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**Self-Study MA in Liberal Studies
Lehman College, CUNY
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Photo MALS Students

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Background

Lehman's MA in Liberal Studies (MALS) is housed in the Adult Degree Program (ADP), which is part of the School of Continuing and Professional Studies. ADP primarily serves undergraduates who are returning to college (or starting college for the first time) after being in the workforce for more than five years. The ADP director, Ms. Pam Hinden, is the administrative director of MALS. Its academic director (since 2016) is Professor Alborn, who teaches in the History Department at Lehman and at the CUNY Graduate Center. In the early years of the program there was an active advisory committee, which provided advice in recruiting efforts and revisions to the curriculum (see Appendix 1 for list of members). Although this has been in abeyance since the lockdown began in March 2020, it will be reconstituted to implement changes that emerge from the program review. Since this is the first external review of the MALS program, none of the changes that have been implemented since 2012 derived from a prior program review; instead, they developed in response to student and faculty feedback as well as challenges faced in getting the program off the ground.

History

The MA in Liberal Studies at Lehman College was first introduced as a program in 1990, with the goal of providing a post-graduate option for students who majored in Self-Determined Studies as part of Lehman's Adult Degree Program. Joseph Dauben (a Professor in the History Department), who served as the program's director between 1989 and 1992, recalls that additional students had received undergraduate degrees from Lehman in History and English, and that the program at that time was not sustainable owing to an insufficient number of eligible MA-level courses. No students completed the program in that incarnation.

In 2011, Richard Finger (who worked in Lehman's Enrollment Management Division and later served as Director of Graduate Studies) raised the possibility of reviving this program. Professor Alborn, who at the time was Dean of Arts and Humanities, worked with the Graduate Studies Office to revise the curriculum and create a strategy for publicizing the program. A steering committee was formed, including Alborn, Dauben, Finger, Marzie Jafari (Dean of Continuing and Professional Studies), and Ann Worth (Director of Graduate Studies). In November 2011, the Lehman College Senate approved the proposal to revive the program with minor changes to its curriculum, and in January 2012 this was approved by the CUNY Board of Trustees. The most important changes to the curriculum were the introduction of

Prior Learning Assessment credits, which has been a successful component of the Adult Degree Program; the combination of two core courses into a single “Arts and Humanities” course (MLS 702); and the creation of a new core course, “Introduction to Liberal Studies” (MLS 701), based on a similar course offered in the MALS program at the CUNY Graduate Center. (Proposals for the revised program and new courses can be found in Appendix 2.)

Joseph Dauben, who had previously served as Executive Officer of MALS at the CUNY Graduate Center, acted as interim director of the Lehman program from February 2012 through May 2013, when he was replaced by Martin Burke (a Professor in the History Department). A Faculty Advisory Committee was set up in Spring 2013, but met infrequently. Although the first student enrolled in the program in Fall 2012, progress was slow for the first few years, with only five students enrolled as of Fall 2014, at which point only two of the core classes had been offered as stand-alone courses (the other two, MLS 702 and 704, were cross listed with courses in other departments). There was also confusion regarding where the program was housed, with the deans of Arts and Humanities (Dierdre Pettipiece) and Continuing and Professional Studies (Marzie Jafari) both claiming administrative responsibility.

A turning point occurred in 2015 with the appointment of Ms. Pamela Hinden as the director of the Adult Degree Program, under whose leadership effective recruitment was carried out for the first time. This resulted in an entering class of 12 students in Fall 2015, which allowed the program to run three of its four core courses as stand-alone classes (all but MLS 702). These were taught by Burke (MLS 701), Alborn (MLS 703, the Social Sciences), and Heather Sloan, a Professor of Geology (MLS 704, the Natural Sciences). In 2016, the appointment of Jane MacKillop as Interim Dean (and later Dean) of Continuing and Professional Studies, and the formation of a new MALS Advisory Committee, further stabilized the program and consolidated its place as an important part of the Adult Degree Program at Lehman. Around this time Alborn, who had been sharing duties with Burke as the academic director of MALS, officially took over in that capacity. In Spring 2017 Grace Bullaro (Professor of English) agreed to teach MLS 702 (Arts and Humanities) and since that date all four core courses have been taught each year as stand-alone classes.

Admissions and Recruitment

Admission requirements for MALS include a 3.0 GPA, personal statement, resumé and two letters of recommendation. Exceptions have been made to the GPA requirement in some cases in which students demonstrate success in their careers subsequent to earning their undergraduate degree. Of 86 students who joined the program between 2015 and 2022, 19 (22%) had a GPA lower than 3.0 at the college where they received their final undergraduate degree (although some of these had higher two-year college GPAs). In all these cases students were asked to submit a writing sample and to meet with the program director prior to admission. All but two of these students either graduated or are still in the program; of these, one left after the first semester to become a New York Teaching Fellow and only one failed to succeed in her coursework. The 11 who have graduated and the 6 who are still in the program earned an average GPA of 3.73, which is just slightly lower than the overall average (3.82) for MALS students. While the program has been very successful with students whom we admit with a GPA under 3.0, it can be challenging to work with some of them. The program does refuse admission to a few students each year, but the total number of those overall is not more than fifteen.

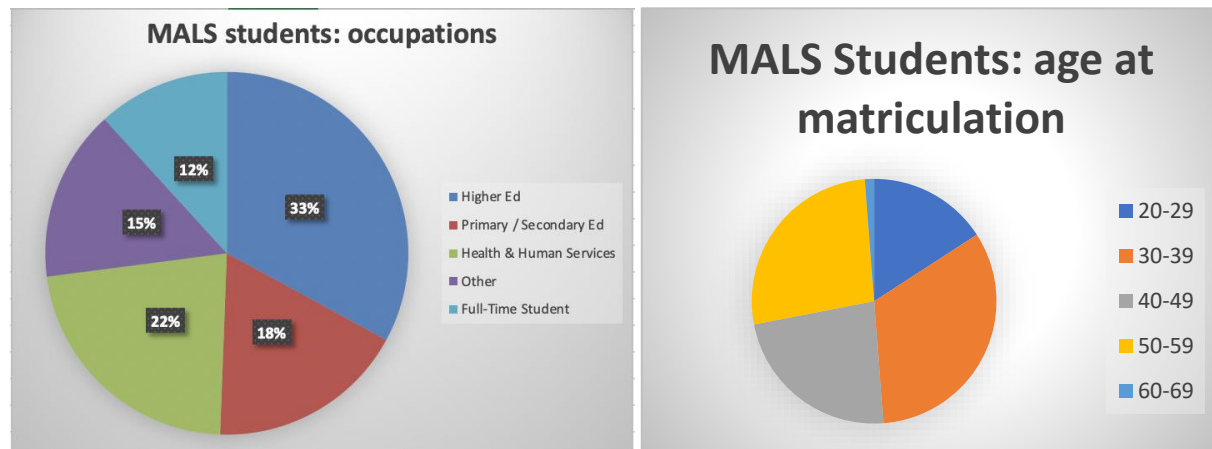
Recruitment for MALS has proceeded intermittently. We have held several information sessions each year since 2018 (since 2020 on Zoom), with between one and ten students attending per session. These are publicized on the MALS website as well as the Graduate Admissions website. Since 2019, MALS has also participated in a campaign conducted by Graduate Admissions, which has included advertising on social media. This generated a handful of additional potential applicants in the first two years, and a substantially larger number last year, although only two of them ended up applying. In 2018 we also conducted a direct mailing to recent ADP graduates, which was reasonably effective. In 2019 we held a well-attended open house, together with the MS in Organizational Leadership, at which MALS students and the academic director discussed the program. Last fall, ADP accepted its first cohort in a new BA program in Liberal and Interdisciplinary Studies (a revamped version of its old Self-Determined Studies program, which stopped admitting students in the mid-2010s). The ADP program is hopeful that this will generate some MALS candidates each year.

A majority of respondents to the student/alumni survey (25 out of 48) said they learned about MALS from its website. Eight more heard about MALS from a Lehman faculty member or advisor, six via word of mouth, five via email, and one each from an information session, the open house, social media, and the Graduate Studies office.

Student Demographics

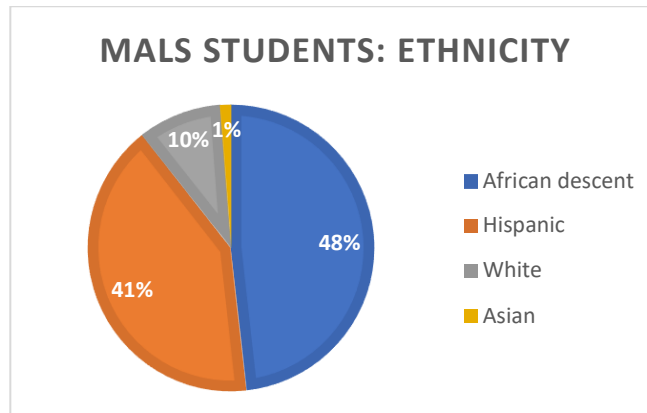
Most MALS students are women of color who are returning to graduate study after being out of school for many years. The average MALS student (median and mean) is 41 years old, has not been in the classroom for seven years, and has been in the workforce for at least ten years. The large majority are continuing to work full-time while they are in the MALS program. 28% of MALS students were fifty or older when they entered the program, compared to only 16% who were in their twenties; 31% had spent a decade or more in the workforce since their most recent college degree. Five are veterans, who earned their MALS degree through the GI Bill or related funding sources. Only 12% of MALS students have been enrolled fulltime (three or more classes per semester).

The large majority of MALS students work in higher education (33%), health and human services (23%), or primary and secondary education (23%).



Most MALS students received an undergraduate degree from Lehman (46%) or another CUNY college (22%). All but three students received their BA in the United States. Their undergraduate training has varied widely, including interdisciplinary studies (13), psychology (11), sociology (10), history (8), English/theatre (7), business (6), health and human services (5), STEM (5), and journalism/communication (5). Most MALS students are women (78%), and most are students of color, including 48% of African descent and 42% Hispanic: this roughly parallels Lehman's gender and ethnic composition among undergraduates (69% women, 50% Hispanic, 32% African descent), but is a higher proportion of students of color

than the overall figures for Lehman’s MA students (40% Hispanic, 30% African descent).



Student Retention

Only 12 MALS students have withdrawn from the program compared to 45 graduates (of 29 students who are still in the program, 6 are presently on a leave of absence). There was an especially large “bump” in withdrawals during COVID. The reasons students have given for withdrawing included job pressure, family issues, and non-COVID related illness. A handful of students withdraw in order to pursue a different educational opportunity: one was accepted into the New York Teaching Fellow Program and another was admitted to law school. The average time to completion has been 2.6 years, or a little over five semesters, not including leaves of absence: this has been very satisfactory, considering that the vast majority of our students are part-time (2 courses per semester, which typically translates into a three-year completion rate). Most of the full-time students have either been veterans (5) or attending on an F-1 visa (2), both of which groups needed to attend full time either to qualify for funding or maintain US residence.

Student Experience

Student experience in MALS has been gratifyingly positive across all phases of the program, judging from “the word on the street” as well as a survey conducted last fall among alumni and existing students (not including those in their first semester), with a response rate of 88% (51 out of 58). (For full survey results see Appendix 3). Among respondents, 84% were “very satisfied” with the overall MALS program and another 8% were “somewhat satisfied”; 92% were “very satisfied” with MALS advising; and 82% were “very satisfied” and 16% were “somewhat satisfied” with

MALS instruction (core courses as well as electives). Among alumni, more than 70% of respondents “strongly agreed,” and more than 90% agreed, that their MALS courses prepared them for their thesis or capstone; that they used the skills they learned in subsequent coursework and at their workplace; and that MALS “contributed to their ability to achieve their goals.” All 38 alumni who responded to the survey agreed (and 36 “strongly agreed”) that they were glad they had enrolled in MALS. A majority of students also expressed satisfaction with Lehman’s library and the graduate admissions office, and a plurality expressed satisfaction with its bursar’s office, financial aid office, registrar, IT, and graduate studies office.

Evidence of what MALS graduates have done with their degrees has been gathered for 35 students. Of these, nearly half (17) are still working in the same job as before entering the program. Seven more alumni received promotions at their place of employment, typically from an assistant administrative role to a director role; one moved from being an after-school arts counselor at a middle school to being a teacher at the same school. Seven alumni changed positions, typically finding work with more responsibility and/or closer to their residence. One moved from being a high school art teacher in Harlem to the same position in the Bronx; another, who commuted to Lehman from Danbury, CT, found work as an IT support manager at Yale. A student who worked as a receptionist in the Bronx while at Lehman moved to North Carolina to be closer to her family and is now an administrative specialist at Duke University. A fourth student, who attended Lehman on a fellowship for disabled veterans, is now the Archivist at the Bronx County Historical Society. One alumna retired after a career working for the Department of Housing and Urban Development and is doing free-lance ASL tutoring. Three alumni, finally, are presently enrolled in doctoral programs: one in Education Leadership at the University of North Florida, one in African American Studies at Temple, and one in History at the CUNY Graduate Center. Several other alumni and current MALS students are either presently applying to doctoral programs to start in 2023 or plan to do so next year.

In email correspondence accompanying the survey, students repeatedly expressed unsolicited gratitude for their time in MALS. The ASL interpreter wrote that she was “living through parts of my research and have gotten more information to add to it.” The woman who now works at Duke wrote that she has “an awesome role in a beautiful environment” and that MALS had “opened so many doors for me here at Duke.” A third alumna thanks MALS for “cultivating such a rewarding and welcoming learning environment and program.”

Faculty

There are no Lehman faculty members who teach exclusively in MALS, although several have taught regularly in the program. In the core courses, MALS has drawn on instructors from a range of programs at Lehman, including English, Geology, History, Latin American Studies, Science Education, Sociology, and Theatre. This range has been much wider for electives, with 25 different programs represented. Nearly three-fourths of these, however (72%, measured by student enrollment), have been clustered in seven programs: Africana Studies, English, Health Education, History, Latin American Studies, Middle and High School Education, and Sociology. MALS has drawn advisors for capstones and theses (who must be fulltime Lehman faculty members) from a narrower range of programs (11), with 68% (34 out of 50) clustered in four programs: History, Africana Studies, Latin American Studies, and Middle and High School Education. (See the “electives” and “796-797” spreadsheets in the data file for details).

