Many authors have contributed to this workbook. This version was edited by Mary Kirk and includes chapters by Marcia Anderson, Sheila Kunkle, Carol Lacey and Charles Tedder. Lorri Skwira contributed her copy editing skills to the final draft.

The current workbook also bears the legacy of the many faculty who helped build the Individualized B.A. program in what is now the College of Individualized Studies. Carol Holmberg, a founding faculty member of Metropolitan State University, sustained our student-centered philosophy and held an undying belief in David Sweet’s words: Given freedom, students will opt for excellence. Chet Meyers, whose ideas about spirituality and the educated person live on in the Educated Person Reader, was a long-time editor of the workbook. Other early contributors include: Tom Jones who did initial content editing, Marcia Anderson who copy edited, Lisa McMahon who did final proofing, John Burton another long-time editor, Bob Fox and Catherine Warrick who contributed to the Capstone chapter, Miriam Meyers for technical assistance, and all of the faculty and staff of the College of Individualized Studies.

Available in alternative formats for people with disabilities. Call Disability and Special Services at 651-793-1549 (voice) or 651-772-7687 (TTI).

Metropolitan State University
College of Individualized Studies
700 East 7th Street
Saint Paul, Minnesota
www.metrostate.edu
651-793-1782

An equal opportunity educator and employer.

©Copyright 1982.
Contents

Chapter 1. Getting started

What’s PRSP 301 about? ........................................................................ 1
Course learning outcomes .................................................................. 2
Program learning outcomes ............................................................... 2
How’s it going to work? ...................................................................... 3
Rely on instructor and classmate support .......................................... 3
Identify your preferred learning style ............................................... 3
Use journaling to reflect on your education ...................................... 3
What’s a reflective journal? ............................................................... 3
Why write a journal? ......................................................................... 4
Plan your individualized degree ....................................................... 4
What can I do with an Individualized B.A.? .................................... 5
Workbook overview ........................................................................ 7
Tips for success in PRSP 301 ............................................................. 8
Study this workbook carefully .......................................................... 8
Use the Glossary .............................................................................. 8
Love the questions ........................................................................... 8

Chapter 2. A short history of higher education

The Academy ..................................................................................... 11
Burke’s parlor .................................................................................... 12
The scholastic university ................................................................. 13
Quadrivim and trivium ..................................................................... 13
Undergraduate and graduate degrees ............................................. 14
Scholastics, scholasticism and the canon ......................................... 14
The research university .................................................................. 15
Changing role of faculty .................................................................. 16
Academic disciplines ....................................................................... 16
Expanding access and the canon ..................................................... 17
Morrill Act of 1862 ........................................................................... 18
Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) .................... 18
The “Great Books” .......................................................................... 19
Chapter 3. The Metropolitan State story

Origins of a “new kind of university for a new kind of student” ..... 24
A “new kind of” educational philosophy .................................. 25
   Student responsibility ......................................................... 25
   Competence-based education .............................................. 26
   Community-based .......................................................... 27
An individualized educational planning course ................................. 28
A “major” restructuring ................................................................ 28
A College of Individualized Studies ............................................. 29
   First College becomes CIS ..................................................... 30
Metropolitan State’s structure today ............................................. 30
What should an educated person know? ............................................. 32
   Original Five Competencies .................................................. 32
   Today’s Six Competencies ..................................................... 33
      Communication ............................................................. 33
      Mathematics and the natural world ................................... 33
      Humanities ................................................................. 34
      Community ................................................................. 34
      Vocation ..................................................................... 35
      Avocation and lifelong learning ...................................... 37
Comparing competencies with GELS ............................................. 38
   The early years ................................................................. 39
   Today ............................................................................. 39
   DARS & GELS ............................................................... 40

Chapter 4. What does it mean to be an educated person?

Why should we educate people? .................................................... 43
   Narratives on the value of education ....................................... 44
      Spaceship Earth ............................................................... 45
      Educating Rita ............................................................... 45
      What’s your narrative? ..................................................... 45
   Education and civic engagement .......................................... 46
But, what kind of education? ................................................................. 47
Is an individualized degree for you? ......................................................... 48

**Perspectives and the educated person** ......................................................... 49
CIS learning outcomes ........................................................................... 50
  Self-directed learning ........................................................................... 50
  Lifelong learning ................................................................................ 50
  Reflective, self-transcendent learning ................................................ 51
  Knowledge in a self-defined area of Focus ......................................... 53

**CIS Courses** .......................................................................................... 53
  Three core courses ............................................................................. 53
  Interdisciplinary Studies (IDST) courses ............................................ 54
  Summer Partnership in Law courses .................................................. 55
  Other courses ..................................................................................... 55

**Chapter 5. Student-directed learning**

A tale of four learners ............................................................................. 57
  A learner in non-credit training earned credit in
    Project Management via PLA ......................................................... 57
  A work-based learner earned credit in Communication in
    Work Groups via Theory Seminar ................................................. 58
  A community-based learner earned credit for Civic Leadership
    and met a GELS Goal .................................................................... 58
  An independent/experiential learner earned credit for Painting
    via SDIS ......................................................................................... 58
  What’s your story? ............................................................................. 58

Understanding self-directed learning ..................................................... 59
  Why encourage evaluation of prior learning? ................................. 61
  Principles of competence-based assessment ...................................... 61

Processes for student-directed learning ................................................. 64
  Testing ............................................................................................... 64
  Group assessment .............................................................................. 64
  PLA or SDIS .................................................................................... 64
  Theory seminar ................................................................................ 64
  Internship ......................................................................................... 65
  Which process should I use? ............................................................. 65

Developing an SDL .................................................................................. 66
  Locate yourself on the SDL continuum ............................................. 66
  Where are you on the SDL continuum? ........................................... 67
  Write a competence statement ......................................................... 68
  Completing the rest of the SDL Form ............................................... 69
Chapter 6. Creating your degree plan

Sketching the blueprint ......................................................... 71
Thinking about your life and educational goals ....................... 72
Framing your focus .............................................................. 73
Avoid creating a shadow degree ........................................... 75
Understanding graduation requirements .................................. 76
GELS requirements ............................................................. 76
Focus area ................................................................. 76
Upper-division ................................................................. 76
Metropolitan State residency ............................................... 77
College of Individualized Studies residency .......................... 77
Understanding your DARS & transfer credits ......................... 78
Quick guide to USelect .......................................................... 78
Technical credit transfer ....................................................... 79
Planning your degree page-by-page ....................................... 79
Organization of this section .................................................... 79
Gather your planning materials ............................................. 79
Cover page ......................................................................... 80
What to think about ........................................................... 80
What TO DO ..................................................................... 80
Degree Plan Rationale page .................................................. 81
What to think about ........................................................... 81
What TO DO ..................................................................... 82
Focus page ......................................................................... 83
What to think about ........................................................... 83
What TO DO ..................................................................... 84
GELS Requirements page .................................................... 85
What to think about ........................................................... 85
What TO DO ..................................................................... 86
Student-Directed Learning (SDL) page ................................... 87
What to think about ........................................................... 87
Chapter 7. Learning after Perspectives & life after Metropolitan State

Learning after Perspectives ................................................................. 92
Developing your “elevator speech” ................................................... 92
Maintaining your degree plan’s integrity ......................................... 92
Tracking your own progress toward degree requirements .......... 93
Working with your CIS Academic Advisor ..................................... 93
Ensuring on-time graduation .......................................................... 94
Continuing to write in your reflective journal .............................. 94
Understanding the Capstone ............................................................ 95
Self-directed learning ...................................................................... 97
Reflective, self-transcendent learning & civic engagement .......... 98
Depth in self-defined focus (vocation) ............................................. 98
Lifelong learning (avocation) .......................................................... 99
Life after Metropolitan State ............................................................ 99
Thinking about graduate study? ......................................................... 100
What about the job market? ............................................................. 100
Pursuing lifelong learning ............................................................... 102
Putting your philosophy of education to work ........................... 102

Glossary

Appendix A. Exercises

Exercise 1. Finding a time and place to study ................................. 110
Exercise 2. Introducing yourself ....................................................... 112
Exercise 3. Reflecting on life and educational goals ..................... 113
Exercise 4. Self-assessment in Competence Areas ....................... 114
Appendix B. Sample degree plans

Appendix C. Blank degree plan

Appendix D. Program Declaration Form
Getting started

Welcome to the Perspectives course! Some of you are taking this class to fulfill GELS requirements, while others of you are developing an Individualized Bachelor of Arts degree. In either event, the faculty and staff of the College of Individualized Studies (CIS) are delighted that you took this opportunity to make meaning of your education by thinking about what it means to be an educated person. This workbook is designed to help you achieve those goals.

Learning outcomes

- Understand the learning outcomes for PRSP 301 and the Individualized Bachelor of Arts degree program
- Offer a chapter-by-chapter overview of the workbook
- Tips for success in PRSP 301

What’s PRSP 301 about?

Perspectives will help you answer important questions that many students have on their mind. Can I handle the demands of family, work and school? Do I remember how to study effectively? Can I meet the demands of college-level reading and writing assignments? What areas of study do I need to meet my career goals? Does any of my life/work experience count for credit? Can I realistically succeed in three courses while maintaining a part- or full-time job? Are there paid internships or other student work opportunities that can help ease the financial burden? Are there independent studies I can work on at my own pace? Is this the right school and/or program for me? Will this be worth my time and effort?

The Perspectives course will support you in making educational choices based on a careful, well-informed evaluation of your circumstances, your short and long range goals, and your unique learning needs. This course goes far beyond merely teaching you the mechanics of degree planning. You cannot wisely do that planning until you have reflected on the question *What does it mean to be an educated person?* Much of this Perspectives course will ask you to focus on an exploration of this
question, using the student-centered philosophy of the College of Individualized Studies.

**Course learning outcomes**

The following primary objectives of the Perspectives course will support you in developing the best possible Individualized Bachelor of Arts degree (or in making meaning of your traditional major):

- become acquainted with the university’s and the College of Individualized Studies’ missions, educational philosophy and academic resources
- consider how elements of gender, race, multicultural perspectives, socioeconomic status and civic responsibility relate to what it means to be educated
- understand the important link between liberal learning and career success, and appreciate the value of lifelong learning and avocational interests
- investigate the use of creative learning strategies which include student-directed learning, internships, theory seminars, faculty-designed independent study, and receiving credit for knowledge gained from life and/or work experience
- assume primary responsibility for and authority over the development of your degree plan.

**Program learning outcomes**

These five primary learning outcomes for the Perspectives course will be considered within the context of the College of Individualized Studies’ six areas of competence—communication, community, humanities, the natural world and mathematics, vocation, and lifelong learning and avocation—as well as the following program learning outcomes:

- Self-directed learning
- Lifelong learning
- Reflective, self-transcendent learning
- Knowledge in a self-defined focus area

The faculty and staff of CIS believe that these learning outcomes are central to becoming an educated person. Chapter 4 contains a more detailed description of these learning outcomes. We hope you’ll use these learning outcomes as a lens through which to reflect on your personal strengths and areas of need as an educated person.
How’s it going to work?

Rely on instructor and classmate support

The Perspectives course challenges you to think seriously about your educational goals, which involves a lot of soul searching on your part. But, Perspectives is also an enjoyable course in which you’ll meet fellow students who have much to offer, and who will share the excitement of developing an individualized degree plan.

Your instructor has a wealth of information to guide you through what may at first appear to be the maze of Metropolitan State terminology and procedures. You will also have the opportunity to consult with others who can help you design a course of study related to your learning needs and life goals.

Identify your preferred learning style

Look back over the important lessons you’ve learned, subjects studied, professors you’ve worked with, and consider the circumstances in which you learned best. Think back to something that you feel you learned at a high level of mastery. Where did you learn it? At work, at home, with the help of a friend, in the classroom? What kind of person helped you with that learning? What teaching/learning strategies did he/she use? Did you learn best by listening, observing, or applying trial and error? Did you learn best when you were under pressure, or when you were relatively free of pressure?

Reflecting on your successes and situations where you learned best can help you to seek out similar opportunities. On the other hand, reflecting on painful learning experiences might help you understand what you need to face (or avoid) in the future. Thinking about how you learn best can provide a valuable perspective from which to consider how you want to learn at Metropolitan State—and how you want to design your individualized degree.

Use journaling to reflect on your education

During this class, you will be asked to keep a journal. The purpose of your College of Individualized Studies journal is to record your personal reflections on your education while you are a student in the College of Individualized Studies. You will begin journaling in Perspectives and continue journaling throughout your educational journey up to the Capstone.

What’s a reflective journal?

A journal is somewhat like a diary, except you’re going to share it with your instructor. Its purpose is to record your thoughts and feelings about
what is going on in your life, especially the *educational aspects of your life*. We want you to record your honest thoughts and feelings about what you’re learning at Metropolitan State, and how that learning impacts your life outside the university. You’ll be asked to write down your thoughts and feelings on the classes you are taking, your instructors, and your educational goals—the things that excite you, the things that disturb you, your joys and frustrations.

**Why write a journal?**

The Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard said that one of the problems in life is that *though we obviously must live our life forward, we can understand it only by looking backward*. Writing in a journal gives us the opportunity to pause in our often too-busy lives, to gather our thoughts and to write them down, reflecting on what has happened and our responses to those occurrences. Then, periodically, we re-read what we have written to see what our thoughts and feelings were at that time and how they may have changed. By reflecting on, or thinking about, our life experiences we can often learn from them.

Your journal should be personal and written as you might talk informally to yourself. In other words, write in the first person “I”. Write to yourself, not to your instructor, and be as honest as you can in your writing, realizing your instructor will read your journal. Of course, as a professional educator, your instructor will treat what you write with respect, not randomly sharing your writing with others. So, do your best to write for yourself and don’t worry about impressing your instructor. Just write openly and honestly. Your instructor will give you feedback on your ideas, and your journal will become an ongoing private conversation with your instructor throughout the course.

During this Perspectives class, you should plan to **write in your journal twice a week**. Your instructors will tell you how many times during the semester they will be collecting your journals.

**Plan your individualized degree**

Most of you will develop an individualized degree plan while in the Perspectives course. That plan will combine learning you have transferred into the university and learning you have and will gain while enrolled here. In your plan you will also outline how you will meet (or have met) the university’s General Education and Liberal Studies (GELS) requirements, and outline an area of focus (or if you are in another college, the major) for your program. In your planning we will ask you to think about what it means to be an educated person and about what learning will best help you meet your educational goals.

Your degree plan is not merely a vocational plan detailing areas of study relevant to your major or career. Nor is it simply a means of checking off university requirements for graduation. Your individualized degree plan is the end product of your work on classroom assignments and
discussions with fellow students, your instructor and professional consultants.

- It will reflect all the research you put into exploring career goals, professional requirements and expert advice from community faculty consultants.
- It will represent your best thinking on what it means for you to be an educated person in an increasingly multicultural and globally-interconnected world.

When completed, your degree plan will consist of a Degree Plan Rationale that clearly articulates your personal and professional educational goals, a focus area which includes courses you have taken and/or plan to take (if you are completing a traditional major, the courses in your major), a plan for how you’ll complete GELS requirements, and a page that tells the story of any consultations you’ve had about your program.

Some of you who enrolled in PRSP 301 to meet a GELS requirement while majoring in another college may decide that the College of Individualized Studies is a better home for you. Some of you who took PRSP 301 to plan an individualized degree may decide that a traditional major better meets your needs. The goal for our course is not that you complete an individualized degree, but that you reflect upon and provide a rationale for your educational choices—whether a traditional major or an Individualized B.A.—in relation to your self-defined learning needs and life goals.

What can I do with an Individualized B.A.?

Anything! Truly. Over 1,300 of Metropolitan State’s 11,000 students are in the individualized degree program. With over 13,500 graduates¹, the Individualized Bachelor of Arts degree program has demonstrated extraordinary success in meeting adult learners’ needs. Of the 40 Alumni Who’ve Made a Difference selected to honor our university’s 40th Anniversary, 27 earned individualized degrees. Those 27 students went on to careers as state senators, college professors, and CEOs. Here are just 4 of the 27:

**Peter Bell** (Class of ’76) chaired the Metropolitan Council from 2003 to 2010 and oversaw transit growth including the Hiawatha Light Rail transit line, the Northstar Commuter Rail line and the Central Corridor Light Rail transit line, scheduled to open in 2014. Previous positions included vice president at TCF Financial Corporation and publishing vice president at Hazelden. From 2002 until

¹ As of Spring Semester 2012
2007, he was a member of the University of Minnesota Board of Regents.

**Senator Sandra Pappas** (Class of '86) was first elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives in 1984, serving three terms. In 1990 she was elected to the Minnesota State Senate and is now serving her sixth term. Pappas has championed numerous efforts to ensure the exceptional quality of educational institutions and affordable access to colleges and universities.

**Dan Breva** (Class of '94) served at the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for more than 40 years managing state parks for the past decade and has been working to build bicycle recreation opportunities in the Twin Cities metropolitan region. He now serves as operations director of Minnesota’s first bike sharing program, and is on the Minnesota State Nonmotorized Transportation Advisory Committee and the Minnesota State Bicycle Advisory Committee. His efforts have paid off, as Minneapolis was recently named the best biking city in the country by *Bicycling Magazine*.

**Yisehak Tura** (Class of '07) is the founder of the Debre Selam Medhane Alem Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo church parish nursing program. The program is a resource for its community that provides health screening, health education and referral services. Tura leads the program and coordinates volunteers and professionals from the community.

A growing literature documents that employers want employees with these qualities: 2) self-reliance; personal and social responsibility; appreciation for lifelong learning; and creative, integrative learning. These desired qualities strongly correlate with our program’s four learning outcomes: 1) self-directed learning; 2) reflective, self-transcending learning; 3) lifelong learning; and 4) student-defined focus.

Multiple research documents that in today’s economic climate most of you will have multiple careers, not just multiple jobs. The Individualized B.A. is ideally suited to displaced adult workers with an array of knowledge and experience. To succeed in education and in life, you need to understand your talents and make meaning of what you’ve already done to better identify what you need. Our student-focused approach facilitates a transformational education that cultivates innovators and leaders, not consumers and followers.

---

Workbook overview

Chapter 2. A short history of higher education—Covers the historical development of higher education and faculty and student roles, including the concept of the canon and how the expanding inclusivity of higher education affects the curriculum.

Chapter 3. The Metropolitan State story—Exposes the roots of our unique philosophy and mission; the structure of colleges, schools, and departments; the competence areas in relation to GELS requirements; and the qualities of an educated person.

Chapter 4. What does it mean to be an educated person?—Describes the purpose of education in civil society, the importance of personal values of education for individuals, and relates educational values to the CIS program learning outcomes.

Chapter 5. Learning creatively—Contains everything you need to know to understand how to use creative learning strategies in your education—student-directed learning (SDL) for prior learning assessment (PLA) or to gain new knowledge via student-designed independent study (SDIS), internships, and theory seminars.


Chapter 7. Learning after Perspectives & Life after Metropolitan State—Describes how to succeed in the program, what the Capstone covers, and contains guidance for future career opportunities and opportunities to continue learning both inside and outside the academy.

Glossary—Includes short descriptions of the terminology in this book. Words in bold and italics are in the Glossary.

Appendix A. Exercises—Includes exercises to help you work through various learning outcomes in the course.

Appendix B. Sample degree plans—Includes examples of individualized degree plans developed by other students.

Appendix C. Blank degree plan—Contains a blank copy of the Word.doc you’ll use for your individualized degree plan.
Study this workbook carefully

As a student claiming responsibility for and authority over your education, you’re expected to study this workbook carefully. There are a few exercises in this workbook. Although your instructor may not assign all of them, you’ll find the exercises helpful to complete on your own.

This workbook provides resources you’ll need to grapple with the question of what it means to be an educated person. In addition to this workbook, you will need readings/resources recommended by your instructor, information from the university’s Web site, major and minor requirements from the other colleges (which can be found online or in the Metropolitan State University Catalog), discussions with your classmates and instructor, and consultations with experts in different fields of expertise. Your instructor may also require readings from other sources to expand your thinking on the educated person question.

Though it may seem a bit overwhelming at first to design your own degree, this workbook has been designed as a step-by-step guide through the process. If you reflect on each chapter and each assignment on a weekly basis, it will gradually begin to feel more manageable.

Use the Glossary

The idea of individualized degree planning may be new to you, as may some of the terms used in this workbook and at Metropolitan State. The Glossary at the end of this workbook includes short descriptions of much of the unfamiliar terminology in the workbook. Words in bold and italics are in the Glossary.

Love the questions

Some of the readings and assignments in this course may seem deceptively simple. But once you begin applying them to your life and assessing your unique educational needs, you’ll discover the subtle complexity that usually underlies simple truths. Participate in discussions, do the readings, complete your assignments and enjoy the journey. Don’t let a little anxiety or fear stand in your way. We all have that. As new questions come up, learn to enjoy them. See what they can teach you about your own life’s journey.

Do the best work you can planning the courses and areas of study you want to include in your degree plan. But don’t worry if you are unsure of all the details. While we want you to take your plan seriously, it is not written in stone. With the help of your advisor, you can always change or amend your degree plan—and almost all students make at least a few changes. The point is to do the best planning you can now, whatever your situation in life. Try to relax about areas of uncertainty and treat them as opportunities to grow and expand.
Getting started

Rainer Maria von Rilke, a German poet, wrote a series of letters to a young person who was asking questions about his life’s direction. We end with Rilke’s words—words to ponder as you begin your journey in individualized education.

I want to beg you as much as I can . . . to be patient toward all that is unresolved in your heart and to try to love the questions themselves. . . Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer. . . take whatever comes with great trust, and if only it comes out of your own will, out of some need of your innermost being, take it upon yourself and hate nothing.

Rainer Maria von Rilke
A short history of higher education

This chapter offers a short history of higher education that will help you understand why colleges and universities operate as they do. Throughout its evolution, higher education has had a common goal or purpose—to discover and apply better knowledge for the benefit of both individuals and society.

Learning outcomes

- Describe the historical development of higher education, faculty, and student roles
- Comprehend concept of the canon and the disciplines and their role in higher education
- Explain how the expanding inclusivity of higher education affects the curriculum

Why is this history worth knowing? By understanding how universities came to be we can better answer questions like: What is college for? Who is it for? Why go to school? This history will also help you understand:

- why things are the way they are
- why the College of Individualized Studies differs from other programs in some ways
- how the Individualized Bachelor of Arts degree program serves the broad goals of higher education.

The Academy

In Classical Greece, around 400 BCE, a philosopher named Plato gathered with his philosopher friends in a sacred grove of trees called Hekademia (near Athens) to discuss ideas. There were no students or teachers, only older and newer members. There were no set subjects or curriculum, only an ongoing conversation among thoughtful, observant, opinionated people.
The word *philosopher* means “lover of knowledge,” and for the most part it is the search for better knowledge (or truth) that motives students and teachers. This is not limited to the search for knowledge about history, medicine, or astrophysics. It also includes investigations into ethics and morality. Plato’s teacher Socrates made perhaps the greatest statement about the quest for knowledge being a matter of personal discovery when he said: *The unexamined life is not worth living.*

Higher education still reflects the attitude of the early Academy, including an emphasis on problem-posing, logical thinking, argument and counterargument. Plato’s Academy made use of a particular methodology, *dialectic*. One philosopher would ask questions, and others would answer. They would try to reason out the truth together by presenting opposing ideas and working out supporting arguments.

Within a few centuries, the Academy had become institutionalized with various divisions and groups and the model of conversation had to change. Instead of talking to each other, philosophers began writing to each other. Through writing, they could have a kind of conversation or discourse. In fact, they could continue “talking” with those who were now dead, like Plato, because the writing would live on. The conventions for “academic discourse” began to take shape, including the need for a writer to quote or summarize the people to which he or she is responding. That’s why today’s students need to “cite their sources.”

**Burke’s parlor**

In the 20th Century, Kenneth Burke updated the image of the Academy, describing it as a dinner party instead of a sacred grove of trees. His metaphor is known as “Burke’s parlor.”

> Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer her; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending upon the quality of your ally’s assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress. ~ The Philosophy of Literary Form

In this metaphor, we can understand today’s student as the new arrival to a conversation that has been in progress for at least 2,500 years. And although the roots of “academic discourse” are specifically Western,
today we generally understand the conversation to include our global knowledge tradition. The written traditions of India and China stand out as particularly rich resources, but oral traditions from around the world should also be part of this unending conversation.

The scholastic university

While the Academy is the first origin story of higher education; the second story is about how institutions like colleges and universities came into being, with their familiar structures of courses of study, assigned readings, examinations, and awarded degrees.

With the exception of the oldest university, established in Bologna around 1100 CE, most early European universities grew out of monastery schools. The modern curriculum has its roots in those schools, which were to train clergy. Rather than the open-ended “search for truth,” the purpose of higher education was to produce a particular kind of professional, a priest.

Given their religious roots, most early universities included an ideal of moral education—students should not only acquire a body of knowledge or a set of skills, but grow as people seeking truth and righteousness. Any learned person should have a virtuous moral character and recognize good from bad, right from wrong, and true from false. The earliest university subjects, theology and law, focused on truth and justice. Morality, values and ethics remain part of higher education today.

Eventually non-clerical students were allowed to attend these schools, and this was the start of the secular university. Later monarchs and civic officials created universities, much as the Minnesota legislature created Metropolitan State. But already something had changed: faculty would decide what to teach, and students would learn what the teachers had decided was worth knowing.

Quadrivium and trivium

If universities ever seem quaint, eccentric, or slow-moving, remember that they were originally medieval intuitions. (That’s also why we dress up in period costumes at graduation ceremonies.) The medieval curriculum was divided into two parts: the quadrivium and the trivium. The quadrivium included subjects united by their use of mathematics. At the time, music was included as well as astronomy; in today’s terms, the quadrivium spanned the range of fine arts, math, and science. The trivium contained the language arts: the mechanics of language (grammar), logical thinking (dialectic), and the use of language to instruct and persuade (rhetoric). In modern higher education, English and communications classes convey most of the trivium, although “critical thinking” (the modern version of dialectic) is part of every college class.
Chapter 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quadrivium (Mathematics)</th>
<th>Trivium (Language Arts)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
<td>Rhetoric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geometry</td>
<td>Dialectic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astronomy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Undergraduate and graduate degrees

The creation of degrees is another convention from this time that’s still with us today. After studying for three to five years, students would earn a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree if they passed an oral exam. Hence, the “four year” standard for undergraduate education, which eventually became codified as 120 semester credits.

With further study, students could get a Master of Arts (M.A.) degree that would certify them to practice law, medicine, or teach theology. Finally, with four more years, a student could defend a written thesis before a panel of “learned examiners” and become a doctor. The title comes from Latin *doctus*, which means learned or studied. Eventually, *doctor* became the common term for a Doctor of Medicine (M.D.). Today, most lawyers are Juris Doctors (J.D.), and most university professors are Doctors of Philosophy (Ph.D.). Modern universities also award doctorates in a variety of professional areas, including business administration and nursing.

Scholastics, scholasticism and the canon

A major part of the monastic tradition involved scribes who copied and studied ancient texts. In addition to scriptures, monastic libraries also kept works by Plato, Aristotle, and other Classical writers, particularly those that addressed the value of logical thinking.

