

Maine Community College System
Five Year Program Review

College: Central Maine Community College
CIP: 24.0101

Program: Liberal Studies
Credentials: Associate in Arts (AA)

Review Team: Tobby Bragdon, David Lewis, Eric Berg, Jeff Green, Jessica Smith, Chris Thoma, Curry Caputo, Mitchell Grohoski, Garth Libhart, David Cassidy, MacKenzie Belanger

Date: October 2024

Period of Review: AY 2018/2019-2022/2023

Program Overview:

1) **Program description** *(from the most recent college catalog):*

The Associate in Arts Degree in Liberal Studies is designed primarily for individuals who plan to transfer to a four-year college or university in pursuit of a bachelor’s degree. A core of courses in the program offers students the opportunity to develop skills in Communication, the Humanities, the Social Sciences, Mathematics and Science. Courses taken as electives afford individuals an opportunity to explore a variety of academic disciplines. In order to ensure optimal transfer of credits to upper division programs, students should work collaboratively with their academic advisor and the Director of Placement and Transfer Services to plan a course of study that meets their goals. To facilitate the transfer of courses, students should identify, as soon as possible, the upper division program and institution in which they plan to enroll.

2) **Program Learning Outcomes: all program learning outcomes are expected to be assessed within the five-year cycle. Please attach an Assessment Data and Reflection Template for each program learning outcome. Explain how the department used the assessment results to improve teaching, learning, and the curriculum.**

List the program learning outcomes:	Method of assessment: list the courses and activities/assignments used to assess the learning outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communicate clearly and effectively in a variety of contexts. 2. Access, evaluate and utilize a variety of information resources. 3. Articulate and utilize fundamental mathematical concepts. 4. Explain basic general scientific laws, theories, and concepts in either the biological or physical sciences. 5. Apply critical thinking skills and link concepts across a variety of disciplines. 6. Critically examine the values, rituals and beliefs of cultures that are separated in time or space from one’s own. 	This area is intentionally left blank for the user to provide assessment methods

3) Credentials Awarded within the IPEDS year, i.e. July 1-June 30:

Credentials Awarded					
Credential	AY1920	AY2021	AY2122	AY2223	AY2324
AA	14	5	6	15	12

4) Program Graduates Employed:

Number of Completers with any Wage Data	43
% of Completers with any Wage Data	88%
# of Completers with First Year Earnings	21
Median First Year Earnings	\$28,910

5) Partnerships, collaborations, associations and memberships

a) Advisory Meeting Dates and Attendance (past 3 years)

There is not an advisory committee established for liberal studies.

Program external accreditation, associations, and memberships (if applicable):

6) Other Indicators of student success, direct and/or indirect, which may include:

	AY1920	AY2021	AY2122	AY2223	AY2324
Licensure/certification pass rates (if applicable)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Program Advisory Committee Member Survey (on scale of 1-5 averaged):	--	--	--	--	--
Program Curriculum	--	--	--	--	--
Technical currency of the program	--	--	--	--	--
Preparation of program graduates for work in the field	--	--	--	--	--
Communication from program administration/faculty	--	--	--	--	--
Overall quality of the program	--	--	--	--	--
Other (please specify):	--	--	--	--	--

7) Student demographics:

Admissions					
	AY1920	AY2021	AY2122	AY2223	AY2324
Fall Applications	81	98	98	166	183
% chg in Fall Applicants from PY	--	21%	0%	69%	10%
Enrolled (Yield)	22	19	16	27	36
% chg in Enrolled from PY	--	-14%	-16%	69%	33%

Student Enrollment ¹					
	AY1920	AY2021	AY2122	AY2223	AY2324
Unduplicated Headcount Enrolled in Program	55	41	39	59	84
% chg in Headcount from PY	--	-25%	-5%	51%	42%
Enrolled Credit Hours	552	386	422	627	952
% chg in Credit hours from PY	--	-30%	9%	49%	52%
FTE	37	26	28	42	63
% chg in FTE from PY	--	-30%	8%	50%	50%

