In this issue... exploring the intersections of interdisciplinary studies

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A publication for students and alumni of DePaul University's MALS and IDS Programs

Winter/Spring 2017

Interdisciplinary, self-constructed graduate programs

Susan Jacobs, Associate Director

DePaul's MALS (Master of Arts in Liberal Studies) and IDS (Master of Arts/ Science in Interdisciplinary Studies) have enjoyed a long run as individualized, self-constructed programs here at DePaul. Due to the customizable nature of the programs, we don't have the fixed

name recognition of more traditional programs. The most frequent questions we get when we introduce our programs are "What are interdisciplinary studies?" and "How does one construct their own master's degree?"

Interdisciplinary Studies has its own niche market, but it is a shy kind of degree cluster. Because Interdisciplinary degrees span multiple disciplines, it can be challenging to create a one size fits all definition. DePaul's MALS and IDS Programs combine flexibility with rigorous graduate studies. Students create their own programs that must include graduate level courses from no less than two disciplines, with no more than five or six courses stemming from a particular graduate program or department.

Why multiple disciplines? More often than not, real world demands are complex, drawing from multiple academic and professional genres. It's natural for an advanced study in literature to include history, psychology, sociology, and/or modern languages. It's natural for a program that includes Communications to also include Digital Media, Writing in the Professions,

and Marketing. Students who dive into Women's and Gender Studies could easily find themselves drawn to Public Policy, Urban Studies, and/or Public Health. Environmental Sciences draw heavily from not only pure science, but economics, ethics, communications, geography, sociology, and philosophy. Those working in

See page four to learn more about graduate certificate programs

education administration know the value of negotiation skills, budget management and interpersonal communication. Any of these areas of study could easily link with digital design, social media, marketing, web design... and onward.

How/when do people realize that these combinations are viable and marketable? Often working adults who have been in at least one profession have learned that nothing occurs in a vacuum, unless they work in a dedicated research-oriented field. Some working adults re-enter academia already having identified a multi-disciplinary academic or professional niche they strive to fulfill. Others seek to explore areas of interest more deeply than standard academic programs might allow.

As part of the IDS application process, prospective students construct their ideal "List of Courses" (LOC), which is accompanied by a "Statement of Academic Purpose" (SAP). What areas do you want to study? Why? How will this unique combination of disciplines help you reach specific academic and professional goals? What life experiences bring you to this proposal, and how do your long term goals mesh with our program's established learning goals and outcomes?

As you read through this issue of Convergence, make sure you read Brittany Schmitt's article "Benefits of Graduate Certificate Programs." Graduate certificates can be folded into either MALS or IDS degree pro-

grams to establish areas of expertise which are highly valued in higher education and professional spheres. Certificate Programs can add meaningful layers to almost any interdisciplinary program.

To get a sense of the many innovative degrees our students have created, check out our blog at www.densejoyousmodern.com and look at our student profiles in "About Our Students."

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Convergence

A publication for students and alumni of DePaul University's **MALS** and IDS Programs

Editor: Susan Jacobs Writer/Designer: Brittany Schmitt

Director's Letter



"Flexible, self-designed graduate programs in the liberal arts and the professions": Throughout the 40-year evolution of MALS & IDS, the elusive idea of interdisciplinarity

has driven us, but some students find the practical concept of "build your own" more relatable. With guidance from advisors and mentors, our students have found ways to create programs from familiar and less well known departments at DePaul, programs that have helped them achieve their professional and personal goals. Sometimes they've combed through course listings to "curate" a personally relevant program. Sometimes they've combined large parts of different existing graduate programs across the university. Traditional graduate programs have to make sure that their graduates have an expected set of skills and knowledges for traditional career paths, so they leave very little room for courses outside their program. MALS & IDS flips this model by helping students formulate their choices based on interests, current job setting or anticipated career. But MALS & IDS allows students to create a core from a traditional graduate program and then incorporate value-added skills to it.