Thomas Aquinas and other monks began to try and reconcile secular philosophy and Christian theology: he and others like him were called *scholastics* and their method, *scholasticism*. Aquinas insisted on rational thinking that often featured painstakingly detailed (even tedious) consideration of minute points in a written text. The greatest achievement of one of those medieval scholars would be the production of a *summa*, a treatise trying to unify all of the written knowledge of a given topic. These were the antecedents of the modern research paper.

If a scholar’s major activity was to interpret and reconcile texts, then it would help to know which texts were “worth” reading. Early undergraduate students were directed to read pagan philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Ptolemy, and Euclid, as well as Christian theologians such as Augustine of Hippo. In choosing the reading list, the faculty...
created a *canon*, an authorized body of knowledge which they believed would liberate students from ignorance, cruelty, and injustice.

## The research university

Scholastic universities were, by definition, pre-scientific. By the eighteenth century, the old methodologies of the academics and scholastics appeared imprecise or even nonsensical. Discoveries by Galileo and Newton had wiped out many old ideas. What had been called *natural philosophy* (philosophical inquiry into the natural world) was renamed *science*. The world of academia began to break apart into separate disciplines, each with its own methodology; for example, literary criticism would continue to be scholastic, but medicine would become scientific.

The decline of scholasticism gave rise to a new kind of university, usually referred to as the *German Research University* because it was proposed by Wilhelm von Humboldt in 1810 in Berlin. Essentially, this kind of university existed to train students to use scientific thinking. Whereas the academics used dialog and the scholastics used textual analysis, scientists would use a method of hypothesis and experimentation—guess and check. Modern features of higher education such as seminars and laboratories appeared.

Humboldt saw this new form of education as a student-centered, liberating experience: *The university teacher is thus no longer a teacher and the student is no longer a pupil. Instead the student conducts research on his own behalf and the professor supervises his research and supports him in it*. Instead of trying to please a scholastic examiner in order to win a degree, students were to discover truth through the experimental research. Although the scientific method is antithetical to the non-experimental nature of philosophical conversations, it retains the original impulse of philosophy, the search for knowledge.

---

**The key to wisdom is this—** constant and frequent questioning, for by doubting we are led to question and by questioning we arrive at the truth.

Peter Abelard

**On the Scientific Method**

*In general we look for a new law [of science] by the following process. First we guess it. Then we compute the consequences of the guess to see what would be implied if this law that we guessed is right. Then we compare the result of the computation to nature, with experiment or experience; compare it directly with observation, to see if it works. If it disagrees with experiment it is wrong. In that simple statement is the key to science. It does not make any difference how beautiful your guess is. It does not make any difference how smart you are, who made the guess, or what his name is — if it disagrees with experiment it is wrong.*

Richard Feynman
The rise of the research university had a deep impact on the role of the faculty. In ancient schools, they carried out their academic duties through conversation. In the medieval universities, the production of a handwritten thesis or summa was mostly a one-time event.

A key part of the scientific method required researchers to write up their experiments and publish the results, so that others could repeat or improve upon them. Universities began to establish their own publishing houses (called a University Presses). Academic journals came into being to disseminate the latest research.

The faculty were expected to conduct, write, and publish research, not only to earn their doctorate degrees, but also to be granted tenure and promoted up the ranks to full professor. The phrase “publish or perish” entered the university lexicon.

Because faculty’s jobs depended heavily on their publications, they tended toward more efficient but less student-centered teaching methods. It takes less time to lecture 100 students than it does to hold five discussions with 20 students each. If you’ve ever sat in a 400-seat lecture hall and felt like you were just a number, you were probably attending a research university—sometimes referred to as an R1 institution. Metropolitan State is not an R1. Although our faculty does conduct and publish research, their primary responsibility is working with students.

### Academic disciplines

Medieval universities had already begun creating fixed curricula with defined disciplines, but professors in the modern research university further compartmentalized into the broad categories of applied and non-applied disciplines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-applied Fields</td>
<td>Natural Sciences (“hard” sciences)</td>
<td>Study of the natural world, including the human body, characterized by quantitative scientific methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ecology, Geology, Anatomy, Zoology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### A short history of higher education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social and Behavioral Sciences (“soft” sciences)</th>
<th>Study of society and human behavior characterized by both quantitative and qualitative scientific methods</th>
<th>Political Science</th>
<th>Anthropology</th>
<th>Sociology</th>
<th>Psychology</th>
<th>Communications</th>
<th>Economics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>Study of humanity characterized by dialectic and scholastic methods</td>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>Composition</td>
<td>Rhetoric</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>Religious Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
<td>Production of words of art</td>
<td>Studio Arts</td>
<td>Painting</td>
<td>Drawing</td>
<td>Sculpture</td>
<td>Performing Arts</td>
<td>Music</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applied Fields</th>
<th>The Professions</th>
<th>Preparation for a vocation</th>
<th>Business</th>
<th>Nursing</th>
<th>Accounting</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Medicine</th>
<th>Law</th>
<th>Engineering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan State’s mission is to provide quality education to underserved students, particularly working adults, students of color, immigrants and first generation college students. This mission departs starkly from the history of higher education in past centuries.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although there is some rhyme and reason to this categorization, it quickly breaks down if you look at it closely. The overall distinction between the applied fields (in which students prepare for particular jobs) and the non-applied fields (in which learning is not directly connected to a particular job) can vary widely based on the particular program at a specific university.

### Expanding access and the canon

For most of the history of academia, college students were white men from wealthy families. Although this was not exclusively the case—the philosopher Epictetus began life as a slave; the Christian theologian Augustine was born and raised in Africa; and Trotula, who pioneered gynecological medicine while chair of medicine at Selerno in 1097, was a woman—these few accomplished individuals were rare exceptions. For the majority, education was for white men of a certain social class.

Like the society in which it existed, higher education institutionalized attitudes of sexism, racism, classism, and cultural superiority. As those prejudices were challenged in society, higher education changed as well. Starting in the nineteenth century, new forms of colleges and schools appeared that met the needs of nontraditional students.
As individuals representing out-of-power groups gained access to education, they shook off their dependence. Slaves who were taught to read and write did not necessarily immediately cease being slaves in the physical sense, but their minds and possibilities were liberated. Social policies and pressures (such as Jim Crow laws) would limit their access and accomplishments in post-slavery society for more than a century after the abolition of slavery, but education opened up possibilities that would otherwise not have existed.

Morrill Act of 1862

In 1862, when the Morrill Act (Land Grant College Act) was signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln, tuition was free and admission was intended to be open to all who passed the rigorous entrance exam.

A significant development in democratization of public higher education occurred in 1862 when President Abraham Lincoln signed into law the first Morrill Act, also known as the Land Grant College Act, established to assure that education would be available to those in all social classes. Tuition was free. Admission was open to all, regardless of race, class or gender who passed the rigorous entrance exam. However, at the time the grants were established, blacks were not allowed to attend some land-grant institutions. There was a provision for separate but equal facilities, but only Mississippi and Kentucky set up any such institution. This situation was rectified when the Second Morrill Act was passed and expanded the system of grants to include black institutions.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)

When slavery ended in America, it was not immediately clear what would become of ex-slaves and their descendants. Before the war, it was illegal to teach slaves to read and write, and even free African Americans in the North had limited access to the institutions of higher education. After slavery, black intellectuals such as W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington promoted education as the path to economic or social equality. But they disagreed on what kind of education would best help their communities.

DuBois was a fierce advocate of liberal education and cultural achievement; he felt that African Americans should pursue the same kind of higher education that affluent whites aspired to. Washington took a different approach, arguing that social equality would be slow in coming and that a focus on economic equality—giving black people vocational and trade skills that would earn money—would be a surer way to immediately improve their quality of life.

On the site of a former plantation, Washington founded the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, the first of what we now refer to as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). The curriculum included academics, but the focus was on trade skills such as construction and agriculture. Students were expected not only to be able to perform vocational tasks, but to have the theoretical knowledge and
A short history of higher education

communication skills to return to their rural black communities and teach those trades to others.

The “Great Books”

With the advent of the GI Bill, college became more affordable for many students from working class communities. In *Liberal Education* (1943), Mark Van Doren argued that the new kind of student should learn the canon, commonly referred to as the “Great Books” curriculum. He even offered up a long list of classics in the Western tradition that starts with the Greek poet Homer (850 BCE) and ends with Bertrand Russell’s *Principles of Mathematics* (1903 CE). He insisted all students deserved the opportunity to join the ongoing conversation, the one in Burke’s metaphorical parlor. He did not argue for a fixed list, only that there are such things as “great works” that an educated person should read. For Van Doren, the claim that everyone could and should read the classics was an egalitarian gesture.

Women’s access to higher education

Throughout Western history, wealthy women were educated by private tutors, but most other women were denied education. Even in medieval times, some women were able through family fortune and encouragement to gain education and pursue creative lives of scholarly accomplishment. Through monastic orders, a few women without means were also able to concentrate their lives on study, creativity and spirituality. Hildegarde von Bingen, whose rediscovered writing and music has become popular in contemporary times, was among the more noted of these early women scholars. However, it was extremely rare for a woman to be enrolled as a university student.

Men's version of history, legitimized as the "universal truth," has presented women as marginal to civilization and as the victim of historical process . . . The picture is false, on both counts, as we now know, but women's progress through history has been marked by their struggle against this disabling distortion.

Gerda Lerner

So-called *finishing schools* allowed wealthy women to learn manners and the liberal arts in preparation for their role as society wives and mothers. Later, Normal Schools and Women’s Colleges would provide courses in home economics, teaching, and nursing—fields considered to be appropriate “women’s work.”

In *The Creation of Patriarchy*, eminent historian Gerda Lerner explains that patriarchy (male-dominated society and family system) began to wither and die at the close of the 19th century as women started entering universities. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, women were encouraged to stay in college and graduate school because it kept them safely out of the struggling labor market. It would take nearly two decades into the twentieth century for women to gain even the basic right of suffrage and decades more to begin to move for fuller equality in work, family and education. Although education was critical in the movement toward equality, higher education did not become widely co-educational until the second half of the 20th century, and graduate education was not fully available to women until Princeton lowered its barriers in 1973.
A more inclusive canon

But, access wasn’t enough. Many scholars began questioning whether the existing curriculum—a mix of Classical philosophy, medieval scholasticism and modern scientific disciplines—was the most relevant and inclusive course of study. In 1979, Adrienne Rich powerfully pointed out how higher education would have to change when she wrote the following:

> What does a woman need to know to become a self-conscious, self-defining human being? Doesn’t she need a knowledge of her own history, of her much-politicized female body, of the creative genius of women of the past?... Doesn’t she need to know how seemingly natural states of being, like heterosexuality, like motherhood, have been enforced and institutionalized to deprive her of power? Without such education, women have lived and continued to live in ignorance of our collective context, vulnerable as projections of men’s fantasies about us as they appear in art, in literature, in the sciences, in the media, in the so-called humanistic studies. I suggest that not anatomy, but enforced ignorance has been a crucial key to our powerlessness.

Adrienne Rich

You can hear Rich saying that Van Doren’s list of “great books” won’t do for women what it might do for men. In fact, other scholars would go on to argue that it actually wouldn’t do much good for men either.

It’s important to note that Rich and Van Doren actually share some ideas about the value of learning, what real learning is, and what it can do to liberate people. Where they differ is that Van Doren wants to maintain connection with an established canon, and Rich is engaged in a project of recovering a knowledge tradition that’s been displaced by that same canon.

Since this period, many new and emerging disciplines have been contributing to a more inclusive knowledge tradition—fields such as American studies, women’s studies, and ethnic studies have made major contributions to a more inclusive canon.

Canon-centered or student-centered?

There is a clear pattern in the questions that occur at moments when the “who” of higher education changes. Again and again, faculty decide what is right for the student—what is worth knowing. Students do not decide for themselves what is worth knowing nor how they may come to know. Influential educator Mike Rose explains it this way:
In other words, a canonistic view of higher education is at odds with a student-centered view. The two are not irreconcilable, but they do challenge each other.

Rose suggests that the problem is not so much the canon, but rather how it is taught. The books on Van Doren’s list are some great books, not the great books. Rose explains the joy of learning the canon himself from instructors who taught it in a student-centered manner—the great books ought to be about conversation, not transmission.

One of the most widely influential books on teaching in contemporary higher education is Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968/1970). Freire outlines the agenda of critical pedagogy—a student-centered rather than canon-centered approach—characterized by a shift from narrative to problem-posing education.  

---

### Narrative Education

The teacher gives the student a narrative, a set body of knowledge. The student is expected to repeat the narrative to show that it has been learned.

Freire calls this the *banking concept* of education, where knowledge is deposited into the student’s head by the teacher.

---

### Problem-Posing Education

The teacher poses the student a problem. The teacher and the student work on the problem together.

Freire calls this *radical futurity* because it empowers the student to solve problems and shape what will be.

According to Freire, narrative education causes students to see the world as unchangeable—there is one narrative, the way things have been, are, and always will be. In critical pedagogy, students learn that the world is a certain way because of specific historical forces. When those forces are understood, the student can find ways to counteract those forces and try to end historical oppression. In theory, any oppression can be addressed this way, whether it is based on race, gender, economics, or culture. We can recognize this idea in Rich’s call for women (and men) to learn the history of women’s oppression if they want to do something about it.

---

3 Note the similarity between problem-posing education and the dialectic methods of Plato’s academy, in which one philosopher would ask a question and another answer.
Other ways of knowing

To include other ways of knowing, based on non-Western ideas about the mind, the heart, the body, and the soul, calls into question the foundation of intellectualism and the “life of the mind” as universities have always understood it.

Not only is the canon a construction of Western society, so are the methodologies and standards of evidence valued in higher education, in particular the pervasive ideal of rationalism. Academic culture has tended to place the powers of reason (logic, critical thinking) above all else in discovering truth. We must consider the extent to which this so-called logocentrism is connected to a history of patriarchy, racism, class oppression, and colonialism.

To include other ways of knowing, based on non-Western ideas about the mind, the heart, the body, and the soul, calls into question the foundation of intellectualism and the “life of the mind” as universities have always understood it. For example, two collections by co-authors Mary Field Belenky, Blythe Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Tarule, in the 80s and 90s revolutionized many fields of study by challenging students and educators to understand and respect diverse ways of knowing—Women’s Ways of Knowing (1987) and Knowledge, Difference and Power (1998).

This chapter has presented you with a history of higher education so that you’re better equipped to claim responsibility for and authority over your education, to decide what is worth knowing, and to assert your own way of knowing in a formal institutional setting.
This chapter offers a brief overview of Metropolitan State’s history, of the Individualized B.A. degree program, and how we view the core competencies of an educated person.

**Learning outcomes**

- Understand the roots of our unique philosophy and mission
- Navigate the structure of colleges, schools, and departments
- Synthesize competence areas with GELS requirements
- Explore the qualities of an educated person

The following table lists some milestones in Metropolitan State’s history:

**Historic Milestones**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Minnesota Metropolitan State College (MMSC) is founded for adult transfer students with a nontraditional Individualized B.A. program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Our name changes to Metropolitan State University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>First traditional undergraduate major—Nursing B.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>First graduate program—Master of Management &amp; Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Study of “higher education needs” recommends Metropolitan State become a comprehensive four-year institution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>First permanent buildings—Metropolitan State acquires St John’s Hospital for $1 to establish a Saint Paul Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>A major restructuring that includes creating separate colleges, and university-wide General Education &amp; Liberal Studies requirements along with other changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>First College is renamed the College of Individualized Studies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 3

Origins of a “new kind of university for a new kind of student”

“Given freedom, students will opt for excellence.”

These words, spoken by founding president David E. Sweet, were among the first heard by the small group of faculty and staff gathered to meet with their new president and learn how they were going to simultaneously plan and operate a new state college. Dr. Sweet was at his charismatic best as he spoke. The atmosphere was charged with excitement, but also tempered by realism. The Minnesota Legislature had appropriated only $300,000 for the first two years of the college’s existence—July 1, 1971 to June 30, 1973.

Undaunted by budgetary constraints, Dr. Sweet talked expansively about his vision of a new kind of campus for a new kind of student. These working adult students would come needing skills and knowledge to fulfill unique educational goals, but they would also want the freedom to plan and implement their own degree programs. Dr. Sweet’s assumption that such freedom would motivate students to strive for excellence became a central tenet of Metropolitan State’s educational philosophy—that students should have primary responsibility for and authority over their own educations.

In those first frenetic months, faculty and staff discussed the concepts of student-centered learning and the role of the university, which Sweet argued was to encourage and support students in developing their natural capacities for learning toward their self-defined goals. Dr. Sweet often exclaimed, “I believe that almost anyone can learn almost anything.” This new college would not impose the wisdom of the elders on students by telling them what they had to learn. Instead it would encourage students to discover and implement their own educational goals.

To the first group of 50 students, courageous enough to enroll in this radical new institution, Dr. Sweet stated, “We shall measure our success with you...by asking you before you graduate, ‘What is the degree to which we have helped you fulfill your educational goals, hopes and dreams?’ We shall continue to expand our resources to better meet your needs and improve our systems of communication, depending on what you tell us at graduation—and you will graduate.

What was the political climate in which this new kind of university was created? How did this radical new concept of individualized education come into being? Who were the ‘players’?

The late 1960s and early 1970s were a time of social unrest globally. In the United States, the struggle for civil rights under Martin Luther King, Jr., increasing unrest regarding our involvement in Vietnam and Cambodia, and a developing women’s liberation movement, all called into question a number of social institutions, including institutions of higher learning. Indeed, colleges and universities often became the focal point for dissent and protest against the status quo. Students and many professors joined “teach-ins” and “strikes” that called for more relevant
learning than could be found in textbooks. By the early 1970s the time was ripe for alternative forms of education, but few had the vision to realize those alternatives. Theodore Mitau was one man who did.

In 1968, Dr. G. Theodore Mitau was named the first chancellor of the Minnesota State College System. He soon called for the creation of a new state college in the Twin Cities. That same year, the Citizen’s League issued an influential report entitled An Urban College: New Kinds of Students on a New Kind of Campus. With help from a number of key community and legislative friends, this new college became a reality in June 1971. Dr. Mitau immediately asked Dr. David Sweet, then vice chancellor for academic affairs for the State College System, to become the founding president of Minnesota Metropolitan State College (MMSC).

David Sweet was a man of vision, and under his leadership the fledgling staff and faculty quickly laid out the key building blocks for the college:

- It would focus on adult students who had completed at least two years (or the equivalent) of previous college education.
- Learning would be student-centered and community-based.
- Resident faculty guided students to meet their educational goals and community faculty (who worked full time in the community) taught part time in their areas of expertise.
- Success toward completion of the degree would be measured in terms of competences—what a student knew and could do—rather than grades and credits.

In 1972, MMSC admitted its first 50 students to an Individualized Bachelor of Arts degree program. By fall 1973, 12 proud adult students marched down the aisle of Central Presbyterian Church to receive their B.A. degrees from a beaming Dr. Sweet. The dream had become a reality and, as word spread, enrollments increased.

In our first 40 years, over 30,000 students have graduated from Metropolitan State—a resounding testimony to that early vision. Though much has changed during the past 40 years, the College of Individualized Studies carries on the legacy of Dr. Sweet’s vision and the belief that adult students should define their own educations.

**A “new kind of” educational philosophy**

To articulate the growing reality of this alternative college to the community, and to obtain necessary grant money from foundations, Dr. Sweet drafted two papers, “Prospectus I” and “Prospectus II,” which embodied the central characteristics of a new educational philosophy.

**Student responsibility**

First and foremost, this new kind of university would encourage students to be lifelong, self-directed learners, committed to excellence in their
learning. To help achieve this goal, the college would grant students primary responsibility for and authority over their educations—this meant that students would decide:

- What was worth knowing
- How that knowledge was acquired (via strategies such as experiential learning, internships, and student-directed study)
- How knowledge would be demonstrated and evaluated (see “Competence-based grading” below).

This educational tenet grew out of both Sweet’s and Mitau’s optimistic assessments of human nature, but also reflected the idealism of the student movement and protests of the 1960s and 1970s.

Students would set their own educational goals, but they would also have to prove they had accomplished those goals. It was the job of the faculty to determine whether or not students had achieved their educational goals. Faculty also had the time-intensive task of helping students articulate learning goals, detail how those goals would be realized and assessed, and provide adequate evidence for achieving those goals.

Each student presented a detailed degree plan to a panel of faculty who critiqued and offered suggestions. With no formal graduation requirements, faculty and students often engaged in lengthy debates about what competences distinguished an educated person. But, even as faculty challenged the content of students’ individualized degree plans, all agreed that students’ judgments should prevail. And, by and large, they did.

**Competence-based education**

A second founding characteristic of this new college was that education should be competence-based, not credit-based. Whereas credits typically focus on the number of hours students sit in a classroom, *competence* emphasizes what students *know* and what they *can do* with that knowledge. To Dr. Sweet, it mattered little where or how a particular competence was gained—the most important thing was that students knew, could apply, and could articulate both the theoretical and the practical aspects of their competence. By the late 1970s Metropolitan State was acknowledged as one of the leading colleges in the country that championed competence-based learning.

When the first students came to Metropolitan State, there were no formal courses. All learning was done in the community either through what we now call internships and student-directed learning, or often simply in one-to-one tutorials with experts in the community. Many students chose to have their previous experiential knowledge evaluated and used “prior competence” to demonstrate college-level learning. Metropolitan State’s work in the assessment of nontraditional learning created a model now followed by many other colleges and universities throughout the country.
Competence-based grading

How might it feel to be free to learn without worrying about grades? What if you weren't subjected to having every demonstration of learning ranked on a hierarchy with a traditional letter grade? How might that liberate you from worrying about “what the professor wants” in order to focus more on what you want (and are ready) to learn?

Competence-based grading—which means you’ve satisfactorily demonstrated what you know and how to apply that knowledge—was the early answer to these questions at Metropolitan State. In fact, for nearly 20 years, all credit earned at Metropolitan State was recorded using competence-based grading: S (satisfactory) or NS (not satisfactory). Faculty wrote narrative evaluations at the end of each credit-bearing activity that described their assessment of what students learned.

As the university moved to more traditional majors, departments, and other processes, more faculty returned to the traditional A-F letter grade system. However, you are still free to choose competence-based grading for any learning activity at Metropolitan State, but you must do so when you register; you can’t change from one grading system to the other once the learning experience has begun. It’s important to understand the following if you choose competence-based (S/NS) grading:

- an S gives you credit, but has no impact on your Grade Point Average (GPA).
- 75 percent of Metropolitan State credit must be completed with a traditional letter grade to have an “official” GPA. Your GPA will still show on a transcript, but it’s not considered “official” for purposes of calculating Honors graduates.

Community-based

The third characteristic of the university was that learning should be community-based, and this legacy is still very much alive at Metropolitan State. Since its beginning, Metropolitan State has facilitated community-based learning experiences so that students could learn from the rich opportunities available in the Twin Cities and not be dependent solely on the educational institution.

One important dimension of that value is our significant reliance on community faculty. While other universities have permanent and adjunct faculty, Metro has resident and community faculty. In particular, community faculty are often working professionals—practitioners of various skills, rather than traditional academics. Community faculty members were recruited both by resident faculty and by students with particular learning needs. In 1975, the ratio of community faculty to resident faculty was about 20:1, and today’s ratio is closer to 3:1.

Community-based learning also meant using classroom space available in the community such as high schools, churches, community centers,
and office buildings. The college was often referred to as the college without walls.

Being community-based is a reciprocal relationship. While the university and its students use community resources to achieve educational goals, they also serve as resources to the community. This is evident in Metropolitan State’s commitment to civic engagement, most visibly represented by the President’s Circle of Engaged Learning for faculty who demonstrate specific evidence and commitment to civic engagement in their teaching.

**An individualized educational planning course**

By 1974, enrollment had grown to over 500 students, and the time-intensive nature of faculty working one-to-one with each student to develop an individualized degree plan was becoming increasingly cumbersome. The faculty designed an Individualized Educational Planning Course (IEPC) to more efficiently explore the philosophy and principles of educational planning with groups of students. Two of the great strengths of IEPC were:

- standardizing the breadth and depth of each undergraduate degree
- creating a class format in which students could assist each other in designing and critiquing their individualized plans.

The IEPC was still time-intensive for teachers, but was a success and evolved through a number of permutations to this Perspectives class that you’re in today. In fact, until 1993, all Metropolitan State students were required to take this course and have their individualized degree plans approved by resident faculty.

**A “major” restructuring**

A series of events gradually contributed to a shift away from the university’s nontraditional roots, and back toward more traditional programs and practices. In the early years, all students completed individualized degrees, but as traditional undergraduate majors were added other traditional practices were adopted as well.

Then, in 1988, a study of higher education needs recommended that Metropolitan State become a comprehensive four-year institution. This contributed to a significant movement toward more traditional programs and philosophies. That same year, we established our first permanent site when Metropolitan State acquired the former Saint John’s Hospital on Dayton’s Bluff for $1 to establish a Saint Paul Campus.

As the university struggled with how best to serve a more traditional-aged student population, a series of decisions were made in 1993 including creating separate colleges (the individualized program was
housed in the “First College”), and the establishment of university-wide General Education/Liberal Studies requirements.

The faculty began to create traditional academic departments with majors and minors in a number of subject areas. Since then, over fifty majors and forty minors have been established. With the creation of traditional majors and minors, the Perspectives course was eliminated as a university-wide requirement. Thus, today’s Perspective’s class is designed for students who choose the Individualized B.A., or who embrace the challenge of reflecting on their life and educational goals. However, students with formal majors often find that the Perspectives course is an illuminating option for meeting the GELS Liberal Studies requirement.

**A College of Individualized Studies**

When the university organized itself into “colleges,” we were originally named First College because the Individualized B.A. program was the “first” created at Metropolitan State.

First College faculty and staff drew on Metropolitan State’s early history and philosophy to reaffirm their commitment to the university’s original vision—that students should have responsibility for and authority over their educations. Another key element of that vision was that students should use a variety of creative learning strategies while completing their degree programs. Finally, feeling that it’s important to express what we believe, what we expect of our students, and what students can expect from us, the faculty and staff developed a mission statement that articulates our commitment to self-directed learning, creative learning strategies, and community-based learning.

**First College Mission Statement**

First College promotes reflection on what it means to be an educated person. Students are encouraged to be self-directed, lifelong learners who can use diverse learning approaches and settings. The college fosters students’ success in their individualized learning goals and challenges students to academic integrity and excellence. We welcome students from a variety of backgrounds and encourage them to build on their previous life, work and education in creating individualized programs to meet their specific learning goals.
In this mission statement, you can see how our goals and ideals reflect the original educational philosophy that characterized the university under President David Sweet.

First College becomes CIS

In 2012, the university engaged in a reorganization of the academic units. Although First College remained its own academic unit, we were renamed the College of Individualized Studies (CIS). However, all that has changed is our name—our philosophy of student-centered education via an Individualized B.A. degree program is unchanged. CIS remains the heartbeat of the original mission of Metropolitan State, and our faculty and staff proudly uphold the vision of Metropolitan State’s founding mothers and fathers.

