

Wayne State College
Proposal to Add a New Master of Arts or Science Degree
in Interdisciplinary Studies

1. Descriptive information

- A. Name of institution: Wayne State College (WSC)
- B. Name of program: Interdisciplinary Studies
- C. Degrees/credentials to be awarded graduates of the program: Master of Art or Science
- D. Other programs offered in this field by the institution: None
- E. CIP code: 30.9999
- F. Administrative units for the program: Academic Affairs
- G. Proposed delivery site(s) and type(s) of delivery, if applicable: Wayne campus
- H. Proposed date (term/year) the program will be initiated: Fall 2020
- I. Description: WSC has long supported a Bachelor of Art or Science in Interdisciplinary Studies. IDS is a boutique major or minor that is designed and proposed by the student in conjunction with a faculty advisor. The program exists to meet demand for programs in emerging or intersectional markets, e.g. Medical Management, Event Management, Digital Music. Similar demand exists at the graduate level among working professionals, who seek to acquire additional training in new and emerging specializations in the workplace. In general, the IDS program exists to allow WSC to be immediately responsive to the demands of an increasingly rapidly evolving job market and work environment. A graduate program in IDS would allow WSC to extend that service to working professionals and recent Bachelors-degree holders as well.

The MA/MS in IDS will be comprised of at least 30 credit hours and may include a thesis, internship, comprehensive examination, or project as part of those 30 hours. The program must include a minimum of 15 credit hours in a primary area of study, with the remainder of the credits in one or more areas. All courses are eligible for inclusion in a program, but courses will be selected from among the regular rotation of existing courses. Interdisciplinary Studies program proposals will be signed and recommended by an advisor and the School Dean, and approved by the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The signed program will be forwarded to the Records and Registration Office.

An example of a potential IDS Master's—one for which we have received requests—is Arts Management. The program of study may be comprised of the organizational management 18 credit core, with the remaining 12 hours taken in the arts, publishing, and media, for example. Another possible program of study is Historical Administration, preparing students to work in public history and historical non-profits. This program of study might be comprised of a core set of courses from Business Administration, combined with a suite of courses in history, geography, GIS, and public affairs.

2. Centrality to Role and Mission

Wayne State College is dedicated to meeting the workforce needs of the region. While a design-your-own Interdisciplinary graduate degree exists at UNL, many prospective graduate students are tethered to their job sites or family obligations in Northeast Nebraska. Further, with emerging markets in a near-constant state of flux, WSC must be prepared to meet demand for specializations at the intersections of traditional degree areas. The flexibility of the IDS degree allows a graduate student to create a program that is tailored precisely to their needs and interests, thereby avoiding saddling students with courses that are not beneficial or useful for their aims.

3. Evidence of Need and Demand

As Peru State College's proposal for an undergraduate Bachelor's degree program in Interdisciplinary Studies last year articulated, the need and demand for self-designed programs of study are strong. As they noted, Interdisciplinary Studies programs excel in fostering skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, professionalism, and communication—all of which are in high demand in the workplace.

While it is difficult to gauge need and demand for any particular design-your-own program, the WSC Director of IDS has been approached, without prompting, by a number of prospective students seeking a graduate degree in IDS in the past year. These students are interested in degrees in areas for which we do not yet have a graduate program. In addition, we are aware of a number of international students who seek to continue their education in the United States, but cannot be permitted to do so unless enrolled in a face-to-face program. This situation poses challenges not only for the students, but also for the Northeast Nebraska region, which loses these potential high-skilled employees to other regions in the US or even their home countries. This loss in international students is not only a "brain drain" on the region, but also a drain on the diversity and global outlook of the region.

Web traffic to the undergraduate Bachelors IDS page is among the highest on the WSC site, at 1,792 page views for the period from July 1, 2018 to July 1, 2019, or roughly 150 per month. Nor is this an anomaly; for the year previous, the page received 1,660 total page views. These figures indicate that interest in a self-designed program is strong among the generations of students now entering college, and will likely remain strong in a market that rewards disruption, entrepreneurship, and unconventional career paths.

4. Adequacy of Resources

Faculty and Staff: The IDS Master's degree is comprised entirely of existing courses; no additional faculty or courses are needed. There are both sufficient seats in graduate courses and sufficient flexibility in the program to house these additional students. In the event that a student would like to take a course that is not regularly offered, the course may be offered as a Directed Study, provided it is approved by the appropriate bodies. A small contingency cost is included in the budget below for faculty compensation for Directed Studies. Administrative staffing for IDS already exists at the undergraduate level, and it can be extended to service the graduate level as well.

Physical Facilities: No additional needs are anticipated.

Instructional Equipment and Informational Resources: No additional needs are anticipated.

Budget Projections:

Revenue: Potential revenue is solely the tuition and fees that would be generated by student enrollment in the new program. A modest estimate of five new students per year has been set, each taking 15 credits per year for two years. While some students may attrit from the program, others may switch into it, balancing out attrition. Therefore, total enrollment in this program of 5 students have been estimated for year one, with a total of 10 students enrolled each year, beginning in year two.