In this issue of Convergence we've focused on another, slightly more formal way of adding value to a MALS & IDS degree—certificate programs. The certificate programs outlined in this issue can be easily folded into a MALS & IDS degree program without additional credit hours. A certificate demonstrates to potential employers that you have a concentration of skills in a particular field. It's a way of helping them see what's obvious to you and to us—that your graduate interdisciplinary studies program is not simply a collection of courses, but a carefully planned academic and professional path.

There's a connection between interdisciplinary programs and concentrations, and it can be seen in the history of our program. Several decades ago DePaul was primarily an undergraduate institution. In the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, the MALS Program and the IDS Program (separate at the time) were among the few

graduate programs. A group of faculty were interested in offering courses in Women's Studies, but no Women's Studies department existed then. So MALS began offering these courses as electives. Soon interest in this area of study gathered strength and MALS was able to offer a concentration in Women's Studies. Eventually Women's Studies became a separate program, later evolving into the department of Women's and Gender Studies. We still offer this concentration, and the WGS department now has their own certificate program that's available even for students who don't choose the concentration. And there were a number of other graduate courses that were initially offered in MALS before there existed departments to accommodate them.

Now we get to play the host and incubator role again, this time with the ground-breaking MS in Sustainable Management, a cross-college initiative with roots in the Kellstadt Graduate School of Business, the College of Science and Health, as well as the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. Although related to the MS in Management in Kellstadt, the MSSM adds the all-important element of sustainability—social and environmental sustainability, as well as economic sustainability—to the skills necessary to create and manage businesses. MALS & IDS is very proud to be hosting some of the core courses of this program, MLS 452, "Business, Society and Sustainable Development," and MLS 409, "Environment and Society." In this way, MALS & IDS continues to be on the cutting edge of educational innovation in the 21st century, just as it has been since the 1970's. "Business, Society and Sustainable Development" and "Environment and Society" will be open to all interested DePaul graduate students, not just students in the MS in Sustainable Management Program or MALS & IDS.

Regards,

Davield. Stones

David Gitomer, Ph.D. Director, MALS/IDS

Program News

Interdisciplinarity has its benefits

Brittany Schmitt, Student Assistant

Liberal arts students are often asked about their degree and its merits in the workforce. Due to the pervasive notion that liberal arts students have little to offer to the world post-graduation, it may come as a shock for some that liberal arts degrees fit many employers' hiring criteria. What is the key, then, to leveraging your liberal arts degree post-graduation?

The answer is interdisciplinarity.

In an article in the Chronicle of Higher Education (June 9, 2016) entitled "Liberal-Arts Majors Have Plenty of Job Prospects, if They Have Some Specific Skills, Too," Goldie Blumenstyk asserts that liberal arts "graduates can improve their job prospects markedly by acquiring a small level of proficiency in one of eight specific skill sets, such as social media or data analysis. In most cases, those skills increase salary prospects markedly, as well."

MALS and IDS students blend their studies together to form an enriching curriculum across a broad spectrum of knowledge and skills. Students must know how to research, how to communicate clearly in writing, how to present their ideas to a room full of people, how to think critically, how to analyze texts and other sources carefully, and more. These skills are valuable enough to employers,

yet adding other specialized skill sets can make a difference after you graduate.

Pairing the excellent written and oral communication skills interdisciplinary students have with these additional skills gives interdisciplinary students an edge, which many MALS and IDS students have already realized.

Blumenstyk cited "knowledge of Java or other programming languages, or proficiency with graphic-design tools like InDesign or Adobe Creative Cloud" as examples of specific skills that have a sizeable impact. Blumenstyk referred to a study produced by Burning Glass Technologies, a job-market-analytics company, in which Burning Glass "found an additional 863,000 entry-level jobs for graduates" with these specific skills. The results?

