

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION FOR
Division of General Studies
Interdisciplinary Studies Undergraduate Programs**

The undergraduate interdisciplinary studies (UIS) degrees include the INDS:

- AAS (Associates of Arts and Applied Science, administered by CTC)
- BA (administered by the Division of General Studies (DGS))
- BS (DGS)
- BAAS (Bachelors of Arts and Applied Science – (DGS). This was formally the BT degree – Bachelors of Technology)

STRENGTHS:

- The degrees allow for flexibility and innovation.
- The Degree Completion option has very high enrollment.
- Graduation Rates - in FY20 UIS had 8.31% of all bachelor's degrees awarded by UAF that year (UAF's top major.)
- Efficiency (especially degree completion)
- Serve a high number of rural and Alaska Native students.
- Serve non-traditional students, International Students, NCAA Athletes, and Military and Veteran students.
- Support students interested in UAF programs not tied to specific majors including, Study Away, One Health, Blast, URSA, Museum Studies, SSS, and Climate Scholars.

WEAKNESSES:

- Lack of a cohort for UIS students may lead to a lack of cohesion.
- SLOAs need to be further developed for all degrees.
- Tracking INDS students and service is challenging.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- The goals program has great potential to expand, both inside and outside Alaska.
- UIS can support students affected by changes to the UA system.
- More online courses are good for the UIS program as many of the degree completion students are by distance.
- Interdisciplinary studies can serve as a low-cost incubator for new UAF programs.
- The program regularly participates in UAF-wide degree completion campaigns.
- UAA and UAS have had interdisciplinary majors and degree completion campaigns. However, UAA does not currently refer students to any interdisciplinary or degree completion programs, and UAS' program is significantly less flexible than UAF's. The UAF program regularly receives referrals from UAA and UAS.

THREATS:

- There can be confusion between the programs. Requirements for the Interdisciplinary Goals option and Interdisciplinary Degree Completion are significantly different, but both are administered under a single major.
- Prerequisite issues limit upper division course selection.
- Faculty support for UIS is important. The program relies on faculty across campus to incorporate serving on INDS Goals students' committees into their workloads.

CENTRALITY TO MISSION:

There are two more or less completely different degrees with different objectives.

1) *Degree Completion Option: Started in 2009 (BA, BA, BAAS)*

The interdisciplinary studies major with a general studies concentration is a pathway to graduation for students who are unable to complete a particular major offered at UAF. Students in the general studies concentration have the flexibility to choose classes that are meaningful and relevant to their educational interests and career goals. Admission to the Degree Completion program requires a 2.0 cumulative GPA or higher, completion of at least 100 or more college credits, as well as a consultation with a degree completion advisor located in the Academic Advising Center. Students must write a letter of rationale explaining why this program is an appropriate path to graduation for them in order to be admitted to the general studies concentration of the interdisciplinary major. Students may not use the interdisciplinary studies major with a general studies concentration part of a double major. (UIS Website)

2) *Goals Option: (Minor, AAS, BA, BS, BAAS)*

An interdisciplinary major allows students to customize and create a major that is unique and different from the majors offered by UAF. Interdisciplinary majors must include courses from at least two different disciplines that focus on a shared theme. To be admitted into the interdisciplinary goals option, students must write a proposal describing the intended name and a description of their major. Interdisciplinary students must also choose a committee of at least three faculty from at least two disciplines to help guide in the selection of courses and ultimately approve their proposal and the major's content. All interdisciplinary proposals will be reviewed by the dean of the committee chair and the UAF vice provost for final approval. (UIS Website for Baccalaureate – AAS and Minor similar)

These are two very different programs, degree completion and goals. Degree completion is relatively cost efficient. This is a very important program and the Deans summary says it best.

The graduation numbers are high for INDS students. This is particularly impressive since a substantial number of Degree Completion students continue to face the same significant challenges that caused them to stop out in the first place. I consider every graduate from the Degree Completion program to be a success story.

The Goals track is different. It is meant to be a true interdisciplinary degree where students can design their own degree from various but related disciplines. These degrees are becoming more commonplace across the U.S. and allows the students to tailor degrees towards their interest under faculty supervision. These degrees are also more costly and time-consuming as they involve faculty committees. Faculty must be committed to the UIS goal degrees if they are going to be successful. This is more difficult in times of extreme budget challenges like we are facing now. However, these degrees can partly substitute for eliminated degrees.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY:

- Graduation Rates - in FY20 UIS had 8.31% of all bachelor's degrees awarded by UAF that year (UAFs top major).
- Serve a high number of rural and Alaska Native students.
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COST-EFFECTIVENESS:

The salary and benefits of these two individuals assigned to this program is approximately \$180,000 a year (Dean's report). Other instructional costs would be the time spent by the Dean of General Studies as well as the costs of instruction from the faculty (although marginal instructional costs may be minimal). Very cost-effective given that there were 90 majors in FY20 and 52 degrees awarded.

Majors

Metric	Detail	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20
Majors	AAS Interdisciplinary Studies	3	3	2	4	2
Majors	BA General Studies	340	303	314	277	264
Majors	BA Interdisciplinary Studies	32	32	45	57	53
Majors	BAAS Interdisciplinary Studies	8	7	9	8	18
Majors	BI Pre - General Studies	43	33	103	103	106
Majors	BS General Studies	0	0	2	1	3
Majors	BS Interdisciplinary Studies	7	14	7	15	19

Degrees

Metric	Detail	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20
Degrees	AAS Interdisciplinary Studies	2	2	2	4	4
Degrees	BA Interdisciplinary Studies	21	13	18	36	36
Degrees	BAAS Interdisciplinary Studies	1	2	3	5	2
Degrees	BS Interdisciplinary Studies	5	11	5	6	14

Interdisciplinary AAS

RECOMMENDATION:	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:	DATE FOR FOLLOW-UP:
Continuation: 6 votes		
Continuation w/ improvement plan: 1 vote		
Abstain: 1 vote		

Interdisciplinary BA

RECOMMENDATION:	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:	DATE FOR FOLLOW-UP:
Continuation: 6 votes		
Continuation w/ improvement plan: 1 vote		
Abstain: 1 vote		

Interdisciplinary BS

RECOMMENDATION:	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:	DATE FOR FOLLOW-UP:
Continuation: 6 votes		
Continuation w/ improvement plan: 1 vote		
Abstain: 1 vote		

Interdisciplinary BAAS

RECOMMENDATION:	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:	DATE FOR FOLLOW-UP:
Continuation: 6 votes		
Continuation w/ improvement plan: 1 vote		
Abstain: 1 vote		