Based upon current tuition and fees for FY19-20, revenue generated includes \$3,405 in on-campus tuition per full-time student per academic year, at a current cost of \$227 per graduate credit, and an additional \$1016.25 in fees per full-time student per academic year, at a current rate of \$67.75 per credit. This equates to \$4421.25 per student, per year, which generates revenue of \$22,106.25 for year one and \$44,212.50 for years two through five. Therefore, total revenue for the first five years is **\$198,956.25**.

Expenses: The IDS Master's degree requires very little new expenditures, as the courses for the program are already being offered and have the capacity for additional students. An estimated expense of \$1,362 per year has been included in the table below to address the instructional cost of up to three directed study courses that may need to be offered for students, at a cost of \$454 per course. Operating costs of \$2500 for initial marketing of the program have been included for the first two years of the program. Therefore, total expenses for the first five years of the program are **\$11,810.00**.

Net revenue for this new program is estimated at **\$187,146.25**.

MASTER'S IN INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES: BUDGET PROJECTIONS

REVENUE	FY20-21	FY21-22	FY22-23	FY23-24	FY24-25	Overall
Tuition	\$17,025.00	\$34,050.00	\$34,050.00	\$34,050.00	\$34,050.00	\$153,225.00
Fees	\$5,081.25	\$10,162.50	\$10,162.50	\$10,162.50	\$10,162.50	\$45,731.25
Revenue Subtotal	\$22,106.25	\$44,212.50	\$44,212.50	\$44,212.50	\$44,212.50	\$198,956.25
EXPENSES	FY20-21	FY21-22	FY22-23	FY23-24	FY24-25	Overall
Faculty Instruction	(\$1,362.00)	(\$1,362.00)	(\$1,362.00)	(\$1,362.00)	(\$1,362.00)	(\$6,810.0)
Operating	(\$2,500.00)	(\$2,500.00)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$5,000.00)
Expenses Subtotal	(\$3,862.00)	(\$3,862.00)	(\$1,362.00)	(\$1,362.00)	(\$1,362.00)	(\$11,810.00)
NET	\$18,244.25	\$40,350.50	\$42,850.00	\$42,850.00	\$42,850.00	\$187,146.25

5. Avoidance of Unnecessary Duplication

While other build-your-own-degree programs exist in the state, by the nature of these boutique programs, each student's program of study is unique to that student and that institution. Thus, no two IDS programs of study are alike.

Nonetheless, it may serve as reassurance that another program with the unique contours of an MA or MS in IDS, offered face-to-face on campus, does not exist elsewhere in the area:

- Nebraska State College System
Chadron and Peru, like Wayne, offer a Bachelor's in IDS, but do not offer a Master's in IDS. This degree could potentially also benefit CSC and PSC, who may have similar untapped populations of adult professionals.
- University of Nebraska at Lincoln
The Individualized Interdisciplinary Degree is offered only at the doctoral level, and only programs that offer a Ph.D. may participate in it:

An Individualized Interdisciplinary Doctoral (IID) program of studies is designed for students who wish to tailor a program to meet their professional interests and research endeavors across programs. A student in an IID program may select a field of study that integrates material offered in two or more departments without meeting the specific major requirements of one program.

Although an IID program allows a high degree of flexibility, it requires the approval of Graduate Studies as well as the participating academic units. It is not an alternative for students who cannot gain admission to other programs. Also, it is not a mechanism for offering the PhD degree within units which do not have their own authorized PhD programs; an IID program may be developed only with programs which offer a doctoral degree.

<https://catalog.unl.edu/graduate-professional/graduate/degrees/doctoral/>

- University of South Dakota
The Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies is offered both online and face-to-face. (<https://www.usd.edu/usd-online/online-programs/master-of-arts-in-interdisciplinary-studies>)

6. Consistency with the *Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education*

Two main arguments may be made for the offering this degree at Wayne State College:

1. According to the CCPE Statewide Plan, Wayne State College serves “the needs of non-traditional students, who often are place-bound individuals seeking professional and personal development.” The IDS Master’s seeks to serve this very demographic of place-bound working adults seeking professional development within their field.

With respect to graduate programs, the CCPE Plan states that: “Graduate-level programs are proposed only when they are within the role and mission, when resources are available, and when there is evidence of ongoing need and demand.” The Master’s in IDS fulfills all of these criteria: as noted directly above, the program lies within the role and mission of Wayne State College; Section 4 above details the adequacy of existing resources (as well as possible revenue streams generated by new students); Section 3 speaks to need and demand for the program.

2. No other such program exists in the state of Nebraska for Nebraskans. As noted above, a Doctoral level face-to-face program is available at UNL. An online/on-campus Master’s program exists at USD, but Nebraskans would need to go out of state (and pay attendant rates) to access it. Thus this graduate IDS program serves to fill a void in the existing Nebraska post-secondary educational ecosystem.

It should also be noted that the CCPE recognizes Interdisciplinary Programs as a separate category of program, as reflected in its CCPE Review of Existing Programs form. In order for a program to qualify as “interdisciplinary,” it must meet one of the following guidelines:

1. The program is individualized and custom-designed and has no specified curriculum, *or*
2. The program has an identified curriculum, draws from two or more departments, *and* has two or less courses of its own.

The Interdisciplinary program proposed here meets both of these criteria and thus qualifies for the lower graduates per year threshold (2 graduates per year) for viability.