A few Lehman faculty members have been especially vital in MALS’s mission, either through teaching core classes and/or popular electives, advising final projects, or both. These include Sarah Ohmer and Alyshia Galvez (Latin American Studies), Heather Sloan (Geology), Sherry Deckman, Gillian Bayne, and the late David Fletcher (Middle and High School Education), Julie Maybee (Philosophy/ Disability Studies), Elin Waring and Naomi Spence (Sociology), Victoria Sanford (Anthropology), Anne Rice, Gary Ford, and Mary Phillips (Africana Studies), and Professor Alborn, Joseph Dauben, Marie Marianetti, Martin Burke, and the late Cindy Lobel (History). Websites for many of these faculty members are included in Appendix 1.

Curriculum

MALS has evolved since 2012 in a few important ways from the original curriculum, which was closely patterned on the proposed course of study in 1990. In 2016 the program introduced an option to write a shorter (3-credit) capstone project and take an additional elective, as an alternative to writing a longer (6-credit) thesis. The program has also developed several new MA-level topics courses to broaden the range of electives that students can take. Finally, as mentioned above, the revived program in 2012 included a new option for qualified students to receive up to six credits for prior learning (see below for more details).

Core courses

The four core courses, MLS 701-704, have been a central component of the MALS program. The goal in these courses is to provide students with the reading, writing, and research skills they need to succeed in their electives and on their final project. Since many MALS students have not been in the classroom for many years, another important function of these courses is to reacclimatize students to the study habits and social skills that are needed to succeed at the postgraduate level. The fact that the average GPA for MALS students in their electives has been 3.85 (compared to 3.67 in their core classes) suggests that the program has largely been successful in these goals. Forty-two of 50 respondents to the recent student/alumni survey said they were “very satisfied” with the core courses, and seven more were “somewhat satisfied.”

Recruiting and retaining instructors for these courses has been challenging but generally successful. The leading challenge has been to persuade department chairs to allow an instructor to teach a course that does not count for the department’s major; this became even more difficult when CUNY course loads diminished from 21 to 18 credit-hours. In some cases, MALS has met this challenge by paying a fulltime instructor as an adjunct, and in others by hiring part-time instructors to teach core courses. At present, it seems likely that full-time Lehman faculty will be able and willing to teach all four core classes in the foreseeable future, although since the retirement of Heather Sloan in 2020 we anticipate possible problems finding people to teach MLS 704 on a regular basis. The content and level of instruction in the core classes has, for the most part, been consistent since 2016, allowing for variations in topics and approaches depending on specific instructors.

Martin Burke taught MLS 701 in its first two installments (2014 and 2015) and again in 2017, and Cindy Lobel, also a Professor in the History Department, taught this course in 2016. In 2018 Keyanah Freeland, a graduate student at NYU, did a very effective job teaching MLS 701, modelling it on a similar course she had taught as part of NYU’s Leadership Alliance Mellon Initiative. The one failure occurred the following year when Carla Murphy, who has a background in journalism and international studies, was much less successful at connecting with the students. Tim Professor Alborn took over the course in Fall 2020 and has been teaching it since then. This course has evolved from its original design to focus more on skills in academic writing, revision, and peer review, but continues to emphasize the unique challenges and benefits that come with approaching a topic from an interdisciplinary perspective.

By design, MLS 702 has varied quite a bit in scope, since instructors have been encouraged to play to their strengths in terms of which disciplines and topics within the arts and humanities to focus on. Hence Grace Russo Bullaro used a set of primary sources and accompanying scholarly commentary to provide students with a sweeping history of important moments in arts and letters from the ancient world to the present day; Crissa Chappell, whose background is in film studies and creative writing, focused on film, literature and philosophy (2018-2020); Sarah Ohmer subtitled her course “Humanities for the People of Color, by the People of Color—Introduction to Coloniality and Decolonial Research Methods” (2021); and Claudia Case, who is a theatre historian, has focused on architecture, theatre, dance, and film (2022-23). A constant in all courses has been a focus on modernism and postmodernism and a final paper that expects students to apply multiple disciplinary approaches in critically analyzing a primary source. (See [syllabi on the MALS website](#) for more details).

MLS 703 (The Social Sciences) and 704 (The Natural Sciences) have been more consistent in approach, mainly because there has been more continuity in who has taught them. Professor Alborn developed a syllabus for MLS 703 in 2014 and taught this course through 2019; Elin Waring has been teaching a modified version of this syllabus since 2020. Heather Sloan developed a syllabus for MLS 704 in 2016 and taught it through 2021; Gillian Bayne (Science Education) taught a version of this syllabus in 2022. Both courses combine an overview of several different disciplines within their respective field, guest lectures by Lehman faculty who teach in these disciplines, and a literature review assignment in which students apply several disciplinary perspectives to a research question. (See [syllabi on the MALS website](#) for examples.) Professors Sloan and Bayne have both supplemented traditional writing assignments with other means of communicating academic ideas, including Power Point and oral presentations. Professor Sloan was very helpful in the program’s early years in identifying issues of plagiarism, leading to a stronger focus on this in MLS 701. Since then, this has not surfaced as a problem, either in the core classes or electives.

Electives

The leading challenge to MALS when it first started in 1990 was the paucity of MA programs at Lehman offering relevant courses. Although Lehman is blessed with a large number of MA and MS Programs, many are in areas that do not fall within the definition of “Liberal Studies”; these include Business, Nursing, Speech Pathology, Social Work, and most of its Education programs. Programs that offer stand-alone

MA degrees that sit squarely within liberal studies include Art, Biology, Computer Science, Earth Sciences, English, History, Mathematics, Music, and Spanish; these account for 29% of MALS enrollments in electives (89 out of 309).

MALS has taken a three-pronged approach to address this issue, which in most cases has been very successful. The most important of these has been the creation of new 700-level topics courses in several departments that do not have MA programs. These courses (typically with one to three MALS students enrolled) meet with upper-level undergraduate lecture courses, with the instructor assigning additional or alternative work, and sometimes holding a few additional meetings with the student(s). Since spring 2016, when Sociology was the first such department to do this, eight different programs in seven departments have agreed to offer such courses. These have accounted for 39% of MALS enrollments in electives (121 out of 309), with the most popular being Latin American Studies, Africana Studies, and Sociology. There is clearly a trade-off between students taking courses with undergraduates and students having fewer choices. In a few cases, instructors have declined to teach these sections because of the additional work it entails, and some departments (e.g. Psychology and Media Studies) have been unwilling to work with MALS to offer such courses: Psychology and Media Studies stand out in this regard. By and large, though, this feature in MALS has been beneficial from both students' and instructors' perspectives (and some other small MA programs at Lehman, including History, Art, and Art History, also combine graduate-level and undergraduate-level sections).

MALS also encourages students to work with Lehman professors in independent studies (17 have done so) and to take classes via the "e-permit" system at other CUNY colleges (12 have done so). In the student/alumni survey, many singled out the independent studies they took as especially rewarding, referring to their ability to prepare in a focused manner for their capstone, the "individualized learning alongside a professor," and "to be truly accountable for my own research." Students also praised the opportunities afforded by the e-permit system. One remarked that the animal behavior course she took at Hunter "was different from anything at Lehman and helped me look at another possibility for my Capstone project." Several students who took courses at the CUNY Graduate Center emphasized that "the pressure of being with advanced level students pushed me to do better" and that it "gave me the opportunity to test out what being in a Ph.D. program would be like."

Additionally, many departments that are not "liberal studies" *per se* have been generous in providing seats to MALS students in those of their classes that do

qualify for that designation. This has especially been the case with Health Education and Middle and High School Education, both of which offer many appropriate electives (e.g., “Human Sexuality”, “History of Multicultural Education”), but do not allow MALS students in their pedagogy courses. Such programs have accounted for 22% of MALS enrollments in electives (69 out of 309). Full enrollment details can be found in the “courses” sheet in the data file.

These high levels of cooperation between MALS and a wide variety of other departments at Lehman are the outcome of several converging factors. First, in under-enrolled MA programs (including History and English), MALS students improve enrollment figures and help to provide a critical mass of students in the classroom. Second, the academic director (Professor Alborn) has worked very hard to forge productive and amicable relationships with faculty who teach electives in which MALS students enroll, with program directors who staff these courses, and with administrative assistants who send in student permissions. In rare cases where there has been a problem, either with a student’s performance or with an instructor, Alborn has been able to intervene to clear up the matter. Finally, and most importantly, MALS students themselves have been outstanding ambassadors on behalf of the program. Each semester numerous instructors provide positive feedback about the value MALS students add to their classes, whether in terms of their real-world experience, their academic achievement, or their participation in class discussions. And in a large majority of cases, MALS students have valued the education they have received in these classes: more than 80% of respondents in the student/alumni survey were “very satisfied” with instruction in their electives and another 18% were at least “somewhat satisfied.”

Internships

Since 2018, a handful of MALS students have received credit for internships. In these cases, the student registered for an independent study with the program advisor, Professor Alborn, and submitted a written reflection on the work they did and how it related to their academic work in the MALS program (for a sample see Appendix 4); Alborn also received independent confirmation from the on-site supervisor regarding the work performed. These internships included a summer music camp in upstate New York; the Paley Center for the Arts in Manhattan; the Bronx County Historical Society; and a research assistantship with Professor JoNina Abron-Ervin, who was writing a memoir on her career as an African American activist. With the exception of the BCHS internship, which Professor Alborn assisted in setting up, students all generated the opportunity on their own initiative. The

students were uniformly positive about these experiences, and in one case (Pastor Crespo at the BCHS), the internship directly led to the student's appointment, following graduation, as the organization's archivist. In the case of Professor Abron-Ervin, the student who worked for her put her in touch with another MALS student, who was writing her capstone on the role of women in Black activism, and she served as a valuable oral history source.

Prior Learning Assessment

Credit for prior learning (also defined in the program description as "life experience") is granted "based on the student's ability to demonstrate learning that has taken place through volunteer activities or employment services." Originally this was assessed using the model that has long been used for undergraduates enrolled in Lehman's Adult Degree Program, whereby students submit a detailed portfolio of their activities, and it is evaluated by an appropriate Lehman faculty member, with a final signoff by Ms. Hinden. Since 2021, the academic director of MALS (Professor Alborn) has taken over this responsibility, in consultation with (but not formal approval by) one or more Lehman faculty members. At this time, the standards for granting such credits were also clarified, to include a focus on MA-level research activities. The other requirement, which has been the case since 2017, is that students must be able to relate their prior learning to the curriculum (including electives) that they are pursuing in MALS. For this reason, such credit is not granted until the student is at least halfway through the program. An alternate path to earning credit for prior learning is possession of one or more professional certificates that are equivalent to MA-level college credit. So far only one student has earned credit in this manner (six credits for certificates in Healthcare Compliance and Certified Coding Specialist). Nine other students have earned credit via submission of a portfolio (3 credits each): a high school English teacher, a high school art teacher, an elementary school math teacher, a clinical lab technician, an account manager, the assistant director of Lehman's Freshman Year Initiative program, an Academic Resource Specialist at Bronx Community College, and a Community Resource support professional. A representative portfolios is provided in Appendix 5.

Capstone/thesis

A final project is required of all MALS students: either a 6-credit thesis (MLS 797) or a 3-credit capstone (MLS 796). In the latter case, students take an additional

elective. 34% of MALS graduates have chosen to write a thesis, and this percentage has dropped to 21% since 2017. The only hard-and-fast requirement for either class is that the project should incorporate at least two different disciplinary perspectives. Thesis and capstone topics have varied widely, but can be roughly divided into five overlapping categories, which broadly correlate with students' occupations and ethnicities: education and child development (16), immigration and Latinx Studies (14), women's studies (9), Africana Studies (5) and health (5). A full list of titles and advisers is provided in Appendix 6. Most of these projects have been traditional research papers, varying in length from 20-30 pages for the capstone to 50-80 pages for the thesis. Some have included additional media: one student combined three original acrylic portraits with an analysis of Puerto Rican music; another combined the first installment of a graphic history with a reflective essay; and a third combined an original recorded song with a comparative essay on a different song by Donny Hathaway. Students are encouraged to develop capstone projects that depart from the typical research paper, and several have done so: these have included a "SWOT" analysis, a proposal for an oral history project, a business plan for an after-school program, and proposal to bring motivational speakers to Lehman.

Students generally choose their thesis or capstone advisor in consultation with the Academic Director. Typically, this is someone with whom they have taken at least one course. The Academic Director also recommends a second person to provide additional advice, either less formally in the case of the capstone or as a more traditional "second reader" in the case of the thesis. In the latter case the second reader is expected to suggest methods and sources at the outset of the project, then read the final draft of the thesis. According to the Graduate Bulletin, all students who complete their capstone or thesis must undergo a "comprehensive examination" with their two readers. Logistical issues have made this requirement difficult to enforce, but something close to the spirit of this requirement has been achieved since 2020 by means of an annual two-hour Zoom meeting (sometimes two separate meetings) with graduates from the previous year and their advisors, in which they present their findings and discuss their projects with their fellow students. This has proven to be a successful culmination of the students' academic career at Lehman.

Advising

The nature of the MALS program puts a premium on advising, and this has been one of the program's strengths. The Academic Director, Professor Alborn, serves as

the primary advisor, although other instructors in the core classes also provide general academic advice and connect students to relevant faculty members. Starting in the student's second semester (when they are halfway through their second pair of core classes), Professor Alborn meets with each student to discuss the following semester's electives and continues to meet with students every semester until they graduate. Before each semester's advising meetings, he circulates a list of eligible electives to students, which he distills from a list of courses provided by the Registrar. Students provide him with a set of courses that sound interesting to them, he suggests additional possibilities, then works with the student to make sure the courses they choose will keep them on track toward their final project and postgraduate plans. He also encourages students to think imaginatively in terms of possible independent studies, internships, or courses on other CUNY campuses. These meetings typically take between half an hour and an hour for each student, often with additional follow-up meetings or email communications. Since COVID, they have all taken place on Zoom, which has proven to be much more convenient for all parties. After meeting with the students, Professor Alborn works with the departments to facilitate the student's enrollment in electives, including permissions and (where necessary) the creation of a graduate-level section to meet with an undergraduate lecture course. This relieves students of at least some of the frustration that comes from navigating Lehman's bureaucracy and enables them to focus more of their energies on their coursework. To keep track of students' progress, Professor Alborn maintains a detailed spreadsheet with students' courses, grades, and additional notes.

