

Assessment: Master of Liberal Studies (MLS)

A. Mission Statement

The Master of Liberal Studies program, based in the Center for Twenty-first Century Studies, offers an interdisciplinary master's degree for college graduates who seek further educational and cultural enrichment in an intellectually rigorous and stimulating environment. In the liberal arts tradition, emphasis is placed on breadth of learning, critical exploration of texts and imagery, effective communication, and integration of knowledge, rather than on specialization within a particular academic or professional field. Hallmarks of the program include a first-year learning cohort, small interdisciplinary-oriented seminars, distinguished faculty, evening classes, individualized advising, and flexible timetable to graduation. Ultimately, the MLS curriculum fosters a deeper understanding of human experience and a broader, cross-cultural approach to the dynamic relationship between historical experience and vital contemporary issues.

B. Learning Goals

The Master of Liberal Studies program will enable students to:

1. Consider historical and contemporary topics from a variety of perspectives that transcend traditional specialized graduate programs.
2. Communicate more effectively, both orally and in writing
3. Conduct research across disciplines, critically evaluate findings, and synthesize knowledge in such a way that understanding is significantly enhanced.
4. Apply interdisciplinary learning skills to goals that range from an emotionally and intellectually enriched private life to greater professional opportunities.

C. Assessment Tools/Procedures

The Master of Liberal Studies program uses these tools to assess attainment of its learning goals:

1. Course evaluations that allow students to assess learning experiences in each MLS seminar and to provide feedback for future curriculum planning [reviewed by Instructors; discussed informally with Director after each semester].
2. Annual consultations between Director and each student to measure progress in the program [performed at least once a year with comments recorded in student's file, and significant problems shared with MLS Faculty Advisory Committee at its annual meeting].
3. Culminating Project (LiblSt 798), which reflects interdisciplinary methodology, critical thinking, and synthesis of knowledge [initial proposal and final defense must be approved by Director and Faculty Advisor].
4. Post-graduation questionnaire that asks each degree recipient to evaluate the overall quality of the program and its impact on their lives [reviewed by Director and distributed for discussion and possible programmatic action at the MLS Faculty Advisory Committee annual meeting].