¹ = students within the program in the fall of the academic year

Student Success					
Cohort Year	AY1920	AY2021	AY2122	AY2223	AY2324
Cohort Enrollment	38	29	38	63	71
Retained to the next semester	37%	45%	79%	52%	38%
Retained to the next year	21%	21%	45%	33%	0%
Graduation Rates					
100% of program time	11%	10%	18%	22%	
150% of program time	11%	14%	26%		
200% of program time	11%	17%			
Transfer Rate (non-graduates) ²	34%	34%			
Transfer Rate (graduates)	11%	7%			
Enrolled in Another Program ²	8%	0%			
Graduated from Another Program ²	5%	7%			

². Determined at the maximum graduation point in this table, i.e. 200%

8) Strengths, challenges, and planned steps for continuous improvement: In your summary assessment you should reference sections of this review that informs the plan.

Program Strengths:

- Addition of Liberal studies pathways; Economic and Public Policy, English, History, Political Science and Philosophy to allow students to have a clear path for transfer.
- Liberal Studies students have access to a variety of special topics courses, giving them the opportunity to explore unique and timely subjects that deepen their understanding of specialized academic interests. These faculty-developed courses provide a dynamic learning experience while encouraging intellectual curiosity. Recent special topics offerings include Magick, the Occult, and the Paranormal; Graphic Novels; Contemporary Young Adult Literature; Storytelling; Technology and Society: Artificial Intelligence; America Chooses: The 2024 Election; and the Art of Game Design. [These examples pull from the Humanities and a few others I found on the fall schedule; if we want a fuller picture, we'd need to consult other departments.]
- The Liberal Studies program is highly transferrable. The College has long-standing articulation agreements with the University of Maine system and other colleges in New England and beyond, making the program a cost-effective way for students to start their education.
- Liberal Studies students can choose from five advising pathways: Economic and Public Planning; English; History; Philosophy; Political Science. These pathways help students align their course selections with their educational and career goals. This structured support ensures a more focused, efficient path to transfer.
- Liberal Studies students benefit from a low advisor/advisee ratio [we need updated stats]. Advisors work closely with students to offer personalized academic and career guidance.

- Liberal Studies students can access a broad range of tutoring support through the tutoring centers embedded in the Learning Commons. Students can receive tutoring in math, science, writing, sociology, psychology, and philosophy. Tutoring is offered in multiple modalities: in-person, online, and live virtual appointments.
- Multilingual learners can receive support from the Lisa Gorman English Language Learning Center, which offers in person or live virtual appointments in addition to a weekly Open Table English Conversation lunch session, where students can drop in to practice conversation in a casual, low stakes setting.
- The Learning Commons gives students access to academic databases and resources that enhance Liberal Studies students' ability to conduct thorough, credible research using a wide range of academic sources. These databases support deeper learning and enhance students' ability to produce well-informed, scholarly work across various disciplines—skills they'll need in their baccalaureate work.
- Many courses in the Liberal Studies program have a strong community focus. Students attend events, go on field trips, and produce projects within the community. For example, students in THE 101: Introduction to Acting attend a play at a local theater and are given the opportunity to meet with actors, designers, and directors for question-and-answer sessions.
- Many courses in the Liberal Studies program have a strong community focus. Students attend events, go on field trips, and produce projects within the community. For example, students in THE 101: Introduction to Acting attend a play at a local theater and are given the opportunity to meet with actors, designers, and directors for question-and-answer sessions. Students in some sections of ENG 101: College Writing work on a final project that requires them to identify a problem in their local community and then develop the resources needed to solve it. Students in some sections of ENG 220: Business Communications participate in a gratitude project where they compose thank you correspondence with someone who's made a positive impact in their community.
- The Liberal Studies program has vastly increased its online offerings. Foundational courses are offered online in multiple modalities to support students' varied learning styles, and an increasing number of electives and special topics courses are being developed for asynchronous online delivery. Recent additions to asynchronous course delivery include ENG 211: Creative Writing; WST 101: Women's Studies; SPA 101: Beginning Spanish I; ART 296-02: Art History

(Medieval through Renaissance); and [we need additional information from other departments]. ENG 221: Advanced Composition and Research—a course that will benefit Liberal Studies transfer students, many of whom will be required to have two composition courses—is slated for asynchronous delivery in fall 2025.