Mission and Learning Goals

MALS's mission, as advertised on its website and in promotional literature, is to provide "an innovative, flexible, and customizable path toward an interdisciplinary degree" and to "help professional adults design a course of study focusing on a specific issue that relates to their personal or career goals." MALS primarily serves students of color who have been in the workforce for many years, offering maximum flexibility in scheduling, course offerings, and mode of instruction.

The following learning goals are posted on the MALS website:

In the four core classes taken during the first year, students will:

- Gain practical writing skills with respect to revision, peer review, and proper attribution

- Learn how to collect and organize data from relevant databases
- Learn how to cite sources using one of the three main styles used in the humanities and social sciences (MLA, APA, and Turabian).
- Learn how to apply different social science methodologies and theories to a research problem
- Gain an accurate understanding of the basic tenets, unifying theories, methods, and unanswered questions in the natural sciences, and reflect on the role that their own scientific knowledge, thinking and skills play in their everyday lives
- Engage with primary and secondary sources to form an understanding of art, literature, and cultural objects

In their electives, students will:

- Learn how to think critically about a selected theme or topic from at least two different disciplinary perspectives

On the thesis or capstone project, students will:

- Locate primary sources relevant to a given research question
- Demonstrate mastery of relevant databases to locate secondary literature on a given research question that allows them to think critically about this question and place it in context.

All MALS capstones and theses have been kept on file for future assessment efforts. MALS will begin a systematic assessment of student learning following the external review in 2023. The most likely structure will involve e-portfolios, which makes the most sense given the open-ended nature of the program following the first year. One student, Pastor Crespo, provided such a portfolio to accompany his capstone project, and this might be taken as a model for such an exercise. The portfolios on file by students who receive credit for prior learning have also provided abbreviated summaries of the work they performed in MALS in the course of connecting their work experience to their curriculum. Since an assessment exercise will likely seek to understand how students connect their scholarship with their occupation, these will also be valuable models.

Alignment with Lehman College's Mission and Institutional Learning Goals

MALS's mission is fully consistent with the general mission of Lehman College (for a full statement of Lehman's mission and learning goals see the 2021 Strategic Plan (Appendix 7). MALS actively contributes to Lehman's mission to enable "a diverse pipeline of leaders and change agents who are committed to social justice, dedicated to igniting new possibilities and confident about finding innovative solutions to the challenges and opportunities in the region and beyond." MALS encourages "active and applied learning, centered in the liberal arts as the foundation for advancing educational attainment and community engagement in the service of the Bronx and the region." It is a striking example of the "innovative curriculum and pedagogy" that Lehman celebrates as part of its vision. It assists in "increasing the number and percentage of Lehman students participating in high impact engagement practices such as internships, field placements, and service learning." Above all, MALS "engage[s] students in the joys and transformative power of the pursuit of knowledge," and it builds upon Lehman's "areas of cross-disciplinary strength to create pillars of outstanding achievement in research, scholarship, and creative work."

MALS also aligns in numerous specific ways with Lehman's institutional learning goals. Our graduates are (to quote from those goals) "independent thinkers, who actively and skillfully cultivate the capacity to conceptualize, analyze, evaluate, synthesize and communicate." They are "self-directed learners with the habit of asking 'why'," and they "synthesize information and knowledge across disciplines to their own perspectives, positions, and interpretations." They "can, ethically and legally, identify, locate, comprehend, analyze, and evaluate information from a multitude of sources to solve diverse problems." They "effectively communicate with diverse audiences in diverse settings and through diverse media as well as use appropriate rhetorical strategies with different audiences." They are "engaged citizens, who contribute to their local, national and global communities using reason, integrity, empathy, accuracy, humility, and civility." They "assume leadership roles to build capacity in their communities."

Comparable Programs

MALS at Lehman is one of five such programs in the CUNY system, only three of which are currently active. Of these, the largest is housed at the Graduate Center, which started it in 1980 and had 161 students enrolled as of 2021. This has declined

from 362 since 2017, although that was up from an average of 104 between 2006-10. Brooklyn College lists a MALS program that it introduced in 1982, but it has not reported any students in the CUNY Academic Program Inventory since 2017. Queens College, which introduced a MALS program the same year, reported only a single MALS student in the 2021 API, down from 18 in 2017 and 25 a decade before, and it does not list a MALS program on its website. The only active CUNY MALS program besides those at Lehman and the Graduate Center is at the College of Staten Island, which started in 1983 and had an average of 20 students enrolled between 2017-2021, down from 34 in 2006-10. Lehman's program averaged 27 students between 2017-2021.

There are several other MALS programs in the New York metropolitan area, including St. John's University, the New School, SUNY-Empire State, SUNY-Old Westbury, and SUNY-Stony Brook.¹ These are all comparable to Lehman's program in terms of credits (30-36). Their tuition ranges from comparable (at the SUNY campuses) to much more expensive (at the New School). There are no other MALS programs in the Bronx or Westchester County, where most of our students live.² A list has been provided in Appendix 8 of these programs, as well as several from other regions (24 in all), with information on credits, tuition, format (in-person, online or both), core classes, areas of concentration, and the schools in which the different programs are housed.

Like Lehman, most other MALS programs include a combination of core classes, electives, and a final capstone or thesis. Sample core-class sequences include "introduction to interdisciplinary study" (Old Westbury), "Making the Modern World" (New School), "cultural analysis" (Northwestern), and "critical inquiry" (Empire State). Most programs offer a course that is the equivalent of MLS 701 (Introduction to Liberal Studies) at Lehman, and many have Lehman's complement of core courses in the sciences, arts, and humanities. Several programs include areas of concentration, including 19 different areas at the Graduate Center's MALS program. Although MALS at Lehman does not list areas of concentration on its website, in practice many students do concentrate on specific areas of study, including Latinx Studies, Africana Studies, Health Sciences, Education and Society, and Women's Studies. An outlier in most of the above features is the Stony Brook program, which includes a core sequence (including "effective professional communication" and "leadership and action") that is closer to Lehman's MS in

¹ Besides the programs mentioned above, MALS or equivalent programs in New York State are offered by Niagara, SUNY-Buffalo, Hofstra, C.W. Post, Manhattanville, NYU, SUNY-Fredonia, and SUNY-Albany.

² The one exception is Fordham's Westchester branch, but this branch only has an overall enrollment of 300 students—hence the number of MALS students is most likely negligible.

Organizational Leadership. Most, but not all, comparable programs nationally go by the name “Liberal Studies”; others use “Liberal Arts” (Stanford, Johns Hopkins and Texas Christian), Interdisciplinary Studies (Arkansas-Little Rock and Liberty University), and Integrated Studies (Jacksonville State).

Across the country most MALS programs are housed in Schools of Arts and Sciences, although several, like Lehman’s, are housed in Schools of Professional Studies or equivalent schools: these include Stony Brook, Northwestern, and Georgetown. Since Lehman does not have a School of Arts and Sciences, and since its electives are taught in all five “academic” schools (Arts and Humanities, Natural and Social Sciences, Business, Education, and Health Sciences, Human Services and Nursing), Continuing and Professional Studies has been an appropriate home for MALS at Lehman. It has also afforded the program resources that would not be available in other schools.

The primary sense in which Lehman’s MALS program does not conform to comparable MALS programs is its credit load (36): most other programs range from 27 to 33 credits, with the majority requiring 30 credits (although Wesleyan’s requires 36 and Stanford’s requires 42). This has an effect on both tuition and time to degree. In practice, factoring in prior learning and transfer credits, the average MALS graduate at Lehman paid for 34.3 credits, and many students have tuition waivers from their employers for at least half (and in many cases all) the courses they take at Lehman: this includes most of the 33% of MALS students who work in higher education, as well as many of the 23% who work in health and human services. Students who enroll in MALS have generally not complained about the 36-credit course load: indeed, a majority of those who entered with transfer credits chose not to use them once they started the program. This is also indirectly borne out by the very high level of satisfaction students expressed about their electives in the student/alumni survey. It has also been the experience of the academic director that the additional number of electives that students take have provided them with better preparation for writing a capstone that is both stronger academically and personally more gratifying.

Future Directions and Recommendations

Since the Lehman MALS program has been successful in terms of retention, time to degree, and student success following graduation and is highly appreciated by the students themselves much of the focus in the coming years will be on finding ways to expand our applicant pool. Partly to this end, there are also some curricular

changes that may make MALS a more appealing choice for prospective students.

The research conducted for this report has already yielded some fruit, in the form of additional features added to our website. The School of Continuing and Professional Studies is presently working on this issue with assistance from Hanover Research, which will be recommending marketing strategies based on best practices at ten successful MALS programs (these are marked with an asterisk on the list in the Appendix). Besides the possible changes mentioned above and below, and any additional changes that emerge from the external review, it is our sense that the MALS curriculum, in its present form, aligns very well with the needs and interests of our students. We will devote more resources to communicating this success to working adults in The Bronx and Westchester County in coming years.

For instance, it should be possible to find a way to communicate the extraordinarily positive feedback generated by the student and alumni survey. Other possibilities include alumni profiles to be posted on the program website, both short written biographies and video testimonials. Since we have had some success with students who are veterans, another idea is to work more closely with Lehman's Veterans and Military Affairs Office to reach out to that population. Finally, as mentioned above, the new Lehman BA in Liberal and Interdisciplinary Studies has the potential to provide a pool of possible MALS candidates. More generally in that vein, it is crucial to return to our earlier outreach efforts among students and alumni in Lehman's Adult Degree Program, which was a very effective recruiting tool in the program's early years.

Although the MALS curriculum has been both effective and popular with our students, it may very well be the case that prospective students do not apply to MALS because other graduate programs provide a shorter and cheaper path to the degree. To address this, there are some possible ways to reduce the credits to 30 or 33 without overly diminishing the strengths that the present structure enables. One way would be to reduce the number of core classes from 4 to 3 by eliminating MLS 701, which presently overlaps in some ways with MLS 703. Another would be to eliminate the 6-credit thesis option, which would standardize the number of electives at 6 for all students: as mentioned above, less than a quarter of MALS students have chosen to write a thesis since 2017. Although most MALS programs at private universities do require a thesis, most at public universities require only a capstone, or (like Lehman) an option between the two.

It should also be possible to implement more widely some successful features of MALS, for instance, to create a new, stand-alone 3-credit internship course and market that more effectively as an option for our students. The present requirement of a comprehensive examination for students who complete a thesis also needs to be removed from the Graduate Student Bulletin (since it no longer applies to most of our students, who write a capstone instead), and replaced by the present practice of requiring a year-end meeting in which graduates and their advisors discuss their final projects.

A final (and significant) task that lies ahead concerns assessment. Our hope is that, with input from our external reviewer, we will be able to put a robust assessment plan in place starting in Fall 2023. Some basic assessment can take place after the first year, by applying rubrics to learning outcomes achieved in the four core classes. Beyond that, and pending additional feedback, the most likely form for subsequent assessment will be some variant on an e-portfolio that students compile as they make their way through the program. This should be sufficiently flexible to accommodate the wide curricular variety that students experience once they complete the four core classes. We anticipate that Lehman's administration will provide the same resources for these efforts that are provided to assessment in other academic programs.

Appendix 1: List of MALS Advisory Committee members (2016-19)

MALS Advisory Committee (2016-2019)

Timothy Alborn (2016-2019)

Professor of History

www.lehman.edu/academics/arts-humanities/history/histalborn.php

Grace Bullaro (2017-2018) (since retired)

Professor of English

www.lehman.edu/academics/arts-humanities/english/grace-bullaro.php

Martin Burke (2016-2019)

Associate Professor of History

www.lehman.edu/academics/arts-humanities/history/histburke.php

Joseph Dauben (2016-2019)

Distinguished Professor of History

www.lehman.edu/academics/arts-humanities/history/histdauben.php

Craig Demmer (2019)

Professor of Health Education

www.lehman.edu/academics/health-human-services-nursing/health-sciences/fac-demmer.php

Richard Finger (2016-2019)

Director of Graduate Studies

lehman.edu/enrollment-management/leadership-team.php

Amanda Gulla (2016-2019)

Professor of Middle and High School Education

Pamela Hinden (2016-2019)

Director, Adult Degree Program

Andrei Jitianu (2016-2019)

Professor of Chemistry

www.lehman.edu/academics/chemistry/prof-jitianu.php

Jane MacKillop (2017-2019)

Dean, School of Continuing and Professional Studies

Dierdre O'Boy (2019)

Lecturer, English Department

www.lehman.edu/academics/arts-humanities/english/deirdre-oboy.php

Heather Sloan (2017-2019) (since retired)

Professor of Geology

Naomi Spence (2019)

Professor of Sociology

www.lehman.edu/academics/sociology/faculty-spence.php

Appendix 2: Proposal to revive MALS (2011-12)

LEHMAN COLLEGE OF THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK**M.A. INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAM IN LIBERAL STUDIES****CURRICULUM CHANGE**

Hegis # 4901.00

Program Code 90048

1. **Type of Change**: Degree requirements
2. **From**: **36-Credit Interdisciplinary Program in Liberal Studies, M.A.**

[The Program in Liberal Studies offers graduate students an alternative to the traditional graduate curriculum. Students apply separately to the liberal studies program, which facilitates interdisciplinary studies combining work in a number of different graduate departments and programs. Students' design their own set of courses in consultation with faculty advisers, take four core courses offered only to students in the program, and write a master's thesis related to their area of special interest.

Above all, this program is anchored on the belief that mature and highly motivated student can benefit from a wide range of courses across many disciplines, coordinated in an academically serious manner. It also provides opportunities for adults who often can only attend part time, in the evening or during concentrated summer sessions. The required "core" courses study the humanities, performing and fine arts, social sciences, and natural sciences. Students also write a thesis in their area of interest and take a comprehensive examination.]

