

Feasibility Study for Bachelor of General Studies

Executive Summary

Degree or Certificate Title: Bachelor of General Studies

Level of Degree or Certificate: Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science Degree (student choice)

Delivery Mode(s): Degree will be comprised of focus areas. Some focus areas will be available only on campus, some will be available through distance education, and some will be available through both modes.

Startup Cost of Degree: Approximately \$60,000, with additional annual costs of roughly \$5,000-10,000

Anticipated Launch Date: Fall 2019

Description: The University of Wyoming's **Bachelor of General Studies (BGS)** is a multidisciplinary degree that bridges academic disciplines and colleges to facilitate degree completion. This degree offers students the opportunity to select two focus areas of study (a primary and a secondary) from a total of 16 focus areas offered across the University. Each student will be assigned an advisor in the college that fields their primary focus area. This degree is designed for non-traditional students, returning students, students who arrive at UW with significant college credit, and students with complex curricular interests.

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Overview and Description of Degree or Certificate, Purpose, Strategic Plan Overlay

Purpose of the Degree: The primary objective of the Bachelor of General Studies degree is to facilitate degree completion for non-traditional students, transfer students with high credit hours, and students with complex curricular interests. This degree program resolves assessment, advising, and course accessibility issues with several current degree programs (planned for sun-setting) while providing a high-quality, University-wide degree program accessible to students on the Laramie and Casper campuses as well as through distance education.

The Bachelor of General Studies will assist our efforts in meeting Governor Mead’s educational attainment goal of 67% by 2025, established in Executive Order 2018-1, by providing a flexible degree option for our roughly 80,000 adult Wyomingites with some college credits but no degree. It will allow those students who transfer to UW with excess hours to complete a bachelor’s degree prior to exhausting their federal student financial aid availability and will be available to students who, for various reasons, may be unable to complete their originally intended major. Finally, the degree will provide a viable option to attract students with an associate’s degree in General Studies from our Wyoming community college partners who might not otherwise continue their education and will provide a clear pathway for our men and women in uniform at FE Warren through the Community College of the Air Force’s partnership program, the AU-ABC.

Completion degrees are an important part of the degree portfolio for land-grant institutions, which serve diverse populations of students. However, this degree is not appropriate for all students. This major requires interested students to meet with a professional advisor and complete 48 credit hours of coursework before the major can be declared. Our work on the Bachelor of General Studies began with a review of the completion degrees offered by several of our peer institutions. We also reviewed a few Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies programs for contrast.

Institution	Degree	Notes
University of Nebraska, Lincoln	Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies	Separate degree completion programs offered in each college; intensive advising
North Dakota State University	BA University Studies, Self-Designed Major	One or more areas of emphasis of 12 credits each with at least 6 credits upper division
New Mexico State University	BA Applied Studies, Self-Designed Major	Intensive advising
Utah State University	BA/BS in General Studies	Separate degrees offered in each college; intensive advising
Montana State University	Associate of Arts, Associate of Science	
University of Idaho	BA General Studies	Self-Designed Major aligned with Exploratory Studies
University of Montana	Associate Degree, Applied Arts and Sciences	
University of Nevada, Reno	BA General Studies	30 credits across three departments in one or two colleges with 18 credits upper division
University of Maine	BA University Studies	30 credit hours, choice of 5

		tracks or self-designed
South Dakota State University	BA General Studies	45 credits with 15 credits in 3 focus areas out of a possible 11 focus areas; 20 credits upper division
University of Rhode Island	BA of Interdisciplinary Studies	45-48 credit major with 25-credit core of courses in interdisciplinary work. Limited to four content areas.
Arizona State University	BA of Interdisciplinary Studies	2 area concentrations of 18-23 credits and a 12-credit core of interdisciplinary coursework

This review of programs informed many of our choices in creating the structure of the degree for UW. The specifics of the degree are explained below. In short, it is a 39 credit degree comprised of two focus areas of at least 18 credits each, a capstone course, and a total of 21 upper division credits with at least 6 upper division credits in each of the focus areas.