Metropolitan State’s structure today

Originally, Metropolitan State had only one program, the Individualized B.A. degree. We had no departments, no majors, no classes, and no traditional letter grades. All learning was competence-based and done in the community either through what we now call internships and student-directed learning, or simply one-to-one tutorials with professionals in the community. Many students chose to have their previous experiential knowledge evaluated, and used the “prior competence” process to demonstrate their theoretical and practical knowledge. However, over time Metropolitan State began to resemble a more traditional university with a more traditional faculty. Today, we have departments, majors, classes, and traditional letter grades.

Although Individualized B.A. students must navigate a larger university with more traditional processes, you can still use the innovative learning strategies (that used to be the only option) to gain college-level credit for knowledge gained outside of traditional classrooms, and request competence-based grading versus traditional letter grades.

Today, Individualized B.A. students have a unique relationship with the university, one that is very different from students in a traditional major. Rather than belonging to a particular department—being a business, nursing, or communications major—students in the individualized program are students of the whole university. With some exceptions, you can take classes from any department and work with any willing faculty member. To take full advantage of these opportunities, you need to understand how the university is currently structured.

The following table shows how subjects are organized into colleges and schools at Metropolitan State. The College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) houses all of the non-applied programs; the other units, with the exception of the College of Individualized Studies (CIS) are considered applied. (For more on applied and non-applied programs, see Chapter 2).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Unit</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College of Arts and Sciences (CAS)</td>
<td>ANTH Anthropology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ARTS Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BIOL Biology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CFS Computer Forensic Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CHEM Chemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COMM Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ETHS Ethnic Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GEOG Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GEOL Geology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GNDR Gender and Women’s Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HIST History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HUM Humanities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ICS Information and Computer Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IMDA Intermedia Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>INFS Information Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LING Linguistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LIT Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MATH Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MDST Media Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MUSC Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NSCI Natural Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OJIB Ojibwe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PHIL Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PHYS Physics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>POL Political Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RDNGL Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RELS Religious Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SCRW Screenwriting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOC Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SPAN Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SSCI Social Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STAT Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>THEA Theater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WRIT Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Urban Education (UED)</td>
<td>EDU Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LAED Language Arts Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MAED Math Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SCED Science Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SSED Social Studies Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SPED Special Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Health and Human Services (CHHS)</td>
<td>DENH Dental Hygiene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HSER Human Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HAS HS / Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HSCD HS / Alcohol and Drug Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HSCJ HS / Corrections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HSFS HS / Family Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HSG HS / Gerontology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HSTD HS / Training &amp; Adult Devlpmnt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NURS Nursing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PSYC Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOWK Social Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Management (COM)</td>
<td>ACCT Accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BLAW Business Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DSCI Decision Science</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What should an educated person know?

What qualities should an educated person possess? What should they know? In keeping with the vision of our founders, CIS continues to view the qualities of an educated person in terms of broad areas of competence.

Original Five Competencies

To ensure that graduating students were equipped with various skills, attitudes and knowledge expected of an educated person, the founding faculty originally identified these five competencies:

- **Basic Learning and Communication**—the ability to read, write, speak, do math, and so forth.
- **Self-assessment (later called Personal Growth)**—the ability to assess one’s own strengths and weaknesses, to identify one’s own learning needs.
- **Civic**—the ability not only to understand the political process, but to actively participate in it as well.
- **Re-creation**—the ability to renew or “recreate” one’s self on a physical, social, psychological and intellectual level.
- **Vocation**—the ability to demonstrate career/job related skills, attitudes and knowledge.

Although students still held the authority to design the focus of their individualized degrees, their degree plans had to demonstrate knowledge in these broadly-defined competence areas.
The Metropolitan State story

Today’s Six Competencies

The six competence areas that CIS uses today are an outgrowth of the original competencies around which students organized their degree plans. These competence areas are intended to provide a framework for reflecting on both your student-designed focus and your general education.

- Communication
- Math and the Natural World
- Humanities
- Community
- Vocation
- Avocation

Communication

An essential aspect of being an educated person is basic communication skills—reading, writing, and speaking. For philosophers, it’s important to carry out a dialectical argument, a conversation that tries to solve a problem. For scholars, interpreting texts is the primary method of critical inquiry. For scientists, you must be able to write up research so that research can be repeated, verified, and built upon. For critical pedagogy, you must be able to understand the deep structure of the world around you and rewrite or contradict the way things are.

On a practical level, good writing abilities will probably provide you with greater job mobility (both horizontal and vertical) than anything else you learn in college. To help determine what other general learning might be appropriate in the area of communication, you might ask yourself the following questions.

- How can I read more effectively and efficiently?
- Do I feel comfortable speaking in front of an audience?
- How well do I organize my thoughts for formal presentations?
- Can I outline and analyze a problem?
- Am I an attentive and sophisticated listener?
- Can I research subjects efficiently and effectively in a library?
- Do I understand the technical language of my profession or subject areas?

Mathematics and the natural world

In a culture with increasing access to a multitude of facts and figures, we all need to know at least enough mathematics to make sense of those facts and figures and to interpret basic information found in the disciplines and subject matter we study. Math is the foundation for the sciences, social sciences, and most professions.

- When you hear a statistic, do you understand what it can and can’t tell you?
- Are you confident in making sound financial decisions?
Chapter 3

- When a doctor talks to you about the absolute and relative risk of a drug or surgery, are you able to make decisions about your care?
- Can you make and keep a budget?
- At work, can you capture and analyze data to improve your policies or procedures?

Today, more than ever before, we also need a basic understanding of how the natural world works. Study in the sciences provides students with both the theory and practice of how science operates, and an understanding of the historical and cultural contexts of these disciplines and their relation to the wider world of ideas.

- Do I understand the implications of climate change?
- Can I vote in an informed way on environmental issues?
- Do I live in a healthy environment?
- Do I understand how my body works, not just how it feels?
- Could my home or workplace be more environmentally sustainable?
- Could I help my business “go green”?

**Humanities**

The word *humanities* has many interpretations, but traditionally this competence area has focused on the tradition of human understanding through literature, philosophy, religion and the arts. At Metropolitan State University we have expanded the humanities to include ethnic studies, women’s studies and some areas of linguistics.

- What do I know of the world’s past as a record of change, both human achievements and human errors?
- Do I fully understand my own cultural roots and appreciate the cultural heritage of others?
- Am I able to think critically about ethical or moral questions?
- Am I able to appreciate works of art and culture?
- Am I able to think critically about works of art and culture?

**Community**

If we try to link community competence to specific disciplines, we might turn to subject areas such as history, social and behavioral sciences. The social and behavioral sciences—including anthropology, sociology, economics, psychology, social science and family studies—have traditionally sought answers to questions of how human beings interact, what commonalities human cultures possess, and what differences. The word *community* implies an interconnectedness and interdependence within our larger human family. Ask yourself:

- Am I equipped to think about the common good?
- Can I think critically about what is a good society on a local, national and global level?
- How do I respond to the challenges of my community?
How do I view my connection with others in my community, my world?

We all exist in a variety of communities—family, neighborhood, national, ethnic, political, religious and global. Although there may have been a time, when US Americans could limit our concerns to a relatively small constellation of people and institutions, those days are long gone. Today, we understand that all of our actions have far-reaching global ripples of influence.

For example, a 9.0-magnitude earthquake near Sendai, Japan on March 11, 2011 swept 5 million tons of debris into the Pacific Ocean. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration estimates that 70 percent of the debris sank immediately. Other researchers’ computerized projections show that the floating debris—including huge objects like destroyed homes and wrecked fishing vessels—will be pushed by wind and waves to cover more than 4,500 miles between Japan and North America by 2018. As of June 2012, debris has already begun to wash up on the coast of Alaska, and is anticipated to stretch from Alaska to Mexico by 2014. Who is responsible for cleaning up such a natural disaster—one that impacts so many human lives in so many nations, as well as our natural environment? We are increasingly a global human family. What affects one affects us all. We must better understand each other, our differences and our commonalities, in order to work together on major challenges such as these to create a better life for all.

Metropolitan State’s Institute for Community Engagement and Scholarship (ICES) provides support for efforts, across the university, to integrate community-based learning and civic engagement with academic reflection through internships and courses which provide a meaningful experience for the participating community, organization or business and the student. ICES provides individual internships, group internships, applied research projects, service-learning activities, courses with field components, and community partnerships which address mutually defined interests and build on the capacity of the community—locally and globally.

Vocation

Specific types of knowledge and skills are necessary to achieve economic independence and to contribute to society’s well-being. Metropolitan State expects you to demonstrate a sound theoretical knowledge base within a given field or profession. We also expect that you will gain specific practical, applicable skills. Moreover, we hope you

---


will develop broad transferable knowledge and skills adaptable to a variety of work settings. This is especially important today when occupations are continually undergoing transformation and change.

It may be tempting to think that there is a choice to make between the life of the mind and having a career, between the liberal arts and the professions. But in some sense higher education has always integrated the two. Even the most rarified scholastic university was intended to produce doctors, lawyers, and priests. And in today’s world, multiple studies show that businesses want people with a solid general education, including knowledge of the liberal arts, because they are more able to work well with others, adapt to change, and innovate in the workplace.\(^6\)

If you’re exploring a new vocation, take the time to survey the field before trying to understand its complexities. Take a few survey courses before focusing your efforts in a specialized area. For example, wanting to work in the helping professions is an admirable motivation, but finding the right fit with your talents and interests takes time and experience. Give yourself time to explore. One practical way to do this is to look at the requirements for different majors available in the other colleges at Metropolitan State and at other universities throughout the country. These offer an overview of what other programs consider a good knowledge foundation in a given field.

**Listening for the call of vocation**

Most college students associate the word *vocation* with their short-term job or career goals. Historically, the word *vocation* has implied a calling of sorts—something you feel a strong pull or inclination to pursue. In this sense, vocation implies a matching of your natural talents and gifts with an area of work.

Some students come to Metropolitan State University as adults in the throes of career change, anxious to find a new path after leaving a job or being a casualty of downsizing. Some younger students are entering the job market for the first time. Though the scenarios and motivations may be vastly different, the vocational challenge to both younger and adult students is to find a good fit between talent, inclination and opportunity.

That’s why we want you to take the time to explore a variety of possibilities while in Perspectives. Even if you’re returning to school secure in your present job, and only seeking the credentials of a bachelor’s degree, you might ask yourself what you will be doing ten years from now.

- Will you be prepared for changes in your field?
- What knowledge and skills can you expand upon that will serve you well into the future?


Professional standards

Keep in mind that whatever vocational area you choose to pursue, the criteria for determining if you are vocationally competent are set by employers or vocational/professional groups, not by educational institutions. Our society has developed a variety of techniques for certifying the qualifications necessary for many professions and occupations. You should make every effort to review the particular requirements of any profession or occupation before you address the competence area of vocation and formulate your educational goals.

Each profession or occupation has standards of competence necessary for entry into that field. It also has standards of behavior. As anyone with their eye and ear to the media knows, unethical behavior has been the downfall of more than a few technically competent people. We encourage you to learn about the ethical aspects of your vocation.

Avocation and lifelong learning

In our culture, education is viewed primarily as a means to an end—a job, a higher salary, credentials associated with high status. However, avocations refresh us, re-create us, and reconnect us to our best selves. The purpose of avocation and lifelong learning is to remind us that not all learning is connected to the work world. This is one of the most exciting areas of competence, because you are encouraged to pursue knowledge for the pure joy it brings you.

Avocations take an incredible variety of forms—listening to classical music, collecting civil war memorabilia, gardening, reading or writing poetry, refinishing old furniture, fishing, cooking, throwing pottery, attending ballet lessons, collecting rocks and minerals, quilt making, camping, square dancing, you name it. Many of you already have well-developed avocations, and we encourage you to include these interests in your studies. The only criteria we use to define what is not an avocational pursuit is that it should not have direct relationship to your work or result in monetary reward. So investment strategies, real estate or playing the stock market usually don’t count.

Avocations are not unlike the benefits of good sleep, which Macbeth reminds us “knits up the raveled sleeve of care.”7 We are all too busy with jobs and obligations that expect us to produce something or to perform some function. We can all get unraveled in the course of those day-to-day demands. No one on their death bed ever said, “I wish I had spent more time at the office” or “I wish I had spent more time on the Internet.” What do you wish you had more time for? Right now!

Everyone needs “down time” during which nothing much is demanded of us. We can lose ourselves in the enjoyment of avocations that refresh us and reknit our raveled sleeves of care. One of the hallmarks of an

---

educated person is that s/he knows her/his limits and realizes when it’s
time to stop the wheels from spinning and find a quiet center within. As
you develop your degree plan we give you permission to pursue an area
of interest that brings you joy and makes you whole—something you can
continue to pursue the rest of your life.

### Demonstrating your knowledge

Though the *areas of competence* have been revised a several times, the
present six areas of competence include four of the original five areas. Based
on your educational experience, and what you’ve just read, can you identify
which original competencies (though renamed) are still in effect?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Five Competencies</th>
<th>Today’s Six Competencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math and the Natural World</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avocation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Comparing competencies with GELS

All colleges and universities in the United States articulate their ideals of
the educated person in terms of a *major* area of study (to demonstrate
deepth in a field) and *general education requirements* (to demonstrate
breadth in many fields). Depth and breadth of learning are two essential
elements of a college education in the United States At Metropolitan
State, depth and breadth may be defined differently depending on
whether or not you’re completing an individualized degree:

- **Depth**—is demonstrated by completing a traditional major or self-
  designing a nontraditional Individualized B.A.
- **Breadth**—is demonstrated by completing the General
  Education/Liberal Studies (GELS) requirements

### Understanding breadth & depth

at Metropolitan State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Any four-year degree Breadth</th>
<th>Traditional majors GELS</th>
<th>Individualized B.A.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competencies 1-4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mathematics and the natural world</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Metropolitan State story

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Depth</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Competency 5—Focus Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Vocation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electives</td>
<td></td>
<td>Competency 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Avocation and lifelong learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The early years

Originally, every student at Metropolitan State University developed an individualized degree plan which addressed five general areas of competence. These five areas assured good breadth of knowledge. The introduction of majors focused students’ study within a subject, but did not address the breadth that also characterizes a bachelor’s degree. To assure students had both depth and breadth, the university established General Education/Liberal Studies requirements.

Today

Today, Metropolitan State’s GELS goal areas are consistent with the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum: Communication, Higher Order Thinking, Natural Sciences, Mathematics/Logical Reasoning, History and Social and Behavioral Sciences, Humanities and the Fine Arts, Human Diversity, Global Awareness, Ethical and Civic Responsibility, and People and the Environment. To complete any undergraduate degree at Metropolitan State, you’re required to earn a minimum of 48 semester credits (8 must be upper division to fulfill Metropolitan State’s liberal studies requirement).

Connecting Competence Areas & GELS Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence Area</th>
<th>GELS Goal Area</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>1. Communication</td>
<td><em>Includes 3 parts:</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Introductory Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Intermediate Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Oral and Visual Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>6. Humanities</td>
<td><em>Must cover 2 disciplines</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math and Natural</td>
<td>4. Mathematics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Chapter 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>World</th>
<th>3. Natural Science</th>
<th>Must include laboratory work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>5. History, Social and Behavioral Science</td>
<td>Must cover 2 disciplines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Human Diversity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. Global Awareness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Ethical and Civic Responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. People and the Environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocation</td>
<td>Not addressed by GELS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avocation and Lifelong Learning</td>
<td>Not addressed by GELS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Metropolitan State’s early years, students also had to demonstrate breadth in their degree plans, but they used the Competence Areas as guides. We encourage you to think of your general education from this broader perspective—not as a set of requirements to check off, but as a core part of what it means to be an educated person. We hope that the six Competence Areas will serve as a valuable framework to help you think about your educational needs.

- If you have completed the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum, you have already completed Metropolitan State’s general education requirements.
- If you have GELS courses to complete, you may want to look for courses that both fulfill GELS requirements and enhance your focus area.
- If you have transferred a large number of technical credits to Metropolitan State, and have a large number of GELS requirements remaining, you may want to use your previous learning for your focus area, and concentrate on broadening that with GELs classes while at Metropolitan State.

The GELS and the Competence Areas are not two separate sets of requirements you have to meet. In addressing the 48 semester credits in GELS, you will have already addressed four of the six areas of competencies. The only difference between GELS and the six areas of competence is the inclusion of:

- **Vocation**—which most students address with their majors or focus areas
- **Avocation and Lifelong Learning**—which you can address with the GELS or as elective credit that’s not part of your focus.

### DARS & GELS

Students admitted after Fall 2005 have their GELS program requirements monitored by a computerized program—the Degree Audit Report System (DARS). DARS will keep track of what GELS, major, minor, focus, and graduation requirements have been completed (including transfer credit) and what requirements remain to complete. You can access your DARS...
report online at any time and get an up-to-the-minute review of where you stand regarding all graduation requirements.

Be sure you know how to access and read your DARS report. In a program where you have primary responsibility for and authority over your education, you must keep track of your progress toward meeting graduation requirements. This is not the job of your Perspectives instructor or academic advisor.
What does it mean to be an educated person?

The idea of education is so ingrained in most of us that it seems like second nature. Of course we need to educate people. But why? To what end? Before we can ask what it means to be an educated person, we need a larger context for considering why we educate people. In previous chapters, we’ve explored the history of higher education and education at Metropolitan State, especially in the College of Individualized Studies. This chapter is concerned less with what was and what is—it takes up the question of what ought to be.

Learning outcomes

- Describe the purpose of education in civil society
- Reflect on the personal values of education for individuals
- Relate educational values to the CIS program learning outcomes

Why should we educate people?

Why should we educate people? It seems like a simple question at first, but upon further reflection becomes much more complex. Before reading further, take a moment to consider the purposes of education and write a few reasons why you think we educate people in the space below (or in your open journal entry for this week).

Write your thoughts here

__________________________________________________

__________________________________________________

__________________________________________________

__________________________________________________
A philosopher or social scientist might argue that we aren’t fully human until we are educated. Unlike other animals, human beings have very few instincts and natural drives. Nature has done very little to program us with ways to behave and, without learning and socialization, we are what one anthropologist called an “incomplete animal.” Those rare examples of children who were not adequately socialized by human beings—for example, children locked away in attics or basements—show us how frighteningly “incomplete” humans can be without some form of socialization and nurture.

Ramu, a young boy discovered in India in 1976, was apparently abandoned by his family shortly after birth. He was discovered living among a pack of wolves; miraculously, the wolves had adopted him. Ramu could neither speak nor interact with humans except through grunts, snarls and wolf-like mannerisms. Although he was biologically a human being, he had not been socialized to behave as one.

So, one simple answer to why we educate people might be that education is essential to becoming socialized as a human being. Learning a language and developing basic communication skills are obviously part of becoming a human being. But what kind of a human being? Given the malleability of human behavior, people can be socialized or educated toward any number of different ends. For example, Adolph Hitler and Mother Teresa—two very different kinds of human beings—were both formally educated.

Narratives on the value of education

Neil Postman, a former professor of communication at New York University, suggests that every society needs to define a larger purpose for why it educates people. He calls these larger purposes narratives or stories we tell ourselves about the importance of education.

In the early days of the United States, the framers of our constitution were clear about why education was important. If you are going to have a government in which citizens can vote and choose their leaders, then you need an educated citizenry so that they can vote wisely. The neglect in those early days to include women, slaves and certain others in that voting group was a major moral and practical failing. But the theory of an educated citizenry, which is still being realized, was born during the Revolutionary War. Suspicious of the power of a national government, yet convinced of its necessity, our founders wanted people to be educated so they would know when government overstepped its bounds and began to infringe on their inalienable rights. Our democracy is still an experiment, and not that clearly secured with only about 60 percent of eligible voters voting in national presidential elections.

8 Clifford Geertz, professor of anthropology at the University of Chicago, “The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man,” in a book on human nature which is out of print
What does it mean to be an educated person?

Spaceship Earth

Today, Postman argues, we still need an educated citizenry, but one that stretches beyond national boundaries and includes global education. He suggests a narrative entitled *Spaceship Earth*—a story that reminds us of how interconnected and interdependent human beings are with the natural environment. We need education so we can become better stewards of the earth, for if we totally destroy the tropical rain forests or continue to deplete the ozone layer, it may well be the beginning of the end of human life on this planet. We now know, as we did not in the late 1700s, that natural resources are finite, and that our physical environment is both precious and fragile. Thus, we need education in the natural sciences to better understand how Earth’s biosphere operates and how human beings can help preserve, rather than destroy, spaceship earth.

For many of us, the purpose of education is much more immediate. We think in terms of preparation for a job or future career. Or, perhaps if we already have a good job, we see education as a means of keeping up with the rapidly changing world of computers and technology. If we are approaching retirement, we may see education as a way to enrich our leisure time and community involvement.

Educating Rita

The film *Educating Rita* demonstrates on an even more personal level why many people seek an education. The movie is a wonderful story of a young working-class woman’s struggle to return to school and how her personal narratives for “Why education?” change over the span of completing her degree. Pressured by her family and husband to have a baby, Rita initially says, “First, I want to discover myself.” Self-discovery is surely a valid reason for pursuing an education. Later in the film, Rita tries to rejoin her family in a local pub. She sees them singing a popular song, but her mother is crying and Rita realizes that her mother has unfulfilled dreams and aspirations. Rita tells Frank, her tutor at the university, “I want a better song to sing.” Education to help realize new and better ways of living is another personal narrative that appeals to many. Finally, after Rita has struggled to complete her degree, she thanks Frank for giving her what she has most come to value about education—she now sees options and can choose. Rita says, “I am different now, Frank. Now I have choice.” The freedom to make our own choices and the broader perspective that knowledge can give us to recognize those choices, are both things that a good education provides.

What’s your narrative?

As the narratives of Neil Postman and Rita illustrate, there are different ways to answer the question, “Why educate people?” As you begin to plan your own education, keep the ideas of these social and personal narratives in mind. And, keep the future in mind by reflecting on how

---

11 Quote from the film *Educating Rita*, with Julie Walters and Michael Caine.
your choices will affect future generations. Audrey Shenandoah, a tribal leader of the Onondaga people of the Iroquois nation, says that when faced with an important tribal decision, her people always ask, “How will our decision impact on those not yet born, seven generations from now?” These are wise words for any of us to consider. How will what you do today affect the lives of your children and their children’s children, seven generations into the future? The wisdom of the Onondaga people reminds us that while our personal educational goals are important, so are larger social considerations that will impact on future generations.

**Education and civic engagement**

> I believe that good, for individuals and for communities, is the end to which education must tend . . . The joy of intellectual pursuit and the pursuit of the good and decent life are no more separable than on a fair spring day the sweet breeze is separable from the sunlight.

_A. Bartlett Giamatti, The Educated Person, p. 51._

Giamatti’s statement above reminds us that having an education entails a direct responsibility to be aware of the larger community and society we live in, and encourages us to reflect upon how we define important concepts such as the good, freedom, and justice. In our democracy we are taught how to become citizens and to participate in a political system, and at the same time, education encourages us to be prepared to challenge what we see as injustices and inequalities within that very system.

When students take responsibility for their own learning, when they work with others cooperatively, whether it is on the design of a community project or a group assignment in the classroom, they are exercising the skills and values that are associated with democracy and effective social interaction. The education required for civic engagement entails certain values of tolerance and respect of differences, not just of ethnicity, race, gender, and class, but also differences of opinion and at times, core values.

In the early part of the 20th century, Philosopher John Dewey criticized traditional education for its failure to allow students out into the community, and to see how occupations, and economic and social realities could all be used as educational resources. Dewey's philosophy emphasizes the importance of connecting learning with real-world experiences, and he warned of the “standing danger that the material of

---

12 Audrey Shenandoah, quoted in Bill Moyers’ *Spirit and Nature*, Mystic Fire Video, New York, NY.
formal instruction will be merely the subject matter of the schools, isolated from the subject matter of life experience.”

Later, in the 1970’s educator Paulo Freire suggested a problem-posing approach to education. Freire worked among the illiterate poor of his community and he devised a key pedagogical tool called critical and liberating dialogue, also known as culture circles, which required teachers and students to learn and use the language of the oppressed. Freire’s vision of dialogue was that it encourage everyone to teach and everyone to create solutions together.

**But, what kind of education?**

Once you’ve reflected on why we educate people, it’s important to reflect on what kind of education they should have. In Chapter 2, we explored how higher education has answered that question over time, and in Chapter 3 we looked at how Metropolitan State answered that question in our early years and today. Here are a few other ways to think about what kind of education you want and/or need:

**Liberal Education**—gives you a breadth of knowledge about various subjects, teaches you how to make connections, and reflect on the meanings of concepts such as freedom, liberty, citizenship, justice, and equality. A liberal education gives people control of their lives by acquiring new knowledge and developing critical thinking skills. Human beings have a right to freedom and dignity. An uneducated person can be more easily abused and exploited than an educated one.

**Professional Education**—prepares you for jobs and careers that have been historically classified as professions, such as doctors, lawyers, managers, and medical health professionals. Our public and private institutions are only as good as the people who work there. We need good doctors and nurses because our health depends on it. We need good lawyers to advocate for us in the justice system. We need good managers and administrators so that our workplaces operate ethically and efficiently.

**Technical Education**—prepares you for jobs that have been historically classified as vocational or technical. The built world that surrounds us depends on skilled technicians and specialists to keep things operating smoothly.

---

General Education—offers a breadth of knowledge that in part supports liberal education, but more specifically creates an educated citizenry. In a democracy, the actions of our government depend not only on our votes, but also the votes of our neighbors. Do you want to live in a democracy where most of the voting public is ignorant or easily misled?

The richest and fullest education integrates most of these types of learning. When a doctor, for example, faces new symptoms or a disease that has not yet been named, she will need to think creatively to make a new diagnosis. And to do this, she might think back to a sociology book she read along the way, or a poetry class she attended where she was confronted with something new in the form of language. In his 2005 commencement speech at Stanford University, Steven Jobs, the former head and CEO of Apple Computers, famously related that a college calligraphy class contributed to his design breakthrough in computer science. He said:

*I learned about serif and san serif typefaces, about varying the amount of space between different letter combinations, about what makes great typography great. It was beautiful, historical, artistically subtle in a way that science can’t capture, and I found it fascinating. None of this had even a hope of any practical application in my life. But ten years later, when we were designing the first Macintosh computer, it all came back to me. And we designed it all into the Mac.*

Steve Jobs

Is an individualized degree for you?

The Individualized Bachelor of Arts degree remains one of the largest programs at Metropolitan State. That success stems largely from faculty, staff, and students who are motivated by Dr. Sweet’s original vision that “Given freedom, students will opt for excellence.” The road to that excellence is not always easy. In many ways it may be easier to complete a traditional major, where a faculty-designed program is provided for you.

Planning and completing an individualized degree comes with burdens and freedoms: the burden of having responsibility for designing your degree plan and the freedom of having authority over deciding what’s worth knowing, how and where you learn, and how that learning is demonstrated and evaluated. At the heart of this process is exploring what you think it means to be an educated person—this includes recognizing your own gifts, talents, and strengths, and placing your education in the context of your larger life goals.

If you’re eager to reflect upon and make meaning of your education by considering the following questions, then an individualized degree is for you: What are your areas of strength? Where are your limitations? What
What does it mean to be an educated person?

subjects or areas of study are most interesting to you? What vocation calls to you? Where do you find joy in your studies? What do you need to know to adjust to a rapidly changing job market or to have a fulfilling retirement? What really matters to you in life? How can you put your education in service of your larger life goals? This Perspectives course is designed to help you answer these questions for yourself, and to decide which course of study is best for you—a traditional major or an individualized degree.