Admission Requirements

1. A bachelor's degree with at least a 3.0 grade point average or its foreign equivalent from an accredited college or university. In exceptional cases student with a cumulative undergraduate grade-point average below 3.0 may apply by special petition.
2. Submission of an autobiographical letter.
3. Two letters of recommendation.

4. Submission of a tentative course list related to the area intended to be pursued as a concentration.
5. [A personal interview with the faculty advisory committee.]

Degree Requirements

Curriculum

[In] Core courses (12 credits):

MLS 701[,] 702[,] 703[, and] 704

Thesis (6 credits):

MLS 797

[Additional courses to be chosen by students and adviser (18 credits).
Students may select any graduate courses offered by Lehman College.]

[Total: 36 credits]

Thesis. The program's major requirements consist of a master's thesis (6 credits). A written thesis proposal must be approved by the Faculty Advisory Committee, assuming prior approval by the students first and second readers, by the time the student has completed 20 credits and[, presumably] is about to begin serious research or study related to the master's thesis.

Comprehensive Examination.

Upon completion of all course work and submission of the thesis, all students must successfully pass a one-hour comprehensive examination. The examination is the same as the student's thesis committee. The chair of this committee and primary reader/adviser of the thesis is a faculty member in the field addressed by the thesis; two other members of the committee and second readers of the thesis will usually be program faculty advisers, but not necessarily in all cases.

Transfer credits. [Up to 6 credits, earned within the last five years, may be transferred if they are in an appropriate field and are approved by the program director and the faculty advisory committee.]

Curriculum: The liberal studies program offers students the opportunity to design a course of study reflecting specific interest in a particular area of concentration. [Others] may [prefer to] take graduate courses as part of an individualized course of study, designed by the students themselves in consultation with a faculty committee, and suited to their own interest and professional needs. In some area of concentration, students should be prepared to meet basic foreign language requirements where appropriate. Students may choose any graduate course offered by the [College].

Advisement. Upon admission each student is assigned a faculty adviser with special knowledge of the student's anticipated area of concentration. In consultation with her/ his faculty adviser, [every] student develops a coherent course of study that must provide a balanced, interdisciplinary selection of courses in the spirit of the [L]iberal [s]tudies [p]rogram. When a student choose[s] a particular area of special [academic] interest, [she/] he is assigned to an appropriate adviser with a particular interest in or [a] special knowledge of the subject in question. Students who lack sufficient prerequisites [in a] particular [specific] area of study in which they choose to concentrate are advised to [take] appropriate undergraduate courses [(for example, in requisite foreign languages)].

Time Limit. Degree candidates must complete all requirements for the degree within a period of [four] years following matriculation.

3. To: 36-Credit Interdisciplinary Program in Liberal Studies, M.A.

The M.A. in Liberal Studies Program is an interdisciplinary 36-credit degree program that allows students to design and pursue an individual course of study among several different departments at Lehman College. Students take a 12-credit core of Liberal Studies courses and 18 credits of graduate electives from various departments. The final requirement is to write a master's thesis under the supervision of a faculty member.

Admission Requirements

- A bachelor's degree with at least a 3.0 grade point average or its foreign equivalent from an accredited college or university. In exceptional cases student with a cumulative undergraduate grade-point average below 3.0 may apply by special petition.
- Submission of an autobiographical letter.
- Two letters of recommendation.

- Submission of a tentative course list related to the area intended to be pursued as a concentration.

Degree Requirements

CURRICULUM (36 credits)

Core courses (12 credits):

MLS 701 Introduction to Liberal Studies

MLS 702 The Arts and Humanities

MLS 703 The Social Sciences

MLS 704 The Natural Sciences

Electives to be chosen by students and adviser (18 credits):

Students may select any graduate courses in the Liberal Arts offered by Lehman College (consult the list of departments below), or enroll in an independent study (MLS 795) with a supervisor approved by the Program adviser.

Thesis (6 credits):

MLS 797 Master's Thesis Preparation

Thesis. The program's major requirements consist of a master's thesis (6 credits). A written thesis proposal must be approved by the Faculty Advisory Committee, assuming prior approval by the student's first and second readers, by the time the student has completed 20 credits and is about to begin serious research or study related to the master's thesis.

Comprehensive Examination. Upon completion of all course work and submission of the thesis, all students must successfully pass a one-hour comprehensive examination. The examination is the same as the student's thesis committee. The chair of this committee and primary reader/adviser of the thesis is a faculty member in the field addressed by the thesis; two other members of the committee and second readers of the thesis will usually be program faculty advisers, but not necessarily in all cases.

Transfer credits. With appropriate permission, matriculated graduate students may apply to transfer up to 12 credits of graduate courses that have been earned within the last five years. A maximum of six credits can be

transferred from courses applied toward a previously awarded master's degree.

Credit for Life Experience. With appropriate permission, matriculated graduate students who have not earned any other life-experience credits within the last five years may earn up to 6 credits (to be treated as transfer credits) for Prior Learning Assessment. PLA is based on student's ability to demonstrate learning that has taken place through volunteer activities or employment services. This knowledge must fall within one or more of the academic disciplines of the college. PLA rewards students for the time and advancement they have achieved in alternative learning settings. PLA must be in an appropriate field and is approved by the Program director. Students interested in PLA may register for a non-credit Portfolio Development workshop offered by the Office of Continuing Education.

Curriculum. The liberal studies program offers students the opportunity to design a course of study reflecting specific interest in a particular area of concentration. Students may take graduate courses as part of an individualized course of study, designed by the students themselves in consultation with a faculty committee, and suited to their own interests and professional needs. In some area of concentration, students should be prepared to meet basic foreign language requirements where appropriate.

Students may choose any graduate course offered by the following departments:

- Anthropology
- Art
- Biological Sciences
- Chemistry
- English
- Earth, Environmental, and Geospatial Sciences
- History
- Journalism, Communication, and Theatre
- Languages and Literatures
- Latin American and Puerto Rican Studies
- Mathematics and Computer Science
- Music
- Physics and Astronomy
- Political Science
- Psychology

Advisement. Upon admission, each student is assigned a faculty adviser with special knowledge of the student's anticipated area of concentration. In consultation with his or her faculty adviser, a student develops a coherent course of study that must provide a balanced, interdisciplinary selection of courses in the spirit of the Liberal Studies Program. When a student is ready to choose a particular area of special research interest, he or she is assigned to an appropriate adviser with a particular interest in or special knowledge of the subject in question. Students who lack sufficient prerequisites for the particular area of study in which they choose to concentrate (e.g., the foreign languages required for focused historical or geopolitical study) are advised to add appropriate undergraduate courses to their graduate course-load.

Time Limit. Degree candidates must complete all requirements for the degree within a period of five years following matriculation.

4. Rationale: The MA in Liberal Arts program at Lehman was originally approved in the mid-1980s and last enrolled students in 1994. At the time, it was intended primarily as a continuation of the Adult Degree Program's (ADP) undergraduate major. The present proposal represents an effort to revive this program, which will continue to recruit ADP graduates but will also cater to DOE-certified teachers and other professionals (including librarians, editors, museum curators, and lawyers) who wish to pursue a flexible Liberal Arts postgraduate degree. The policy changes to the proposal represent changes to College-wide policies (e.g., the list of allowable departmental course offerings) that have been introduced since 1994, and clarify guidelines that were previously enforced in the advising process.

The new policy allowing for up to six life-experience credits builds on the successful implementation of such a policy in Lehman's undergraduate ADP. The policy enables students whose career-history has endowed them with substantive expertise in the liberal arts (for instance, as a museum curator) to count this experience in the same way (and with a similar evaluation process) that students with graduate credits in liberal arts from another college count transfer credits.

The curriculum has been changed in two ways. It combines two existing courses into a single course (MLS 701, "The Humanities," and MLS 702, "The Fine and Performing Arts," will become MLS 702, "The Arts and Humanities") and it provides entirely new content for one of the four core requirements (MLS 701 is now "Introduction to Liberal Studies"). The first change reflects the increasing commingling of Arts and Humanities disciplines in recent years, and reflects more closely the school-structure

now in place at Lehman College (i.e., School of Arts and Humanities and School of Natural and Social Sciences). The second change reflects the successful implementation in the MALS program at the CUNY Graduate Center of a similar course, offered in the first semester of the program, that provides exposure to the concept of interdisciplinarity and also teaches basic writing and research skills that are needed for successful completion of subsequent course assignments and the MA thesis.

5. Date of Program Approval by the MALS Steering Committee (representing the School of Arts and Humanities and the School of Continuing and Professional Studies): September 12, 2011

**LEHMAN COLLEGE
OF THE
CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK**

M.A. INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAM IN LIBERAL STUDIES

CURRICULUM CHANGE

1. **Type of change:** Title, Description

2. **From:** **MLS 701: [The Humanities].** 30 [hrs. plus confs.], 3 [crs]. [A survey of some of the major ideas or themes presented through literature and philosophy that have contributed to the shape of Western culture. It introduces students to the methodology necessary to develop historical and critical analyses of motifs and themes central to the definition of the humanities, through the analysis of text and through the writing assignments. In addition, the courses will demonstrate the interrelationship among the various disciplines in the humanities, how questions raised by literature cut across language and cultural barriers and have a conceptual basis in philosophical writing.]

3. **To:** **MLS 701: Introduction to the Liberal Arts.** 30 hours (plus conferences), 3 credits. Introduction to the intellectual and methodological bases of selected disciplines in the liberal arts and in inter-disciplinary fields; strategies for crossing disciplinary boundaries and for combining or integrating disciplines.

4. **Rationale:** The course introduces students to important matters, theoretical and practical, which are not usually covered in either the core courses or the doctoral seminars. It also provides Master's students in different areas of concentration with a common experience and a common ground for thinking about interdisciplinary studies, graduate study in general, and the MALS program in particular. While specific reading and writing assignments will depend on which faculty member teaches the course, all students will get training in writing in the academic genres. The course prepares students for the graduate seminars and graduate research they undertake in the MALS program, providing an introduction to the intellectual and methodological bases for graduate study within the traditional disciplines and in inter-disciplinary fields. It overlaps with no other course in the department and no course will be dropped to accommodate this offering.

The original content of this course has been incorporated into the revised MLS 702, the title of which has been changed from "The Fine and

Performing Arts” to “The Arts and Humanities.”

5. Date of Program Approval by the MALS Steering Committee (representing the School of Arts and Humanities and the School of Continuing and Professional Studies): September 12, 2011

**LEHMAN COLLEGE
OF THE
CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK**

M.A. INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAM IN LIBERAL STUDIES

CURRICULUM CHANGE

1. **Type of change:** Title, Description

2. **From:** **MLS 702: [The Fine and Performing Arts.]** 30 [hrs. plus confs.], 3 [crs]. [Many of the fine and performing arts, which include painting, sculpture, architecture, photography, film, videos, television, theatre, dance, opera, music, and anything in between, are no longer discrete and like the humanities have become interdisciplinary. The course explores how art forms (in contrast to the other humanities that rely on texts) communicate ideas, beliefs, and emotions. The course will include attendance at exhibitions and performances.]

3. **To:** **MLS 702: The Arts and Humanities.** 30 hours (plus conferences), 3 credits. Intersections among major themes in history, literature, philosophy, and the fine and performing arts. Methodologies necessary to analyze textual and visual evidence historically and critically.

4. **Rationale:** This change, which combines the former content of both MLS 701 (“The Humanities”) and MLS 702, reflects the increasing commingling of Arts and Humanities disciplines in recent years, and reflects more closely the school-structure at Lehman College (i.e., School of Arts and Humanities and School of Natural and Social Sciences). It also provides room in the core curriculum of the MALS program for a formal “Introduction to Liberal Studies,” which (in the version taught in the MALS program at the Graduate Center) has proven to be an important addition to the core.

5. **Date of Program Approval by the MALS Steering Committee (representing the School of Arts and Humanities and the School of Continuing and Professional Studies):** September 12, 2011

Appendix 3: MALS Survey Results (October 2022)

Surveys were emailed to 58 current and former students. A total of 51 completed the survey for a response rate of 88%. An additional 14 had incomplete responses (meaning in most cases that they opened the survey but did not answer any questions).

Alumni

Graduates of the program were asked a series of targeted questions.

Overall	0
n	6
5	
The overall MALS curriculum prepared me for my thesis.	(
%)	
Strongly agree	2
9 (76.3)	
Agree	
6 (15.8)	
Neutral: Neither agree nor disagree	
2 (5.3)	
Disagree	
1 (2.6)	
Strongly disagree	
0 (0.0)	
I used skills learned in specific courses.	(%)
Strongly agree	2
8 (73.7)	
Agree	
8 (21.1)	
Neutral: Neither agree nor disagree	
2 (5.3)	
Disagree	
0 (0.0)	
Strongly disagree	
0 (0.0)	
I use skills learned in my current /n work.	(%)
Strongly agree	2
3 (62.2)	
Agree	1

1 (29.7)	Neutral: Neither agree nor disagree	
3 (8.1)	Disagree	
0 (0.0)	Strongly disagree	
0 (0.0)	MALS contributed to my ability to achieve /n my goals (%)	
	Strongly agree	2
9 (78.4)	Agree	
5 (13.5)	Neutral: Neither agree nor disagree	
3 (8.1)	Disagree	
0 (0.0)	Strongly disagree	
0 (0.0)	I am glad that I enrolled in the MALS program.	(
%)	Strongly agree	3
6 (94.7)	Agree	
2 (5.3)	Neutral: Neither agree nor disagree	
0 (0.0)	Disagree	
0 (0.0)	Strongly disagree	
0 (0.0)		

Students and alumni

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with specific aspects of the MALS program.