Alignment with other UW Degrees: The Bachelor of General Studies is designed, in part, to replace three “distributed majors” currently offered by the College of Arts and Sciences. While the A&S distributed majors have met student needs in the past, several problems now exist. Course offerings are largely limited to A&S, the degrees require complex advising and course scheduling which often delay graduation, and they do not meet the learning outcome assessment standards of the Higher Learning Commission. With approval of the Bachelor of General Studies, A&S will move to discontinue these degrees and teach out the students currently enrolled in them.

Outside of the distributed majors offered by A&S and intended for sun-setting, there are few UW degrees designed for the specific needs of the student populations identified. The Bachelor of Applied Science–Organizational Leadership offered by the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources offers students a flexible degree program that includes choice within a limited set of required courses, but is only offered online. Similarly, the College of Business offers an online-only Bachelor of Business Administration particularly suited for site-bound students with an interest in business. There are a number of interdisciplinary degree programs at UW including the Bachelor of Science in Environmental Systems Science and the Bachelor of Science in Environment and Natural Resources (a secondary major/concurrent degree only), American Studies, and International Studies. While interdisciplinary, each of these degrees is tailored to students with particular and defined substantive interests. The proposed Bachelor of General Studies allows much more flexibility and is supported by units *across* the University. There is no similar University-wide degree offered at UW.

Alignment with UW’s Mission and Strategic Plan: The proposed Bachelor of General Studies aligns with UW’s stated mission in “Breaking Through: 2017-2022” as it provides students increased opportunities to graduate, with a focus on academic opportunities from many different units across UW’s academic frontiers. The unique ability to combine foci from different Colleges and disciplinary units across campus helps to ensure that students have opportunities to engage in scholarship and creative activity in a broad range of fields, with variation that can emerge from such a multidisciplinary degree. Students in the Bachelor of General Studies will have the opportunity to pursue their own goals within a flexible plan that is purposefully designed to meet the needs of the burgeoning adult student population. This degree program will also serve to assist in increasing the number of bachelor’s degree holders in the state.

This degree is most closely aligned with Goals 2 and 3 in the University's 2017-2022 strategic plan. Goal 2 is to "Inspire students to pursue a productive, engaged and fulfilling life and prepare them to succeed in a sustainable global economy." With a focus on providing a bachelor's degree, particularly for students who may have accrued significant numbers of credit in multiple areas, but have not met specific degree course requirements, this program is designed to ensure that more students complete bachelor's degrees, which will allow these graduates to obtain employment that requires at least a bachelor's degree more readily and thus to become a more productive part of the global economy. Goal 3 is to "Improve and enhance the health and well-being of our communities and environments through outreach programs and in collaboration with our constituents and partners." One aspect of the potential audience for this degree program is students who have left UW without a degree but have amassed significant amounts of course credit. With this audience in mind, this degree is sure to improve the health and well-being of our communities.

Learning Outcomes

Students completing the Bachelor of General Studies will:

1. Demonstrate knowledge in focus areas
2. Demonstrate the capacity to integrate knowledge and modes of thinking from two or more disciplines
3. Demonstrate an ability to think creatively about complex problems in order to construct, evaluate, and implement innovative possible solutions
4. Demonstrate an ability to communicate to academic or professional audiences in written, oral, and digital form as appropriate to specific disciplines and interdisciplinary fields
5. Demonstrate higher-order thinking skills such as interpretation, analysis, evaluation, synthesis, creative generation, and innovation

Curriculum Map and Program Structure

Degree Structure: The Bachelor of General Studies is comprised of two curricular focus areas and one 3 credit capstone that fulfills the University Studies Program (USP) "Communications Skills 3" (C3) requirement. Each focus area is defined by subject area, fielded by a specific college, and comprised of at least 18 credit hours. Students can choose from a menu of 16 focus areas across the University. Of the 39 credits required for the major, 21 credits must be upper division with a minimum of 6 upper division credits in each focus area. As a University-wide degree, all USP and University-wide requirements must be met. The degree allows students to choose whether they receive a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science.