- "... an additional 137,000 entry-level jobs for liberal-arts graduates who had data-analysis or management skills."
- "... data-analysis jobs paid an average of \$12,700 above the average salary for jobs traditionally open to liberal-arts graduates without such
- "Jobs for graduates with comput-

- er-programming skills paid nearly \$18,000 more, and there were nearly 53,000 more of them."
- "... the average salary for the jobs requiring additional technical skills was more than \$6,000 higher than the \$42,730 average for jobs traditionally open to liberal-arts majors."
- ". . . graduates who had such skills would be qualified for nearly 568,000 additional job openings."

By learning how to interpret data or write code, new doors open to graduates. Pairing the excellent written and oral communication skills interdisciplinary students have with these additional skills gives interdisciplinary students an edge, which many MALS and IDS students have already realized.

Kevin Moffat, a DePaul IDS graduate and a service educator, knew he wanted to tack on additional skills to his resume through a threefold blend of education, business, and leadership studies. Of his interdisciplinary education, he wrote, "I can definitively say that working in an interdisciplinary program has given me a direction. Business, leadership, and education skills will always have relevance in the workplace at any level. Not every career path needs to be 'black and white.' This graduate program allowed me to see that, and truly become an engineer of innovation."

MALS graduate Kelly Ferrell agreed. "My MALS degree, which started out as a quest for personal fulfillment and development, has now become an integral part in securing future employment. I will be much more competitive in the private sector with a DePaul MALS degree."

It isn't hard to acquire new skill experience while obtaining a degree. Graduate certificate programs, averaging about four courses a certificate, are designed to help supplement your degree with a specific set of skills in minimal time. DePaul has a myriad of certificate programs. Refer to page four to learn more about certificate programs and learn how to apply.

Brittany Schmitt: Student Assistant



In August 2016, Brittany Schmitt joined the MALS / IDS family as the new Student Assistant. Brittany is a first year masters student in the DePaul Writing and Publishing Program. Brittany received her Bachelors of Arts in History from DePaul this past June with minors in International Politics and Creative Writing.

Brittany writes and reads across a variety of genres and forms. She aspires to write young adult literature that provides positive female role models to young women and empowers them through literature.

You can reach her via email at bschmitt@depaul.edu or by phone at 773-325-7840.

Benefits of Graduate Certificate Programs

Brittany Schmitt, Student Assistant

Interdisciplinary graduate students yearn to explore many fields. Traditionally, lifelong learners feel like there's never enough time to take all of the courses they want to master. Fortunately, DePaul has an innovative way for you to enhance your main concentration: graduate certificate programs.

Certificate programs at DePaul are designed to give graduate students an opportunity to add a specialized certificate to their field of study. MALS and IDS students already blend various aspects of study together to form a personalized, self-constructed master's program. Certificate programs offer students great options to enhance their degree through a variety of four course concentrations that provdide focused experience.

According to Donna Del Giudice, Career Specialist in the DePaul Career Center, these degrees provide innovative ways

to "enhance" graduate degree.

Most students use certificate programs to strengthen their resume, Del Giudice said. "It helps them round out, depending on what their profession is, on their resume."

Del Giudice went on to say that these certificate programs could designate a student as a "specialist in an area instead of a generalist."

A certificate program can also satisfy a need for more knowledge.

Del Giudice explains that somebody pursuing a Women's and Gender Studies certificate, for example, does so because advanced certificates allow students to gain more specialized knowledge in a field they may not necessarily have a degree in.

DePaul offers many different certificate options, from studies in the field of global health to teaching English in higher education.

Getting to know a few of the graduate certificate programs and their program directors

Digital Humanities

Director: Dr. John Shanahan Requirements: Four courses

Focus: The marriage of humanities and technology; the introduction of tools and methodology for new kinds of cultural research; broadening and strengthening employment prospects for humanities students.

Contact jshanah1@depaul.edu or 773-325-7309 to learn more

Global Health

Director: Dr. John Mazzeo Requirements: Four courses

Focus: The four-course certificate trains graduate students to analyze the underlying determinants of global health, the relationship between public health and community development, and what the workplace demands from global public health practitioners.