Satisfaction

Overall	0v
n	65
The overall MALS program (%)	
Very satisfied	43

(84.3)	Somewhat satisfied	4
(7.8)	Neutral: Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	2
(3.9)	Somewhat unsatisfied	1
(2.0)	Very unsatisfied	1
(2.0)	Not Applicable	0
(0.0)	MALS advising (%)	
	Very satisfied	4
7 (92.2)	Somewhat satisfied	
3 (5.9)	Neutral: Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	
0 (0.0)	Somewhat unsatisfied	
0 (0.0)	Very unsatisfied	
1 (2.0)	Not Applicable	
0 (0.0)	Instruction in MALS required courses (%)	
	Very satisfied	4
1 (82.0)	Somewhat satisfied	
7 (14.0)	Neutral: Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	
2 (4.0)	Somewhat unsatisfied	
0 (0.0)	Very unsatisfied	
0 (0.0)	Not Applicable	
0 (0.0)	Instruction in MALS electives (%)	
	Very satisfied	4
1 (80.4)	Somewhat satisfied	
9 (17.6)		

Neutral: Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	
1 (2.0)	
Somewhat unsatisfied	
0 (0.0)	
Very unsatisfied	
0 (0.0)	
Not Applicable	
0 (0.0)	
Support for developing my capstone or thesis topic or idea. (%)	
Very satisfied	4
3 (86.0)	
Somewhat satisfied	
1 (2.0)	
Neutral: Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	
1 (2.0)	
Somewhat unsatisfied	
2 (4.0)	
Very unsatisfied	
1 (2.0)	
Not Applicable	
2 (4.0)	
Support for completing my capstone or thesis project. (%)	
Very satisfied	4
0 (81.6)	
Somewhat satisfied	
3 (6.1)	
Neutral: Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	
2 (4.1)	
Somewhat unsatisfied	
0 (0.0)	
Very unsatisfied	
0 (0.0)	
Not Applicable	
4 (8.2)	

Rating of support offices

Respondents were asked to rate their experiences with specific offices at Lehman.

n	Overall 65
---	---------------

Library (%)	
Very satisfied	28 (58.3)
Somewhat satisfied	10 (20.8)
Neutral: Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	4 (8.3)
Somewhat unsatisfied	0 (0.0)
Very unsatisfied	1 (2.1)
Didn't use	5 (10.4)
Graduate Studies Office (%)	
Very satisfied	15 (34.1)
Somewhat satisfied	3 (6.8)
Neutral: Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	4 (9.1)
Somewhat unsatisfied	0 (0.0)
Very unsatisfied	0 (0.0)
Didn't use	22 (50.0)
Graduate Admissions Office (%)	
Very satisfied	27 (56.2)
Somewhat satisfied	6 (12.5)
Neutral: Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	6 (12.5)
Somewhat unsatisfied	2 (4.2)
Very unsatisfied	0 (0.0)
Didn't use	7 (14.6)
Financial Aid Office. (%)	
Very satisfied	13 (29.5)
Somewhat satisfied	6 (13.6)
Neutral: Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	5 (11.4)
Somewhat unsatisfied	3 (6.8)
Very unsatisfied	2 (4.5)
Didn't use	15 (34.1)
Bursar's Office (%)	
Very satisfied	21 (45.7)
Somewhat satisfied	6 (13.0)
Neutral: Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	10 (21.7)
Somewhat unsatisfied	3 (6.5)
Very unsatisfied	2 (4.3)
Didn't use	4 (8.7)
Registrar (%)	
Very satisfied	22 (47.8)
Somewhat satisfied	5 (10.9)
Neutral: Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	8 (17.4)
Somewhat unsatisfied	3 (6.5)
Very unsatisfied	0 (0.0)
Didn't use	8 (17.4)

Information Technology (%)	
Very satisfied	22 (45.8)
Somewhat satisfied	9 (18.8)
Neutral: Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	5 (10.4)
Somewhat unsatisfied	0 (0.0)
Very unsatisfied	1 (2.1)
Didn't use	11 (22.9)
Other Offices (%)	
Very satisfied	8 (27.6)
Somewhat satisfied	4 (13.8)
Neutral: Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	2 (6.9)
Somewhat unsatisfied	0 (0.0)
Very unsatisfied	0 (0.0)
Didn't use	15 (51.7)

The "other" offices were `paste(unique(data$otheroffice), collapse = ",")``.

Students were asked about their experiences in special features of the program.

Independent study

[1] "I enjoy the flexibility of the course and the instructor "

[2] "All the online courses were helpful toward completing the program."

[3] "Had a wonderful experience with Prof O'Boy. She was very helpful in helping me to research and write on a topic I was interested in."

[4] "My experience with Independent study is not so great. My Professor/advisor had to dropped out in the middle of the semester due to other work duties and was assigned another advisor /Professor. I had to change the focus of my research work and felt like my time was wasted. "

[5] "Allowed the freedom to choose thesis topic related to my interest"

[6] "Researched how women in high political offices are described/perceived in media and society in contrast to their male counterparts, and how this affects their career development. My goal was to learn more about gendered expectations in positions of power, but I also ended up learning more about US government politics which has empowered me in my civic involvement. "

[7] "I believe that my independent study allowed me to be true

ly accountable for my own research and graduate school experience.”

[8] "It was a great opportunity to explore academic areas in more depth.”

[9] "I appreciated the flexibility that independent study granted as I had some logistical issues that would have otherwise forced me to take classes that didn't cater to my academic interests due to financial aid requiring a full-time schedule.”

[10] "The IS was a great experience and opportunity that helped me set the ground work for my Capstone project.”

[11] "The independent study was great for me and allowed me to do more of the in depth study I wanted to do.”

[12] "Excellent.”

[13] "These were great. They allowed me to focus on specific topics which contributed to my interest in public health.”

[14] "African American men's experience during world war 2.”

[15] "I did this alongside Professor Alborn and that was rewarding because it allotted a lot of individualized learning alongside a professor.”

[16] "I had chosen to do an independent study about the COVID-19 Pandemic. I had some understanding of the issues surrounding this pandemic because on a daily basis that's all that was discussed in the lab. Also at that time the new COVID Antibody test was introduced and I was in charge of analyzing the patients' samples, including mine, I might add. So, since I decided to write on this topic, I did extensive research and read every "expert" opinion that was presented.”

e-Permit

[1] "Great experience taking a course at SPS.”

[2] "Extremely useful for a course I could not get at Brooklyn College and Lehman has the offering.”

[3] "I took a course at the Graduate center with PhD students and had a great experience. The Professor was excellent, her pedagogy helped me focus on my weak areas and the pressure of being with advance level students pushed me to do better.”

[4] "I was able to be part of a different learning community that also helped me navigate my career and studies at Lehman”

[5] "Being able to take a class aimed at PhD students gave me the opportunity to test out what being in a PhD program would be like if I decided to pursue further education. "

[6] "Used e-permit to attend classes offered at City College for courses that fit into the curriculum but were not offered at Lehman or were full. This was a great option because it kept me on the path to graduate when I had planned."

[7] "THIS!!! This, to me is the biggest selling point. I appreciated being able to take classes on subjects I was personally interested in that were not available at Lehman. "

[8] "I took a course at CUNY's Graduate Center in Manhattan. I received access to excellent lecture series from diverse professors. "

[9] "The Animal Behavior course was different than anything at Lehman. It helped me look at another possibility for my Capstone project."

[10] "I studied abroad in India during winter semester with City College and had an amazing experience. I was able to meet other people in other graduate programs/disciplines and experience another school campus and professors. I also took a course at Hunter College which was rewarding for similar reasons."

Internship

[1] "Allowed me to intern as a graduate assistant at Lehman"

[2] "My internship gave me transferable skills I was able to add to my resume and fostered connections I have kept till this day. "

[3] "I have taken advantage of the internship opportunity and it opened the door for me to where I was able to learn a lot and pick up on some skills for future use."

[4] "Extremely relevant to my Capstone and personal research. I was also hired by the institution after graduation in a permanent full-time position. Thank you!"

[5] "I had an excellent internship at the Paley Center in NYC. This internship provided me with on the job experience in media studies."

Prior Learning Assessment

[1] "Yes."

[2] "Yes."

[3] "I was able to earn the maximum prior learning experience credits. I felt totally supported throughout this process and it helped me complete my degree that much quicker. "

[4] "I was offered the opportunity to complete a prior learning assessment. It was amazing because I was able to gain credit

just from my career and established skills! My advisor was thorough, attentive and kind. He helped me to understand my options and the opportunity to complete this helped me not only financially but in completing the program in an even more timely manner. "

[5] "This allowed me to speak about my many years of working in the Chemistry lab at Jacobi Medical Center and how this experience has prepared me to become an adjunct lecturer of Clinical Chemistry at Bronx Community College. "

How did you learn about MALS

[1] "I learned about the MALS program while \searching for Lehman programs online."

[2] "Lehman website"

[3] "The Lehman Website"

[4] "I learned about the MALS program during a review of the CUNY website"

[5] "An email"

[6] "Online Research"

[7] "I did a google search."

[8] "I learned about the MALS Program through social media. I was interested in Professor Burns' work and got inspired by her. I started exploring several Lehman's options and MALS turned out to be the one that suited me the most."

[9] "I was lucky that I Richard Finger told me about the program."

[10] "I learned about the program through Lehman's website"

[11] "I learned about the MALS program working in the Office of the Registrar. As a graduation auditor, I had the opportunity to research the program."

[12] "Went to informational session, researched the program through Lehman website, and discussed the program with my mentor."

[13] "I learned about the MALS program through the Lehman Website."

[14] "I saw a flyer, there was an open house. I was seeking a Masters program."

[15] "One of my co-workers mentioned the program to me she is also a former Lehman student."

[16] "Lehman's website."

[17] "Internally - Lehman staff/faculty."

[18] "I learned about the MALS program through the guidance of Professor Dr. Banoum of the Africana Studies department."

[19] "I was researching grad schools and decided to browse the Lehman college academic departments."

[20] "I received a bachelors degree in political science from Lehman."

[21] "Timothy Alborn. I was advised by the graduate admissions office to connect with Dr. Alborn about furthering my education as I was inquiring about the school counseling program at the time."

[22] "I searched for a program that suited me."

[23] "I was looking for a masters program in psychology and saw the MALS program on Lehman's website."

[24] "I learned about the MALS program from the Leap office at Lehman. Mr. Shapiro to be exact."

[25] "I researched Lehman and the programs offered at the college. The MALS program was idea for my intellectual pursuits."

[26] "I was searching online for Master Programs at CUNYs."

[27] "A year after moving to NYC I was eligible to begin taking college classes without incurring out-of-state tuition. I began researching colleges in the NYC area and wanted to find a program that would cater to my varied interests without a hefty price tag. I also wanted to enroll at a school that would cater to my commute. Ironically, the location of the school became insignificant as my first semester was in the Fall of 2020 which caused all of my classes to be virtual that first year. By the time things started opening up, I was taking advantage of the EPermit program, so I've technically have never had a class on the Lehman campus!"

[28] "I Learn about the MALS programs thru Lehman College website."

[29] "I was an undergraduate student at Lehman."

[30] "I was already interested in going to Lehman College so I looked on their website and saw all the graduate programs they offered."

[31] "When researching graduate programs online, I came across the MALS program on the Lehman College website."

[32] "Website"

[33] "I learned about from my undergrad advisor"

[34] "I learned about the MALS program when I received an email from Lehman College."

[35] "I researched New York City universities with interdisciplinary programs."

[36] "Probably from a mailing I received."

[37] "I learned of the program from the Lehman College graduate website page"

[38] "I was a Lehman College undergraduate student. I completed my coursework in January 2017 and was looking for a program that would fit into my schedule."

[39] "I learned about the MALS program from Lehman academic advisors. I was looking to obtain my master in a diverse discipline, I would be passionate about."

[40] "Email that was send to me"

[41]"I learned about the MALS program via the Lehman College catalog."

[42] "Through Lehman's continuing education catalogue while doing courses on substance abuse there."

[43] "I am an Alumnus of Lehman."

[44] "I learned about the MALS program through the Lehman College Website."

[45] "I was introduced to the program by my mentor."

[46] "I learned about the program from my history professor."

[47] "Google search"

[48] "Through a member of the college."

[49] "I found out about during advisement"

[50] "I learned about MALS through the Lehman website and through the Office of Continuing Adult Education (Pam Hinden)."

[51] "An old classmate "

[52] "Lehman College website"

Why did you enroll in MALS

[1] "I decided to enroll in MALS because of the course flexibility and potential exposure to courses in areas I had never taken before".

[2] "To attain additional knowledge"

[3] "I am a Lehman Graduate so I was familiar with the college"

[4] "I recently was unemployed and thought it best to up my formal education as I was in my mid-50s and figured it would be difficult to find another job etc."

[5] "I knew that I wanted to go on for a Master's Degree but was not sure in what. This allowed me to come up with my own program."

[6] "Wanted to explore and study several topics such as childhood education, women studies, and urban education."

[7] "I enrolled in the MALS program because Dr. Alborn contacted me about my application and answered every question I had."

[8] "Because I wanted to implement my personal knowledge in Africana Studies. I needed to focus on a field of Liberal Arts that would speak to me, but also enrich my journalistic, editorial, and entrepreneurial plans."

[9] "It's the idea that if you decide one subject is too difficult or does not suit you well you can do more of another subject in the liberal studies. Also if you know you love one subject but do not want to get burnt out or curious just another subject MALS gives you this flexibility of mixing within the liberal studies."

[10] "I made my decision to enroll in MALS after meeting with Professor Alborn. During our meeting, we discussed what I want to gain from any graduate course and my purpose of pursuing an other degree. He was able to convinced me that MALS is the right program for me."

[11] "I decided to enroll in the MALS program because of the flexibility and ability to customize my course of study."

[12] "I decided to apply to the MALS program as an opportunity to continue to advance my studies. My ultimate goal was to enter a terminal degree program."

[13] "The MALS program offered flexibility in my class schedule."

[14] "I decide to enroll in MALS because of its flexibility, understanding of other and working adults. It is customizable. As a free spirit, I loved the idea that I could study a little bit of everything and focus on all my interests and not just one subject"

[15] "I decided to enroll in MALS because I liked the fact that I am not pined down to one study."

[16] "It provided me with the flexibility to choose courses that best fit my interests"

[17] "Wanted to earn a MA without committing to a specific career or certification. Also, I felt that interdisciplinary study/research was beneficial to my professional development."

[18] "I decided to enroll in the MALS program because after speaking with the Program Director I realized I could tailor my curriculum to my own personal research interests."

[19] "I had received my undergrad bachelors degree and felt comfortable continuing an academic relationship there."

[20] "I was considering a second career as a community college professor".

[21] "The curriculum flexibility and exposure to new areas of my interest in college readiness."

[22] "I liked the flexibility of the program."