No course can count toward more than one area of focus. Students must earn a C or better for all credits counting toward the major. One USP "Human Culture" (H) course and one "Physical & Natural World" (PN) course may also count toward the major. No college core applies to the degree. To declare this major, students must have earned 48 credit hours and received intensive advising from the college fielding their primary focus area.

Focus Areas: Each of the focus areas identifies a knowledge domain that includes courses from a range of disciplines within a particular college. Focus areas include *all courses* from each of the disciplinary prefixes/subject areas or programs specified as belonging to the focus area (no course exceptions or course lists will be maintained). This will make advising for the degree manageable and will ensure access to needed coursework. Students should choose courses from within the focus area *thematically* to gain a breadth and depth of knowledge appropriate to the curricular or professional interest that ties together the two focus areas of the student's major. Students should work

with their advisor to ensure that their coursework includes the skills and methods necessary for expertise in the substantive area of interest. Proposed focus areas are listed below by college.

Focus Areas Listed by College

College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Biomedical Sciences: Microbiology (MICR), Molecular Biology (MOLB), Pathobiology (PATB), Family and Consumer Science (FCSC), Animal Science (ANSC), Food Science (FDSC)

Agricultural and Natural Resources Sciences: Animal Science (ANSC), Ecosystem Science and Management (ESM), Renewable Resources (RNEW), Entomology (ENTO), Soil Science (SOIL), Agroecology (AECL), Plant Sciences (PLNT), Agricultural Economics (AGEC)

Human Sciences and Public Policy: Family and Consumer Sciences (FCSC), Agriculture (AGRI), Agricultural Economics (AGEC), Food Science (FDSC)

College of Arts and Sciences:

Humanities: Art History (ART), English (ENGL), Modern and Classical Languages (LANG), Philosophy (PHIL), Religious Studies (RELI), American Studies (AMST), History (HIST), Anthropology (ANTH), African American Diaspora Studies (AADS), American Indian Studies (AIST), Latina/o Studies (LTST), Gender and Women's Studies (WMST), International Studies (INST), Theatre and Dance (THEA)

Fine Arts: Theatre and Dance (THEA), Music (MUSC), Art and Art History (ART), African American Diaspora Studies (AADS), American Indian Studies (AIST), Latina/o Studies (LTST), Gender and Women's Studies (WMST), Creative Writing (CW), English (ENGL)

Social Sciences: Communications and Journalism (COJO), History (HIST), Anthropology (ANTH), Criminal Justice (CJ), Geography (GEOG), Sociology (SOC), Political Science (POLS), International Studies (INST), American Studies (AMST), Psychology (PSYCH), Statistics (STAT), African American Diaspora Studies (AADS), American Indian Studies (AIST), Latina/o Studies (LTST), Gender and Women's Studies (WMST)

Math & Sciences: Math (MATH), Statistics (STAT), Botany (BOT), LIFE Program (LIFE), Psychology (PSYCH), Zoo/Physiology (ZOO), Chemistry (CHEM), Geology and Geophysics (GEOL), Physics and Astronomy (PHYS), Anthropology (ANTH), Geography (GEOG)

College of Business

***Management, Marketing, and Decision Science:** Management (MGT), Marketing (MKT), Decision Science (DSCI)

***Accounting and Finance:** Accounting (ACCT), Finance (FIN)

Economics: Economics (ECON)

*Due to accreditation requirements, a student may not choose both the "Management, Marketing, and Decision Science" *and* the "Accounting and Finance" focus areas to comprise their Bachelor of General Studies major.

