterman) (03/26/24 3:06 pm): Proposal was approved and
Comments	completed CAS Governance Process prior to entry into CourseLeaf per Kelly Erby. Holly Broxterman (holly.broxterman) (04/02/24 8:23 am): Approved by 4/1 Academic Affairs committee.