Perspectives and the educated person

PRSP 301 Perspectives: Philosophy of Education and Planning will challenge you to integrate your personal narrative with the larger narrative that the College of Individualized Studies espouses. The central purpose of Perspectives is to explore what it means to be an educated person both on a personal level in the context of our individual hopes, dreams, and goals, and on a universal level that considers the larger needs of humanity.

The six Competence Areas (see Chapter 3) spell out the essence of the CIS narrative regarding why we educate people. We encourage you to use these as a framework within which to explore your own learning needs from both a personal and a larger social perspective.

A first step in this process is considering your personal goals within a larger context. If exploring or expanding career options is your primary motivation for being in college, we’ll help you achieve your desired ends. But, we’ll also challenge you to think about your role as an engaged citizen, your responsibility to others, and your relationship with the natural environment.

As part of this reflection, you will also be asked to evaluate your past education. In CIS, we are not so arrogant as to assume that you come to us uneducated. We affirm what you have already learned and will even help you receive college credit for learning that results from your prior life and/or work experience. We will ask you to look at your past, the present, and your future so that you can design a degree program that best fits all of your needs.

One way to begin developing and shaping your educational goals is to begin thinking of your long-term life goals. What do you hope to achieve, not just on the job, but in your personal, family and community life? What will the future bring and how can your education at Metropolitan State University prepare you for some of those possibilities? What changes will take place in our local communities and in the world in the coming decades? What values will guide your behavior in response to change? These are just a few of the questions you will be asked to grapple with in preparing your individualized degree plan.

Perspectives 301 gave me the entire picture and the ability to articulate it in both speech and writing. I can now communicate exactly what it is I am doing and why I am doing it. I am working on my B.A. in Energy Healing for the Mind and Body.

PRSP 301 student, Spring 2005
CIS learning outcomes

In CIS, we believe that students completing an Individualized B.A. must demonstrate learning outcomes that might not be expected from students in a traditional major. In the same way that the six Competence Areas play a major role in providing a framework within which to design your program, the CIS learning outcomes should inform your studies throughout your degree. Following are the four CIS learning outcomes—what you’re expected to know when you complete an Individualized B.A. degree:

- Self-directed learning
- Lifelong learning
- Reflective, self-transcendent learning
- Knowledge in a self-defined area of focus

Self-directed learning

Self-directed learning essentially means that you decide what is worth knowing, how and where it should be learned, when or to what extent it is known, as well as how that learning will be demonstrated and evaluated. Embracing this learning outcome requires that you assume responsibility for and authority over your education, and that you become excited about learning itself. Being a self-directed learner also includes choices about how and where to learn. Achieving competence in self-directed learning includes:

- Learning to think critically
- Assuming responsibility for, authority over
- Developing the ability to self-assess your particular strengths and limitations, and an awareness of resources available to you
- Cultivating the ability to articulate your learning needs and creating a plan to achieve them.

Lifelong learning

In our increasingly interconnected world, where new technologies are adopted at a dizzying pace, and you’re likely to have multiple careers (not just jobs) over the course of your life, you’ll need to be a skilled lifelong learner in order to survive as well as thrive. Because our human problems are now global problems, you’ll be required not only to master new and emerging skills, but also to be aware of how solutions to future problems will become interdisciplinary and require collaborative input from various perspectives.

As you continue to learn from both formal education and your life experiences, you should continue to ask yourself: What skills can I develop that will help me adjust to a flexible, ever-changing job-market? How can I continue to improve my writing, speaking and technological skills to better communicate with others? Are there subjects I want to learn that I never made time for?
What does it mean to be an educated person?

Aside from the needs of the work world, lifelong learning also brings its own intrinsic rewards—it allows you to continue studying subjects you are fascinated by, whether they have an instrumental value or not. Achieving competence in lifelong learning includes:

- awareness of the ongoing need for lifelong learning and resources available to you
- ability to self-assess gaps in your learning through the process of reflection
- ability to plan ways to fill your gaps in learning—this includes intentional as well as serendipitous learning
- a sense of the love of learning
- application of your unique gifts (skills/knowledge/attitudes), perhaps through community involvement and/or avocation.

Reflective, self-transcendent learning

This is perhaps the most esoteric of the four learning outcomes. Its purpose is to encourage you to stop and reflect on your life and what you’re learning. It’s also intended to help you think about your education in terms that transcend yourself. Take a moment to ponder these questions: How many people in the world have access to formal education? Where do I fit in the context of the larger world? What purpose might my education serve beyond my own immediate goals and needs? How might my education be used in service of something larger? Achieving competence in reflective, self-transcendent learning is a process that includes:

- an appreciation for a variety of perspectives on vocation, education and life
- achieving some distance from your immediate ego needs
- a healthy sense of humility, an awareness that there is so much more to learn
- a desire to contribute to a common good—our collective responsibility
- a sense of how your skills, knowledge, and talents might contribute to the community (local, state and national)
- a sense of your connectedness to the larger human community (human family/ethical/spiritual).

Civic engagement is one way

As a CIS student, we expect you to seek ways to connect your education with civic engagement. Civic engagement is one way to demonstrate your competence as a self-transcendent learner. You have the opportunity to make civic engagement part of your degree plan through options such as prior learning assessment, internships, or the Civic Engagement or Community Development minors.

You can also put your education to work in your community in the following ways after you leave Metropolitan State:
**Political activism and service**—The spectrum of activity in this category can include both direct and indirect activism, such as: voting, monitoring election funds, writing a letter to the editor of your local newspaper, organizing and/or attending political meetings on the local, state or national levels, and even organizing and participating in meetings, rallies, and protests concerning social, economic or political issues. It can also include running for public office or simply deliberating with fellow citizens about social, economic and political issues that affect everyone.

**Service learning**—The incorporation of education with various kinds of voluntarism and community work may include many types of participation in the sphere of civil society, ranging from the network of non-governmental and private organizations to citizens’ action groups, such as soup kitchens, walkathons, neighborhood organizations to fight crime, or helping the homeless.

**Experiential learning**—This type of learning recognizes skills and talents you have acquired through your work in a professional or non-professional setting, or working with others in the community to address social, economic and/or political issues. For example, you may have served as a mentor to youth or coached a sports team in your community.

**Global learning**—While good citizens need to think about the perspectives of others and the plight of those living on the margins of their societies, they also need to think of themselves as “global citizens” with responsibilities that extend beyond national boundaries. A specialized CIS option, the Peace Corps B.A., allows Peace Corps volunteers to earn credit for the learning and application of learning gained through their Peace Corps training and experience.

Our issues today span the planet, and problems such as global warming, the illicit trafficking of humans, and the existence of sweat shops manufacturing goods for first-world countries are all issues that are trans-national in nature and that interconnect us all. Author Martha Nussbaum argues that although our first obligation might be to our families, loved ones, and local communities, we should also work to ensure that all people, regardless of race, nationality or location, have the same rights and opportunities as we would want for ourselves and our families. She
What does it mean to be an educated person?

states that we should “work to make all human beings part of our community of dialogue and concern.”

Civic education is grounded on the belief that we can better our world, and it relies not just on critique, but also critical thinking, commitment and collaboration to eliminate oppression, injustice, and racial and other tensions. It involves developing a tolerance of, if not an appreciation for, difference and divergence, as well as a willingness and even eagerness for political action.

Knowledge in a self-defined area of Focus

The last of the four CIS learning outcomes is that you have knowledge in a self-defined focus area—your area of depth. Your focus can be defined in any terms that you can justify as part of your life purpose, but that doesn’t parallel an existing major at Metropolitan State. Your focus can be inter-, multi-, or trans-disciplinary—that is, it can embrace many different subject areas. The key is that you define the core thread around which this knowledge is woven together. We’ll explore what makes a strong focus in greater depth in Chapter 6.

CIS Courses

As a more traditional university has arisen around CIS, we have developed more courses for our students to take. This section outlines courses taught by the CIS faculty. Of course, we also strongly encourage you to make use of the wide range of strategies for learning outside a traditional classroom—student-directed learning, internships, theory seminars, standardized tests, and prior learning assessment.

Three core courses

You must earn a C- (minus) or better in our core courses. If you used competence-based grading (S/NS), you must earn an S.

A sequence of three core courses are designed to support you in developing and completing your individualized degree plan.

- PRSP 301 Perspectives: Educational Philosophy and Planning
- PRSP 310 Interdisciplinary Conversations
- PRSP 499 Capstone

PRSP 301 Perspectives: Educational Philosophy and Planning

This required course considers, from a multidisciplinary perspective, the questions What is an educated person? What character traits mark an educated person? And how does becoming educated impact one’s personal, family and social life? While it is a required course for

all students who plan to graduate from the College of Individualized Studies, it is also a helpful course for students in any of the other colleges who are not sure about their major focus. The course helps students develop their own individualized degree plans or program outlines by providing time to reflect on what they want to learn and the best way to learn it. Students assess their own academic strengths and weaknesses and meet resource people from around the university who challenge them to think about education in a broad and liberating manner. While most students often focus first on their vocational goals in higher education, this course challenges students to think also about their community involvement and lifelong learning needs.

PRSP 310 Interdisciplinary Conversations—This 2-credit course provides students an opportunity to actively develop skills in interdisciplinary scholarly thinking and communication with the support of faculty. A student-driven seminar format helps students deepen academic habits of inquiry, critical and creative problem solving; and allows continued reflection on the value of academic learning. Students bring discussion topics from their individualized studies to the table. Together, students and faculty explore subjects of mutual interest and learn from each other. Students connect isolated learning experiences to develop a holistic understanding that enriches the learning outcomes of their individualized educations.

PRSP 499 Capstone—This required course is the culminating experience for Individualized B.A. students. Students demonstrate the relationship between what they have learned and the university's philosophical tenets and academic outcomes related to communication skills, critical thinking, multicultural understanding, global perspectives and citizenship. Students also consider their lifelong learning plans, possible career changes and future liberal learning opportunities. You should register for this course in the semester in which you intend to graduate—your final semester.

Interdisciplinary Studies (IDST) courses

The rise of the modern disciplines has shown us that the world cannot be neatly divided into separate subject areas. You’ll find some interdisciplinary learning opportunities in courses throughout the university. The following CIS courses can be found in the Class Schedule (and Course Descriptions) under the IDST Subject Area (look for more to be added). Many of these courses also meet GELS goals:
What does it mean to be an educated person?

IDST 310  Principles of Civic Engagement
IDST 321  Human Rights and the Educated Citizen
IDST 330  Women in Math, Science and Technology
IDST 343  Perspectives on Community Development
IDST 370  Cinema, Self and Other
IDST 385  Turning Points: Self-Transformation
IDST 401  Interdisciplinary Topics
IDST 425  Comparing Alternatives: Community, Diversity and Utopia

Summer Partnership in Law courses

For those who may be considering law school, CIS has partnered with William Mitchell College of Law to offer the Summer Partnership in Law (SPIL) program to provide an introduction to the legal profession and to legal education. The following two courses are taught concurrently at William Mitchell College of Law every Summer Semester:

PRSP 370 American Legal System (2 semester credits)
PRSP 371 Legal Reasoning and Writing (2 semester credits)

You register for the courses through Metropolitan State and they count toward your graduation requirements. However, they are law school courses taught at the law school by their faculty. This program is designed for students who have completed their sophomore year of college, but not their senior year.

Other courses

A few other CIS courses also support students in their pursuit of an excellent individualized education.

METR 100  Getting Credit for What You Know—This one-credit course is designed for students who wish to examine the various options for gaining credits for learning outside the formal college or university classroom.

METR 101  Your Academic Journey—This course is designed to introduce students to Metropolitan State and its academic programs and services. It also helps students self-assess their abilities and gain knowledge in important reading and writing skills, public speaking, listening skills, study skills, and critical thinking.
PRSP 302T  Self-Directed Learning Theory Seminar—This theory seminar is designed for adult students who have engaged in one or more self-directed projects and/or activities a year. Self-directed learning applies to broad areas of interest and includes, but is not limited to, learning experiences in travel, business, self-education, literacy, entertainment, the arts, environment, home improvement, gardening, parenting, activism, and volunteerism. Students read and discuss leading adult learning theories covering a wide range of thinkers and link their learning experience with these theories.
This chapter explores the variety of learning strategies available to you to pursue your learning goals. It describes student-directed learning as one option and explains how competencies can be evaluated for college-level credit.

### Learning outcomes

- Understanding student-directed learning, competence and learning assessment concepts, principles, terminology, history, benefits and options
- Understanding how to use these concepts for lifelong learning and for degree planning
- Reflecting on your own competence in relation to degree planning needs and goals, analyzing options, and making degree-planning decisions
- Practicing using terminology and procedures for describing SDL and undertaking PLA for credit

### A tale of four learners

Following are the stories of four actual students in the Individualized B.A. program describing the ways in which they used student-directed learning in their degrees. Do you see yourself in any of these stories?

#### A learner in non-credit training

**earned credit in Project Management via PLA**

Jill is a project manager who achieved competence in project management through work experiences, first being mentored on (and subsequently leading) new product development projects over twenty years. She also learned through the many training programs offered at work and in professional organizations, eventually becoming certified through standardized training and exams in the field. She earned college-level credit through the prior learning assessment (PLA) process.
A work-based learner earned credit in Communication in Work Groups via Theory Seminar

Kaye has 12 years of work experience participating in small- to large-scale work groups/work teams, in which she has occupied many roles, including leader and contributor, and analyzed the functions and interactions of the groups and their communication patterns. She has also done some independent reading on work-group dynamics, because the communications principles and practices are interesting to her, and she would like to know more. She added theoretical learning to her practical knowledge via the COMM 351T Communication in Work Groups theory seminar.

A community-based learner earned credit for Civic Leadership and met a GELS Goal

Juan has been an officer of his neighborhood association for a long time, and has worked on and learned about many neighborhood and civic issues involving city life. He has learned about urban planning, organizing residents, and advocating various proposals with businesses, city staff and elected officials. Using the POL 381T Community Leadership Theory Seminar (and/or Prior Learning Assessment for community advocacy/leadership) he can earn credit toward Goal 9: Ethic and Civic Engagement.

An independent/experiential learner earned credit for Painting via SDIS

Meghan had a graphic arts background and technical school training, but was always interested in pursuing painting as an avocation. After taking an Introduction to Painting class to build foundation skills, she wanted to work on her painting more independently and connect with a group of artists she knew in her community. She designed a Student-Designed Independent Study (SDIS) which included independent study of painting principles and techniques, along with feedback from the community art group and her Metropolitan State SDIS faculty evaluator, culminating in a show of her paintings in a community exhibit.

What’s your story?

Like the Metropolitan State students above, you are probably learning much of the time, in many settings, in many ways. Humans are learning beings! Learning is by its very nature an active process; the brain remembers via experience. The world is your learning laboratory, where you learn while at work, when seeking training from a professional organization, through your community engagement like volunteering or leadership activities, and in your personal lives as family members,
travelers, readers and online learners. You learn by studying, reflecting on and learning from experience, and by practicing new skills.

How does such student-directed learning from your life relate to your degree? How does the learning laboratory of your learning life merge with your university-level learning and your credits for a B.A.? In other words, how does life and learning meet, as Metropolitan State’s slogan goes? This chapter explains why the individualized degree program thinks it’s important, even vital—for life and learning to meet.

Real stories from Individualized B.A. students start this chapter to illustrate how learning occurs in the learning laboratory of life. Your own self-directed learning probably compares well with those stories. We hope they inspired you to consider learning in a variety of ways and settings.

Understanding self-directed learning

As these four stories show, people learn in many ways and settings, in formal education and through personal life experiences. As students with responsibility for and authority over their educations, we encourage you to include a variety of learning methods—those that work best for you.

Learning theory research indicates that each learner has a particular style (or sequence of learning steps) that suits her best. In addition, learning style surveys show that most learners prefer an active learning style over a passive one. That’s one reason you’ll find active learning (rather than the traditional lecture/test model) built into classroom instruction in many classes at Metropolitan State. Self-directed learning—from work, your community or personal settings—is active learning at its core!

Further, if you’re directing the process of your own learning, you can choose the levels of active experience or participation—along with planning in reflection and observation, abstract conceptualization and generalization, and testing and experimentation—that best suit your learning style. These four stages of learning are known as the experiential learning cycle. Educational theorist and practitioner David Kolb researched how adults learn from experience and described these four stages.
Whenever you acquire new information and skills, when you reflect on what you’ve observed and experienced and learn from it, when you try out new principles and practices in new settings and analyze the results—in all of these common adult life endeavors—you’re being a self-directed learner.

Self-directed learning is learning that you direct, choose, encounter, or experience as opposed to learning via an established course in a college or university. When you register to earn college credit for a self-directed learning experience, we use the term Student-directed learning (SDL) because you are an enrolled student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-directed learning</th>
<th>Student-directed learning (SDL)</th>
<th>Faculty-directed learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning you direct, choose, encounter, or experience</td>
<td>When you register to earn college credit for a self-directed learning experience, we use the term Student-directed learning (SDL) because you are an enrolled student</td>
<td>Learning directed by, structured by, or assigned by teachers or instructor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why encourage evaluation of prior learning?

In the Individualized B.A. program—one whose founding principle is that students have responsibility for and authority over what they learn—we know that the things you’ve learned from life, work and your community may be as significant as knowledge gained from formal education. Therefore, it is part of our value system and our student-centered educational philosophy to recognize that knowledge. Evaluation of the prior learning that you bring to Metropolitan State can also:

- Help you identify and articulate your learning in a way comparable to academic learning
- Recognize and validate your learning for college credits
- Shorten your progress toward degree completion instead of repeating learning or doing new learning that doesn’t meet your needs.

Awarding credit for prior learning has also been linked to higher graduation rates among adult students in multiple CAEL (Council Adult and Experiential Learning) research studies. Metropolitan State has a history of awarding credit for prior learning, and it’s why we’ve received multiple CAEL awards for being an adult-friendly university.

At its inception, Metropolitan State used a competence-based approach. Whereas credits typically focus on the number of hours students sit in a classroom, competence emphasizes what students know and what they can do with that knowledge. What’s important is not where or how a particular competence was gained, but rather that you know, can apply, and can describe both the theoretical and practical aspects of your competence.

By the late 1970s Metropolitan State was acknowledged as one of the leading colleges in the United States championing competence-based learning. The College of Individualized Studies maintains a competence-based approach, continuing an educational tradition highly valued since Metropolitan State’s founding more than 40 years ago. More recently, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) Board of Trustees adopted policies and procedures supporting its member institutions in developing policies and procedures for student-directed learning, particularly prior learning assessment (PLA).

Principles of competence-based assessment

When you set out to learn something on our own, you may not need to document or demonstrate the learning or be evaluated by anyone else. Sometimes such evaluation occurs as part of the setting or experience,
Chapter 5

such as at work when learning a new skill is recognized in a performance evaluation or with expanded responsibilities. However, if you want to have that learning evaluated for college-level credit, you must be able to describe what you know and demonstrate what you can do. Competence emphasizes what you know and can do with that knowledge.

Metropolitan State’s founding faculty helped establish the following set of principles (now used nation-wide by CAEL) for competence-based assessment of prior learning:

1. Student-directed learning included in your degree plan must be related to your overall educational goals. While self-directed learning may be in any subject area, it must be an integrated part of your overall educational goals.

2. Learning must have a subject matter in which both theoretical and practical elements can be identified and verified. This is particularly important where your area of learning does not fit easily into the usual academic categories. We are especially concerned that you can identify the theoretical elements of the subject matter. In other words, your learning must go beyond the mere application of a manual skill or narrowly prescribed routine or procedure. It should not be common or perfunctory. For example, basic home repair skills, filing personal income tax forms, general household duties, and auto mechanics, while all important abilities, would not qualify for university credit. On the other hand, an individual who has spent years refinishing antique furniture and has studied the history and cultural background of furniture constructed immediately following the Civil War, might have a sound enough theoretical background to claim college credit in that area.

3. Recognition of experiential learning does not encompass experience alone. Just because you have had an experience, even a valuable experience, does not mean it qualifies for college-level learning. For example, you may learn valuable life lessons while going through a divorce, but that does not necessarily translate into college credit. Or, in the area of avocation, a person may have fifteen years of fishing experience under his or her belt, but that does not mean he or she understands enough of the biology of fish and the ecology of the environment for college level credit in natural science. However, in a similar vein, a person who complements ten years of fishing experience with independent study on fish biology, the ecology of lake habitats, aquatic vegetation, and the influence of weather and water conditions might well qualify for credit in natural science, if she or he is able to articulate these theoretical considerations.

4. Learning outcomes must be current. If you informally learned to read and converse in French 20 years ago, but have not retained that ability, you would not be considered competent in this area. Or, if you learned elementary statistics some time ago, but have not kept
up with changing techniques in the field, your abilities would not be
current enough to qualify for college credit.

5. Learning **must have general applicability outside the specific
situation in which it was acquired.** Credit will not be granted for
knowledge of specific procedures or practices that are confined to a
specific setting. For example, you may have learned how to
supervise the payroll department operations in your particular
business. But, if you do not know general theoretical and practical
elements of payroll supervision applicable in other settings, your
competence is not generalizable. Similarly, you may have led Bible
study for children at your worshipping community for a number of
years, using materials from your particular church or synagogue.
But, that doesn’t mean you know the history and literature of the
Bible well enough to earn college credit.

6. Learning **must be publicly verifiable.** You must be able to
demonstrate or prove your learning to an expert in the general
subject area you are claiming. You must prove to that expert—a
resident or community faculty member—that you indeed know both
the theory and practice of that subject matter and can articulate that
knowledge in a convincing manner.

7. Student-directed learning proposed for credit must not duplicate
(though it can build on) **credits previously transcripted and
accepted from another institution of higher learning.** For
example, you may have had an introductory college-level course in
group facilitation. Since then you have actually worked as a
volunteer with a local high school facilitating after-school activities
for teenagers at risk and been active in the local Girl Scouts. It’s
possible that your additional practical experience, along with
theoretical knowledge you gain through independent study at
Metropolitan State, could qualify for more advanced credits in group
facilitation.

8. Finally, learning **must be university level.** This has been implicit in
the preceding seven criteria. To determine whether or not your
learning is equivalent to college or university learning outcomes, you
might consider the following:

- Does what you know resemble similar subject areas regularly
taught in colleges and universities (for example, can you find a
course description on a college Web site or in a catalog)?
- If you can’t find a similar course, can you relate your learning to
a college-level subject matter?
- Can you compare your learning to individuals or groups who
have completed university-level studies or certificates in the
identified subject area?
- Is your learning uniquely distinguished from learning that
everyone gains through common experience, and does it have a
sound theory base?
When the learning outcome is what matters for determining college-level credit, the learning process can be opened up to all learning methods possible! So, self-directed learning that’s occurred outside of a credit-bearing school—whether learned prior to now, in the future, or some combination of both—can be evaluated as college-level learning.

Processes for student-directed learning

Whether your student-directed learning is prior or future learning, there are a variety of processes that you can use to have that learning evaluated for college-level credit.

Testing

Standardized tests are offered in a variety of subject areas by organizations other than Metropolitan State, such as CLEP and DSST. A few of these exams can even be used to meet GELS goals, such as CLEP’s Freshman Composition exam or DSST’s Technical Writing exam.

Group assessment

Some community colleges and some departments at Metropolitan State have established processes for evaluating learning in certain areas with a group of students. For example, COM 103P Public Speaking is a group prior learning assessment that you can register for when it’s listed in the Class Schedule. You only attend one class meeting where you give a speech and evaluate others for college-level credit.

PLA or SDIS

Prior learning assessment (PLA) refers to the process for evaluating knowledge you’ve gained from prior experience for college-level credit. Student-designed independent study (SDIS) refers to the process for evaluating new knowledge that you’ll gain via self-study for college-level credit. At Metropolitan State, we use the same SDL form and administrative procedure to evaluate your learning for college credit regardless of whether it is prior or future learning—we refer to this as student-directed learning (SDL).

Theory seminar

Theory seminars are a method of student-directed learning designed for students with extensive practical knowledge in a subject, but limited theoretical knowledge. Students with substantial practical knowledge meet with instructors to build the needed theory and reflection component in a seminar format of 4-5 class sessions.
Theory seminars are offered in a variety of areas, but you can only take them when they’re listed in the Class Schedule. To register for a theory seminar, you must complete a free Diagnostic Test (available on the Metropolitan State Web site) that demonstrates an appropriate level of practical knowledge in that subject area.

Many experienced adult learners may qualify for PRSP 302T Self-directed Learning Theory Seminar—a theory seminar that was designed to offer students a theory seminar experience no matter what body of knowledge they may have gained via self-directed learning.

**Internship**

Internships allow you to have an applied learning experience outside the traditional classroom.

- **Student-initiated** internships are arranged by the student with a community organization or business, and with help from Metropolitan State’s Institute for Community Engagement and Scholarship (ICES).
- **Sponsored** internships are arranged by Metropolitan State’s Institute for Community Engagement and Scholarship (ICES) with a community partner, and are listed on the Metropolitan State Web site.

For both types of internship, you must complete an Internship Agreement that includes a competence statement (describing what you’ll know), learning strategies (how you plan to learn), and evaluation measures (how you propose to be evaluated).

### Which process should I use?

Which process you use is up to you, and your decision will depend on how these learning experiences fit into your overall plans for your Individualized B.A. The following table offers guidance for determining which process may best suit your needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Testing</td>
<td>Any time before test</td>
<td>With testing organization, such as DSST or CLEP</td>
<td>3-6 each</td>
<td>Mostly lower division. DSST has upper division.</td>
<td>Pre-approved GELS or focus area</td>
<td>Cost-effective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Developing an SDL

Using the SDL process is a great way to gain college-level credit in almost any subject area. Although it is tremendously flexible, it is also a bit more work than the other processes. This section offers a step-by-step guide to developing an SDL.

#### Locate yourself on the SDL continuum

When you register for an SDL, you may want to earn credit for prior learning OR future learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SDL continuum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prior learning (PLA)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning you’ve already</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experienced via a self-directed process, but that hasn’t been evaluated for credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Future learning (SDIS)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning that hasn’t occurred yet either via self-directed processes or traditional courses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Assessment</th>
<th>Learning When?</th>
<th>Register Where?</th>
<th>Semester Credits?</th>
<th>Levels?</th>
<th>Use in Degree?</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PLA</strong></td>
<td>Prior to assessment</td>
<td>Community Colleges and some Metropolitan State subjects</td>
<td>3-4 per unit</td>
<td>Lower division</td>
<td>GELS or major pre-requisites</td>
<td>Plan in PRSP 301 or METR100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theory Seminar</strong></td>
<td>Both prior and new in seminar</td>
<td>After diagnostic test on Metro Web site</td>
<td>2-4 credits</td>
<td>Mostly upper</td>
<td>As fits subject, GELS</td>
<td>Proposal-based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SDIS</strong></td>
<td>Mostly new, while at Metro</td>
<td>Individual proposal in department</td>
<td>Typically, 1-4 credits</td>
<td>Lower or upper division</td>
<td>As fits subject, degree</td>
<td>Proposal-based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internship</strong></td>
<td>Anytime within a semester</td>
<td>At Metro, applies to residency credit</td>
<td>Typically 4 credits</td>
<td>Lower or upper division</td>
<td>As fits subject, degree</td>
<td>Proposal-based</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At Metropolitan State, we use the same form and administrative procedure to evaluate your learning for college credit regardless of whether it is prior or future learning—we refer to this as student-directed learning (SDL).

