**Bachelor of University Studies Summary** **7/1/18**

**Program Overview**

The Bachelor of University Studies (BUS) program at the inception was "to enable students in the university who are interested in a major beyond those now offered to help define and plan their academic careers from courses offered in the university as a whole." The program allows students to propose and pursue an individualized, interdisciplinary major not otherwise achievable within the current structure of the University.

BUS proposals are reviewed and approved by the University Studies Committee, a ten-member faculty committee selected by the Personnel and Elections Committee of the Academic Senate. Multiple committee meetings are scheduled each Fall and Spring semesters, where the student/faculty advisor team is asked to come and discuss their proposal with the committee.

I was placed in a leadership role on July 1st, 2017 when I took over for the departing director, Ed Barbanell.

**Student Activities**

During the 2017-2018 academic year, we have had a total of 18 proposals reviewed and 11 approved. During the first review September, we reviewed five proposals and accepted two. The three that were rejected were advised to consult with the director and revise their projects descriptions for the November meeting. During the November meeting, we reviewed five proposals with two submitting from the previous meeting. All of these proposals were accepted.

During the February meeting, the committee reviewed two proposals, and both were accepted.

In the second meeting during the Spring semester, we reviewed 6 proposals and accepted 4.

After consultation with the previous director and looking at past numbers, this is in-line with past experiences.

**Administrative Activities**

Upon my appointment as the new director, I conducted a thorough evaluation of the program and developed an in-coming and out-going survey to understand what the strengths and weakness of the program from the student's perspectives were. Several themes emerged: Student's didn't have the ongoing support throughout their BUS academic journey. The previous director had left this primarily up to the students and while he was available to meet with students there was not a systematic plan in place for advising. Also, the students indicated that when it came to graduation that they often had to negotiate inclusion in College specific activities. The students also felt that they didn't have adequate support for determining a schedule that worked with their variety of courses from different programs. To address these particular issues, the BUS program was able to get two advisors assigned to the program to help with student advisement, support, and inclusion in the graduation activities. These advisors now meet with each student when they are contemplating the program, once they are accepted and at least once per year and then before graduation to ensure that they are on track, have support in negotiating courses and are considered in the graduation proceedings in their home college. We have also developed a guide and checklist for students to consider when approaching a faculty member to be a BUS advisor. In the past, it was determined that many students were not prepared to discuss their projects and academic paths.

In addition, we have streamlined the submission process by having a form that students complete and upload files rather than submit via email. We have also developed a template form that students fill out for their schedule to ensure uniformity and eliminate many minor errors such as miscalculation of credit hours.

**Data**

To understand the success of the program and its effectiveness, I worked with Mike Martineau to gather some data.

BACHELOR OF UNIVERSITY STUDIES OUTCOMES

Includes all undergraduates who were admitted into the BUS program 2008 through 2017

* 97% retained to next semester after enrolled in BUS program
* 76% graduate within 4 years after enrolled in BUS program
* 100% graduate within 6 years after enrolled in BUS program
* 32% of BUS students enroll after 4 terms
* 34% of students started out in Undergrad studies. (undeclared or preprofessional)
* 62% male and 38% female
* 82% white, 14% domestic students of color, and 5% international
* 81% of students with a 3.0 GPA or better
* 27% of students are 24 years of age
* In relation to other graduates, BUS students tend to take a greater portion of their first-year courses from Fine Arts, Science, UGS, and Architecture + Planning. The most statistical difference is found in Fine Arts.

**Goals**

Working with the two BUS advisors, we will try to develop a better cohort of students so that the students feel that are part of a program. This could include a get together each semester for a lecture or some other type of activity. Also, we will explore how to reenergize the senior project presentations. These are valuable because they celebrate the wonderful accomplishments of our students and provide a mechanism to develop a cohort. In addition, I will work to increase the diversity of our students and strive for more gender equality. We will work with the Office of Undergraduate Research to start requiring students to present their final thesis project at their symposium. This will help strengthen the cohort model and also provide a mechanism to celebrate the amazing work that the students have done with their capstone project. We will also investigate the feasibility of having the BUS students complete a learning portfolio so that we can capture the unique stories and paths that these students have taken. This will also provide them with a communication platform that they can use for future endeavors such as job searching or graduate school applications.