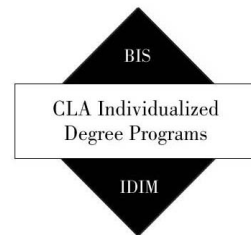


TIPS FOR WRITING A SUCCESSFUL

BIS/IDIM STATEMENT



When **framing your academic program**, you are expected to demonstrate its coherency. The purpose of the statement is not to explain why you are departing from the traditional path of a departmental major, but rather to demonstrate that your program stands on its own as a rigorous and carefully planned academic program.

The introduction should not take a “rambling path” approach (first I tried this, then I tried that); rather, present the three areas you are studying and how these three areas relate to your strengths, interests and experiences. The introduction (and the rest of the proposal) should not be formulaic—that is, there is no need to go over the structure of BIS program or any other sort of presentation of obvious information that anyone could write.

When **describing your courses**, avoid indicating that you are taking a course because it meets a requirement—you should explain why the course makes sense for your program. If the course is a requirement, there is most likely a good reason **WHY** it is a requirement. Avoid giving course descriptions that simply paraphrase what is written in the Undergraduate Catalogue. Think about and explain in your own words how each course fits into *your* program. In addition, avoid mentioning that a course meets some other sort of requirement (such as writing intensive). If you found a prerequisite course to be particularly useful, you can mention it in your proposal. However, do not list or mention prerequisite courses just so the reader knows you took them—it is assumed that you have these courses completed when you submit your proposal.

The **format** of your proposal should read SMOOTHLY. The proposal should take the format of an essay (not an outline or a series of bullet points). At the top of the first page, provide your name, ID number and the title of your program (no title page). For BIS, the title will contain your concentration areas (e.g. BIS: Art, French, Management) and for IDIM you should provide the title of your major (e.g. IDIM: Theater and Social Change). You can use headers for the sections of your proposal (for example for each concentration area) but you do not have to. When you introduce a course, you must offset it with italics or boldface. You must list the course designator/number and the course title (e.g. ArtH 3921 Art of the Film). As always, avoid redundant language or repetitive wording (e.g. “In the class, Jour 3004...” It’s obvious that Jour 3004 is a class and so you can just start the sentence with “In Jour 3004,...”).

Avoid presenting your courses in a monotone list format (I took this course....Then I took this course). Similarly, avoid indicating which term you have or will take the course (that information can be found on the course list). In addition, you do not need to mention the course instructor. Avoid using vague language or terminology. For example, rather than simply saying Mass Communication will give you important skills, indicate what those skills are and how this discipline will provide them. Be sure to go beyond stating the benefits or results of a course or area of study and explain **WHY** and **HOW** something is important, beneficial, etc.

As you work on your proposal, remember that it represents the explanation of your focus of study as an undergraduate student—you will draw on this proposal in the future for job resumes, graduate school applications and the like. Take time to put together a thoughtful statement that you can use in the future.

Finally, consider how your academic program will help you reach the following learning outcomes: identify, define and solve problems; locate and critically evaluate information; understand diverse philosophies and cultures within and across societies; communicate effectively; understand the role of creativity, innovation, discovery, and expression; acquire skills for effective citizenship and life-long learning. How does your program teach you to think, learn, and see issues, knowledge and the world as a whole?

Resources:

Center for Writing (15 Nicholson Hall and 9 Appleby Hall; 612/625-1893; <http://writing.umn.edu/sws/>)
Sample proposals at <http://idp.class.umn.edu> (click on [Writing the Proposal](#))