The Exit Requirement: The Exit Essay

As part of this degree, you are required to complete an “Exit Essay”. This essay is a self-assessment and portfolio of your learning and goals. There are several intentions behind this exit requirement. First, the reflection on degree completion is intended to help you, the student, feel a sense of closure and accomplishment as you prepare for graduation. Second, the reflection on future directions is intended to help you consider your future, and how your education (or continued education) will benefit your personal and professional goals. Finally, it will help us assess student learning outcomes for our program.

Students are required to complete this reflection on learning and growth in their last semester or in the semester in which they intend to graduate with the BIS degree. The exit project will be graded on a pass/fail basis by the Chair of Interdisciplinary Studies and one faculty member identified by the student (their mentor). You are required to reflect, in a typed, 10-page essay (or longer, if you wish), on the elements listed in outline form below. Please note, your formatting must follow these guidelines:

- double-spaced (except contact information)
- 12 point, professional font (e.g., Times New Roman)
- The bolded headings should be used to start each section
- 1” margins, using tab indentation for paragraphs
- no extra, unnecessary spacing

Your completed essay should be sent to interdisciplinary@wnmu.edu as an attached Word document. Please use the following headings for each element within your essay:

a) **Contact Information**: please include your name, W#, mailing address, phone number(s), and email address(es). We will use this information to stay in touch with you, so please consider sharing information that you know will remain somewhat constant for the next few years.

b) **General Education Core Requirements**: please look back over the general education courses you took and reflect on how taking these courses benefitted you. How did they help to increase your awareness of personal interests?

c) **Required “focus” within the upper division credits**: First, confirm the upper-division focus you completed, including a listing of academic disciplines (if appropriate). The 4 options for upper-division focus are listed above. Reflect on what courses you took as part of the upper-division credit hour requirement. How did these courses fit together to help you accomplish your goals for the degree? This section must include reflection on the interdisciplinary or customized nature of your degree plan. This section of your essay should be quite lengthy, with deep reflection on what you have gained from your studies and from the creative, flexible nature of this degree program.

In this section, please include reference to some “artifacts” that you will attach to this exit report in an Appendix. These should be sample items that help to document your learning and goals, with specific emphasis on the interdisciplinary focus of your degree program. For example, you might include syllabi, papers, an updated resume, and applications to jobs or programs. Please visit with the Chair of Interdisciplinary Studies for detailed guidance on completion of this requirement.

d) **Future Directions (or current pursuits)**: now that you are completing this BIS degree, what are your personal, professional and educational intentions? How did this degree serve you in working toward those goals?
c) **Appendix of Artifacts**: Please include each of the Artifacts to which you referred in section c) above, in the order that they were mentioned in your writing. You might want to consider leaving these items as separate documents, renaming them as Appendix item #1, #2, etc. Again, visiting with the Chair of Interdisciplinary Studies is strongly encouraged as you complete this document and consider what artifacts to include in your exit paper.

Please remember that we can be reached at interdisciplinary@wnmu.edu or 575-538-6650 ~ The Interdisciplinary Studies Staff ~