

Campus Statement on the Role of the Liberal Arts at IUPUI

The School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI is in a financial crisis, having experienced nearly a 20% drop in student tuition and fee revenue over the past decade. Reductions in enrollment have been driven by a complex array of campus, state, and national factors that have led to significant reductions in general education credit, as well as numbers of students enrolled across most majors. This situation reflects national trends. Since 2007 the numbers of bachelor's degrees conferred by Title-IV participating 4-year institutions have dropped 15% for philosophy and religious studies, 22% for English language, literature and composition, 25% for history, and 4% for area, ethnic and civilization studies.¹

At the same time, many national higher education organizations are reaffirming the critical importance that the arts, humanities and social sciences play in supporting the development of transferable skills that employers value (e.g., communication, ability to work as a member of a diverse team, critical thinking, ethical reasoning; Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2018). These benefits call for tighter integration between the major and core coursework in the liberal arts, particularly for science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine programs (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018).

Academic leaders at IUPUI reaffirm the inherent value of the arts, humanities, social sciences, sciences and mathematics as the core of any undergraduate degree program. We must ensure that undergraduate students have ample opportunities to apply and integrate their learning across their degree programs, as articulated in IUPUI's [Profiles of Learning for Undergraduate Success](#) (PLUS), and we acknowledge that the purpose of general education is to provide breadth of exposure to ideas, concepts and skills outside of the major in order to foster multiple "ways of knowing" among our students. We champion liberal education as an opportunity to balance specialized, practical education with a general liberal education that can foster transferable skills (highly valued by employers), as well as contribute to an enlightened, engaged citizenry and a well-functioning democracy

The financial crisis of the School of Liberal Arts cannot be addressed entirely from within the school, given the array of external forces that have contributed to reductions in enrollment. Academic leaders are called upon from across all schools conferring undergraduate degrees to collectively address this issue through creative strategizing, particularly with respect to elective credits available within degree programs.

Specific suggestions include:

- Expansion of the LAMP program available at [IUPUI](#) and [Bloomington](#) to include other professional programs
- Revising curricula to create more opportunities for double majors across schools and accelerated (4 + 1) degrees involving the arts, humanities and social sciences

¹ Schneider, M., & Sigelman, M. (2018). Saving the Liberal Arts: Making the bachelor's degree a better path to labor market success. Burning Glass Technologies. <https://www.burning-glass.com/wp-content/uploads/Saving-the-Liberal-Arts.pdf>

- Expand the Dual Degree Program developed to provide Butler University students the opportunity to earn an engineering degree to include IUPUI students pursuing majors in the liberal arts
- Support outreach to high schools to provide stronger pipelines to advanced coursework in the arts, humanities and social sciences
- Strengthen the marketing and branding associated with the promotion of liberal arts to undergraduate students, prospective students and their parents
- Redesign liberal arts courses, when possible, to clarify applications to professional contexts (e.g., social work, engineering, business)
- Develop interdisciplinary certificates and minors that include coursework in the liberal arts
- Strongly encourage students in professional programs to complete a minor related to the liberal arts in order to enhance the value of their degree

Recommended Reading for School Curriculum Committees and IUPUI Undergraduate Affairs Committee:

- [The Integration of the Humanities and Arts with Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine in Higher Education: Branches from the Same Tree](#) (2018, National Academies Press).
- [Fulfilling the American Dream: Liberal Education and the Future of Work](#) (July 2018; AAC&U)
- Robot Ready: Human Skills for the Future of Work (2018, Srada: <https://www.economicmodeling.com/robot-ready/>)