When you design a student-directed learning (SDL) experience, you can include learning across a continuum from prior (learning you’ve already experienced via a self-directed learning process, but that has not been evaluated for college-level credit) to future (hasn’t occurred yet) learning.

Where are you on the SDL continuum?

Use the following Exercise to discover where you are on the SDL continuum in relation to a particular learning experience outside of a traditional classroom.

**Exercise**

Think of something you’ve learned outside of a traditional classroom:

- What did you want to learn and be able to do? What was the subject or topic of your learning?
- How would you describe it to a friend or colleague? *I learned about _______ lately, because I wanted to be able to _______.*
- How did you go about the learning? What methods did you use and why? Books, research, volunteering, or other methods?
- How did you decide whether you had accomplished what you set out to learn? What demonstrated to you that you’d learned?
- How did you evaluate yourself, or did someone else evaluate you?
- How would you describe the level of your learning?
- Is your prior learning deep enough to evaluate as college-level, or do you need new knowledge to claim competence in this area?
Write a competence statement

Competence statements summarize what you know and can do (for prior learning) or want to know and be able to do (for future learning). Review the “Principles of competence-based assessment” on page 61 to ensure that your learning qualifies as college-level. Each competence must have three elements:

- **Subject area**—this refers to the major knowledge areas, such as personnel management, English literature, counseling skills, and black-and-white photography.

- **Theoretical and practical elements**—you need to demonstrate that you know a subject and are able to apply that knowledge. For prior learning based on life/work experience, it is particularly important that you have a theoretical understanding of the subject matter in which you claim to be competent.

- **Level of achievement**—communicates how well you know the subject or what specific content it is that you know. You can use *one* of the following phrases to precede your description of level:
  - specifically
  - including
  - well enough to
  - at a level equivalent to

Following are two examples that identify the three elements: **subject area, theory and practice, and level.**

### Competence Statement Formula

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knows the _______ and _______ of ____________</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory</td>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>Subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_______</td>
<td>_______</td>
<td>_______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Examples

Knows the *theory* and *techniques* of *English Poetry* well enough to:

- *recite, recognize forms, analyze and critique poetry.*

Knows the *principles* and *skills* of *Group Facilitation including*

- *group dynamics, leadership roles, feedback and processing interactions.*
Theory usually refers to the general principles that undergird a subject. For example, there many theories for counseling psychology such as Jungian, Freudian, and Adlerian. Practice refers to how one actually uses that knowledge in the everyday world. For example, some practices for counseling psychology include empathy, reflecting, feedback, and transference. The theory and practice words that you use will be dictated by your subject area. Following are some common words from a variety of subject areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory words</th>
<th>Practice words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concepts</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>Techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principles</td>
<td>Approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patterns</td>
<td>Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs</td>
<td>Practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems</td>
<td>Functions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Research techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Treatment modalities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Completing the rest of the SDL Form**

You’ll need to identify, contact and confer with a subject matter expert (SME) — usually a Metropolitan State faculty member — to support you in developing the remaining parts of your proposal:

**Learning outcomes**—Describe learning already completed (for PLA) or learning yet to be completed (for SDIS).

**Learning process**—Describe how you’ve gained (or plan to gain) the knowledge listed in your competence statement.

**Resources**—List key resources used to acquire the knowledge (prior or future), including books/journals, training, mentoring, faculty consultations, community-based learning, and any other resources.

**Previous Assessment**—List any assessment techniques you have already completed, or plan to complete, such as a theory seminar diagnostic, course waiver exam, learning inventory or portfolio, standardized license or certificate examinations. Also list the sponsor of the assessment, and when it was completed or will be completed.

**Evaluation**—Describe proposed evaluation methods, demonstration and/or documentation to be provided for evaluation.
Chapter 5

Registering for your SDL

Follow these steps to register for your SDL:

1. Save the SDL Form and narrative for each proposal in a Word document. Title the Word.doc with your name and competence title.

2. Email the completed SDL Form from your Metropolitan State email account to individualized.studies@metrostate.edu. Be sure to keep a copy!

3. The designated faculty reviewer e-mails approved SDLs to Registration, copying you and the evaluator. If your proposal is not approved, you'll receive an explanation of what needs to be revised via e-mail.

4. A designated Registration staff person registers you and notifies you to pay tuition.

5. You must pay tuition within 24 hours.
   - If it’s an SDL for prior knowledge, you contact the evaluator to arrange for your final evaluation.
   - If it’s an SDL for future knowledge, you complete your studies, and then contact the evaluator to arrange for your final evaluation.

More support for developing SDLs

If you need more support, we offer the following additional support systems for students developing SDLs:

- A 1-credit course METR 100: Getting Credit for What You Know is offered each semester.

- Multiple “Working Labs” on prior learning assessment (PLA) and student-directed learning (SDL) are offered each semester. These free one-time sessions give you support in: identifying a proposed PLA/SDL subject area, developing a competence statement, identifying a prospective evaluator, and developing the SDL form. Dates are posted on the Metropolitan State Web site or you can contact marcia.anderson@metrostate.edu.

- Any faculty or staff member in the College of Individualized Studies can also help you get started.
Creating your degree plan

This chapter describes how to create your degree plan beginning with a broad overview of the plan, and ending with a page-by-page guide to developing your unique degree plan toward an Individualized, B.A.

**Learning Outcomes**

- How to develop an individualized focus in the context of your life and educational goals
- Understands graduation requirements towards Individualized B.A.
- Understands how to read and use DARS and evaluate transfer credits

**Sketching the blueprint**

Think of your degree plan as a blueprint for building your Individualized Studies, B.A. Like a blueprint, your degree plan sketches the overall vision of what you hope to build—in this case, the knowledge you plan to acquire by the time you complete your degree. Your plan needs to meet the necessary graduation and program credit requirements. As you exercise your authority to design a degree with deep meaning for you, your plan should also consider your educational goals in relation to what you think it means to be an educated person, and reflect how this experience can be transformative for you.

When drafting your overall degree plan blueprint, consider the broad bodies of knowledge that you want to understand, not necessarily specific courses or subject areas. Picture the overall shape of the structure, the supporting beams, the rooms, but not necessarily every detail of the design. Keep in mind that you may not be able to include every educational goal in your degree plan, which may mean making some difficult choices. Talk with your fellow students, your instructor, and other consultants. Then, do the best you can to create a well-rounded plan.
Assuming authority over and responsibility for these decisions can be a truly transformational process, and the word “process” is key here. Just as blueprints can change during construction, your degree plan can be amended along the way. By the end of PRSP 301, you’ll produce a degree plan that your instructor will approve. However, the details of how you implement your blueprint can change. To change your plan, submit a Degree Plan Amendment Form to your advisor. Their job is not to be gatekeepers who bar the way, but to “have your back”—for example, by checking to make sure that you aren’t replacing an upper division course that you need with a lower division one.

Thinking about your life and educational goals

By now, our class has already offered valuable resources for self-assessing your personal strengths, interests and needs, and you should be well-prepared for developing your individualized degree plan.

Exercise 2 provides a starting point for thinking about your life goals and educational goals. It asks you to think of both your long-term life goals and some specific ways you might realize those goals as you work toward your B.A. degree. When you design an individualized degree plan in the context of your life and educational goals, you place education in service of your needs instead of putting yourself in service of the institution.

Start by brainstorming a list of life goals. Don’t worry about what form they take. Give yourself permission to dream.

- What is it you really want out of life?
- What things might you want to study just for the pure joy they bring you?
- What do you need to learn to be a well-educated person?

Across from each Life Goal, indicate what areas of study (Specific Educational Goals) you might pursue in order to realize that particular goal. Under Specific Educational Goals, don’t worry about listing particular courses. Just think about subject areas you could study to achieve that goal.

As a student at an urban university with commitment to civic engagement, consider your education from a broad perspective that not only addresses personal interests but also your responsibilities as a national and global citizen. For more, see Chapter 7.
Creating your degree plan

Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Life Goals</th>
<th>Specific Educational Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding/helping my family</td>
<td>Child psychology, family systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming a corporate manager</td>
<td>Accounting, personal finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanding leisure time options</td>
<td>Study wildflowers, intern at local Nature Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation for graduate school</td>
<td>Improving math and writing skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring my religious roots</td>
<td>Hebrew scriptures and spirituality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming more politically active</td>
<td>Join my local neighborhood association</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Framing your focus

Frame a focus that reflects the major thrust of your interests and studies. If you are a CIS student, you will not complete a standard “major” in a single traditional discipline such as accounting, nursing, or social work. You will define your own area of depth in inter-, multi-, and transdisciplinary knowledge areas. Therefore, we use the term focus, instead of major, to signify the distinctly different nature of your degree program.

Minimum requirements

Individualized degree plans draw from multiple disciplines and usually incorporate work from more than one college to help students meet their focus objectives. Your focus must include a minimum of 32 semester credits, including credit you may have transferred as well as new areas of study.

- If you are a CIS student, PRSP 301, as well as a capstone course (generally PRSP 499 Capstone), should be included on your focus page.
- If you are not a CIS student and taking this class as a Liberal Studies elective, your focus page should list the courses required for your major.

The freedom that an individualized degree offers allows you to create a unique focus that is integrated thematically, but that may include study from many disciplines. Designing an individualized degree is not simply a matter of meeting graduation requirements. It involves developing a degree plan that reflects your unique needs as an educated person in relation to your life and career goals. You should carefully consider how to create a focus that integrates multiple areas of study across different academic units, but also maintains integrity of purpose.

Your focus area can include transfer credits and GELS credits, as well as new learning (keeping in mind that the credit hours only count once).
The following focus area examples illustrate different approaches to designing an Individualized B.A. focus.

**Broad interdisciplinary focus**
You can build a focus around a broad theme or topic that includes courses from two or more of the other colleges within Metropolitan State University.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Small Business and the Environmental Movement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International Development in Third World Countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Development Through Art and Story Telling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dual/split focus**
You can also combine an area of special interest with perhaps a concentration from a different area. You can use Minors that are offered in other programs as guides for the type of courses you might group together.

- A student running her own daycare center combined a focus in small business management and entrepreneurship with a minor in psychology that focused on child development.
- A youth minister combined a religious studies minor with human services and counseling courses.
- A student preparing to work with domestic violence survivors combined crisis intervention, psychology and violence prevention studies with internships in community organization.
- A Peace Corps volunteer (Peace Corps B.A.) combined Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) of his Peace Corps work with psychology and counseling courses to prepare him for graduate study in psychology.
- A student combined an aviation management focus with an ethnic studies minor to better understand the diversity of peoples and countries to which she’d be travelling.

**Liberal education with a focused theme**
You may have come to Metropolitan State University with substantial specialized technical training in the armed services, from community and technical colleges or from vocational schools. Your main goal may be to complete a degree that rounds out your specialized education with study in the liberal arts. You’re likely to have already completed your focus area, and only need to complete the GELS goals to add breadth to your bachelor’s degree.

- A student chose GELS courses that strengthened her knowledge in leadership
- A student added GELS courses with a community engagement and child advocacy focus
**Preparation for further study**

You can also use your individualized degree to prepare for a particular graduate program, for law school, or for other kinds of programs such as a physician’s assistant program. You can include missing prerequisites needed for admission to the program you’ve chosen. A focus like this might include the following:

- WRIT 331 Writing in Your Major
- INFS 300-level course work or research methods courses (check for required prerequisites).
- Self-directed learning can also be a valuable option to prepare for the initiative and scholarship expected at the graduate level.

**Avoid creating a shadow degree**

An individualized degree plan should not be used to circumvent policies or procedures of the other colleges. A shadow degree is an individualized degree plan with a:

- focus title that is the same as an existing major at Metropolitan State
- focus page that includes all but one or two courses from an existing major at Metropolitan State

If you are really completing most of your studies in one major but not formally declaring that major, you are developing a shadow degree plan.

- If you really want a particular degree title, you should formally declare that major.
- If you know you want to focus solely on courses required by a particular major, then you should formally declare that major.

Avoid creating a shadow degree by:

- thinking creatively about a focus title that accurately represents the bodies of knowledge you’ve included in your focus in broad terms
- thinking in broad inter-, multi-, and trans-disciplinary terms as you develop your focus
- declaring a minor if part of your “focus” involves four or five courses in a specific discipline
Understanding graduation requirements

This section explains the graduation requirements in more detail. To earn your Individualized Bachelor of Arts degree, you must successfully complete **120 semester credits** which include the following:

- **General Education/Liberal Studies (GELS):** 48 credits, including 8 upper division
- **Focus Area:** 32 credits
- **Upper Division:** 40 credits
- **Metropolitan State Residency:** 30 credits
- **College of Individualized Studies residency:** 20 credits

**GELS requirements**

You must include a minimum of 40 lower-division credits and 8 upper-division credits for a minimum total of 48 semester GELS credits in the following 10 goal areas:

- **Goal 1:** Communication (two writing classes; one oral or visual communication class)
- **Goal 2:** Higher Order Thinking (met by completing 1 and 3–10)
- **Goal 3:** Natural Sciences (must include a lab)
- **Goal 4:** Mathematical/Logical Reasoning
- **Goal 5:** History and Social and Behavioral Sciences (two different disciplines)
- **Goal 6:** Humanities and the Fine Arts (two different disciplines)
- **Goal 7:** Human Diversity
- **Goal 8:** Global Awareness
- **Goal 9:** Ethical and Civic Responsibility
- **Goal 10:** People and the Environment

**Focus area**

Your focus area must contain a minimum of 32 credits. The focus may include transfer credits as well as GELS courses related to the focus. There is no minimum or maximum limit on lower versus upper division credit. Your focus area can include all lower division, some lower and some upper division, or all upper division credit.

**Upper-division**

All universities expect their students to do some work at an advanced, or upper-division, level. One generally accepted definition of an educated person holds that an educated person needs both *breadth* and *depth* of
Creating your degree plan

knowledge. The purpose of requiring upper-division work is to ensure you understand a subject area with sufficient depth to have more than an overview of the field. Such depth is usually gained through study at the upper-division level.

Metropolitan State University students are required to have at least 40 semester credits at an upper-division level—courses that are numbered 300–499. Naturally, you may choose more than 40 upper-division credits.

As you develop your focus, be aware that many upper division courses have prerequisites. It is your responsibility to complete these prerequisites before enrolling in any course you’ve included in your focus.

Lower-division credits include courses at the 100 or 200 level. (Usually, courses numbered less than 100 do not count toward a B.A. degree.) Some of you may have come to Metropolitan State University with a large number of lower-division credits. Since you need to complete 40 upper-division credits, you can use only 80 lower-division credits toward the total credit requirement for graduation. However, if you transfer more than 80 credits, some of those extra lower-division credits may apply toward your GELS requirements or may be appropriate for your focus area.

**Metropolitan State residency**

Metropolitan State University follows the nationwide standard of requiring students to complete a minimum of 30 semester credits resident at the degree-granting institution—this is the Metropolitan State residency requirement.

**College of Individualized Studies residency**

To ensure that students have the opportunity to develop well-rounded individualized degree programs, the College of Individualized Studies (CIS) has a 20 credit residency requirement. In order to earn an Individualized B.A., you must complete at least 20 credits while resident in the College of Individualized Studies. Residency begins in the semester when you are admitted to CIS and/or take PRSP 301 (4 credits), whichever comes first. All credits earned from that point on count toward residency, including PRSP 499 Capstone (4 credits).
Most of you will have transfer credits from other colleges and universities. When you were admitted, you received a DARS report, which lists all of the credits transferred, and shows how they apply to your degree requirements.

Review your DARS report carefully to be sure that it accurately reflects your transfer credit.

- If there are errors, or if you have questions about how some of your credits have been applied, bring them to the attention of your advisor or instructor.
- If you disagree with how credits were used to meet requirements, particularly the GELS requirements, you can appeal.

To submit a request for correction, search “transfer credit appeal form” on the Metropolitan State Web site. Your instructor can also help with these forms.

Quick guide to USelect

You can see how courses from higher education institutions in Minnesota and many other states (as well as how CLEP, DANTES and other tests) transfers to Metropolitan State by going to www.transfer.org. Here’s a quick guide to USelect:

1. Gather your transcripts.
2. Open the U-Select window on your browser.
3. Under Look for course or transfer information click on Equivalencies by School.
4. Select Minnesota from the State drop-down menu, Metropolitan State University from the School drop-down menu.
5. Select the state where the school you've attended is located; then select the school.
6. Select the schools in the checkboxes on the right, click on Add Schools.
7. Click on Create Guide in the box on the upper right above the list of schools.
8. On the left side, choose the Subject (course code from your transcript) and then see equivalents on the right side (including GELS).

FOR STANDARDIZED TESTS:
Follow the same process EXCEPT choose Standardized Examinations and press Go (to right of states) to access exam equivalencies.
Technical credit transfer

If you’ve transferred credits from a technical college, the Registrar accepts credits that meet GELS goals PLUS up to 16 technical credits. However, the College of Individualized Studies will accept additional technical credits, particularly if they relate to your focus. Your advisor or PRSP 301 instructor will work with you to determine how many credits can be applied to your program and then complete a request to have additional credits recorded and reflected on your DARS.

Planning your degree page-by-page

Your degree plan contains the following pages:

- **Cover page**—contains personal information, snapshot of where you stand in relation to graduation requirements, and a Student Pledge that you must sign and date.
- **Degree Plan Rationale page**—provides a rationale for your individualized degree plan focus, in the context of your educational, career and life goals.
- **Focus page**—lists the courses (or other learning strategies) that comprise your area of depth of knowledge, your individualized focus.
- **GELS Requirements page**—lists the courses (or other learning strategies) for General Education/Liberal Studies requirements that are met, needed, or in progress.
- **Student-Directed Learning (SDL) page**—include one page for each SDL you plan to include in your focus.
- **Consultation page**—documents consultations, research and advice that contributes to design of this degree plan.
- **Program Declaration Form**—the official form to declare your intention to complete an Individualized Bachelor of Arts degree and to be assigned an academic advisor in the College of Individualized Studies.

Organization of this section

This section contains page-by-page instructions for developing your degree plan. Each section is organized as follows:

- **What to think about**—offers an overview of the purpose and requirements for that page of the degree plan
- **What TO DO**—provides specific directions for how to complete that page of the degree plan
Chapter 6

Gather your planning materials

Gather the following materials to begin drafting your degree plan:

- **Degree plan document (Word.doc)**—available on your course’s D2L page OR the Metropolitan State Web site. Plan to sit at your computer with your Degree Plan open on your desktop, and the print copies of the other materials in this list.

- **Sample degree plans in Appendix B**—for examples of how other students have conceived their individualized degrees.

- **Current copy of your Degree Audit Report System (DARS) report** listing credits accepted for admission.

- **Your college transcripts**—You may find it helpful to review a copy of your college transcripts in case there are any errors on the DARS, or questions to raise with your PRSP 301 instructor. *For example, you may have transferred credit from a technical college. If so, your DARS may only give you 16 credits, but more are indicated in parenthesis. Your PRSP 301 instructor can submit a form to request that you receive additional technical credits.*

- Any other materials assigned by your instructor

Cover page

What to think about

Once your degree plan is accepted by your PRSP 301 instructor, it represents the agreement between you and the university to grant your Individualized B.A. It’s important that you fully understand all of the graduation requirements in relation to the knowledge that you’ve already gained, as well as what remains to complete your degree.

The cover page offers a contents that summarizes what’s included in the document, a snapshot of where you stand in relation to graduation requirements, and a Student Pledge that you must sign and date at the bottom to signify your understanding of the agreement between you and Metropolitan State.

Although you have primary responsibility for your degree plan, the university holds some responsibility as well. Therefore, once your degree plan is approved changes to your focus must be submitted on an Amendment Form (available on the Metropolitan State Web site), and approved by your advisor.

What TO DO

Enter your Name, Student ID, and Focus Title at the top of the page.

In the Contents section, check the box next each page that you’ve included in your plan.
Creating your degree plan

In the Requirements section, use your DARS to list Credits Completed, In Progress, and Needed for each graduation requirement.

- Credits may overlap multiple categories, but ALL requirements must be met
- Calculate each requirement INDIVIDUALLY. They do NOT total.

Read the Student Pledge carefully, and sign and date to attest your commitment to our agreement.

Your instructor will review your plan, and you’ll be informed whether it was accepted or needs revision.

Degree Plan Rationale page

What to think about

Your Degree Plan Rationale (DPR) is the most important part of your Individualized Bachelor of Arts degree because it explains the purpose of your degree in narrative form. Your DPR is the why behind your individualized degree—readers should clearly understand why you’ve designed an individualized degree, rather than completing a traditional single-discipline major.

Consider this DPR to be a work in progress throughout the course. You likely will draft the rationale and revise it several times before you submit your final degree plan. Sections of the DPR (such as “Your Past” or “Your Philosophy”) might correlate well with assignments your instructor requires such as your educational odyssey, autobiography, or educated person paper.

Your DPR should put your Individualized plan of study in the context of your life as a whole. Readers should understand something about your:

- past—the life and educational experiences that brought you to this moment, what you’ve learned, and what you still need to know
- present—what you hope to learn here (in broad knowledge areas) and why you want to learn it
- future—what you hope to gain from your individualized degree and where you hope that knowledge will take you.

Focus Title

Officially, your transcript will list your degree title as a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Individualized Studies. However, it is important that you name your focus. Historically, graduates of the individualized program use their focus titles on their resumes since this describes what you know better than the formal title. You may also decide to list both, like this:

B.A. in Individualized Studies: Your Unique Focus Title
Sometimes the appropriate title isn’t clarified until you develop your focus page, or submit your final plan. It’s all right if it takes time to decide on the best title, but it’s important that you have one!

Following are some DOs and DON’Ts to keep in mind as you develop your Degree Plan Rationale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>DOs</strong></th>
<th><strong>DON’Ts</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explain what you know and need to learn in terms of broad subject areas</td>
<td>List specific courses—those will be on your focus page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a focus title</td>
<td>Name your focus precisely like an existing major at Metropolitan State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include as many areas of study (academic disciplines, subject areas) to fulfill your goals.</td>
<td>Include all but a few courses from an existing major at Metropolitan State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain how you plan to build on prior academic and experiential learning with new learning (courses, internships, self-directed learning, prior learning assessment)</td>
<td>Think of what you know only in terms of previously transcripted credit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What TO DO**

**Plan to draft your DPR in stages.** The best writing occurs over a period of time. The more you leave yourself time to reflect in between writing sessions, the better final product you’ll develop.

**At your first sitting,** it’s easiest to begin by writing about the past because you’re just telling the story of your life and the learning experiences you’ve had so far. Just write what you think you need to say without worrying too much about length.

**Use the same process to draft the other sections.**

**When you’ve generated a few pages of writing,** sit down at a later time and revise the whole essay to meet the following requirements. Your DPR should be approximately two double-spaced pages (or about 500 words), and should address the following:

- **Your Past**—Briefly describe previous learning experiences in higher education, work and life, as well as how this plan builds on your previous educational and life experience.
Creating your degree plan

- **Your Present**—Give a title to your focus area and explain how the variety of disciplines and learning experiences you include meet your educational goals and create a meaningful area of depth.
- **Your Future**—Briefly describe the visions you have for your future. Consider how this individualized degree will enhance your capacity for lifelong learning.
- **Your Philosophy**—Describe your philosophy of what it means to be an educated person and how this plan supports your learning and growth as an educated person.

**Focus page**

**What to think about**

As you reflect on what to include on the focus page, you may want to review the following:

- courses/credits completed at other schools
- previous credit completed at Metropolitan State
- the Metropolitan State Catalog—for ideas about areas of study, not necessarily particular courses
- identify whether there are prerequisites for any courses that you include in your focus
- theory seminars, student-designed independent study, prior learning assessment, internships, and/or standardized tests you may want to include
- Metropolitan State’s Career Services resources or on Minnesota’s career-related system.

### DOs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOs</th>
<th>DON'TS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Include creative learning strategies such as SDLs, internships, theory seminars &amp; standardized tests</td>
<td>Only choose from existing Metropolitan State courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include as many areas of study (academic disciplines, subject areas) as are justified by your purpose</td>
<td>Include all but a few courses from an existing major at Metropolitan State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow the example below which shows HOW to list your courses</td>
<td>Use the wrong Subject # from the DARS. Look at the example carefully.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include at least 32 credits on your focus page</td>
<td>Include courses restricted to majors, such as nursing, and urban education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include any pre-requisites required for courses on your focus page</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although your focus may include transfer credits as well as GELS courses related to the focus, but the **semester credits only count once**.

**What TO DO**

At the top of the page, enter your unique focus title. Use a few terms to describe the bodies of knowledge in which you’ll have the most depth.

Use your DARS report to enter all previously transcripted credit.

Following are descriptions of each column of the focus page:

- **Subject Number (#): Title**—List the Subject, Number (#) & Title as shown on your DARS report. Refer to the example below.
- **Institution**—Abbreviate the name of the school granting the credit, such as Metro, MCTC, or UMN.
- **Learning Strategy**—Choose from Course, FDIS, Student-designed Learning (SDL), Internship (Intern), Theory Seminar (TS), or Standardized Test (Test).
- **Credits**—List the *credit* in the appropriate Lower or Upper Division column
  
  **TECHNICAL CREDIT:** If you are applying a cluster of technical credits (such as prosthetics, paralegal studies, or interior design) from an earlier degree toward your individualized focus, list those credits as a group.

- **Status**—Indicate whether Completed (C) or In Progress (IP).

The following example shows a course listing from a DARS report and where to find the correct elements to enter on your focus page.

**Enter all remaining credit** that has yet to be earned that will demonstrate knowledge in your focus.

The focus page Example below shows how to list credits—some of which is In Progress (IP), some Complete (C), and some yet to be taken.
### Focus page Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT #: COURSE TITLE</th>
<th>INSTITUTION</th>
<th>LEARNING STRATEGY</th>
<th>CREDITS</th>
<th>LOWER DIVISION</th>
<th>UPPER DIVISION</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRSP 301: Educ Phil &amp; Plng</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>IP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG 1108: Writing &amp; Research Skills</td>
<td>Inver</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRSP 302T: Self-Directed Learning Theory Seminar</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>TS</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech Credits in Prosthetics</td>
<td>Century</td>
<td>Courses</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Enter Lower & Upper Division Subtotals at the bottom of the page.

Enter the Total of all credit at the bottom of the page. Your focus must include a minimum of 32 credits, but there is no maximum limit.

### GELS Requirements page

#### What to think about

Completing the GELS Requirements page will help you clarify what remains to plan for in your individualized focus. You can find the General Education and Liberal Studies (GELS) requirements, and the list of Metropolitan State courses that meet them:

- on the Metropolitan State Web site (search for GELS)
- in the Registration Resources guide
- in the Metropolitan State University Catalog

Read the description of GELS requirements carefully. Understanding such things as the specific requirements for each goal area, and how to effectively use overlaps are key to assuming responsibility for and authority over your education. For example, courses such as MGMT 360 Managing a Diverse Workforce or IBUS 311 International Business count toward specific goal areas, but do NOT count toward general education totals.