[23] "I looked at other programs at other colleges I could not find a program in psychology that was in a convenient location that I could complete in the evening that would be the right fit with my busy work schedule. I was familiar with the Lehman campus, knew the staff was excellent and felt comfortable with the flexibility that the MALS program provided."

[24] "I enrolled into the program because I felt it was my only option of higher education due to my undergrad GPA."

[25] "Because my intellectual interest was broad, the program was an ideal opportunity to explore those areas of interest."

[26] "I liked the flexibility of the MALS program in that I was unsure in what I wanted to get a degree in. I also had a science heavy undergraduate background and I appreciated being able to take a variety of courses across the disciplines."

[27] "I wanted to have the freedom and flexibility that the liberal studies program offered. Most graduate programs are designed to specialize within a specific discipline which, given instability of future job prospects, limits maneuverability and stifles the interdisciplinary approach that is needed for more innovative enterprises. Also, it is more interesting and engaging to experience graduate level discourse in subjects, topics, and a variety of other colleges (thanks to the EPermit program!) in which you may not be as academically comfortable. That type of stress supports growth. "

[28] "I wanted to enroll in a masters psychology program but none was available at Lehman, so when I saw the MALS program I decided to give a try."

[29] "I was working full-time and looking for a master's program to fit my schedule and offer online options."

[30] "Since I wasn't sure about my career and what I wanted to do, I felt MALS was the best program to be a part of because I believed it would help me find and lead me towards the right career path for me."

[31] "I decided to enroll in the MALS program because they provided me flexibility in scheduling and made it easy for a working student. Having a career already established, it was one o

f the things that attracted me most to the program. The fact that they worked with me, acknowledged my career advancement and gave me flexibility in scheduling and class choices.”

[32] "I liked the option of choosing your concentration.”

[33] "It was in line with my plan to become a future educator.”

[34] "I decided to enroll in the MALS program because there were a variety of courses to choose from and I wasn't restricted to one major topic.”

[35] "The latitude in course selection such as the ~social history and ~social anthropology offerings I loaded my degree plan with. Dr. Alborn made a great pitch.”

[36] "At the time, I didn't have a specific area of focus. I knew I wanted a Master's degree before I retired. After attending the informational session, I was intrigued by the program's flexibility in designing your area of focus, and the consideration of working individuals and those with families.”

[37] "I think January 2012”

[38] "I decided to enroll in MALS because I wanted to consider becoming a teacher in 2019. The MALS program provided me the opportunity to take a class in Manhattan at CUNY's Grad Center. I enjoyed having the flexibility to take night courses.”

[39] "I decided to enroll in the MALS program after hearing many great things about the program, and deciding it was in alignment with my current and future career path.”

[40] "It would give me more education and help decide what career I want to follow“

[41] "My decision to enroll in the MALS program was made on the basis of being able to select courses that most interested me.”

[42] "It was an opportunity for me to do something creatively that I was actually searching for at the time, and MALS provided that opportunity.”

[43] "I wanted a Master's in African American Studies and spoke with Timothy Alborn. He was incredibly informed, patient, and supportive."

[44] "I am a Herbert H. Lehman alumnus who graduated in 2000, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in the Interdisciplinary of Anthropology (Physical)-Biology-Chemistry (B.S.). My interdisciplinary degree focused on the sciences and liberal arts studies. It had always been my goal to obtain a master's degree to further my liberal arts education and alongside expand my professional experience. The MALS program enabled me to finally achieve my goal. It reflected my own interests, experience, and needs."

[45] "I decided to enroll in the program due to the flexibility I would have after the core courses were completed."

[46] "I enrolled into the MALS program because it gave me the freedom to study various parts of history throughout the world."

[47] "I wanted to wrap up my Master's Degree without losing the credits I earned from John Jay College"

[48] "The program was flexible and well rounded. I was not interested in a specific field."

[49] "MALS allowed me to explore my interests and tailor my coursework based on those interest. It also afforded me the support I needed to complete my coursework successfully."

[50] "I wanted to continue my post-graduate education, but I didn't know what specific area of study I wanted to enroll in."

[51] "Wanted to return to school after being out few yrs and wanted a better support group."

[52] "I had a goal in mind to complete my Master's degree before a certain age. Therefore, I started looking into programs at different CUNY and SUNY colleges that would fit into my working schedule and allow for an easy commute."

Appendix 4: Sample Internship Writeup

The Elias Karmon Papers

Pastor Crespo, Jr.

The Bronx County Historical Society Internship – Write-Up & Reflection
MALS Program, Lehman College
August 13, 2021

Introduction

In keeping with my research, the subject of the personal collection for which I was assigned for most of my internship is named The Karmon Papers. Born Elias Kaminsky in 1910 on the Lower East Side of Manhattan to Eastern European Jewish immigrants. Mr. Karmon lived the American dream graduating from NYU in 1932 and opening his own business (Elias Karmon Papers). The Bronxite, businessman, and civic leader known as “Mr. Bronx” donated heavily to charities and to an indiscriminate list of ethnic and religious community organizations and causes such as the Target Tuberculosis project and the Bronx chapter of the American Legion - Borinquen Post 1216. Due to the papers presently encompassing approximately eighty boxes of materials and currently in the midst of final sorting, re-boxing and re-labelling, documenting, and citing references will be general in nature without specific folder and/or box numbers. Hence the necessity for Dr. Stephen Payne, Historian, Archivist and Librarian at the Society to assign these papers as a priority project (Elias Karmon Biographical Data, 2007).

Of the several buildings belonging to the Society within walking distance of each other I was assigned to building 3313 Bainbridge Avenue, The Bronx Historical Society Research Library and Bronx County Archives. The Elias Karmon Papers are located in the basement archives where 99% of all the work for this project was conducted. Oddly, I felt comfortably miserable most of the time in the basement which always seemed ten degrees hotter and twice as humid. An environment an archivist or historian alike can appreciate especially when exciting discoveries are made. My tools were a pencil, pad, a supply of manila folders and a very old but still functioning MacBook. I also made do with a 4-foot small table, a card table, and the top of a double-stacked map cabinet.

Intern Duties & Responsibilities (Annotated List)

1) Accessioning (Cataloguing) Karmon Papers:

This first part of this task took the entire first two weeks of the internship to complete and began with reviewing boxes numbered zero through thirty-five (0-35) to ensure each folder in these first thirty-six boxes were properly alphabetized and catalogued into a working Table using Microsoft Word. The Word document *table* being used as an interim Finding-Aid” for the collection until the data can be migrated onto an online system used by the Society. The work area and the racks of stored collection boxes were a twenty-foot distance from each other and

the retrieval of boxes weighed an average twenty to forty pounds each. The Word Table included four columns titled: Box #, Folder #, File Name, and Date. The Folder # column was not to be updated at this point in the cataloguing and ignored for this project. Beginning with Box 0, I ensured each folder's Box # and File Name were recorded into the Table properly and alphabetically filed. The Date column was mostly identified as "n.d." for *no date* unless the date was easily identifiable without delaying the cataloguing process. I can honestly state, I always made a concerted effort to find a date for a file though difficult and tedious the pauses were to endure. Although the majority of these boxes were filed and alphabetized properly when errors were discovered the hard file had to be properly sorted alphabetically and correctly annotated electronically in the Table. Most boxes were tightly packed and made retrieval difficult and resorting alphabetically from box to box challenging to refile. Care needed to be taken to not rip or tear files and documents that were jammed together in some cases. Many documents especially newspaper clippings which Mr. Karmon seemed very fond of collecting were old, brittle, and decaying causing them to break apart even when handled delicately.

Part 2 entailed cataloguing the undocumented boxes numbered thirty-six to eighty-four (36-84) which contained both file folders and scrapbook binders of various sizes. This part was a bit more tedious than the last since each file had to be reviewed and a Folder/File Name needed to be confirmed or added to the manila folder itself and annotated electronically. The folder names needed confirming since the majority had multiple and unrelated folder names penned, penciled, crossed-out and/or even blank titles. During this process, documents contained in the files which were unrelated to the folder/file name were either refiled in their appropriate file or set aside for a file to be created at the end of the cataloguing.

2) Organizing Collection:

Once the initial eighty-four (84) boxes were catalogued it was time to start double-checking the alphabetizing of files from box to box. For instance, a box with all folders pertaining to the letter A that contained a file name with the letter D was refiled in the appropriate box and corrected electronically in the Table. When this refileing occurred, it also entailed ensuring the First and Last folder/file names were annotated on the Box Label Correctly, similar to Encyclopedia bindings providing the first and last words in the volume. Unable to conduct much of this work in the aisles, the archived boxes had to be retrieved two-deep on three, three-shelf racks and lugged back and forth to the work area.

3) Sorting Overflow Boxes:

After the first 84 boxes of The Karmon Papers were catalogued, sorted, and alphabetized (Sigh), two boxes of what appeared to be the contents of a desk(s) or cabinet drawers that were simply emptied out into two file boxes. The boxes contained an assortment of hundreds of scattered business cards, newspaper clippings (in a delicate state), pamphlets, bills, and charity/donations slips. The business and index cards were bound with rubber bands in many bundles, although not sorted. An entire day was spent filing loose documents into already categorized and catalogued files. The remaining documents were sorted into over sixty stacks of separated bills, invoices, biographical and personality files, and newspaper clippings. Many of these remaining documents were filed into existing folders but about a dozen were determined to require new files be created and added to the collection. The final sorting was completed the

week of August 10th. Five boxes containing 44 personal scrapbooks of newspaper clipping and the final three boxes contained various wooden and glass plaques and miscellaneous corporate and business documents.

4) *Vicente “Panama” Alba Oral History Transcription:*

On June 6, 2021, Dr. Steven Payne conducted a telephonic interview of Young Lord member and activist Vicente “Panama” Alba from his home in Puerto Rico, while Dr. Payne was in the Bronx, NY. Dr. Payne began the transcription and ended transcribing after nearly three pages at seven minutes and forty-eight seconds (7:48) of audio. These pages provided an outline for the format of transcribing Dr. Payne wanted me to follow. One important decision and action taken, was to omit the endless and lengthy, “andum...” pauses and transitions for nearly every sentence for Mr. Alba’s (PA) parts of the dialogue. Dr. Steven Payne, the interviewer is identified and coded as SP and the interviewee Vicente “Panama” Alba is coded as PA for the transcription dialogue. Bracketed [Laughter] was inserted where appropriate throughout the transcription. Time stamps were also inserted at five-minute intervals throughout the transcription such as [5:00], [10:00], &c. If the time elapsed during the middle of a word, the time stamp was to be inserted after the word. The transcription was to be typed in single line spacing and doubled spaced in between interviewer and interviewee. Dr. Payne asked eleven questions in total. The slow and tedious transcription was conducted remotely from home since Dr. Payne was on vacation that week. The entire transcript was 1-hour, 38 minutes, and eighteen seconds (1:32:18) long and is nearly 34 pages in length. Unfortunately, Panama’s accent or rather my untuned Nuyorican ear, and audio distortions necessitated the insertion of [undiscernible] throughout several portions of the audio recording transcription.

5) *Capstone Research Exploitation:*

Dr. Payne did not just encourage me but insisted I take every opportunity during the project to exploit everything in the Karmon Papers and the Society archives relevant to my Capstone project. At every opportunity I scanned and remained vigilant for anything 1950s and Puerto Rican community related to provide a context for my Puerto Rican Air Migration ethnographic journey project. The Karmon Papers yielded many primary documents in support of my Capstone project such as a folder located in Box 52 titled, “Borinquen” Post 1216 a Bronx chapter of the American Legion formed by Puerto Rican U.S. military veterans. The folder contained event programs such as their Women’s Auxiliary Mother’s Day event in 1951.

Part 2, of the Papers cataloguing provided me similar research opportunity such as found in several folders in Box 60 containing 1950s period newspaper clippings. A New York Times article on the 1956 Hoboken Boricua community and a Spanish language *El Diario* article from 1957 on the Desfile Puertorriqueño (Puerto Rican Parade). Another event program from the Council of Spanish American Organization in 1956 listed dozens of Hispanic organizations active in the 1950s. The biggest find, in my opinion was a document originating from the Education Section Services document, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Department of Labor – Migration Division detailing services and resources provided such as English language training and teaching materials for U.S. teachers to use and access in aiding Puerto Rican migrant education.

II – Learning & New Skills Reflection

The amazing opportunity afforded me to work intimately with the pretty-much unexploited personal Karmon Papers collection, its cataloguing into a finding aid, and the archiving of primary documents, its handling, sorting, and compiling of materials were new to me, at least in my academic career. The hands-on experience of simply double-checking a file's contents with its assigned title or brainstorming a new and appropriately relevant interest or biographical title gave me a sense of being part of the Society's team. This was a process of periodically going back and forth to ask for Dr. Payne's opinion on a subject file. Another skill I had never experienced prior to Summer 2021 was the transcription of an oral-history recording. Many times, this interaction turned into a welcomed and short Bronx history lesson on a subject such as development of the Cross Bronx Expressway or a local Puerto Rican politician. One instance of a simple interaction with Dr. Payne on a 1930's business organization event flier (the title I do not recall) whose membership list names an Elias Kaminsky providing a possible change of last names. Dr. Payne's hunch was verified using other documents in the same file.

The discovery of a possible name change had the same excitement I only previously experienced and witnessed, working on captured "Operation Just Cause" (1989) Panamanian Defense Force's Intelligence and Finance documents when I was assigned to Panama during the post-war document exploitation efforts. With that said, the patience of systematically scanning documents and not rushing through seemingly boring or insignificant subjects is not to be overlooked. Many documents especially personally written letters to and from Mr. Karmon provided a context to a specific era and insights into the character of Mr. Elias Karmon. One letter written by Mr. Karmon was a letter of support for a young Latino client who had strayed and committed a burglary gave me personal insight into the standing and respect Mr. Karmon held in his community. Usually, my previous academic research would consist of more rushed scanning of materials while exploiting these Karmon Papers afforded me a more relaxed study of the materials.