Contact jmazzeo@depaul.edu to learn more

Social Research

Director: Dr. Jose Soltero *Requirements:* Four courses

Focus: "The certificate tries to train students in a broad spectrum of research techniques and analysis that are quantitative and qualitative," Dr. Soltero said.

Contact jsoltero@depaul.edu to learn more

Teaching English in the Two-Year College

Director: Dr. Carolyn Goffman

Requirements: Four courses, including internship

Focus: For graduate students, this program provides experience for those interested in teaching English in two-year colleges.

Contact cgoffman@depaul.edu to learn more

Social and Cultural Foundations in Education

Director: Dr. Amira Proweller Requirements: Four courses

Focus: The certificate offers students the opportunity to acquire broadbased, interdisciplinary knowledge of social, political, and cultural forces that impact schools and other educational contexts.

Contact aprowell@depaul.edu or 773-325-4320 to learn more

Women's and Gender Studies

Director: Dr. Ann Russo *Requirements:* Four courses

Focus: Designed for students who want to learn about feminist and social justice theory, agency, social responsibility, advocacy, and activism in transnational contexts, according to the program website.

Concact arusso@depaul.edu or 773-325-1774 to learn more

News

Donna Del Giudice said

students with the Women's and Gender Studies certificate specialize their degree in Women's and Gender Studies issues. For example, according to Del Giudice, students with a master's in Sociology could use the WGS certificate to specialize their degree in counseling for women, and students with a master's in Public Policy could use their certificate to focus on women's issues.

Dr. Shanahan recommends this program to students who are open

to exploring technology for cultural study. Such students will find themselves at home with the program's mission to understand storytelling's changing technological mediums, such as "different ways of presenting characters" and "different kinds of focalization," according to Dr. Shanahan. He also had some reassurances for technology-phobic students. "You don't have to master it all," he said. "At the end of the day, you want to find something culturally significant from use of these tools."

According to Dr. Mazzeo,

students with a BA who are "interested in graduate level courses in global health because they work at [a global] organization that is health related," students with an advanced degree "who are working for an organization and want to move it more towards a global health sector," or students with a public health degree that want to do more work in the field, are good candidates for the program.

Women's and Gender **Studies**

Social and

Advanced Certificates and Interdisciplinary Learning

Digital

Humanities

MALS/IDS students incorporate advanced certificates to:

- create innovative intersections of focused experience within a variety of concentrations
- specialize their self-constructed programs, furthering their academic and professional goals

Social Research

Global

Health

Cultural **Foundations** in Education

Teaching English in the Two-Year College

According to Dr. Soltero,

the interdisciplinary nature of this certificate also enhances a student's knowledge base.

"If the student goes to the job market after a BA or MA degree, it is very likely that this type of graduate is going to have a very central role in analyzing data information and designing techniques to do research. Therefore, this person is going to be considered the expert in that institution or organization."

Dr. Proweller said that

the SCFE Certificate Program invites students from a wide array of fields and experiences. Through coursework that is interdisciplinary, students have the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the foundations of education and educational policy from a critical perspective. From there, they can apply their knowledge in schools and other educational settings in the community to shape a more inclusive, caring, and socially just world.

Dr. Goffman said that students may focus on the teaching internship

to glean the most experience without necessarily completing all course requirements. Students who have the prerequisites can take this internship at any time. During the internship, students are paired with an experienced instructor at a local college. "By the end of the internship, [the intern has] learned from the experience," Dr. Goffman said, "but they've also become educated in the history and philosophy of two-year colleges in the basic pedagogical theory for composition in English teaching and they are ready to apply for a job."