Although different colleges and universities within MnSCU may have different courses that meet the GELS requirements, the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC) is common to all MnSCU institutions and the University of Minnesota. This means that any GELS goal areas that you completed at another MnSCU institution will be considered complete at Metropolitan State.

Some things to pay particular attention to:
- PRSP 301 counts toward the Liberal Arts goal.
- PRSP 499 does NOT count toward the Liberal Arts goal.
• Be careful using overlaps—one course to meet two GELS goals—the credits only count once, and you still need to reach 48 total.
• You must complete a minimum of 3 credits in each goal area.
• You **may use creative learning strategies** such as SDLs, theory seminars, and standardized tests to meet GELS goals.

**What TO DO**

**On the GELS Requirements page**, check the appropriate sentence indicating whether or not you’ve completed the goals.

1. ___ I have completed the GELS requirements
2. ___ I have completed the General Education, but NOT the Liberal Studies requirements. *True if you’ve earned an Associate of Arts from a MnSCU community college.*
3. ___ I have NOT completed the GELS requirements.

**Complete this page, only IF** you checked one of the following items:

- **For #2**—You *only* need to complete the Liberal Studies goal
- **For #3**—You need to complete the whole GELS page

In the **Status** column, indicate whether the requirement is **Met (M)**, **In Progress (IP)**, or **Needed (N)** for each course that you enter.

The following GELS Requirements Example shows how to list a completed course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL #: AREA</th>
<th>SUBJECT #: COURSE TITLE</th>
<th>CREDITS</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introductory Writing</td>
<td>ENG 1108 Writing &amp; Research Skills</td>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Met (M)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Enter Lower & Upper Division Subtotals** at the bottom of the page, and verify that you have at least 8 upper division credits.

**Enter the Total** of all credit at the bottom of the page, and verify that you have 48 credits minimum.
Student-Directed Learning (SDL) page

What to think about

Many students designing an individualized degree include Student-directed Learning (SDL) in their plan. Some build on previous experiential or non-credit learning through prior learning assessment (PLA) or theory seminars. Some seek new student-directed learning in areas not available at Metropolitan State. (For more, review Chapter 5.) Student-directed learning can apply to your focus or GELS.

Be aware that completing this page, does NOT signify official approval of your SDL. Before registering, you must submit the official Student-Directed Learning (SDL) Proposal Form.

What TO DO

If you are including SDLs on your focus page, complete an SDL page for each SDL you include. You do not need to complete this page for theory seminars or internships.

Before you actually register for student-directed learning (SDL or PLA), you will need to complete a more extensive form (For more, review Chapter 5).

Consultation page

What to think about

The Consultation page is where you tell the story of any conversations, consultations, research and advising that contributed to your individualized degree—both your choice to pursue an individualized degree and the design of your focus.

You’re welcome to consult with as many people as you find useful. In fact, it can be valuable to consult with experts outside the university, such as interviewing people who are doing the type of work you’re interested in pursuing.

Many of you may have begun the consulting process before you came to Metropolitan State and the College of Individualized Studies. Your research may include all types of things such as the following:

- a conversation with a friend who earned an Individualized B.A.
- reviewing existing programs (undergraduate or graduate) related to your focus
- conversations with experts in proposed careers or fields of interest
- participation in graduate program information meetings
- completing career assessments
- attending SDL working labs.

Completing this page, does NOT signify official approval of your SDL. Before registering, you must submit the official Student-Directed Learning (SDL) Proposal Form.
If you have not consulted with anyone about your individualized degree plan, we have identified and trained Resident and Community Faculty members to serve as consultants. These individuals are experts in their areas and are available to answer questions about your degree plan and/or long-range goals. Your instructor can help to identify consultants that may be particularly useful to you.

**What TO DO**

**Before you schedule your consultation,** prepare questions in advance, such as:

- What bodies of knowledge or specific courses should I include?
- Should I study some things before others?
- What previous course work will fulfill existing prerequisites?
- How would I go about getting an internship in this field?
- How might I incorporate my experiential learning through SDL or PLA options?
- How best could I prepare for graduate school?

**On the Consultation page,** briefly tell the story of your research and consultation process including people you spoke to, programs you investigated, information you gained, and how this has guided the decision to complete your individualized degree and the design of your focus.

**Program Declaration Form**

**What to think about**

The Program Declaration Form for the College of Individualized Studies is included in Appendix D and on the university’s Web site.

**What TO DO**

If you have not already completed a program declaration, you should do so now. This formally admits you into the College of Individualized Studies. Be sure to include your Metropolitan State e-mail, which is required for official communication at this university.

**Reflecting on this chapter**

After you’ve drafted your degree plan, pause and take a few minutes to appreciate your accomplishment. Too often in our lives we rush forward to the next task without taking time to reflect on and savor what we’ve accomplished. As you well-understand by now, creating an Individualized Degree Plan is no small task. It takes forethought, intentionality, integrity and courage. It is much easier to let someone else “call the shots” and tell you what to study. You have chosen to take
Creating your degree plan

responsibility for your own education, and should be justly proud of your accomplishment.

Even though your Degree Plan is just that—a plan—it is a plan of your making. We think that putting this plan together will make your education more intentional and more worthwhile. You designed this plan and you will implement it, which means that you are well on your way as a self-directed learner.

Years ago the American poet Robert Frost penned these words.

Two roads diverged in a wood and I took the one less traveled by . . . and that has made all the difference.

In choosing to develop your own individualized degree plan, you have chosen a road “less traveled by.” If you have done so conscientiously, we believe it will make “all the difference.” Congratulations, and enjoy your studies!
Learning after Perspectives & life after Metropolitan State

Congratulations on completing the design of your individualized degree plan! Since the end of this project is also the beginning of the rest of your education, this chapter offers guidance on ensuring the integrity of your degree plan, working with your advisor, considering your future (employment and graduate study), what to expect in the Capstone course, and how you might put your philosophy of education to work through civic engagement and community service.

Learning outcomes

- Assume responsibility for ensuring the integrity of your degree plan
- Understand the role of your academic advisor, especially when to contact your advisor
- Be informed on future options in the job market and for graduate study with an individualized degree
- Know what to expect in the PRSP 499 Capstone course
- Think about life after Metropolitan State, especially graduate study, the job market, and the importance of civic engagement and community service

As you approach graduation and even leaving Metropolitan State, keep in mind John Dewey’s words for they reflect the idea that life itself becomes a succession of goals achieved through various learning experiences, both inside and outside of the classroom. Dewey felt very strongly that life and education are deeply interconnected and that education allows us to see all kinds of possibilities to make positive change in the world. This is encapsulated in another of his very famous quotes: “Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.”
Chapter 7

Learning after Perspectives

This section covers a few things to keep in mind as you continue learning after Perspectives is over:

- Developing your “elevator speech”
- Maintaining the integrity of your degree plan
- Working with your CIS academic advisor
- Continuing to write in your reflective journal
- Understanding the Capstone

Developing your “elevator speech”

Now that you’re working toward your bachelor’s degree, people will want to know what you’re studying. In casual conversation, most people expect you to give them a one or two word answer—the title of your “major.” But, you’re not completing a traditional major. So, what do you say?

If you’re happy with your focus title, you could start there. Just give them that title as if it’s a traditional degree. If they want to know more about it, they’ll ask. Then, you can describe the process of the program—that it is individualized and that you created your own degree.

At that point, you want an “elevator speech”—a way of explaining what you’re studying and/or what you know in just a few sentences. Your explanation should be brief enough to be shared “between floors” if you were on an elevator (hence, the name). Taking a few moments to reflect on this will help you talk about your nontraditional studies with confidence and authority.

Maintaining your degree plan’s integrity

As a student in the College of Individualized Studies you have been granted the freedom to design your own bachelor’s degree. At the completion of this Perspectives course, your instructor will approve your degree plan and it will become your agreement with the university.

Along with the authority you have been granted comes the responsibility to maintain the integrity of your individualized program. What this means, in the most concrete terms, is sticking with the plan you designed in Perspectives. If you need to make either minor or major changes to your degree plan in the future, you should send a Degree Plan Amendment Form to your advisor. Your advisor will check your records to ensure that you’re still fulfilling all the graduation requirements for Individualized Studies, B.A.

Most amendments are easily approved—after all, it’s your plan. While advisors are flexible about minor changes (such as the addition or
replacement of a course or two in your Focus), any major revisions require a re-submission of your degree plan. This takes some time and thought, but as a student in the College of Individualized Studies, you have the freedom to make such revisions in your degree plan as long as you exercise the same care that you did in originally developing the plan during Perspectives.

**Tracking your own progress toward degree requirements**

As one who’s assumed authority over and responsibility for your education, you should be tracking your own progress toward meeting all of the following degree requirements:

- 120 total credits
- 48 credits in 10 GELS goal areas
- 40 upper division credits (including PRSP 301 & PRSP 499)
- 30 credits resident at Metropolitan State University
- 20 credits resident in the College of Individualized Studies
- depth of knowledge in a student-defined Focus

Although some of these credits may overlap in different areas, each of the total number of credits must be met. For example, if you take 30 credits at Metropolitan State University and all of those credits are upper division, you would meet both the residency requirement and 30 of the 40 upper division credits requirement.

The easiest way to keep track of your progress is via your Degree Audit Report System (DARS) report. Since your DARS report is accessible via Eservices—the same tool through which you register for classes—it’s wise to check your progress each semester when you register. As you change your registration choices, the DARS report will display up-to-the-minute information about your progress toward each individual degree requirement.

**Working with your CIS Academic Advisor**

After you submit the Undergraduate Program Declaration Form, you’re assigned an academic advisor in CIS to support you toward graduation. During the Perspectives course, you can rely largely on the wisdom of your instructor, but once you complete Perspectives, we urge you to stay in regular contact with your assigned advisor.

The CIS advisors are very concerned with each of their student’s success. They are an excellent source of knowledge and can help you navigate the sometimes confusing rules and regulations of the university. They are also available to help you through difficult times with a compassionate ear. When Capstone students are asked what advice they would give new students, the advice they give most frequently is to keep in touch with your advisor.
We encourage you to introduce yourself to your advisor early on, to review your individualized degree plan (or your major if you are in another college) and to become acquainted. If you have questions about which courses to start with, or how to generally proceed, your advisor is there to assist you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When might I contact my advisor?</th>
<th>When must I contact my advisor?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• to discuss your registration or how to balance GELS and Focus</td>
<td>• to get to know each other and review your program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• to discuss problems you're having with an instructor or class</td>
<td>• to consider changing your primary area of focus or adding a minor to your degree plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• to get support from a friendly listener in difficult times</td>
<td>• to discuss academic probation or other student status issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• to get an appropriate referral to a career specialist</td>
<td>• to discuss substituting an SDL, internship, or other learning strategy for a regular course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• for guidance about any academic issue</td>
<td>• to ensure that graduation requirements have been met, contact your advisor in the semester BEFORE you plan to graduate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ensuring on-time graduation

When you’re ready to graduate, your academic advisor is the person who will certify that you have met all of the graduation requirements for your degree. If you’ve been accessing your DARS to check your progress each semester when you register for classes, you should know exactly where you stand. However, we also recommend that you contact your academic advisor in the semester BEFORE you intend to graduate to ensure that you have met all requirements and to avoid any last minute surprises.

In the semester that you intend to graduate, be sure to register for WKSP Graduation Workshop along with your other classes. This notifies your advisor to review your records and also gives you access to a brief online workshop describing graduation and the commencement ceremony. There is a deadline early in each semester by which you must be registered for the Graduation Workshop in order to graduate that semester.

Continuing to write your reflective journal

By now you’ve completed much of your reflective journal, and you will have completed most of it by the end of Perspectives. Part of what it means to maintain the integrity of your degree plan is to be in continual
reflection on whether and how your learning is reflecting your educational and lifelong goals. As a CIS student, you’re expected to continue the reflection process you began in Perspectives, and make regular journal entries throughout your studies at Metropolitan State. For example, you should:

- journal at the completion of each course or other learning experience, reflecting on what you learned
- reflect (at least once a year) on such issues as the continued development of your critical thinking skills and the general direction of your educational program.

Since you’re defining your own course of study, it is up to you to integrate that knowledge—often from many disciplines or subject areas—into a meaningful whole. Journaling along the way can help with that process of synthesizing what you’ve learned. Part of what it means to maintain the integrity of your degree plan is to be in continual reflection on whether and how your learning is reflecting your educational and lifelong goals.

Your journals will be used in the Capstone course as input for reflecting on what you’ve learned at Metropolitan State and what you plan to explore as a lifelong learner once you graduate.

Understanding the Capstone

Looking at the meaning of the word *capstone* may help you begin to understand the purpose of this course. The primary meaning of the word *capstone* is an architectural term referring to the stone placed on top of a building when it’s complete. The secondary meaning of the word *capstone* is a crowning achievement or culmination.

In higher education, many programs have adopted the practice of requiring capstone courses for their students to demonstrate depth of knowledge in their fields. You’re required to complete a Capstone to earn your Individualized Bachelor of Arts degree. Although most students take the PRSP 499 Capstone course in CIS, you *may* take another capstone in a specific subject area if it better suits your learning needs (and if you have met any prerequisite requirements for that alternative capstone). It’s a good idea to discuss these options with your Perspectives instructor (initially) and with your advisor (later).

As individualized degree students, you’ve all created unique programs. So, you may be wondering exactly what you’ll be studying in the PRSP 499 Capstone course. The Capstone offers an opportunity for you to reflect on the outcomes of your educational journey at Metropolitan State and to synthesize these discoveries. You’ll be asked to demonstrate what you’ve learned in relation to the six competence areas (See Chapter 3) and the CIS learning outcomes (See Chapter 4). The following table shows the ways in which the six Competence Areas and the learning outcomes for the Individualized B.A. program overlap:
# Competence areas & learning outcomes for the Individualized B.A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence areas</th>
<th>Learning outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competencies 1-4</strong></td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mathematics and the natural world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Humanities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflective, self-transcendent learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competency 5</strong></td>
<td>Vocation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge in a self-defined area of Focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-directed learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competency 6</strong></td>
<td>Avocation and lifelong learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lifelong learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You’ll reflect on how much you’ve learned via questions such as these in relation to each learning outcome:

**Self-directed learning**—To what degree have you assumed **responsibility for and authority over** your education? How much have you enhanced your critical thinking skills? Have you continued to develop the ability to self-assess your strengths and limitations, and develop an awareness of resources available to you? Are you skilled at articulating your learning needs and creating a plan to achieve them?

**Reflective, self-transcendent learning**—Have I cultivated an appreciation for a variety of perspectives on vocation, education and life? How well have I achieved some distance from my immediate ego needs? Do I have a healthy sense of humility about the fact that there is so much more to learn? Have I developed a sense of connectedness to the larger community and a desire to contribute to a common good? Do I have a sense of how my skills, knowledge, and talents might contribute to the human community?

**Knowledge in a self-defined focus area**—How well have I synthesized and integrated the knowledge from the multiple subject areas in my focus? What am I competent to do with my individualized education? What themes or patterns has this new knowledge helped me to recognize? How has my education helped me to develop professionally?
Lifelong learning—Do I have a sense of what I still need to learn in relation to my professional development, and have I identified resources for this continuing education? Have I learned how to fuel my spirit with learning for the sheer joy of it?

Let’s explore each of these learning outcomes in a bit more depth.

Self-directed learning

Successfully assuming responsibility for and authority over your education—being a self-directed learner—requires that you cultivate your skills for self-reflection. Reflection is the interior art of taking a pause to mull over certain aspects of our lives in the absence of our daily schedules and stressors. Too often, in our haste to finish things, we miss opportunities to reflect on and make sense of what’s happened and to use this knowledge to enrich our lives.

Reflection is, in part, the ability to look inside and assess, interpret, and make sense of our lives. Paradoxically, this also means stepping back from our ego involvement in our accomplishments so that we can objectively assess our strengths and weaknesses. In The Skillful Teacher, author Stephen Brookfield suggests that the ability to reflect is one of the hallmarks of an educated person.

In the Capstone you will be asked to look at where you started with regard to your degree plan, and what you have learned as a result of your formal education and life experiences. You can see why making regular entries in your Reflective Journal will really help you with this process.

The Capstone will challenge you to answer questions such as: How have I grown as a person, parent, or partner? Am I happy with the general direction of my life? What needs to change for me to have a fuller life? Just who are we really? And what do we stand for? How do each of us participate in and support our culture—for good or ill? What obligation do we have to challenge and resist values we don’t support? Here we will touch on what sociologist Robert Bellah and his colleagues call habits of the heart. Educated people have self-knowledge of their strengths and limitations. They also have the ability to step back and see themselves in the larger context of the society in which they live.

The Capstone will offer you a much needed pause to stop and reflect on these important questions, on all that you’ve accomplished, and on all that you’ve learned from your experiences. By reflecting on our successes and failures we can learn how to go forward, and how we might become agents of positive change in our families, in our various communities, and in larger political, national and international settings.
Reflective, self-transcendent learning & civic engagement

In the simplest terms, becoming a reflective, self-transcendent learner involves viewing your education and your life in a larger context. Beyond the personal benefits, education has the potential to heighten your commitment to civic engagement. Toward that end, the Capstone will help you explore questions such as: What have you learned at Metropolitan State that’s helped expand your concept of citizenship? In what ways are you an active participant in your various communities—neighborhood, local government, national organizations, and international, ethnic, and religious groups?

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2012 only 26 percent of U.S. Americans have completed a bachelor’s degree. In earning your Individualized B.A., you join that elite group that possesses the social privilege to function in positions of authority in our society. So, do you owe any special obligation to the other 74 percent to use that power wisely?

Giving back to our communities is a special opportunity for those of us who have had the access to earn a formal education. You may even come to the conclusion that it is an obligation of an educated person to give something back to their community.

Granted, we can all sometimes feel overwhelmed by the problems in our world. But, as the old saying goes, “It’s better to light one candle than to curse the darkness.” So, what candle are you going to light? You can’t do everything, but what can you do to make the world a better place—right where you are? Start thinking now about how you can contribute to what social philosophers call “the common good.”

Depth in self-defined focus (vocation)

As you’ve heard many times in this Perspectives class, two central elements of an educated person are breadth and depth of knowledge. The breadth component is addressed by the GELS requirements, and your efforts to embrace the six Competence Areas. The depth component is met by your Focus area—the area in which you’ve gained some depth of knowledge about a subject, topic, or issue.

It’s only by diving deeply into an area of study that you come to understand both the core threads and assumptions behind a topic, as well as problematical issues and concerns. In today’s information overloaded culture, we are too often tempted to sacrifice depth of understanding for knowing a little about everything. It’s important to take the time to reflect on issues in their complexity, across multiple disciplinary boundaries, and in this effort discover theories that are shared. These common theories point to deeper core truths.
Another important reason for going deeply into a subject/topic is that in doing so you begin to see inevitable connections between your area of expertise and a myriad of other areas of concern. For example, you’ll quickly discover that it’s impossible to fully comprehend psychology without understanding something about physiology, nutrition, infant development, cultural sources of stress, and even spirituality. You begin to see how knowledge doesn’t really exist in discrete boxes; it’s the legacy of our single-discipline based knowledge tradition that created the boxes. But, 21st century challenges will require people who can think within, across, and beyond those boundaries—just as your individualized education teaches you to do.

Lifelong learning (avocation)

Right now you’re probably pretty focused on finishing your degree, and the thought of lifelong learning may leave you fatigued or overwhelmed. But, whether you intentionally choose to or not, you will continue to learn. The only question is whether you’re going to direct your learning or not. We’ll consider questions such as: How will you stay abreast of changes in your area of expertise? What skills can you develop that will help you adjust to a flexible, ever-changing job-market? How can you continue to improve your writing, speaking and computer skills so that you can make lateral moves when you decide on a career change?

Maybe your lifelong learning will have more to do with avocation. One of the reasons CIS stresses the importance of avocational competence is that we realize that most of us will have many productive years of life after we retire. Retirement offers the time we always wished we had to explore the things we love—hobbies, reading, personal relationships, new areas of work or volunteerism, community involvement, and the spiritual side of life, to name a few.

Ultimately, each Capstone experience will be different because it depends so much on the blend of teacher and students. Though you are only in the process of completing the Perspectives course, we want you to look forward to that Capstone experience so that you can get the most from it. The best way to prepare for the Capstone is to simply be the most engaged learner you can. The Reflective Journal you have started in Perspectives will be an important source of data for your Capstone reflection—so, plan to make regular entries!

Life after Metropolitan State

This section covers a few ideas that we hope will help you reflect on your life after you leave Metropolitan State, and the ways in which your ideas about what you want your life to look like may impact the design of your individualized degree.
Thinking about graduate study?

For those of you considering a graduate degree in the future, this section offers general information regarding the different options available. You may want to do some research into graduate programs that you’re considering since you have the opportunity to use the flexibility of your individualized degree plan to include any knowledge required for admission to the graduate program you’re considering.

There are generally two categories of graduate degrees—the master’s and the doctorate—as well as a number of hybrid or combined degree and certificate programs available at many universities, including Metropolitan State. Master's degree programs are growing in popularity across the United States, and offer degrees in many professional and academic fields, such as the Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.), the Master of Arts in Psychology (M.A.), the Master of Science in Nursing (M.S.N.), and the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (M.A.).

The Doctor of Philosophy degree (Ph.D.) is the highest possible academic degree, the end of the academic road, and is referred to as a terminal degree. Obtaining a Ph.D. requires you to demonstrate advanced knowledge through original research and/or application of same in one or more academic fields.

There are also master’s degrees and doctorates in individualized and interdisciplinary studies. If you choose to continue your individualized and interdisciplinary approach to learning on the graduate level, there are programs to explore, locally and nationally.

You will need to conduct research about the specific programs that interest you. Your professors, your academic advisor, professionals in your chosen fields of study, and reference librarians are all invaluable resources to help you make decisions about graduate schools. Most university Web sites have lots of information about their programs, and this is a rich resource in terms of digging down to see what a program is really about. It’s also a good idea to contact someone like the director of the graduate program you’re considering to get a better feel for their program.

What about the job market?

Students often want to know how their individualized degree might look to future employers. Traditionally, you might consider your unique educational experiences in a merely instrumental way—in terms of the subject area knowledge that you’ve gained. However, we hope you’ll see that your Individualized B.A. makes you a unique and impressive candidate, especially for positions and roles that require initiative, leadership, self-motivation, effective communication, creativity, and critical thinking skills.
One advantage of the Individualized B.A. is that it showcases your unique talents and combination of educational experiences. It also demonstrates that you can think in an interdisciplinary way and that you have taken the initiative to be in charge of your own education. While no one can predict the vagaries of the job market, it is a certainty that employers will continue to look for the brightest individuals who are self-motivated and who can work collaboratively to solve problems. They will continue to hire employees who exhibit creativity and imagination, as well as those who have excellent critical thinking and communication skills. Indeed, the fact that you have successfully designed your own unique degree plan already demonstrates many of the qualities employees will look for and reward.

Our graduates have gone into a wide array of positions such as service in public office, heading non-profit organizations, start-up entrepreneurial and artistic ventures, and management positions in various businesses and industries. Since many of our students become leaders in the working world, they are the ones doing the hiring, and making decisions about resources, planning, management, budgets, and growth. As such, the skills they learn while they are in our college serve them in these leadership roles wherever they become employed.

Remember that what makes you different from the student with a traditional major is your unique and interdisciplinary learning history. The more creative you’ve been in designing your plan, the more impressed your future employer will be. If you’ve made use of the options for student-designed learning, or incorporated an internship or theory seminar into your plan, this can only add to the richness of your resume, and further illustrates your initiative in designing a meaningful and rewarding education.

Finally, Metropolitan State offers you free career counseling. Staff in our Career Services office can help you decide where you might seek future employment and stay abreast of various job openings and trends in various fields. Please feel free to make an appointment with a career counselor by contacting our Career Services office. For more information, see the Metropolitan State Web site.

---

Butler, Margaret. (March 1, 2003). Lifelong Learning – it’s the only way to remain competitive in the job market. Strategic Finance.
Greenwald, Richard. (December 5, 2010). Today’s Students Need Leadership Training Like Never Before.” The Chronicle of Higher Education.
Chapter 7

Pursuing lifelong learning

If you choose not to enter into a graduate program after graduation, consider the option of adult continuing education opportunities at various venues in the Twin Cities. Many of our students have taken courses in foreign languages, writing, and technology, and workshops in a variety of subjects from gardening to genealogy. The opportunities to continue both your vocational and avocational passions are endless.

Whether you are completing a bachelor’s degree in order to find a secure job, to pursue a career in a certain professional field, to prepare for graduate school, or to fulfill a lifelong calling, we hope you will come to value your education and learning experiences beyond their merely instrumental value, and see that education enriches your life and has value for its own sake.

Putting your philosophy of education to work

Metropolitan State University is committed to the belief that students have an obligation to contribute to the community and become active, participating citizens in a democratic society. In CIS, we spend a great deal of time asking you to consider how what you have learned will help you expand your concept of citizenship and in what ways you can become an active participant in the world, through service and volunteer work, political activism, or by seeking employment in community service. We ask that you take the deep reflection and initiative you’ve shown as a student in the College of Individualized Studies and apply it to address social inequalities, end ethnic and racial discrimination, and create a more just society.

By becoming an educated person, you are already contributing something important to those around you, and that is a more discerning and critical perspective to social and political issues of our time. Part of what it means to be educated is that you are able to see how other people experience the world, how humans and their behavior connect on local and global levels, and how differences of class, race, gender, ethnicity, and religion all help to shape our identities and interactions with each other. Having learned about these linkages and differences, you are in a better position to see various perspectives and to approach any problem collaboratively and with sensitivity.