College of Education:

+Elementary Education: Early Childhood (EDEC), Elementary Education (ELED), Curriculum and Instruction (EDCI)

+Education and Society: Educational Studies (EDST), Exceptional Children (EDEX), Instructional Technology (ITEC), Curriculum and Instruction (EDCI)

+The Bachelor of General Studies does not satisfy the requirements for teacher licensure through the Wyoming Professional Teaching Standards Board.

College of Engineering:

***Engineering Studies:** Engineering Science (ES), Architectural Engineering (ARE), Civil Engineering (CE), Chemical Engineering (CHE), Electrical Engineering (EE), Energy Systems Engineering (ESE), Mechanical Engineering (ME), Petroleum Engineering (PETE)

***Applied Science Studies:** Atmospheric Science (ATSC), Computer Science (COSC)

*The Bachelor of General Studies does not satisfy the requirements for an ABET/EAC accredited engineering degree or an ABET/CAC accredited computer science degree.

College of Health Sciences:

Community and Public Health: Health Education (HLED), Wyoming Institute for Disabilities (WIND)

Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources:

Environment and Natural Resources: Environment and Natural Resources (ENR), Environmental Systems Science (ESS)

BACHELOR OF GENERAL STUDIES FOUR YEAR DEGREE PLAN

The Four Year Degree Plan below demonstrates the flexibility of the Bachelor of General Studies; which is particularly valuable for transfer students with high student credit hours. However, this degree is not designed for first year students. The degree requires 48 credit hours and intensive advising before it can be declared as a major. Addendum I includes a degree check-list which may be more useful for degree planning.

First Semester	Credit Hours	Second Semester	Credit Hours
Freshman Year Seminar	3	Physical and Natural World (USP)	3
Communication Skills 1 (USP, C1)	3	Human Culture (USP)	3
Quantitative Reasoning (USP)	3	US and Wyo Government (USP)	3
Lower Division Elective	3	Lower Division Elective	3
Lower Division Elective	3	Lower Division Elective	3
Total	15	Total	15
Third Semester	Credit Hours	Fourth Semester	Credit Hours
Physical and Natural World	3	Human Culture*	3
Communication Skills 2 (USP C2)	3	Lower Division Focus Area 1	3
Lower Division Elective	3	Lower Division Focus Area 2	3
Lower Division Elective	3	Lower Division Elective	3
Lower Division Elective	3	Lower Division Elective	3
Total	15	Total	15

*After 48 credit hours the student must receive intensive academic advising and determine the two focus areas that they will pursue for the degree.

Fifth Semester	Credit Hours	Sixth Semester	Credit Hours
Upper Division Focus Area 1	3	Upper Division Focus Area 1	3
Upper Division Focus Area 2	3	Upper Division Focus Area 2	3
Upper Division Focus Area 2	3	Upper Division Focus Area 2	3
Lower Division Focus Area 1	3	Lower Division Focus Area 1	3
Lower Division Focus Area 1	3	Upper Division Outside Major	3
Total	15	Total	15
Seventh Semester	Credit Hours	Eighth Semester	Credit Hours
Upper Division Focus Area 2	3	Upper Division Capstone (USP, C3)	3
Lower Division Focus Area 2	3	Upper Division Outside Major	3
Lower Division Focus Area 1	3	Upper Division Outside Major	3
Upper Division Outside Major	3	Upper Division Outside Major	3
Lower Division Outside Major	3	Upper Division Outside Major	3
Total	15	Total	15
		Degree Total	120

Course Descriptions:

The Bachelor of General Studies requires the creation of only one new course: the degree Capstone which will also fulfill the requirements for the Communication Skills 3 (USP, C3). The Capstone is designed to be taken at the very end of a student's study as they synthesize their work in the focus areas and anticipate the value of this work to future career paths.

Initially, the Capstone will be offered only through distance education to ensure availability to all students in the major. As enrollment in the degree increases, more sections and an on-campus option may be added.

