

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA
ACADEMIC SENATE

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

REPORT TO
THE ACADEMIC SENATE

AP-015-245

Liberal Studies BA General Studies Option Name Change

Academic Programs Committee

Date: 3/12/2025

Executive Committee
Received and Forwarded

Date: 11/19/2025

Academic Senate

Date: 12/3/2025
First Reading

BACKGROUND:

The current option “general studies” is vague and creates confusion among students and diminishes their understanding of the degree’s purpose and value. Renaming the option to “Interdisciplinary Studies” more accurately reflects the curriculum’s breadth and focus, providing greater clarity for students. Furthermore, the proposed name aligns with the department’s second program, the Interdisciplinary General Education Program, which contributes coursework to this option. All current students enrolled under the existing designation will be grandfathered in and allowed to complete their degree under the current title and expected to phase out by the 2028–2029 academic year.

RESOURCES CONSULTED:

Deans and Associate Deans

Teresa Lloro, PhD, Professor & Interim Co-Chair, Liberal Studies Department

Dennis Quinn, PhD, Professor, Interdisciplinary General Education (IGE) Program

Jocelyn A. Pacleb, PhD, Dept Chair, Ethnic & Women's Studies

Dale Turner, PhD, Dept Chair, Philosophy.

DISCUSSION

Two departments have expressed concern that the proposed name “Interdisciplinary Studies” may be too broad and non-specific. They noted that many programs on campus, such as Science, Technology, and Society (STS) and Ethnic and Women’s Studies (EWS), are also interdisciplinary, making the term too general to serve as a clear descriptor. Some suggested that if the goal is to emphasize the non-teaching focus of the option, a more direct name such as “Non-Teaching” might be more appropriate.

In response, the Liberal Studies department pointed out that the proposed name changes align with the CSU Strategic Framework’s emphasis on clear student success pathways leading to careers or further study. It added that while the degree title “Liberal Studies” must be retained to meet *the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing* requirements, the “General Studies” option would be renamed to “Interdisciplinary Studies” to more accurately represent its rigorous, cross-disciplinary curriculum and to enhance recognition among employers and students pursuing diverse careers outside teaching. The department emphasizes that this change, aligns with existing departmental programs such as the *Interdisciplinary General Education Program*—and reflects the college’s ongoing commitment to promoting interdisciplinary learning across the university, rather than claiming ownership of the term.

RECOMMENDATION:

The AP committee carefully reviewed the responses and the program curriculum. The option curriculum has major required and option required courses over 15+ departments spanning multiple colleges including courses from the *Interdisciplinary*

General Education Program, which makes it suitable to address as an interdisciplinary option. However, supporting the name change also doesn't provide ownership to the term and in future other departments should also be able to use the term as mentioned in the email response from the Liberal Studies department:

"We do not view this option change as "putting a stamp" on the term, but as a move that is good for student success. We support interdisciplinarity across campus and would invite other colleges and departments to continue to develop their own interdisciplinary programs, options and pathways."

So, with that understanding of shared nature of the term "interdisciplinary", the Academic Programs Committee finds the justification reasonable and supports the option name change to "Liberal Studies, B.A. - Interdisciplinary Studies Option".