We encourage you to find ways to contribute to your local community or our larger society by working with local grass-roots organizations or on a global level to solve problems that affect us all. But we also encourage you to use the benefits of your education and learning experiences to help you think differently about your daily life, about critical issues of our day, and about how you might devise and employ creative initiatives in your personal and professional life.
Again, congratulations on finishing this part of your educational journey. The Individualized B.A. degree plan you have just completed is one big step toward realizing the ideal of the self-directed, lifelong learner. The fruits of your educational pursuits will echo into the future and the world at large—a sentiment best captured by author Gilbert K. Chesterton, who wrote: “Education is simply the soul of a society as it passes from one generation to another.”
| **Academy** | higher education is also sometimes referred to as “the Academy” in reference to Plato’s early system of education that emphasized problem-posing, logical thinking, argument and counterargument. |
| **avocation** | avocational pursuits refresh us, re-create us, and reconnect us to our best selves. An avocation is something you do for yourself, for the pure joy it brings, a hobby. |
| **canon** | an authorized body of knowledge intended to liberate students from ignorance, cruelty, and injustice. Each academic discipline has its own canon. |
| **capstone** | 1) an architectural term referring to the stone placed on the top of a building when it’s complete  
2) a crowning achievement or culmination |
| **college** | Within a university, a college is an administrative unit that houses schools and/or departments. College may also refer to an institution of higher learning. |
| **competence** | emphasizes what you know and what you can do with that knowledge— being able to describe theoretical and practical components of what you know and being able to apply that knowledge. |
| **DARS** | acronym for Degree Audit Report System. Shows an up-to-the-minute record of all of your transfer credit, and how it has been applied to requirements at Metropolitan State. |
| **department** | an administrative unit housing a discipline or subject area |
| **dialectic** | a particular methodology established by Plato’s Academy where one philosopher would ask questions, and others would answer, trying to reason out the truth together by presenting opposing ideas and working out supporting arguments |
| **discipline** | an academic field of study, also referred to as a subject area |
| **field of study** | an academic subject area, also referred to as a discipline |
| **Focus** | the term we use instead of major to describe your student-defined area of depth of knowledge in your Individualized Bachelor of Arts degree. Your focus may contain multiple subject areas. |
| **GELS** | General Education and Liberal Studies requirements. You must complete 48 credits in 10 Goal Areas that are common among all Minnesota State Colleges and Universities due to the Minnesota Transfer Agreement. |
| **MnSCU** | Abbreviation for Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. |
| **PLA** | Prior learning assessment is the term used nation-wide to describe the process for evaluating knowledge gained experientially for college-level credit. |
| **prior learning** | Learning you’ve already achieved via a self-directed learning process, but that has not been evaluated for college-level credit. |
| **quadrivium** | An area of the medieval curriculum that included subjects united by their use of mathematics. At the time, music was included as well as astronomy; in today’s terms, the quadrivium spanned the range of fine arts, math, and science. |
| **SDIS** | See student-designed independent study. |
| **SDL** | See student-directed learning. |
| **self-directed learning** | Learning you (the learner) direct, choose, encounter, or experience to earn college-level credit as opposed to learning via an established course in a college or university. |
| **shadow degree** | An individualized degree plan with either (or both) a: 1) focus title that is the same as an existing major at Metropolitan State; and 2) focus page that includes all but one or two courses from an existing major at Metropolitan State. This is NOT an approvable degree plan toward the Individualized B.A. If you are completing most of your studies in one major but not formally declaring that major, you are developing a “shadow” degree. |
| **student-designed independent study** | New learning that is student-designed. Use the SDL process to register for college-level credit for that learning experience. |
| **student-directed learning (SDL)** | Broad term used to define the process of designing and registering for a learning experience that is self-directed. SDLs may include prior learning, future learning, or any combination of these. |
| **subject area** | An academic field of study, also referred to as a discipline or field of study. |
| **trivium** | an area of the medieval curriculum that included the language arts: the mechanics of language (grammar), logical thinking (dialectic), and the use of language to instruct and persuade (rhetoric). In modern higher education, English and communications classes convey most of the trivium, although “critical thinking” (the modern version of dialectic) is part of every college class |
| **vocation** | Historically, the word *vocation* has implied a calling of sorts—something you feel a strong pull or inclination to pursue. In this sense, vocation implies a matching of your natural talents and gifts with an area of work. For more, see Chapter 3. |
Exercises

Appendix A contains the following exercises:

- Exercise 1. Finding a time and place to study
- Exercise 2. Introducing yourself
- Exercise 3. Reflecting on life and educational goals
- Exercise 4. Self-assessment in Competence Areas
- Exercise 5. Building creative learning strategies into your degree plan
- Exercise 6. SDL Form
Exercise 1. Finding a time and place to study

An essential tool for a successful learning experience is developing good study habits. Students who’ve successfully completed individualized programs know that pursuing their education required great discipline and determination, especially given the competing demands of family, work and social life. One of the most important aspects of that discipline is finding time to study.

**Recommended books**
- *Becoming a Master Student* by Dave Ellis, Houghton-Mifflin, 2007.

**How can I use my study time wisely?**

**Set aside regular study times each week**
You can always catch quick snatches of reading time at lunch or on the bus, but the nature of most of your assignments will require more intense and undistracted time. Since most of you have work and/or family obligations, it may require heroic effort to set aside regular study times each week. You should plan to spend three to four hours outside of class for each hour in the classroom. Be clear with your spouse, partner, children, or house mates that, for example, Saturdays from nine to noon and Sundays from three to six, you will need to study alone and uninterrupted.

**Study when you’re at your sharpest**
If possible, study when you’re at your sharpest and best. If studying at 5 a.m. agrees with you, do it. But what if you’re not a morning person? Then you might need to study on weekends in the afternoons or evenings. Most of us know, or quickly learn, when we are most productive. There are some common sense considerations as well. If you try to study soon after eating, the blood in your body is busy beginning to digest food and that can sometimes make you feel drowsy.

**Study for reasonable blocks of time**
Study for reasonable blocks of time, such as two to three hours. Try to avoid extremes such as studying nine hours a day on Saturday, or the opposite, only studying in 10-minute snatches between chores.
Plan for some physical activity breaks

Leave time within your block of study time for some kind of light physical activity. Walking increases circulation and can actually stimulate your brain cells. Often a well-timed walk can be the catalyst for solving a difficult study problem. Whatever you choose to do, break up your study time with brief, 5 to 10 minute, periods of moderate physical movement.

Find a place conducive to study

Another key to developing good study habits is finding a place to study that is conducive to productive reading and study. Get away from distractions as much as possible. Find or create a study sanctuary—the local library, an empty room at Metropolitan State, a coffeehouse—wherever you feel comfortable and will not be interrupted.

You may be accustomed to studying at home. That’s fine, just be sure to set boundaries with others in advance, and be sure you can avoid cleaning up your room, doing the dishes, or otherwise being distracted.

Study in the same place each time

Practicing regular study habits at the same time and place promotes a conditioned reflex that tells your brain, “It’s time to study. Let’s get to it.”

Environmental conditions matter

Fresh air, a straight-backed, yet comfortable chair, a solid writing surface, easy access to resource materials all promote good learning. Avoid easy chairs or studying in bed—your body is already conditioned to do something else in those environments.

My study plan

Jot down when and where you think you can best study

Where I can study—free of distractions

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________

When I can study—specific days of the week and times

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________

What arrangements must I make to create a reasonable study time/place

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________
### Exercise 2. Introducing yourself

This brief introductory information will help your instructor better understand your unique background and aspirations.

| **Name** | ____________________________________________________ |
| **Address** | ____________________________________________________ |
| **Day phone** | __________ | **Evening phone** | __________ | **Metropolitan State e-mail** | ______-________ |

**Name and approximate size of your hometown** ________________

Have you attended an orientation to our program (PIM or PAW)? **YES / NO**

Have you completed your reading/writing and math assessments? **YES / NO**

How many semester credits have you transferred? **Upper div _____ Lower div ____**

If you transferred additional credits, how many? _____ where from? ______________

How long since you were last in school? ________ __________

What courses are you taking this semester besides this one? _______________________

Do you have a spouse or partner? **YES / NO** If you have children, what ages? __________

If you are employed, where is your work and what do you do? _______________________

If you do volunteer work, what do you do? ____________________________

How many hours a week do you plan to spend on this course, outside of class? __________

Is English your primary language **YES / NO** If not, which language is? ______________

If you have a diagnosed learning disability, how can your instructor help your learning in this class? _____________________________________________________________________________

To what extent have you done research in a library?

- ____ extensive: use of government documents, professional journals, etc.
- ____ moderate: use of some of the above
- ____ basic: use of popular periodicals and books
- ____ little: little research or a long time ago
- ____ make use of the Internet

Just for today, in terms of your education, what are you looking forward to studying and accomplishing in your college study? _____________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

Why did you choose Metropolitan State University? _____________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

What do you do in your spare time to help you relax? _____________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

Anything else you would like your instructor to know about you? _____________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

What one question is foremost in your mind as you begin this course? _____________________________________________________________________________
Exercise 3. Reflecting on life and educational goals

Name ____________________________________________________________

Besides earning your bachelor’s degree, why did you decide to return to college?

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

What further career education is necessary for you to improve or advance your employment situation?

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

List a few areas of interest outside your career that you can envision pursuing throughout your lifetime—for the pure enjoyment they give you.

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

What characteristics do you admire in friends or relations you consider well educated?

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

Complete the chart below, using short phrases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General life goals</th>
<th>Specific educational goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Exercise 4. Self-assessment in Competence Areas

### Step 1.
For each competence area listed below, assess your present capabilities by checking the appropriate box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence Area</th>
<th>Confident O.K.</th>
<th>Could use work</th>
<th>Priority area</th>
<th>No need</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General reading ability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General writing ability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public speaking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing and presenting reports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World languages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research &amp; information studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mathematics and the Natural World</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical sciences (chem., physics)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural sciences (biology, ecology, geology)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics (college algebra)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Humanities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts (painting, music, theater)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthropology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political sciences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General knowledge of the field</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific technical knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Exercises

**Step 2.**

To illustrate your depth of knowledge by competence area, complete the pie chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence Area</th>
<th>Confident O.K.</th>
<th>Could use work</th>
<th>Priority area</th>
<th>No need</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working with others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Avocation/ Lifelong Learning</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present areas of interest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New areas to explore</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Divide the pie chart below into 6 sections**—each segment should correspond to your self-assessment of your strength in that area.

For example, if your greatest strength is in Vocation, cut a big piece of pie. Or, if you have little exposure to the Humanities,” cut that piece smaller.

**Use a pencil to lightly sketch your self-assessment** as you determine your strengths and limitations. Be sure to include all six areas:

- Communication
- Math/Natural World
- Humanities
- Community
- Vocation
- Avocation Lifelong Learning
Exercise 5. Building creative learning strategies into your degree plan

The purpose of this exercise is to help you consider how you might use creative learning strategies as part of your Individualized degree plan. We’re not asking you to make a formal commitment, but simply to consider some of these different strategies. Consider including at least three creative learning strategies in your degree plan.

**Look over the subject areas of your educational goals.** Many of these may be achieved through formal classroom learning, but some of your goals might better be addressed through one of these creative learning strategies.

**List a subject you might study** using that particular learning strategy in the blank spaces below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>______________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty-designed Independent Study or Online Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student-directed Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theory Seminar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prior or Combined Prior and New Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample Degree Plans
**EXAMPLE 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th>Check included pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Declaration Form</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor Declaration Form <em>(only IF completing a minor)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Plan Rationale</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GELS Requirements</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-Directed Learning Form <em>(only IF your Focus includes SDLs)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultations</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**REQUIREMENTS**

- **Credits may overlap multiple categories, but ALL requirements must be met.**
- **Calculate each requirement INDIVIDUALLY. They do NOT total.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REQUIREMENTS</th>
<th>Minimum Required</th>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>In Progress</th>
<th>Needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Education &amp; Liberal Studies (GELS)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus <em>(including PRSP 301 &amp; PRSP 499)</em></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan State University residency</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Individualized Studies residency</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Division <em>(courses numbered 300-499 @ Metro)</em></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Individualized B.A. Degree Credits</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SIGNATURES**

**STUDENT PLEDGE**

Your signature attests that you understand:
- the Individualized B.A. degree requirements listed above
- that you must meet these requirements to earn your degree
- that changes to your Focus page must be Advisor-approved
- that you assume responsibility for meeting any course prerequisites
- that if you’ve made errors in this plan, the College of Individualized Studies will still require you to meet all graduation requirements.

**SIGNATURE** Martina Schmidt  
**DATE** May 1, 2013

**INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS**

- □ Plan accepted
- □ Plan accepted with restrictions that must be resolved.
- □ Plan is not acceptable as written. Contact your Perspectives instructor by ________ for further instructions.

**SIGNATURE**  
**DATE**

See Chapter 6 of the *Perspectives: Educational Philosophy and Planning Workbook* for page-by-page guidance on completing this degree plan.
DEGREE PLAN RATIONALE

I was born and raised in Slovakia, Europe. I earned my first degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management in Slovakia 10 years ago. I enjoyed working in that field, but a few years ago I decided it was time for a change. In 2008, I started classes related to medical coding and billing at Rasmussen College. After I graduated from Rasmussen College in with an associate’s degree in Health Information Technology, I decided to pursue my dream of earning a bachelor’s degree at Metropolitan State University.

The individualized degree program offers many options for working people trying to complete their education. In my case, I see this program as an excellent opportunity to utilize what I’ve previously learned in college to design a program that will help me change careers. My educational goal is to complete my bachelor’s degree in Individualized Studies with a focus in Cultural and Ethnic Diversity in Business.

I believe my learning experiences at Metro State will prepare me for a future in business management. I am entering the field open-minded and ready to learn. I plan to utilize previously earned credits, life experience, and work experience to create an individualized degree.

Growing up in Europe made me appreciate different cultures. One of my long-term goals is to move back to Europe. I believe I can utilize the learning and knowledge and experience I will gain from Metro State and from working in business to improve my leadership and management skills.

I am under the impression that being an educated person means that I go to school, attend college, and keep up with current events around the world. Being an educated person also means that I have more options such as not having to settle for a job I do not like because I do not have the proper education, or denying myself the opportunity to grow as a person. I got my ideas about what it means to be educated while in college studying Hotel and Restaurant Management. I completed interesting internships in Switzerland and in Italy. I realized education opens closed doors. Being an educated person means that I am able to apply my knowledge to everyday life, to use critical thinking skills, communication skills, and management skills to my best ability. An educated person should be characterized as someone without fear, as someone who is not afraid of obstacles, and as someone who knows what they want. I hope that working towards the education I desire will help me be that person.

See Chapter 6 of the Perspectives: Educational Philosophy and Planning Workbook for page-by-page guidance on completing this degree plan.
### FOCUS

**Your Focus Title here:** Cultural and Ethnic Diversity in Business

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT #: COURSE TITLE</th>
<th>INSTITUTION</th>
<th>LEARNING STRATEGY</th>
<th>CREDITS</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRSP 301: Perspectives: Educational Philosophy &amp; Planning</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>IP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRSP 499: Capstone (or other capstone)</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td></td>
<td>IP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E150: Success Strategies</td>
<td>Rasm</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M208: Intro to Health Information Management</td>
<td>Rasm</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M228: Medical Legal &amp; Ethical Issues</td>
<td>Rasm</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M230: Medical Law and Ethics</td>
<td>Rasm</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E242: Career Development</td>
<td>Rasm</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M209: Medical Insurance Billing</td>
<td>Rasm</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETHS 302: Immigration &amp; the New World</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>IP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETHS 311: Understanding Racial and Ethnic Groups in the United States</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POL 301: Citizenship in a Global Context</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC 305: Race &amp; Ethnicity: Sociological Perspectives</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETHS 305: Major Issues in U. S. Race Relations</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MGMT 360: Managing a Diverse Workforce</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MGMT 310: Management Principles and Practices</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCT 210: Financial Accounting</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 333: Intermediate Intercultural Communication</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LOWER & UPPER DIVISION SUBTOTALS**  
17.7  40

**TOTAL (must include 32 credits minimum)**  
57.7

Date: _______________________  Date(s) revised: _______________________

See Chapter 6 of the *Perspectives: Educational Philosophy and Planning Workbook* for page-by-page guidance on completing this degree plan.
# GELS REQUIREMENTS

## CHECK ONE:

- **X** I have **completed** the GELS requirements.
- ____ I have **completed** the General Education, but **NOT** the Liberal Studies requirements. *True if you’ve earned an Associate of Arts from a MnSCU community college.*
- ____ I have **NOT completed** the GELS requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL #: AREA</th>
<th>SUBJECT #: COURSE TITLE</th>
<th>CREDITS</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>LOWER DIVISION</td>
<td>UPPER DIVISION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Introductory Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Intermediate Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Oral &amp; Visual Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Natural Sciences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Mathematical/Logical Reasoning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. History, Social &amp; Behavioral Sciences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Humanities &amp; Fine Arts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Human Diversity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Global Perspective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Ethical &amp; Civic Responsibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. People &amp; the Environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st course</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd course</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LOWER & UPPER DIVISION SUBTOTALS**

**TOTAL (must include 48 credits minimum)**

See *Chapter 6 of the Perspectives: Educational Philosophy and Planning Workbook* for page-by-page guidance on completing this degree plan.
CONSULTATIONS

Since I’ve already attended several colleges and universities, I did my homework before choosing Metro State. I researched programs on the web and spoke to advisors at Rasmussen about where to finish my bachelor’s degree.

I spoke to Jane Krueger at Metro State about how to use the Individualized Bachelor of Arts degree to accomplish my personal and professional goals. I also gained more information about the program at the Pre-Major Advising Workshop where I learned even more by hearing stories from other students.

During this PRSP 301 course, I spoke to Jeanne Cornish in the College of Management about what types of knowledge I should add to my existing knowledge to create my individualized degree in Cultural and Ethnic Diversity in Business.

See Chapter 6 of the Perspectives: Educational Philosophy and Planning Workbook for page-by-page guidance on completing this degree plan.
NAME  Carlos Estrada  STUDENT ID#  00011222

FOCUS TITLE  Human Development and Civics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th>Check included pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Declaration Form</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor Declaration Form <em>(only IF completing a minor)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Plan Rationale</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GELS Requirements</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-Directed Learning Form <em>(only IF your Focus includes SDLs)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REQUIREMENTS
- Credits may overlap multiple categories, but **ALL requirements must be met.**
- Calculate each requirement **INDIVIDUALLY. They do NOT total.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REQUIREMENTS</th>
<th>CREDITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Education &amp; Liberal Studies (GELS)</td>
<td>Minimum Required: 48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus <em>(including PRSP 301 &amp; PRSP 499)</em></td>
<td>Minimum Required: 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan State University residency</td>
<td>Minimum Required: 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Individualized Studies residency</td>
<td>Minimum Required: 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Division <em>(courses numbered 300-499 @ Metro)</em></td>
<td>Minimum Required: 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Individualized B.A. Degree Credits</td>
<td>Minimum Required: 120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SIGNATURES

STUDENT PLEDGE
Your signature attests that you understand:
- the **Individualized B.A. degree requirements** listed above
- that you must **meet these requirements** to earn your degree
- that **changes to your Focus** page must be Advisor-approved
- that you **assume responsibility** for meeting any **course prerequisites**
- that if you’ve made errors in this plan, the **College of Individualized Studies** will still **require you to meet all graduation requirements.**

**SIGNATURE**  Carlos Estrada  **DATE**  May 1, 2013

INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS
- Plan accepted
- Plan accepted with restrictions that must be resolved.
- Plan is not acceptable as written. Contact your Perspectives instructor by ________ for further instructions.

**SIGNATURE**  **DATE**

See **Chapter 6** of the **Perspectives: Educational Philosophy and Planning Workbook** for page-by-page guidance on completing this degree plan.
**DEGREE PLAN RATIONALE**

In the fall of 2003, I began my college education as a Fine Arts Education major at the University of Minnesota-Duluth. During this time my family was undergoing some major awakenings and struggles. I also became very ill and almost had to withdraw from classes. Since I started becoming aware of how my physical wellbeing affects the various communities to which I belong, I became increasingly interested in family counseling and mental health. I decided to transfer to the UMN-Twin Cities to pursue a degree in Family Social Sciences. I was able to attend the first month of classes before falling ill once again. I became discouraged and withdrew from the university. I did not know it then, but I was embarking on a set of adventures that would forever change my world view and life course.

I moved to Colorado, where I worked for a Lutheran camp in the Rocky Mountains. I learned about leadership and wilderness survival. I eventually became a camp leader and traveled around Colorado’s Front Range and Western Slope, teaching leadership skills, and social justice awareness to middle and high school students. I enrolled at the local community college, where I majored in Child Behavioral Psychology. During this time, I met and married a philosophy major at Colorado State University, with whom I was in a bluegrass band. We played together at local political and environmental functions. After my two years at Front Range Community College, I joined my wife in attending the university, where I studied Human Development and Family Studies.

While at CSU, I worked at the Boys and Girls Clubs of Larimer County. I started as a volunteer, and became the Visual Arts Coordinator for all of the county’s units after 3 years with the organization. During my last year with them, my marriage came to an end. I was physically unwell for the first time since leaving Minnesota, and felt that I had become a burden on my friends and loved ones. I decided to return home to get a grip on my health and resulting impact on others. I soon found employment with Whole Foods Market-Saint Paul, and went on to help the company open new stores in both Minnetonka and Edina. There, I have been using my education to supervise and coordinate the customer service teams and teach healthy eating courses. My company’s values are in harmony with my own: invest in and care for your personal wellbeing, so that you may flourish in servitude to your surrounding community, the environment and those in need around the world.

I started at Metropolitan State University in the fall of 2011, and the College of Individualized Studies in the spring of 2012. Here, I wish to pursue a degree in Human Development and Civics. Human development and the helping professions have always been passions of mine and what I have been drawn to academically and professionally (i.e. teaching, counseling and mentoring). Conscientious citizenship is how I want to focus and apply those disciplines, moving forward. I want to study ways of leading others to think of their own actions and the actions of others in terms of their impact on the local and global communities, and the environment. I want to build my career on guiding people to good citizenship from a human development standpoint. How does our own personal wellbeing affect those around us? How do our daily living choices affect the environment—how can they affect the global community? What are developmental approaches we can take to create stronger, healthier, happier and more aware citizens and communities?

These are some of the questions an educated person should be asking and attempting to answer. An educated person should be able to think critically about what they witness in themselves and others, and creatively apply the products of that thinking. I want to explore this process and its applications in relation in civic responsibility, in its many dimensions.

See Chapter 6 of the *Perspectives: Educational Philosophy and Planning Workbook* for page-by-page guidance on completing this degree plan.
FOCUS

Your Focus Title here: Human Development and Civics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT #</th>
<th>COURSE TITLE</th>
<th>INSTITUTION</th>
<th>LEARNING STRATEGY</th>
<th>CREDITS</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRSP 301: Perspectives: Educational Philosophy &amp; Planning</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>IP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDU 127: Intro to Early Childhood Edu</td>
<td>FrontRan</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAMS 108: Individual and Family Development</td>
<td>CO State</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHIL 134: Ethics</td>
<td>FrontRan</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>Counted on GELS page</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSER 395: H Ser &amp; Diversity</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSER 355: Intro to Human Services</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MGMT 310: Mgmt principles &amp; Practices</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MGMT 320: Organizational Behavior</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSYC 136: Gen Psych I</td>
<td>FrontRan</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>Counted on GELS page</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSYC 113: Child Psych</td>
<td>CO State</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSYC 120: Marriages &amp; Family Worldwide</td>
<td>UM-Duluth</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>Counted on GELS page</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSYC 314: Basic Counseling Skills</td>
<td>CO State</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSYC 387: Environmental Psychology (LS)</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC 101: Intro to Soc</td>
<td>UM-Duluth</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>Counted on GELS page</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC 140: Contemp Social Problems</td>
<td>FrontRan</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>Counted on GELS page</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC 311: Community Organizing &amp; Soc Action</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC 409: Childhood Socialization</td>
<td>CO State</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRSP 499: Capstone (or other capstone)</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LOWER & UPPER DIVISION SUBTOTALS | 9 | 38

TOTAL (must include 32 credits minimum) | 47

Date: _______________________    Date(s) revised: _______________________
**GELS REQUIREMENTS**

**CHECK ONE:**

___ I have **completed** the GELS requirements.

___ I have **completed** the General Education, but **NOT** the Liberal Studies requirements. *True if you’ve earned an Associate of Arts from a MnSCU community college.*

___ X ___ I have **NOT completed** the GELS requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL #: AREA</th>
<th>SUBJECT #: COURSE TITLE</th>
<th>CREDITS</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>LOWER DIVISION</td>
<td>UPPER DIVISION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Introductory Writing</td>
<td>WRIT 151: College Wrtg</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Intermediate Writing</td>
<td>WRIT 128: Eng Comp II</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Natural Sciences</td>
<td>BIOL 126: Sci of Bio</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Mathematical/Logical Reasoning</td>
<td>MATH 115: College Algebra</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. History, Social &amp; Behavioral Sciences</td>
<td>PSYC 136: Gen Psych I</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Humanities &amp; Fine Arts</td>
<td>RELS 135: Comparative Rels</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Human Diversity</td>
<td>SOC 101: Intro to Soc</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Global Perspective</td>
<td>PSYC 120: Marriages and Fams Worldwide</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Ethical &amp; Civic Responsibility</td>
<td>PHIL 134: Ethics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. People &amp; the Environment</td>
<td>PSYC387: Environmental Psych</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Studies</td>
<td>PRSP 301: Perspectives</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>IP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Studies</td>
<td>PSYC387: Environmental Psych</td>
<td>Overlap Goal 9</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LOWER & UPPER DIVISION SUBTOTALS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOWER DIVISION</th>
<th>UPPER DIVISION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL (must include 48 credits minimum)**

48

See Chapter 6 of the *Perspectives: Educational Philosophy and Planning Workbook* for page-by-page guidance on completing this degree plan.
CONSULTATIONS

When creating my degree focus, I thought about the program that I used to be in at Colorado State University. I considered what I liked most about what it had to offer, and what I would want to add to it to make room for the changes I’ve undergone since my time at that university. Since I know that I want to continue working in the natural and organic foods industry, and also for environmental causes. My past leadership training has created a passion in me for instilling motivation in others, and I love using my psychology and human development education to help myself do that. Because of that passion, I went to my company’s (a natural and organic grocery retailer) Twin Cities Metro locations to ask their resident educators and marketers about their educations and how I could tailor my own for a strong future within our company—specifically as part of its Green Mission (promoting environmentally sustainable business practices) and Whole Planet Foundation (relieving poverty around the world).

I also plan on moving my life back to the Colorado Rockies, so I started conferring with some friends in and around the mountains who have careers in the sustainable energy industry (solar, specifically) and organic farming, and also with friends who are very active in their communities (especially in the Aspen area: where I will most likely be moving to next with my current company). I wanted to know what issues are most important to the residents there, how I should start to mold my thinking and what current events I should keep up with. I did not interview these individuals with a degree plan in mind, but rather a life plan. I want my degree plan to reflect and support my life plan.

Once I began write my actual degree plan, I went to my parents. They are very practical people, and have never had expectations for me that were not specific to my character, interests and abilities. They questioned my decision to join this program, because it didn’t sound like a real degree to them. They did not think that a “made up” degree would be something worth getting. I explained to them the history and foundation of Metro State University and the College of Individualized Studies, and they realized that it really was a great fit for me. I showed them the credits and courses I have already completed and there I was thinking of taking it. I discussed a Human Development and Environmental Civics degree plan with them and they thought that that plan would be too narrow for the offered courses for my next and final three semesters. I agreed with them, and changed my focus to Human Development and Civics. I included an environmental psychology course, because it combines the first half of the degree with how I want to apply it.

See Chapter 6 of the Perspectives: Educational Philosophy and Planning Workbook for page-by-page guidance on completing this degree plan.
## Example 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>STUDENT ID#</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Susanna Court</td>
<td>00011223</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FOCUS TITLE**  Creative Approaches to Chemical Dependency Work

### CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Check included pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Declaration Form</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor Declaration Form <em>(only IF completing a minor)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Plan Rationale</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GELS Requirements</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-Directed Learning Form <em>(only IF your Focus includes SDLs)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultations</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### REQUIREMENTS

- Credits may overlap multiple categories, but **ALL requirements must be met.**
- Calculate each requirement INDIVIDUALLY. They do **NOT** total.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Minimum Required</th>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>In Progress</th>
<th>Needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Education &amp; Liberal Studies (GELS)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus <em>(including PRSP 301 &amp; PRSP 499)</em></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan State University residency</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Individualized Studies residency</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Division <em>(courses numbered 300-499 @ Metro)</em></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Individualized B.A. Degree Credits</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### SIGNATURES

**STUDENT PLEDGE**

Your signature attests that you understand:
- the Individualized B.A. degree requirements listed above
- that you must meet these requirements to earn your degree
- that changes to your Focus page must be Advisor-approved
- that you assume responsibility for meeting any course prerequisites
- that if you’ve made errors in this plan, the College of Individualized Studies will still require you to meet all graduation requirements.