Another skill learned or experienced was the technical assigning of Series, Box and Folder numbers to a collection of materials and using a working or interim finding aid until the data is perfect enough to warrant electronic migration into the main Society retrieval system. The experience of observing Dr. Payne who was patient enough to explain many of the tasks pertaining to establishing a personal collection. The series codes and call numbers assigned to different parts of the collection such as general documents assigned "MS-Karmon", &C. (e.g., audio/video files, plaques, corporate documents) Another technical task I learned in was the adding of a finding-aid or tool such as annotating the first and last file names to the front of labels such as "Ferrer – Fonseca." I was actually able to use that reference several times which assisted me greatly when I started trying to find homes for the two boxes of loose and mostly untitled/unnamed materials. The appreciation for the tedious and very slow work of cataloguing, sorting, and filing these materials was felt when I had to file over sixty stacks of loose materials into the newly catalogued collection. This is also the point where I discovered errors I had made earlier or maybe moments of laziness which had to be corrected. The new skills and hands-on experience acquired in archival research of previously unexploited materials and primary documents dating back nearly one-hundred years and their cataloguing into a finding aid was an invaluable research experience.

Previous experience with interview transcriptions consisted of one weekend assignment to transcribe a few minutes of an interview. Otherwise, I had never had the pleasure (very loosely used) of transcribing over an hour and twenty minutes of an audio file. When I look back at the tireless moments of frustration of carefully rewinding the audio over and over again, I can now appreciate the time spent. Not only was I clarifying the heavily accented Nuyorican and 1970s speech but I was drilling into my head some very fascinating and revelatory information on Puerto Rican colonial resistance and thought. The events of both Puerto Rican activist occupations of the Statue of Liberty heard from the only person to participate in both occupations was amazing to hear over and over again. This time I didn't have audio or comprehension issues but rather I just wanted to hear it over again. What was even more fascinating about the oral history interview was Mr. Alba's commitment to the Puerto Rican cause for liberation from their colonial oppressors, and his love for the Puerto Rican people. He isn't even Puerto Rican; his parents were Panamanian and Spanish (Spain). The Panamanian and Spanish immigrant's own family history of political and military strife surely influenced Mr. Alba's colonial resistance and fighting spirit. Mr. Alba's story is not for this reflection sir (that's a tease) but his oral history and its transcription are now available for your own research. You'll enjoy as I am enjoying these word contractions in my reflection. There's something rebelliously enjoyable about reflections.

Listening to the life of Vicente "Panama" Alba is reminiscent of Piri Thomas' life account in the famous book *Down These Mean Streets*. Mr. Alba's addiction to heroine and his account of his recovery reminded me a great deal of growing up on the Lower East Side when heroine, dope (not weed), or *manteca* (lard) was king on the streets. It seemed like every family and building on the Lower East Side had a *tecato* or junkie. My entire life and my memories from grammar school through high school are permeated with this drugs consequences. Watching junkie's shoot-up and giggling as a child, laughing at their aptitude to stay on their feet while teetering on the verge of losing their balance but they never do. Jumping over them [junkies] in the stairwell while teasing them are my childhood memories. A youth where children enjoyed junkies as part of their playtime activities.

III - Internship & Final Project Linkage

The immediate course that comes to mind is the Anthropology 750 course on qualitative and ethnographic methods which I completed during session A of the same summer semester. The Anthropology methods course focused more on participant observations, its planning, execution, and fieldnote taking with a day and a half on an actual transcription for the purpose of discourse analysis or picking up recurring themes in the dialogue using analytical tools such as Atlas.ti. Very little focus was placed on how to actually transcribe. These skills and experience are very important to my Capstone project which will incorporate oral histories and their respective transcriptions. The transcription process afforded me the constant beating of the information into my head trying to capture every enunciation uttered by Mr. Alba. Furthermore, the technical coding and annotations were important to learning the transcription process but listening to Dr. Payne begin the oral history providing vital citation and contextual data helped in the preparation my own oral history. That very weekend I recorded the oral history of my aunt Amada Crespo's recollection of the Puerto Rican Air Migration during the 1950's, who participated in my families' migration. I had been procrastinating and delaying the interview due to fears which were alleviated by my experience and work with Dr. Payne's interview of Mr. Alba.

The second course which had direct linkages to my Bronx County Historical Society internship experience was HIST 748 – History of New York City, and State. The Elias Karmon story followed a common thread for many Eastern European Jewish immigrants who settled on the Lower East Side through the early Twentieth Century and began to migrate to other parts of Manhattan or the outer boroughs such as the Bronx. A story similar to many successive immigrant generations which started their journeys on the Lower East Side and followed an out-migration to outlying areas of the city with larger residences. As their lots on the socio-economic scale improved, I guess so did their residential lots. Of course, I can't help but see how the Elias Karmon family journey from the LES to the Bronx fit nicely with my post World War II Puerto Rican Air Migration to the LES. Although the History course focused on the Puerto Rican communities of the Barrio and the Lower East Side it touched briefly on the Bronx community. My journey through the Bronx spanned over six decades of a virtual tour of the South Bronx through the life of no other than Mr. Bronx. The journey offered me a perspective of how vast the Puerto Rican community was in the Bronx from the very beginning of and prior to the 1950s. I will walk away from this internship in a more comfortable place having expanded my knowledge on the Puerto Rican community of the 1950s specifically the Bronx.

The internship was very a very productive and rewarding experience in my training and preparation for the production of my Capstone Project. This internship reminded me of how rewarding being an analyst can especially since much of the work is hoard sought through many tedious and at sometimes unrewarding hours of scouring endless documents. The Karmon papers contained many newspaper clippings of Puerto Rican events such as the Desfile Puertorriqueño (Puerto Day Parade) and its' predecessors such as the *Defile Panamericano* or Pan-American Parade. A newspaper clipping of the Borinquen Post's leadership in 1950 is evidence of Puerto Rican community's organization and civic participation even at this early juncture in the post-World War II migration. Event programs such as the Women's Auxiliary of American Legion Post 1216 or Borinquen Post contained a listing of dozens of Latino and Puerto Rican organizations active in the Bronx during the Puerto Rican Air Migration era from as early as 1951.

The third week of my internship, which was performed remotely from my apartment and must have been one of the most interesting and rewarding weeks of the internship. Probably the least direct linkage to my Capstone was the Nuyorican activism of the 1970s as recounted by Mr. Vicente "Panama" Alba's oral history. The passion in his telling the story of the Puerto Struggle for independence gets my decolonial and militant research blood pumping. Listening to the hour and thirty plus minute audio repeatedly line by line, sentence by sentence, or just pause by pause placed me in a world of decolonial thought and activism I have experienced in my other Lehman courses such as the *African American Great Migration*, and *Who Are Afro-Latinos?* Two other courses that provided opportunity for critical analysis of colonial practices were The Humanities for People of Color, By People of Color and Restorative Practices and Restorative Justice were two other courses that are complimented by the Panama Alba oral history transcription week. These four courses along with the internship have provided me access to a broad knowledge base of colonized experiences of local groups such as U.S. African descendants in New York City, the larger U.S. Afro-Latino diaspora and West Indies population of New York, Western hemispheric populations of color. The internship provided me a glimpse of the Puerto Rican community I had

originally intended to study more during my graduate experience. So much to research with so little time.

Both the Summer 2021 Anthropology course and Internship were both intended to provide me with preparation for both my interviews and oral histories and the archival research workloads for my Capstone Project. This internship research has corroborated through the documentation mentioned above and much more documentary evidence the well-established New York Puerto Rican or Nuyorican communities at the migrants along with the colonial Migration office. Mr. Karmon kept official Migration Office literature from the 1950s I look forward to citing in my Capstone paper. I can't help but also see the possibility of a budding relationship between Lehman College History and Ethnic Studies focused students seeking internship experience and The Bronx County Historical Society in need of support.

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Elias Karmon Papers. The Bronx County Archives at The Bronx County Historical Society Research Library.

Vicente "Panama" Alba, "Oral History, June 6, 2021," interviewed by Steven Payne, transcript, The Bronx Latino History Project, The Bronx County Archives at The Bronx County Historical Society Research Library.

Appendix 5: Sample prior learning assessment portfolio

Student: Zenaida Bough, 2018 (not including appendices)

Introduction

This portfolio is focused on my work experience at Lehman College from the last eight years in the roles of 1) Assistant Director of the Freshman Year Initiative (FYI) program, 2) Adjunct Lecturer for the English and LEH Departments, and 3) ESL Program Coordinator. Enclosed in this portfolio you will find a range of knowledge, skills, and abilities that I have acquired throughout my professional development journey in a higher education setting. Whenever possible, I have also attached various additional documents including lesson plans, assessments, and curricular resources that I have developed over the years. I begin with my resume and a brief foreword.

I am requesting that my learned knowledge and skills be considered for six (6) credits toward Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) credits. I believe that the level and amount of knowledge and skills I have learned over the years can be equated to the college-level content of various education courses.

Degree Focus

Throughout my interdisciplinary exploration in the MALS program, I have selected much of my courses and coursework in topics that could expand my understanding of the challenges our educational system pose to our society, especially those challenges that could negatively affect students' future motivations and inspiration toward prospective careers in leadership.¹ Through my own early academic experiences and challenges, my own professional experiences as a higher education administrator and teacher, and my research on effective pedagogy, I have learned that many people are unimpressed with the pace in which our educational system is advancing², and sometimes find that the lackluster education that many students receive fail to stimulate or stir students to consider themselves for careers in leadership positions, especially for girls³ and already disadvantaged students.

For my Capstone project, I examined and compared the teaching philosophy, methodologies, and strategies of one popular and respected freshman adjunct lecturer at Lehman who manages each semester to encourage and impassion a significant number of her students to participate in campus and community leadership opportunities. Many of her students, whom still keep in contact with her, have gone on to accomplish great professional

¹ Cynthia Luna Scott, "THE FUTURES OF LEARNING 3: WHAT KIND OF PEDAGOGIES FOR THE 21st CENTURY?" *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*, Educational Research and Foresight: Working Papers, 25 Apr. 2018, unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002431/243126e.pdf.

² Jelena Cingel Bodinet, "Pedagogies of the Futures: Shifting the Educational Paradigms." *European Journal of Futures Research*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2016, pp. 1–11.

³ Barbara Winslow, "Clio in the Curriculum: The State of Women and Women's History in the Middle and High School Curriculum...and Perhaps a Way Forward." *Journal of Women's History* 25, no. 4 (2013): 319-32.

aspirations. The knowledge I've gained through this research project has strengthened my understanding of the learning and teaching process, and has expanded my abilities to transform my own classroom, train and mentor faculty, and innovate academic programs that serve to enhance the student learning experience.

Foreword

For the past fifteen years working at Lehman, I have had the absolute honor of being surrounded, on a daily basis, by some of the most brilliant and exceptional faculty and mentors. My office is literally situated between two classrooms, and from my desk, I have a clear view of another classroom, and on a rotating basis, these classrooms are filled each day with so much constructed knowledge and inspiration that I feel the rooms could spontaneously burst. The profoundness of this daily experience is not lost on me. I have spent these past fifteen years absorbing it all, realizing what it takes to be truly inspired by learning, deconstructing and reconstructing pedagogy and curriculum to embody all the spiritual elements that I have seen make a classroom come alive. I have dedicated a large part of my career to professional development that offers me new insights and perspectives on how to continue to develop and create meaningful and memorable educational experiences for students. I am fortunate to work in an environment rich with resources, where information is literally at my fingertips, and where I am encouraged to continue learning new concepts, new perspectives, new strategies, and new methods. On the next page, I highlight some of the knowledge, skills, and abilities I have achieved.

Academic Programming: Development and Management

While I have worked for Lehman's Freshman Year Initiative (FYI) program for fifteen years, I officially took on the role of Assistant Director eight years ago, expanding my responsibilities from supporting basic operations to leading comprehensive program development and management. Managing a large-scale academic program like FYI is comparable to school management, and in many ways, my job shares similarities with the roles of a principal or vice principal. Acting as a nexus between administrators, academic department chairs, and faculty, I ensure seamless daily operation of the program, and facilitate collaboration so that together we can develop effective strategic plans that focus on student success.

My fundamental objective is to provide first-year undergraduate students with a supportive and carefully structured program that promotes an interdisciplinary curriculum, faculty collaboration, and peer support. Toward this end, each semester I create a logistically complex block program structure of 40+ fulltime learning communities that consist of CUNY Pathways general education courses and gateway majors courses carefully selected from across nearly 20 disciplines. I also fold supplemental instruction, and tutoring components into each learning community block. Each learning community block I create becomes a strong and connected academic structure within which faculty collaborate with their "blockmates" and integrate their courses to produce an enriching, interdisciplinary learning environment for first-year students.⁴

In addition, I work with my team of staff and faculty to organize and oversee all large-scale freshman events that require campus-wide support, such as the Freshman Orientation, the Majors and Minors Fair, and the Freshman Spring Festival. When needed, I also lead system

changes that require campus-wide collaboration. For example, this year I proposed and led the implementation of a new freshman online registration and advisement system for all incoming students, including developing and overseeing the production of an instructional backbone video.

Mentoring Faculty

As the Assistant Director of a successful, large-scale academic program, another important responsibility includes training, guiding, and mentoring faculty. Borrowing from many noted mentoring paradigms,⁵ I begin this process each semester by coordinating and leading a faculty development meeting/forum for 100+ faculty from across all disciplines. The focus of this forum is for faculty to workshop together to begin developing integrative and interdisciplinary strategies and plans for their learning community blocks. Then, I monitor each learning community's progress throughout the semesters by systematically meeting with each small group of faculty so that I may help facilitate the interdisciplinary collaboration, and ensure that the program's learning values and objectives are being met.

The FYI program is also responsible for the development, staffing, and maintenance of the Freshman Seminar class – a pivotal course that all freshmen take in their first semester. The

⁴ Betsy O. Barefoot, *Achieving and Sustaining Institutional Excellence for the First Year of College*. 1st ed., Jossey-Bass, 2005.

⁵ Sarah Fletcher, *The SAGE Handbook of Mentoring and Coaching in Education*. SAGE, 2012.