Challenges:

- Many students may not fully understand the value and versatility of a Liberal Studies degree, leading to misconceptions about its practicality in the job market.
- The absence of a dedicated department chair for the Liberal Studies program can lead to a lack of vision, direction, and advocacy for the program, making it challenging to implement new initiatives or address faculty and student concerns effectively.
- Students may choose to transfer to other institutions before completing their degree.

Planned steps for continuous improvement:

- Establishing a dedicated department chair for the Liberal Studies program is essential for providing focused leadership and direction. This role would involve overseeing curriculum development, faculty coordination, and student engagement.
- Forming an advisory committee composed of faculty, alumni, industry representatives, and current students will provide diverse perspectives and insights to enhance the Liberal Studies program.
- Collaborating closely with the transfer coordinator is crucial for ensuring that students are well-informed about their options and pathways for transferring to other institutions.
- Partnering with the Learning and Advising Center to identify and reach out to students in the General Studies program who may benefit from transitioning to the Liberal Studies program.

Five-year Assessment Plan for Student Learning Outcomes

Liberal Studies

November 2024

Name of Program or General Education Domain

Date

Learning goal:

Student learning outcomes:	Academic year during which assessment will occur	Source(s) and type of assessment artifact(s) that will be collected (e.g.: embedded questioning, capstone assignments, standardized testing, performance observation, portfolio reviews, etc.)	Method(s) to be used for assessing artifact(s)	Assessment Goal (targets/criteria) for direct measure	Assessment Outcome (Number of Students Achieving an "acceptable" or better)	Assessment Goal was:		
						Met	Not Met	Pending Review
1. Communicate clearly and effectively in a variety of contexts.	2023-24 Ongoing, semesterly	ENG 101/105, and ENG 125, and Communication classes	Papers completed by students and presentations using rubrics	Students earning a 70% pass rate in the courses that support the learning outcome	84%	X		
2. Access, evaluate and utilize a variety of information resources.	2023-24 Ongoing, semesterly	ENG 101/105 and ENG 125	Papers completed by students and presentations using rubrics	Students earning a 70% pass rate in the courses that support the learning outcome	84%	X		
3. Articulate and utilize fundamental mathematical concepts.	2023-24 Ongoing, semesterly	Math courses, majority of students take MAT 115 or MAT 135	Exams, homework of lesson material and projects using rubrics	Students earning a 70% pass rate in the courses that support the learning outcome	66%		X	

4. Explain basic general scientific laws, theories, and concepts in either the biological or physical sciences.	2023-24 Ongoing, semesterly	Science courses with Lab	Exams, homework of lesson material and labs using rubrics	Students earning a 70% pass rate in the courses that support the learning outcome	69%		X	
5. Apply critical thinking skills and link concepts across a variety of disciplines.	2023-24 Ongoing, semesterly	All courses in the liberal studies program	Exams, homework of lesson material and projects using rubrics	Students earning a 70% pass rate in the courses that support the learning outcome	76%	X		
6. Critically examine the values, rituals and beliefs of cultures that are separated in time or space from one's own	2023-24 Ongoing, semesterly	Social, Diversity, Ethical Reasoning	Exams, homework of lesson material and projects using rubrics	Students earning a 70% pass rate in the courses that support the learning outcome	78%	X		

Most significant assessment findings? (Pedagogical, instructional, curricular changes). Please report on actions taken and on ongoing assessment plans. Advise our students to utilize tutoring at the Math and Science Center to assist with math and science classes. Math Department to work with all advisors on math pathways to ensure students are selecting the proper math class for their educational needs and proper math placement. Advisors let their students know there are multiple science classes that students can take to include astronomy with lab. Astronomy with lab was added since the last five-year presentation.