First-Person Discoveries

Geoff Stellfox: Award-winning journalist

Brittany Schmitt, Student Assistant

awards for his photojournalism.

shared with Convergence his award winning photograph, which his experiences at Game Two of the World Series at Cleveland's took first place in the Catholic Press category of single graphic Progressive Field. Stellfox's witty commentary and humor amidst art or photograph, and was the Society of Professional Journal- a field of Indians fans makes the lesson of the article all the more ism regional winner. The photograph, from Stellfox's DePaulia engaging. Perhaps our rivals from Ohio may not be as bad as article "Laquan McDonald remembered at prayer vigil," depicts many Cubs fans might have thought . . . Michelle Dodson, Associate Pastor of New Community Covenant Church, as she "leads protestors in a prayer of lament," according to Stellfox's article.

Besides his outstanding achievements in photojournalism, — at http://depauliaonline.com/byline/geoff-stellfox/

Stellfox's journalistic work is also well-recognized.

As our Chicago Cubs battled the Cleveland Indians in the Geoff Stellfox, one of our own IDS students, has won several historic 2016 World Series, Stellfox provided most of the Cubs photo coverage for the DePaulia. He also produced the article "A Stellfox, a writer for DePaul's student newspaper The DePaulia, partisan opinion of Cleveland." In this piece, Stellfox recounts

> Check out Stellfox's contributions to the DePaulia — such as his Cubs coverage or reportage of the Laquan McDonald prayer vigil

A closer look at Stellfox's award-winning photographs



Stellfox's photo (above) won first place for single graphic art or photograph for the Catholic Press and was the Society of Professional Journalists regional winner. (Geoff Stellfox/The DePaulia)



Cubs and Indians fans celebrated a mutual love for baseball in Stellfox's piece "A Partisan Opinion of Celeveland." (Geoff Stellfox/ The DePaulia)

Blogs to Follow

Stay informed about Chicago and the world at large. Here are several blogs and journals to follow:

Chicagoist: This popular site covers a wide breadth of topics in the Chicago area, with topics in news, arts and entertainment, and food. They pay attention to trending topics, too. Visit *chicagoist.com*.

Blair Kamin: As a notable scholar of architecture, Kamin has brilliantly covered Chicago architecture for the Tribune since 1992. Kamin does not shy away from the politics of buildings and spaces, analyzing them thoughtfully and critically. Visit chicagotribune.com/news/columnists/chinews-blair-kamin-20130507-staff.html.

Chicago Reader: With news, politics, music, arts, culture, film, food, drink, and classifieds, you can find what you're looking for in Chicago Reader. Visit *chicagoreader.com*.

Slag Glass City: This online journal is run by DePaul's own Dr. Barrie Jean Borich. Specializing in nonfiction arts, this journal has internships and editor positions available to DePaul students, and takes submissions, as well. It is a great way to get your work published as a DePaul student. Visit slagglasscity.org.

Chicago Review of Books: Here you will find book reviews, interviews with authors, and news about the literary world. Visit *chireviewofbooks.com*.

New Student Spotlight

Making a Difference by Telling Impactful Stories

Estella Achinko, IDS Student

I have constantly searched within me for what I really wanted to become while travelling through the academic world and trying to carve my own career path. I guess I never had any fixed field of study because of the various skills that I discovered I possessed.

Back in my native Cameroon, I was passionate about changing women's lives.

I began to do women's and gender-related activism works through the Women's Welfare Foundation (WoW-F)-Cameroon, an NGO that I co-founded with my sister. Alongside that, I studied feminist literature as a graduate student, which somehow opened me up to women's struggles. Also, I spent a lot of efforts in honing my skills, like

writing articles and developing manuscripts (of novels and poetry) intended to tell the stories of African women and show how much I wanted to bring untold stories of Africans to the global front through visible mediums like digital media.

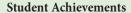
I couldn't fathom how I was going to realize my dreams and aspirations, but thanks to the Fulbright program, I am here at De-

Paul. I was able to contact the advisors of the MALS and IDS programs who oriented me to the richness of the Interdisciplinary Studies program. I could immediately figure out that the IDS program was the perfect program for me since I could customize my own learning experience while taking courses in diverse disciplines such as Women's and Gender Studies, Digital Media, and Creative Writing.

