

**DATE:** July 26, 2018

**SUBJECT:** New Academic Program  
University of Memphis  
Liberal Studies, Doctor of Liberal Studies  
(CIP 23.0101—Liberal Arts and Sciences)

**ACTION RECOMMENDED:** Approval

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**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The University of Memphis proposes a Doctor of Liberal Studies (DLS) offered through University College. Designed for students wishing to work across disciplines the program will culminate in a dissertation demonstrating interdisciplinary analysis, synthesis and interpretation. This program will be attractive to students who wish to follow their intellectual passions beyond the master’s degree. The proposed DLS builds upon a successful Master of Liberal Studies degree program.

The proposed Doctor of Liberal Studies program affords student greater flexibility in shaping their graduate experience and offers them a terminal degree that will enhance their professional development. Additionally, the proposed DLS program is designed to accommodate all students with hybrid, online, and mini-term course offerings.

**INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNING BOARD APPROVAL**

The proposed Doctor of Liberal Studies program was approved by the University of Memphis Board of Trustees on June 6, 2018.

**PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

Fall 2018

**RELEVANCE TO INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STRATEGIC PLAN**

The proposed Doctor of Liberal Studies program aligns with the University of Memphis’ institutional mission to be a “learner-centered metropolitan research university providing high quality educational experiences while pursuing new knowledge through research, artistic expression, and interdisciplinary and engaged scholarship”. The proposed DLS program aligns with the mission with a strong focus on interdisciplinary educational opportunities and learner-centered environment providing students with flexibility on course offerings.

## **CURRICULUM**

The proposed Doctor of Liberal Studies program will consist of 54 semester credit hours post-Masters. Along with the required core courses (15 credit hours), students will design their own program of study in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator. This program will include 33 credit hours across at least two disciplines with no more than 18 credit hours in any one discipline. Students should be prepared to engage in multiple disciplines in their pursuit of an innovative, interdisciplinary education. Students will also complete an oral comprehensive examination and defend their dissertation or a capstone project.

## **PROGRAM PRODUCTIVITY**

The proposed DLS program at the University of Memphis projects annual enrollment of 12 students in the first year and 15 in each subsequent year with graduates beginning in year 4. Attrition is anticipated at one student per year from both part-time and full-time enrolled students.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Full-Time Headcount</b>	<b>Part-Time Headcount</b>	<b>Total Headcount</b>	<b>Graduates</b>
<b>2018</b>	8	4	12	-
<b>2019</b>	16	10	26	-
<b>2020</b>	22	18	40	-
<b>2021</b>	25	28	53	6
<b>2023</b>	27	34	61	9
<b>2024</b>	30	36	66	12
<b>2025</b>	32	37	69	15

## **PROGRAM DUPLICATION**

No doctoral program in Liberal Studies exists at a public or private institution in Tennessee. This proposed DLS program will be the third program in the nation including Georgetown University and Southern Methodist University.

## **EXTERNAL JUDGEMENT**

On November 13-14, 2017, an external review was conducted by Dr. Caroline B. Brettell, Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute of Southern Methodist University and Dr. John Dolan, Associate Dean, Liberal Studies program of Georgetown University. The external reviewers stated "We recommend approval of this program. There is clearly a demand for it in the region; it aligns well with the mission of the University of Memphis and the higher education goals established by the State of Tennessee; the bulk of the resources are in place to launch it; and there is a strong institutional commitment."

## **STUDENT DEMAND AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRAM GRADUATES**

The feasibility study conducted for the proposed DLS program indicated that relevant job postings for doctoral graduates in liberal arts programs increased 57 percent from 2013 to 2016. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, occupations that require a master's degree is expected to grow the fastest from 2012 to 2022 with 18 percent growth, while occupations that require doctoral degrees will grow 16 percent

An economic impact report conducted by the Tennessee Conference of Graduate noted that Tennessee is a "net importer of graduate talent" with the Memphis metropolitan area at the bottom of the three state region (Mississippi, Arkansas and Tennessee) for producing graduate degrees. Lifetime earnings for doctoral-level workers across disciplines are significantly above bachelor's degree holders resulting in a significant benefit to the state in increased lifetime tax revenues. Specifically, it is estimated that adding doctoral-level workers in the state of Tennessee would mean an economic impact of more than \$2 million dollars per graduate.

## **INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY TO DELIVER THE PROGRAM**

The interdisciplinary DLS program will draw from faculty across the University of Memphis. Since the College of Arts and Sciences does not offer doctoral degrees in several of their programs, the proposed DLS program provides an opportunity for students to pursue graduate studies beyond the Master's degree. The Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences is very supportive of the proposed DLS program.

All of the core courses for the proposed DLS will be offered online. The University College along with other colleges has a rich history in developing online programs complemented by the University of Memphis Global program.

To support the proposed DLS program, the University College will establish an Advisory Council that will include faculty members from other colleges and academic units on campus. The Council will provide advice on admissions and program direction.

## **ASSESSMENT AND POST-APPROVAL MONITORING**

There is no professional accreditation agency for the Doctor of Liberal Studies program. An annual performance review of the proposed program will be conducted by THEC staff for the first seven years following program approval. The review will be based on benchmarks established in the approved proposal. The benchmarks assessed in the post-approval monitoring include enrollment and graduation, program cost, progress toward accreditation, and other metrics set by the institution and Commission staff. If benchmarks are not met during the monitoring period, the Commission may recommend that the institutional governing board terminate the program. If additional time is needed and requested by the institutional governing board, the Commission may choose to extend the monitoring period.