Freshman Seminar has standardized components, but requires that faculty be imaginative in how they bring their own varied backgrounds and disciplines into the academic folds of the course. Thus, instructors benefit from faculty development workshops that help them create and develop their own unique plans for the course. Having taught the course myself many times, I have developed a curriculum and pedagogical approach to the course that I teach to new faculty. I organize and lead the annual Freshman Seminar Faculty Development Workshop every summer, where I meet with all LEH100 instructors together so that they can begin designing their course. I am partial to Fink's 12 steps of integrated course design to help faculty identify course learning objectives, design lesson planning that incorporates activities, course materials and assignments to include in their syllabus, and formulate effective teaching and assessment strategies.⁶ I also facilitate discussion on new innovative pedagogies that cultivate meaningful learning.⁷ and I encourage faculty to share their own experiences teaching the course, as well, so that we are engaged in a collaborative learning environment. Though an important exercise for all, this is an especially valuable experience for faculty who are new to teaching the Freshman Seminar.

When the opportunities arise, I help support the professional development of our faculty by organizing seminars with special guest speakers that focus on how to adopt innovative pedagogical strategies into the classroom, and offer one-on-one coaching and training consultations throughout the year. I also collaborate with Lehman faculty development initiatives, especially ones that can serve the FYI faculty. Since the FYI program often offers Writing Intensive (WI) courses in learning community blocks, I teamed up with Writing Across the

⁶ L. D. Fink, *Creating significant learning experiences: An integrated approach to designing college courses* (John Wiley & Sons, 2013).

⁷ Cynthia Luna Scott, "THE FUTURES OF LEARNING 3: WHAT KIND OF PEDAGOGIES FOR THE 21st CENTURY?" *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*, Educational Research and Foresight: Working Papers, 25 Apr. 2018, unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002431/243126e.pdf.

Curriculum (WAC) leaders to help develop workshops that assist FYI faculty in building lesson plans and assignments that incorporate WI guidelines.

Curricular Development and Lesson Planning

I have participated in, and contributed to, several WAC initiatives and workshops. I helped develop the first *Making Connections Across an FYI Block* workshop⁸ that was designed specifically for FYI faculty in order to support them in using writing to make connections across linked courses. Participating faculty explore methodologies for interdisciplinary collaboration, and strategies for using writing to connect courses across academic disciplines. Faculty are also introduced to different approaches for developing linking activities and assignments that support their collaborative efforts. With the implementation of the new FYI Learning Objectives and Outcomes model (appendix A), I have begun weaving WAC goals and objectives into the learning values, and plan to collaborate with the WAC committee to incorporate the new FYI Learning Objectives and Outcomes into future WAC/FYI workshops.

While I only played a moderate role in the initial development and creation of FYI's credit-bearing Freshman Seminar course, I have taken the lead on its ongoing curricular development. While staying true to the course's original objectives, over the last eight years, I have tweaked and added to the curriculum of the course to enhance the student experience.

Having learned many things from the 2014 Freshman Seminar external assessment done by Cobblestone Applied Research and Evaluation Inc. about what students valued about the course curriculum, I developed supplemental materials that aid faculty in connecting campus resources to academic lesson plans. Over the semesters, I've developed an effective integrated course design for the Freshman Seminar course, and found Fink's 12 step process for course design a great resource. Using Fink's model, I have developed lesson plans for lectures and class discussions that create a learning environment that promotes and encourages student participation and active learning,⁹ and I have designed assignments that reinforce critical thinking, writing, and research skills, as well as quantitative reasoning and information analysis. I have created a syllabus that outlines these lessons and assignments, as well as the course requirements, rationale, goals, and objectives (appendix E), Elements of my instructional plan have been adopted by other faculty who teach this course, and I often train faculty on how to implement these parts in their own sections.

An example of a lesson plan that I developed for the Freshman Seminar course is a three- part, context-based learning¹⁰ lesson plan that ties the Long Range Academic Plan (LRAP) assignment to the course's liberal arts exploration core, and concludes with delving into personal career goals and career planning. Students begin by reading a short text written by Martha Nussbaum, *Go the Wrong Way*. Engaging class discussion and reflection assignment follows, compelling students to analyze and evaluate their own values and opinions on what a liberal arts

⁸ "Workshops and Institutes: College-Wide Offerings." *Writing Across the Curriculum*, Lehman College, www.lehman.edu/academics/wac/workshops-institutes.php.

⁹ Fink, *Creating significant learning experiences*.

¹⁰ Mike Sharples, et al., "Innovating Pedagogy 2015." *The Open University Innovation Report 4*, SRI Education, 25 Apr. 2018, iet.open.ac.uk/file/innovating_pedagogy_2015.pdf.

education means to them and what they could stand to gain from it (appendix F). Students then complete their LRAP plan, which requires them to map out their academic courses for all four years, including courses for their major and minor, as well as for the general education Pathways curriculum (appendix D). Thus, students are learning the curriculum and their requirements, and also applying their (often newly discovered) liberal arts values to their academic planning. Next, students visit the Career Services office for a career planning presentation, and students are asked to write a reflection paper on their career goals which they then share during class discussion (appendix G).

Finally, students complete their career planning assignment by drafting a professional resume and cover letter (which a Career Services counselor reviews with them and offers feedback). With this three-part lesson plan, students come away with a new appreciation for their liberal arts education as it connects them to their career aspirations, as well as their personal development. Because I often teach Freshman Seminar in the FYI program, I have the opportunity to collaborate with other faculty in developing an interdisciplinary approach. One example of my collaborative work was with an instructor teaching PSY166-General Psychology. After developing a thematic link between our courses, I created an experiential learning¹¹ lesson plan that would allow students to think more analytically about the processes of the mind, and experience a psychological study firsthand, while also exercising their argumentative and critical thinking skills in a written joint assignment. Students begin by participating in a mock psychology study that is based on a famous 1993 study done by Daniel Gilbert and his colleagues.¹² Gilbert's study sets out to test whether understanding and belief operate together, or whether belief (or disbelief) comes later (appendix H). Then, as a class, we read and discuss an article in *PsyBlog*, *Why You Can't Help Believing Everything You Read*, and students are asked to reflect on the results of the data from the mock study they participated in. Finally, students write an essay that is submitted to both their psychology and Freshman Seminar instructor (appendix I).

Teaching

Teaching within the FYI program, I have had to find a balance between adhering to departmental and programmatic guidelines, objectives, and rubrics, while also creating a successful and engaging classroom environment that specifically meets the needs of first-year students. I have been fortunate to have spent the last eight years collaborating with veteran faculty who have shared many strategies and methodologies with me. These resources, combined with the resources I've obtained through my own research, have given me the tools needed to achieve a well-balanced learning experience for students.

One important lesson I've learned from my experiences in teaching college freshmen is that, unlike how it appears in movies, students do not typically experience an enlightening "intellectual awakening" in their first semester of college. On the contrary, first semester students are usually unimpressed and disengaged with traditional university pedagogy,¹³ and are often unprepared to adopt the kind of learning that is expected of them to succeed in college. Thus, part of my job as a freshman instructor is to utilize new creative and innovative

¹¹ Mike Sharples, et al., "Innovating Pedagogy 2015." *The Open University Innovation Report 4*, SRI Education, 25 Apr. 2018, iet.open.ac.uk/file/innovating_pedagogy_2015.pdf.

¹² D T Gilbert, et al., "You Can't Not Believe Everything You Read." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 65, no. 2, 1993, pp. 221–33.

¹³ Jelena Cingel Bodinet, "Pedagogies of the Futures: Shifting the Educational Paradigms." *European Journal of Futures Research*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2016, pp. 1–11.

teaching strategies that promote metacognition and motivate students to become active participants in their own learning.¹⁴ I begin by diagnosing students' learning needs and formulating clear learning goals, and then choosing engaging texts and materials that allow students to identify and examine their own personal identities, beliefs, and values, and scaffolding lessons that promote the development of literacy and critical thinking skills.¹⁵ I help students build their written communication and critical response skills, with an emphasis on argumentative development in paragraphs and essays, and the rewriting process. Using a high-tech teaching approach,¹⁶ I also introduce students to online distance learning using platforms like Blackboard and ePortfolio. I assess student progress through graded assignments, and provide critical feedback to support academic growth. Coaching students on effective strategies for managing their daily life, including personal and academic goals, has also been helpful. And, of course, modeling these elements helps them learn how to apply them to their own learning.

As college instructors, we are not formally trained to identify and adapt to students with disabilities. In order to better serve these students in my classroom, I have participated in several faculty workshops led by Lehman's Disabilities Office, and have read resources that have helped me learn how to approach the wide-range of disabilities I may encounter in the classroom.¹⁷ In cases where a disability is suspected but not addressed by the student, I also learned how to approach students to effectively discuss challenges in the class, how to develop appropriate action plans, and how to refer students to helpful resources, including the Disabilities and Counseling Offices.

Assessment

Ongoing evaluation and assessment of the FYI program is an important part of what drives instruction design and style, and guides curricular change. Taking what I have learned from resources on program assessment, I avoid the common misconceptions of assessment,¹⁸ and develop effective assessment plans in collaboration with colleagues. I regularly analyze quantitative retention and GPA data reports, that inform action plans to improve persistence and success rates, and draft assessment reports. Another large source of program assessment data is collected from faculty teaching in the FYI program at the end of each semester via their FYI Faculty Narrative Reports, which I review and evaluate. These reports demonstrate how faculty achieved their collaborative work within their block and describe the effect of their work on integrated student learning (appendix B). In addition, narratives illustrate student experiences

¹⁴ Cynthia Luna Scott, "THE FUTURES OF LEARNING 3: WHAT KIND OF PEDAGOGIES FOR THE 21st CENTURY?" *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*, Educational Research and Foresight: Working Papers, 25 Apr. 2018, unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002431/243126e.pdf.

¹⁵ Fink, *Creating significant learning experiences*.

¹⁶ "Teaching Methods." Teach.com, *Teach Make a Difference*, 25 Apr. 2018, teach.com/what/teachers-know/teaching-methods/.

¹⁷ "Reasonable Accommodations: A Faculty Guide to Teaching College Students With Disabilities." *Lehman College Student Disabilities Services*, The City University of New York Office of Student Affairs, 2009, www.lehman.edu/student-disability-services/documents/ReasonableAccommodations.pdf.

¹⁸ *Program Assessment Handbook: Guidelines for Planning and Implementing Quality Enhancing Efforts of Program and Student Learning Outcomes*. University of Central Florida, 2008, oeas.ucf.edu/doc/acad_assess_handbook.pdf.

and often include student work. I compile these reports into an annual book that is distributed to FYI faculty as a resource.

As the Assistant Director to a large academic program, it is my duty to maintain a high quality standard of interdisciplinary experience for students. Toward this effort, I was charged with the development of new learning objectives with outcomes that would offer faculty guidance in setting specific goals within their collaborative work in their learning community blocks, while still allowing the flexibility to be imaginative and creative in how they achieve them. I created an outline of objectives that was largely adapted from the Skagit Valley College Learning Values and Outcomes model, and then further developed each of the eleven learning values to address our specific program criteria. I recently implemented the new FYI Learning Values and Outcomes model (appendix A) into the program, and have seen significantly positive results within a short period of time. Faculty are fostering integrative thinking in their students, and since each of these values outline the expected student outcomes, faculty have a way to measure the success of their collaborative work.

The success of the new FYI Learning Values and Outcomes has produced more higher quality FYI Faculty Narrative Reports, and therefore provided me the opportunity to develop a brand new assessment tool. I am currently leading a team of faculty and administrators on a large-scale assessment project to analyze, codify, and *quantify* the qualitative data in faculty collaboration narrative reports. Using a new rubric that is currently being finalized, and utilizing a data analysis computer software program, we will soon be able to easily run our narratives through a program that will instantly produce statistical data reports, allowing me to quickly assess the strengths and weaknesses of the interdisciplinary collaboration of the program.

Additionally, the FYI program executes several evaluations of program components and new initiatives each year. These assessment outlines and results are laid out in the College's annual Program Self-Study Reports. Among the evaluations that I administer to all students is the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which measures student satisfaction through a number of categories each year. I also facilitated an external assessment conducted by Cobblestone Applied Research and Evaluation Inc. on the objectives of the Freshman Seminar course, from which I learned the curricular areas that were highly valued by students, and those areas that needed improvement. I also conduct data assessment on bridge workshops including biology, chemistry and math, to determine student success rates in credited courses before and after intervention, as well as to compare student success rates of those who participated in these interventions to those who did not. As a member of a committee tasked with evaluating our freshman advisement model, I developed a survey administered in specialty learning community blocks geared toward specific majors (appendix C), which will help me assess student experiences with majors advisement. These and other assessment projects, which I have directly been involved in, have shaped and refined the FYI program over the years, and have greatly contributed to an impressive recent third-semester retention rate of 83.4%.

FYI evaluates the Freshman Seminar instructors through official, in-class observations. Each year I visit several LEH100 classes and sit-in to the day's lesson. While there, I observe and assess faculty's class structure and content, methods of teaching, and interaction with students. Later, I write an official evaluation of their classroom instruction, highlighting their strengths and areas that need improvement.

Advising Students

One of my main responsibilities as Assistant Director of FYI is to supervise the academic advisors and advisement process of 1800+ freshmen annually. However, I also regularly engage in the advisement of freshmen, myself. I advise continuing students on the general education

curriculum, and on academic policy and procedure, and I advise incoming students on their first semester registration process, and help with the intake and evaluation of earned college credits through programs like College Now, Advanced Placement (AP), and International Baccalaureate (IB).

Aside from my Assistant Director role, I am also the ESL Program Coordinator at Lehman. Through this role, I advise all newly admitted ESL students who have been identified through admissions and testing criteria as English language learners. In collaboration with the director, I help evaluate students' writing samples to determine appropriate placement into ESL courses. On occasion, students can be misevaluated as ESL students upon admission, and as a result, I have learned how to identify distinct differences between true ESL writing, native ESL writing, and learning disability writing errors. This ensures that I correctly place students in English courses and connect them with the proper instructional support services. In addition to evaluation and placement, I also work closely with ESL students in an academic advisor role, meeting with them several times per year, to ensure that they are selecting classes with coursework appropriate to their academic abilities, and to help them create short and long-term academic plans that move them toward graduation. As our ESL students advance through their first several semesters, I monitor their progress and, in collaboration with the ESL instructors and the Testing Office, refer them to retest on writing and reading skills assessment exit exams when ready.



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