University Catalog Description:

Bachelor of General Studies Capstone: The Capstone is designed to foster self-analysis of career and intellectual interests based upon the student's focus areas. Assignments will emphasize interdisciplinary thinking, problem solving from multiple perspectives, and written, oral, and digital communication. Course restricted to Bachelor of General Studies majors.

Assessment Plan

Academic Affairs will maintain primary responsibility for assessing the student learning outcomes of the Bachelor of General Studies degree. Upon Board of Trustee approval of the Bachelor of General Studies degree, Academic Affairs will convene a small task-force of faculty to determine the initial structure and assignments for the Capstone and to develop the initial rubrics required for assessment of student learning outcomes. The assessment process will be based upon the already successful method used for First Year Seminars. Student work submitted in the Capstone course will be made available to a committee of faculty for the assessment of student learning outcomes through the WyoCourses learning management platform. The process for assessing student learning outcomes and all data collected will be included in an annual report on the degree program and submitted to the University Assessment Coordinators Committee for review and assignment of tier status. Curriculum and course design will be reviewed in light of assessment results.

Learning Outcome #1: Demonstrate knowledge in focus areas.

Each student will take 18 credit hours in two different focus areas in consultation with a professional academic advisor. Only those courses in which a student earns a "C" or better will count toward the degree program. In addition, students are required to take at least 6 credit hours of upper division coursework in each focus area, 21 total upper division credit hours for the major, and 42 upper division credit hours for the BA or BS degree, ensuring the opportunity to engage in more sophisticated analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of course content.

Learning Outcome #2: Demonstrate the capacity to integrate knowledge and modes of thinking from two or more disciplines.

Assignments in the Capstone course will offer the opportunity for students to integrate and synthesize what they have learned in their two focus areas providing a direct assessment measure of the learning outcome. Students will also be asked to complete an exit interview/survey upon completion of the degree which will allow students to provide feedback on their experience and provide us with an indirect assessment measure of the learning outcome.

Learning Outcome #3: Demonstrate an ability to think creatively about complex problems in order to

construct, evaluate, and implement innovative possible solutions.

Individual coursework within each of the focus areas will offer different methods for understanding and evaluating disciplinary specific problems. Assignments in the Capstone course will allow students the opportunity to collaborate with one another as they consider specific problems from a variety of perspectives and work together to evaluate potential solutions. Student work will provide a direct assessment measure of the learning outcome. Students will also be asked to complete an exit interview/survey upon completion of the degree which will allow students to provide feedback on their experience and provide us with an indirect assessment measure of the learning outcome.

Learning Outcome #4: Demonstrate an ability to communicate to academic or professional audiences in written, oral, and digital form as appropriate to specific disciplines and interdisciplinary fields.

All students must complete the University Studies Program Communication series (C1, C2, and C3) which emphasizes the ability to communicate in written, oral, and digital form. The Capstone course will meet the learning outcomes for the USP C3 designation. Student work from the Capstone may be assessed within both the University Studies Program and separately as a component of the major. Students will also be asked to complete an exit interview/survey upon completion of the degree which will allow students to provide feedback on their experience and provide us with an indirect assessment measure of the learning outcome.

Learning Outcome #5: Demonstrate higher-order thinking skills such as interpretation, analysis, evaluation, synthesis, creative generation, and innovation.

Upper division coursework within the major will develop these skills through specific assignments. Assignments in the Capstone course will emphasize these skills in the production of a larger scale project appropriate for the content and methods of the students' focus areas. Student work will provide a direct assessment measure of the learning outcome. Students will also be asked to complete an exit interview/survey upon completion of the degree which will allow students to provide feedback on their experience and provide us with an indirect assessment measure of the learning outcome.

Degree Program Evaluation

Program evaluation for the Bachelor of General Studies will include three major components:

First, Academic Affairs, in consultation with the professional advising centers, will collect detailed demographic and academic data on each student who declares the major. Analyzing these data will allow us to better understand the specific student populations drawn to the degree and, through course mapping of student transcripts, the specific academic trajectories that bring students to the Bachelor of General Studies. This knowledge will inform potential curricular changes to the degree, assist in the projection of degree enrollment, and may also identify larger structural obstacles to student success across campus such as bottleneck courses or the need for more distance education options.