I intend to further this degree into a

PhD so that I can have solid grounding in translating my art back to my country and continent. Through my creative ability, I hope to empower the younger generation of Africans who don't get to have such life changing opportunities and reshape the African narrative which the world hardly gets to see.

The journey has been quite intimidating, but overwhelmingly interesting, as I was able to step in boldly. I deeply appreciate the wonderful professors of the MALS and IDS program who have been there to guide me every step of the way in the struggle to adjust to the American way of life and in understanding my new environment.



Congratulations to Anna Bahow! Anna is a recipient of the Richard J. Meister Scholarship Award, which honors scholars "who critically reflect on social justice issues and problem solving methods to achieve societal goals and engage in service within the local and/or global community." Anna recieved this award for her work using theatre as a platform and resource for social justice.

Congratulations to Rachel Conrad, Estella Achinko, and Anna Bahow for presenting the following papers at the LAS Graduate Student Conference:

- Rachel Conrad "Transnational Identity within the International School: An Analysis of Identity Narratives of Third Culture Adults"
- Estella Achinko "Women As Hidden Figures But Redefining Change Through Film"
- Anna Bahow "Critical Race Theory Counter-Narratives and the Work of Swedish Playwright Jonas Hassen Khemiri"

Congratulations to Jennifer Rhee and Anna Bahow for their participation at the Thesis and Dissertation Conference!

Have you recently recieved an academic award or another form of recognition? We want to hear about it! Send us an email and we will share your achievement with the program.

Follow our blog, **Dense.Joyous.Modern!** Visit densejoyousmodern.com!

Don't forget to like us on **f**acebook!**△** Visit *facebook.com/1160893980633827*!



Convergence

MALS/IDS Programs

2327 N. Racine Ave. Chicago, IL 60614 (773) 325-7840

http://las.depaul.edu/mals

http://las.depaul.edu/ids

http://densejoyousmodern.com

Online Resources: Meant to be used

Adult Student Affairs

studentaffairs.depaul.edu/
adultstudentservices

Alumni Association

alumni.depaul.edu

Alumni Sharing Knowledge (ASK)

ask.depaul.edu

Campus Events

events.depaul.edu

The Career Center

careercenter.depaul.edu

Center for Students With Disabilities

offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/about/departments/Pages/csd.aspx

Course Catalog

sr.depaul.edu/coursecatalog

Digication

depaul.digication.com/

Financial Aid

depaul.edu/admission-and-aid/financial-aid

Financial Fitness

financialfitness.depaul.edu

Genius Squad

<u>offices.depaul.edu/information-services/</u> support/Pages/genius-squad.aspx

LAS Grad Student Services

<u>las.depaul.edu/student-resources/graduate-student-support/Pages/default.aspx</u>

Learning Commons

<u>library.depaul.edu/get-help/Pages/learning-commons.aspx</u>

Library

library.depaul.edu

MALS/IDS Blog

www.densejoyousmodern.com

Office for Academic Advising Support

<u>oaas.depaul.edu</u>

Steans Center

steans.depaul.edu

Student Involvement

studentaffairs.depaul.edu/involvement

NON-PROFIT ORG.

U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 7366
CHICAGO, IL

Address Service Requested

Student Legal Services

sls.depaul.edu

Student Life

<u>depaul.edu/student-life/Pages/student-organizations.aspx</u>

Study Abroad

studyabroad.depaul.edu

Technology Training

offices.depaul.edu/information-services/ services/technology-training/Pages/default. aspx

University Counseling Services

studentaffairs.depaul.edu/ucs

Via Sapientiae: The Institutional Repository at DePaul University

via.library.depaul.edu

Writing Center

condor.depaul.edu/writing/