**SIGNATURE** Susanna Court  **DATE** May 1, 2013

**INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS**

- Plan accepted
- Plan accepted with restrictions that must be resolved.
- Plan is not acceptable as written. Contact your Perspectives instructor by ________ for further instructions.

**SIGNATURE**  **DATE**
DEGREE PLAN RATIONALE

I have spent my career as an advocate and have been dedicated to assisting diverse families in crisis within many social service contexts. I plan to continue to dedicate my life as a recovery worker, and hope that pursuing a degree will insure that I remain employable professionally and sustainable personally.

Designing an individualized degree through the College of Individualized Studies allows me to integrate my ongoing knowledge gained as a recovery worker with my personal and vocational aspirations by fusing the fields of chemical dependency, theatre arts and ethnic studies.

My previous formal education was at Mankato State University where I majored in theatre arts, women’s and ethnic studies. Unfortunately, I did not complete my degree, instead deciding to pursue my political convictions and begin my career as an advocate for women and children (working as a shelter case manager at a domestic violence shelter). I have continued to do this work, and have greatly enjoyed it. However, without a college degree, I have not been able to move up or to perform other necessary program implementation. I have been forced to move laterally throughout my career, doing similar jobs in different programs.

In order to subsist with the demands of life, continue to work in the social service field, and progress in my own personal recovery from substance abuse, I have maintained my balance through the expression of spoken word theatre art. The theatre has been an outlet for me to articulate my passion—using the stage as a platform to divulge my evolution as a culturally mixed race woman. This has been a tool in my own recovery and an amends to the larger community. Art has connected me to others through identification, emotion and politics.

Currently, I’m employed at Wayside House, which is a CD treatment facility for women and their children. At Wayside, I’m the coordinator of Celebrating Families, which is an evidence-based curriculum that offers cognitive behavioral education for the multigenerational needs of the whole family recovering from chemical dependency.

For the last 20 years, I have been working in homeless youth programs and battered women’s shelters and have covered a variety of issues such as domestic violence, homelessness, mental illness, chemical dependency and prostitution. This experience has given me a well-rounded view of the current conditions women and children face within our communities.

I have a myriad of experiences to prepare me in designing an individualized degree. As a multi-cultural woman of color in recovery from chemical addiction and other afflictions, I bring not only my previous undergraduate and professional experience to Metro State, but also my unique personal perspectives and life experiences.

My past experience in life and work inspires me to pursue the cultivation of creative forms of counseling and philosophy to better support various people in recovery, mainly women and children. My goal is to bring together my passion as an artist and my work as a community advocate—communicating through the arts by using the stage as a platform to expose the atmosphere of race, culture and oppression through spoken word art.

I believe that education extends out of the classroom and into the atmosphere of culture and community. The educated person must be well versed in the competency requirements affiliated with the collegiate intuition, as well as in their personal evolution to emerge forward as their whole true self, in the declaration of claiming their own values and belief systems.

See Chapter 6 of the Perspectives: Educational Philosophy and Planning Workbook for page-by-page guidance on completing this degree plan.
**FOCUS**

*Your Focus Title here:* Creative Approaches to Chemical Dependency Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT #: COURSE TITLE</th>
<th>INSTITUTION</th>
<th>LEARNING STRATEGY</th>
<th>CREDITS</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRSP 301: Perspectives: Educational Philosophy &amp; Planning</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>Counted on GELS page</td>
<td>IP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTS 50: Intro to Art</td>
<td>Mankato</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 55: Fundamentals of Speech</td>
<td>Mankato</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEA 57: Intro to Theatre</td>
<td>Mankato</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EthST 52: Am. Racial Minority</td>
<td>Mankato</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEA 61: Acting</td>
<td>Mankato</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEA 59: Touring Theater</td>
<td>Mankato</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEA 62: Audition Methods</td>
<td>Mankato</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEA 63: Stage Make-up</td>
<td>Mankato</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMNST 44: Women, Self and Others</td>
<td>Mankato</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEA 67: Adv. Summer Theater</td>
<td>Chadron</td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HLTH 53: Healthful Living</td>
<td>Mankato</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEA 64: Interned. Acting</td>
<td>Mankato</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEA 65: Fund. Of Directing</td>
<td>Mankato</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEA 58: Basic Design Theater</td>
<td>Mankato</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETHS 306: Pol. Mixed Rac. Identity</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>Counted on GELS page</td>
<td>IP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSCD 310: Cult Aspects of Chem. Dep.</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSCD 300: Chem Dep. Concepts</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEA 359: Touring Theater</td>
<td>Mankato</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSCD 309: Co-occurring Disorders</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSCD 302: Chem Dep. Assessment</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDST 365I Group Counseling and Interviewing</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>PLA</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSYC 343: Drugs and Behavior</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>FDIS</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRSP 499: Capstone (or other capstone)</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LOWER & UPPER DIVISION SUBTOTALS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOWER DIVISION</th>
<th>UPPER DIVISION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL (must include 32 credits minimum)**

| TOTAL | 66.8 |

Date: _______________________    Date(s) revised: _______________________

See Chapter 6 of the Perspectives: Educational Philosophy and Planning Workbook for page-by-page guidance on completing this degree plan.
GELS REQUIREMENTS

CHECK ONE:

___ I have completed the GELS requirements.

_X_ I have completed the General Education, but NOT the Liberal Studies requirements. True if you’ve earned an Associate of Arts from a MnSCU community college.

___ I have NOT completed the GELS requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL #: AREA</th>
<th>SUBJECT #: COURSE TITLE</th>
<th>CREDITS</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>LOWER DIVISION</td>
<td>UPPER DIVISION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Introductory Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Intermediate Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Oral &amp; Visual Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Natural Sciences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Mathematical/Logical Reasoning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. History, Social &amp; Behavioral Sciences</td>
<td>1st discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Humanities &amp; Fine Arts</td>
<td>1st discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Human Diversity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Global Perspective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Ethical &amp; Civic Responsibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. People &amp; the Environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Studies</td>
<td>1st course</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd course</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PRSP 301: Perspectives</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>IP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ETHS 306: Pol. Mixed Rac. Identity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>IP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOWER &amp; UPPER DIVISION SUBTOTALS</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL (must include 48 credits minimum)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See Chapter 6 of the Perspectives: Educational Philosophy and Planning Workbook for page-by-page guidance on completing this degree plan.
STUDENT-DIRECTED LEARNING (SDL) FORM

SDL TITLE: _Group Counseling & Interviewing_

CREDITS (typically 4): _4__
□ Upper Division

COMPETENCE STATEMENT

Describe what you will know and be able to do as a result of your previous and/or future student-designed learning.

Knows the systems, practices and treatment modalities of Group Counseling and Interviewing well enough to: provide services required, teach life skills, and counsel families who come to treatment facilities funded by the state of Minnesota for chemical dependency, homelessness and victims of domestic violence.

LEARNING PROCESS DESCRIPTION

Describe how you learned what you currently know and/or how you plan to learn new knowledge.

I have worked in the field of social services for over 20 years in the following capacities: as a case manager, counselor, and battered woman’s legal advocate, as well as serving as coordinator of a program “Celebrating Families.”

EVALUATION TECHNIQUES

Check below to indicate how you would like your learning to be evaluated
□ Oral Interview
□ Product evaluation
□ Performance test

RECOMMENDED EVALUATOR NAME: _Jennifer Bunch________________
□ Metropolitan State University Resident or Community Faculty Member

Completing this page, does NOT signify official approval of your SDL.

Before registering, you must submit the official Student-Directed Learning (SDL) Proposal Form.

See Chapter 6 of the Perspectives: Educational Philosophy and Planning Workbook for page-by-page guidance on completing this degree plan.
CONSULTATIONS

Before applying to Metro State, I spoke with an Admissions Counselor about a variety of programs. Given the combination of all of the credit I’ve already earned and my 20 years of experience as a chemical dependency counselor, it didn’t really make sense for me to pursue the formal major. As we discussed my options, I was introduced to the Individualized B.A. program and that seemed like the perfect fit since it would allow me to combine my extensive credit in theatre arts with my experience as a chemical dependency counselor in a way that I didn’t know was possible.

In PRSP 301, my instructor has helped me better understand how to include knowledge from a variety of fields into an individualized focus of which I can be very proud—embracing my knowledge of women’s and ethnic studies as well as theatre and chemical dependency. I’ll have a degree like no other when I’m finished!
**Example 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>Douglas Jackson</th>
<th>STUDENT ID#</th>
<th>00221234</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**FOCUS TITLE** Managed Design Usability

**CONTENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Check included pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Declaration Form</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor Declaration Form (only IF completing a minor)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Plan Rationale</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GELS Requirements</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-Directed Learning Form (only IF your Focus includes SDLs)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultations</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**REQUIREMENTS**

- Credits may overlap multiple categories, but **ALL** requirements must be met.
- Calculate each requirement **INDIVIDUALLY**. They do **NOT** total.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REQUIREMENTS</th>
<th>CREDITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Required</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education &amp; Liberal Studies (GELS)</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus (including PRSP 301 &amp; PRSP 499)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan State University residency</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Individualized Studies residency</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Division (courses numbered 300-499 @ Metro)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Individualized B.A. Degree Credits</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SIGNATURES**

**STUDENT PLEDGE**

Your signature attests that you understand:
- the Individualized B.A. degree requirements listed above
- that you must **meet these requirements** to earn your degree
- that changes to your Focus page must be Advisor-approved
- that you assume responsibility for meeting any course prerequisites
- that if you’ve made errors in this plan, the College of Individualized Studies will still require you to meet all graduation requirements.

**SIGNATURE** Douglas Jackson  
**DATE** May 1, 2013

**INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS**

- [ ] Plan accepted
- [ ] Plan accepted with restrictions that must be resolved.
- [ ] Plan is not acceptable as written. Contact your Perspectives instructor by ________ for further instructions.

**SIGNATURE**  
**DATE**

See Chapter 6 of the *Perspectives: Educational Philosophy and Planning Workbook* for page-by-page guidance on completing this degree plan.
DEGREE PLAN RATIONALE

In high school I knew I wanted to go to college and did my best to prepare by taking college-preparatory electives, studying diligently, and researching schools. From 1981-1983, I attended a chemical engineering degree program at Rochester Community College. I planned to complete the first two years in Rochester and the last two at the University of Minnesota. I discovered that, as much as I was interested in science and research, that field of study wasn’t what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I needed to take a break and rethink my goals.

For the next ten years, I worked full-time while thinking about college. I took several general education classes through Mankato State University during this time. In 1993, I had an epiphany of sorts; I decided I was finished with jobs that required little or no thinking. After deciding on a plan of action, I quit my job, cashed out my 401k, and moved to the Twin Cities to pursue an Associates of Applied Science degree from Brown College in the field of Advertising Design (1994-1996). I truly enjoyed my time at Brown, and graduated in two years with a 4.0 GPA. Then, I felt like I found my calling. Directly upon graduating, I started a job as a graphic designer at a company that I loved and stayed with over the next thirteen and a half years. During that time, I discovered that I would eventually need additional education if I wanted to further my career. In 2009, the company was bought out and I was suddenly out of a job. While I was fortunate to eventually be hired by the company that bought my former employer, it was not a good fit, and twenty-six months later, I was again unemployed—this time facing an even more difficult job market.

From December 2011 until March 2012, I took many skills, interests, and knowledge assessments trying to discover what other fields I could potentially transition to easily. I found many areas of interest, however my real passion still revolved around graphic design. According to these assessments, my strengths show some leadership skills, an ability to help others recognize and develop their skills, creative problem solving, artistic work, communications work, and research work. With this in mind, I came up with the following plan: (1) update my web site design skills and incorporate usability design in the process; (2) develop project management skills which would be valuable managing future marketing campaigns and web site projects; and (3) develop my leadership skills to prepare for filling roles of increasing authority, appropriate for someone with my years of work experience.

I plan to build on my advertising design degree and my work experience in marketing and copywriting, by studying management principles, project management, writing, and design for the web (I & II), and technical communications for usability while a student at Metropolitan State. These components will complete the areas I lack theory or practical knowledge in, and complement my work experience and previous education. Possessing a bachelor’s degree has become a necessity for graphic designers. The field has been in an evolutionary process moving towards digital realms of communication; to address this evolving future, my Individualized Bachelor of Arts degree focus is in Managed Design Usability.

I believe after nearly twenty years in this career, I must prepare myself to fill roles of a supervisory, management, or consultancy nature, possibly starting my own firm. I have always been a strong believer in education, and have demonstrated this by taking classes—college as well as professional training—throughout my adult life. I believe I will always do so, and I think that enrolling in Metropolitan State has actually broken through a barrier; I will not wait so long to pursue my educational goals in the future. Because of this, I am strongly considering pursuing a master’s degree once I have completed my B.A., possibly to become an educator sometime in the future.

See Chapter 6 of the Perspectives: Educational Philosophy and Planning Workbook for page-by-page guidance on completing this degree plan.
### Your Focus Title here: Managed Design Usability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT #: COURSE TITLE</th>
<th>INSTITUTION</th>
<th>LEARNING STRATEGY</th>
<th>CREDITS</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRSP 301: Perspectives: Educational Philosophy &amp; Planning</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>Counted on GELS page</td>
<td>IP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MGMT 310: Management, Principles &amp; Practices</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRIT 371: Editing</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>Counted on GELS page</td>
<td>IP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MGMT 360: Managing a Diverse Workforce</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>Counted on GELS page</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSCI 420: Project Management</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRIT 373: Writing/Designing for the Web I</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Ethics</td>
<td>DSST</td>
<td>Test</td>
<td>Counted on GELS page</td>
<td>IP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRIT 574: Usability for Technical Communications</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRIT 573: Writing/Designing for the Web II</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech Credits in Advertising Design</td>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDL: User Experience in Communication Design</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>SDL</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRSP 499: Capstone (or other capstone)</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LOWER & UPPER DIVISION SUBTOTALS**: 17.1  25

**TOTAL (must include 32 credits minimum)**: 41.1

Date: _______________________  Date(s) revised: _______________________
GELS REQUIREMENTS

CHECK ONE:

___ I have completed the GELS requirements.

___ I have completed the General Education, but NOT the Liberal Studies requirements. True if you’ve earned an Associate of Arts from a MnSCU community college.

_X_ I have NOT completed the GELS requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL #: AREA</th>
<th>SUBJECT #: COURSE TITLE</th>
<th>CREDITS</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Introductory Writing</td>
<td>WRIT 45: Freshman English</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Intermediate Writing</td>
<td>WRIT 46: Freshman English</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Natural Sciences</td>
<td>CHEM 38: Gen Inorg Chem</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Mathematical/Logical Reasoning</td>
<td>MATH 50: Analysis I</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. History, Social &amp; Behavioral Sciences</td>
<td>GEOG 47: Human Geography</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOC 64: Intro to Sociology</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Humanities &amp; Fine Arts</td>
<td>ARTS 62: Intro to Art</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LIT 101: 20th Century Lit</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Human Diversity</td>
<td>MGMT 360: Managing a Diverse Workforce</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Global Perspective</td>
<td>GEOG 47: Human Geography</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Ethical &amp; Civic Responsibility</td>
<td>DSST: Business Ethics</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>IP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. People &amp; the Environment</td>
<td>NATS 102: Environ Studies</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Studies</td>
<td>PRSP 301: Perspectives</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>IP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WRIT371: Editing</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>IP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd course</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| LOWER & UPPER DIVISION SUBTOTALS | 33.5 | 15 |

TOTAL (must include 48 credits minimum) 48.5

See Chapter 6 of the Perspectives: Educational Philosophy and Planning Workbook for page-by-page guidance on completing this degree plan.
STUDENT-DIRECTED LEARNING (SDL) FORM

SDL TITLE: __ User Experience in Communication Design __

CREDITS (typically 4): __1__
□ Upper Division

COMPETENCE STATEMENT

*Describe what you will know and be able to do as a result of your previous and/or future student-designed learning.*

Knows the concepts and methodology of User Experience, specifically used as part of website design, well enough to analyze and recommend improvements to existing websites for clients.

LEARNING PROCESS DESCRIPTION

*Describe how you learned what you currently know and/or how you plan to learn new knowledge.*

I have over 18 years work experience in developing marketing campaigns and have come by my knowledge of User Experience informally through real-world observation, as well as topic research done independently of work and school. To further develop my understanding and ability to apply appropriate techniques, I propose to read the book, *The Design of Everyday Things*, by Donald Norman who coined the term *User Experience*, and write a paper on the benefits in applying Norman’s original theories in today’s website designs.

EVALUATION TECHNIQUES

*Check below to indicate how you would like your learning to be evaluated*

□ Objective or essay test
□ Product evaluation

RECOMMENDED EVALUATOR NAME: __Fred Carpenter______________
□ Metropolitan State University Resident or Community Faculty Member

Completing this page, does NOT signify official approval of your SDL.

Before registering, you must submit the official Student-Directed Learning (SDL) Proposal Form.

See Chapter 6 of the *Perspectives: Educational Philosophy and Planning Workbook* for page-by-page guidance on completing this degree plan.
CONSULTATIONS

In gathering information about what education would be most beneficial to me in my career, I have consulted with five different individuals.

Adrienne Uitz, account manager at The Creative Group, met with me and gave me some detailed information about the current in-demand skills employers are looking for among graphic design and marketing professionals. Those skills included: web design and usability, film and video editing, presentation expertise, as well as project management capabilities. Many of her observations influenced the courses that have become the core of my degree plan.

Pat Hunenke, employment counselor with the Minnesota Workforce Center, was also able to provide some help deciding on appropriate training goals. She was solidly behind my desire to improve my web design and project management skills and approved my proposed education plan to qualify for the Dislocated Worker’s Program funding.

As a newly admitted Metropolitan State University student, I had a very helpful conversation with Jane Krueger, First College: College of Individualized Studies Advising Center, who was able to give me some ideas on what courses to start registering for until such time as my official advisor had been assigned.

Ping Wang, my assigned advisor, was proactive in contacting me by phone and discussing my educational goals, giving me a lot of guidance in course choices as well as some valuable tips about how to watch full classes for drops and snap up a spot after tuition deadlines pass!

Finally, Dr. Mary Kirk met with me and answered many questions that I had planning my future education, both here at Metropolitan State University, and after graduation. I believe she helped me achieve a solid foundation to build this plan on. I feel confident that I have created a plan that meets all the college’s requirements, and meets my own education goals.

See Chapter 6 of the Perspectives: Educational Philosophy and Planning Workbook for page-by-page guidance on completing this degree plan.
### CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Declaration Form</th>
<th>Check included pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minor Declaration Form (only IF completing a minor)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Plan Rationale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GELS Requirements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-Directed Learning Form (only IF your Focus includes SDLs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### REQUIREMENTS

- **Credits may overlap multiple categories, but ALL requirements must be met.**
- **Calculate each requirement INDIVIDUALLY. They do NOT total.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minimum Required</th>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>In Progress</th>
<th>Needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Education &amp; Liberal Studies (GELS)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus (including PRSP 301 &amp; PRSP 499)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan State University residency</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Individualized Studies residency</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Division (courses numbered 300-499 @ Metro)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Individualized B.A. Degree Credits</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### SIGNATURES

**STUDENT PLEDGE**

Your signature attests that you understand:
- the Individualized B.A. degree requirements listed above
- that you must meet these requirements to earn your degree
- that changes to your Focus page must be Advisor-approved
- that you assume responsibility for meeting any course prerequisites
- that if you’ve made errors in this plan, the College of Individualized Studies will still require you to meet all graduation requirements.

**SIGNATURE** ____________ **DATE** ____________

**INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS**

- □ Plan accepted
- □ Plan accepted with restrictions that must be resolved.
- □ Plan is not acceptable as written. Contact your Perspectives instructor by _________ for further instructions.

**SIGNATURE** ____________ **DATE** ____________
See Chapter 6 of the *Perspectives: Educational Philosophy and Planning Workbook* for page-by-page guidance on completing this degree plan.
Your Focus Title here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT #: COURSE TITLE</th>
<th>INSTITUTION</th>
<th>LEARNING STRATEGY</th>
<th>CREDITS</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRSP 301: Perspectives: Educational Philosophy &amp; Planning</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>IP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRSP 499: Capstone (or other capstone)</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LOWER & UPPER DIVISION SUBTOTALS

TOTAL (must include 32 credits minimum)

Date: ____________________  Date(s) revised: ____________________

See Chapter 6 of the Perspectives: Educational Philosophy and Planning Workbook for page-by-page guidance on completing this degree plan.
GELS REQUIREMENTS

CHECK ONE:

___ I have completed the GELS requirements.

___ I have completed the General Education, but NOT the Liberal Studies requirements. True if you’ve earned an Associate of Arts from a MnSCU community college.

___ I have NOT completed the GELS requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL #: AREA</th>
<th>SUBJECT #: COURSE TITLE</th>
<th>CREDITS</th>
<th>STATUS Met (M), In Progress (IP), Needed (N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Introductory Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Intermediate Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Oral &amp; Visual Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Natural Sciences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Mathematical/Logical Reasoning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. History, Social &amp; Behavioral Sciences</td>
<td>1st discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Humanities &amp; Fine Arts</td>
<td>1st discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Human Diversity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Global Perspective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Ethical &amp; Civic Responsibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. People &amp; the Environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Studies</td>
<td>1st course</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd course</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LOWER & UPPER DIVISION SUBTOTALS

TOTAL (must include 48 credits minimum)

See Chapter 6 of the *Perspectives: Educational Philosophy and Planning Workbook* for page-by-page guidance on completing this degree plan.
STUDENT-DIRECTED LEARNING (SDL) FORM

SDL TITLE: ________________________________

CREDITS (typically 4): _____
☐ Lower Division
☐ Upper Division
☐ Not sure (can be discussed with the evaluator)

COMPETENCE STATEMENT
Describe what you will know and be able to do as a result of your previous and/or future student-designed learning.

LEARNING PROCESS DESCRIPTION
Describe how you learned what you currently know and/or how you plan to learn new knowledge.

EVALUATION TECHNIQUES
Check below to indicate how you would like your learning to be evaluated
☐ Oral Interview
☐ Simulation
☐ Objective or essay test
☐ Product evaluation
☐ Performance test
☐ Not sure (can be discussed with the evaluator)

RECOMMENDED EVALUATOR NAME: ________________________________
☐ Metropolitan State University Resident or Community Faculty Member
☐ Other Please explain why you need an outside evaluator, and what her/his qualifications are.

Completing this page, does NOT signify official approval of your SDL.
Before registering, you must submit the official Student-Directed Learning (SDL) Proposal Form.

See Chapter 6 of the Perspectives: Educational Philosophy and Planning Workbook for page-by-page guidance on completing this degree plan.
CONSULTATIONS

See Chapter 6 of the Perspectives: Educational Philosophy and Planning Workbook for page-by-page guidance on completing this degree plan.
See Chapter 6 of the *Perspectives: Educational Philosophy and Planning Workbook* for page-by-page guidance on completing this degree plan.
Program Declaration Form

College of Individualized Studies

Student Directions for Submitting the Program Declaration Form

Please consult with your advisor prior to completing this form.

1. Complete Student Information section of the form. Notifications and additional requests for information will be sent to your Metropolitan State University email account. So, be sure to include it.

2. Select only one program from the list of majors, minors, certificates, and degrees under Program Selection. You will need one form for each program you are declaring. That is, if you are declaring both a major and minor or other program, you will need one form for each program. Please note: there are seven Program Declaration Forms (one for each college/school), if the program you are looking for is not on this form, it may be listed on one of the other forms.

3. Sign the form in the Required Signatures area and submit by mail, fax or at a pdf through your Metropolitan State University email account to:

College of Individualized Studies
Metropolitan State University
700 East Seventh Street
St. Paul, MN 55106
Phone: (651) 793-1783
Fax: (651) 793-1789
Email: Jane.Krueger@metrostate.edu

Please Note: If you have been arrested, charged or convicted of any criminal offense, you should investigate the impact that the arrest, charge or conviction may have on your chances of employment in the field you intend to study or on your chances to obtain federal, state, and other higher education financial aid.

Office Staff Directions for Processing the Program Declaration Form

☐ Request student file, if necessary.
☐ Review application to the program, and sign to approve, if appropriate.
☐ Update advisor assignment in ISRS STI100UG Area Study/Int tab.
☐ Add “Effective Year/Term” and “Advisor Assignment” on the bottom of the first page of this form.
☐ Update college/division listed in ISRS STI100UG if necessary.
☐ Add any cohort and/or program codes used by the program.
☐ Forward the Program Declaration Form to the Registrar’s Office.
☐ For majors, forward a DARS report showing major requirements for students that have DARS records or an approved Major Checklist to the Registrar’s Office.

Registrar’s Office
☐ End date previous programs on the Area Study/int tab in ISRS STI100UG or STI1001UG at appropriate (do not end the first program if this is the second program at that level).
☐ Enter new declared program, appropriate rank, and in the comments note “verified” with your initials and the current date (mm/dd/yyyy), example “verified dj 09/11/2012.”
☐ Check the override box in the lower left corner of the screen and score.
☐ Verify that the major has been accepted and perform any needed actions for errors.
☐ Verify that all the required categories on the Admin/Plan tab in STI100UG or Adm/Admis tab of STI1001UG is consistent with the students program status.
☐ Enter major course equivalencies and exceptions into DARS if required.

Directions date: 9/11/2012
Student Information

Date: ___________ Student (Tech) ID: ___________ Current Advisor: ___________

Last Name: ___________ First Name: ___________ M.I.: ___________

Phone: H ___________ W ___________ Cell ___________

Address: ___________ (State/City/State/Zip)

Campus E-mail Address: ___________ @metrostate.edu

(Notification will be sent to your campus e-mail address)

Program Selection

1. Check only: This is a □ First Major □ Second Major □ Change of Major
   □ First Minor □ Second Minor □ Change of Minor

   Previous Major

   Previous Minor

2. Please select only one major or minor per form (e.g., if you are declaring both a program and a minor, you will need two forms).

   Major
   Individualized Degree (0078 BA)
   Concentrations (select one)
   □ Aviation Management (0078 w/concentration ID 0073 BA)
   □ None (0078 BA)

   Minors
   □ Community Organizing and Development (0120)
   □ Civic Engagement (0154)

   Required Signatures

   Student Signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________

   College/School Approval: ___________________________ Date: ___________

   For Office Use Only
   □ Entry has been made in ISRS
   □ Document has been scanned
   □ Effective Year/Term ___________________________ □ Advisor Assignment

   An equal opportunity educator
   A member of the Minnesota State
   Colleges and Universities System
   Form date: 09/11/2012 rev