Second, as described above, Academic Affairs will assess student learning outcomes, primarily through the Bachelor of General Studies Capstone course.

Third, a pre/post assessment of student academic interest and satisfaction will be administered. As part of the initial advising session before declaring the degree, students will complete a short survey designed to identify their academic interests, relate these to their future career goals, and assess their satisfaction with different elements of their post-secondary education. At the conclusion of the Capstone course, an exit interview/survey will address these same points. Student reflections will be analyzed to address degree structure, learning outcomes, and Capstone assignments and to improve student performance and satisfaction.

New Resources Required

Program Administration and Staff Support: Academic Affairs will oversee the degree as a whole including the fielding of instructors for the Capstone, maintaining degree metrics, assessing learning outcomes, and conducting program evaluation. Existing staff within Academic Affairs will collaborate with professional advisors within the Colleges to organize work flow for these responsibilities. Existing professional advisors in the colleges, in consultation with Advising, Career, Exploratory Studies Center, will advise students in this degree.

Faculty and Instructional Staffing: Faculty supplemental salary of roughly \$10,000 will fund the creation of the Capstone and development of the rubrics for assessment of student learning outcomes. Initially, only one-two distance education section of the Capstone will be offered per year at an annual cost of roughly \$5,000-10,000.

Marketing: Marketing of the degree will be coordinated by Academic Affairs, in collaboration with Institutional Marketing, college advising centers, and the Office of the Registrar. Focus audiences for marketing will include a) former UW students who left without a bachelors' degree and b) current UW students who have high numbers of credit hours accumulated but are still not close to meeting specific program requirements. Subsequent to receiving recommendations from Institutional Marketing, methods of marketing will include development of contact list, four print mailings, six electronic contacts, and five to ten digital impressions as well as inbound marketing through HubSpot. We expect marketing expenses of roughly \$50,000 to launch the degree.

Substantive Change Determination: Not Applicable

Higher Learning Commission (HLC), UW's regional accrediting agency, must approve all substantive changes to UW's offering. HLC considers substantive change as the addition of a program (degree or certificate/credential level) not previously included in the institution's accreditation, usually judged to be a program that is a significant departure from normal offerings, the addition of a program with 50%+ new coursework required, or the addition or change to an existing program which will be delivered 50%+ through alternative (hybrid, online) delivery. Substantive change may also be defined as a new program which does not meet the above guidelines, but which requires a significant amount of financial investment to be made. Please contact the HLC Accreditation Liaison Officer (currently Anne Alexander, aalex@uwyo.edu) to make this determination.

Executive Summary of Demand Statistics*: In Preparation

Describe and outline:

- Market area and primary target markets/
- Educational market and student demand statistics, including peer comparisons of the size of enrollment, completions, and size trajectory (growth, decline) of comparator programs.
- Employment trends and projections given core competencies of the degree or certificate.
- Graduate salary trends and other post-completion trends.

**available from Gray Associates data subscription*

Bachelor of General Studies Check Sheet

2015 University Studies

Freshman Year Seminar		
Com1		
Com2		or Cojo 1010 and WB
Com3 (Capstone Course)		
Quantitative Reasoning		
Physical and Natural World		
Physical and Natural World		

Human Culture

General Studies Courses

Human Culture

Focus Area 1: Focus Area 2:

<p>1. </p> <p>2. </p> <p>3. </p> <p>4. </p> <p>5. (upper division)</p> <p>6. (upper division)</p>	<p>1. </p> <p>2. </p> <p>3. </p> <p>4. </p> <p>5. (upper division)</p> <p>6. (upper division)</p>
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MAJOR UPPER DIVISION

Upper Division (21 in major/42 total)

OUTSIDE MAJOR UPPER DIVISION

Capstone Course

12