



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
WHITEWATER

ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT

INDIVIDUALLY DESIGNED MAJOR- COLS

MISSION STATEMENT

The College of Letters and Sciences Individually Designed Majors and Minors program serves students with interdisciplinary academic interests or career goals that cannot be met through existing programs. The purpose of the major is to accommodate integration of courses and programs now offered by the University; it is not a means of forming special majors or degrees which the University is not authorized to offer. The program allows such students to work closely with a faculty advisor to construct a coherent and rigorous interdisciplinary course of study based on coursework in two or more departments (including departments outside of L&S). Although the overall number of students who pursue an individually designed major or minor is relatively small, the program is highly efficient since it utilizes already existing staffing and resources. Therefore, it provides a cost effective means of expanding the curriculum and, at the same time, contributing to the retention and graduation of students who might otherwise leave the university without a degree.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Student learning outcomes (SLOs) are statements of what a student will know or be able to do when they have completed a program. They represent the knowledge and skills a program has determined are most important for students to gain from that program. The most useful SLOs are specific and measurable so the program can accurately assess the degree to which students have achieved each outcome, and they align with college and institution mission and values. Data on achievement of SLOs is used to make improvements in the program and increase student success.

A student completing an Individually Designed Major (COLS) will be able to demonstrate:

- Breadth and depth of knowledge in two or more disciplines.
- Ability to think critically and analytically.
- Inquiry, problem-solving, and/or creative skills as appropriate to the specific subject matter and disciplines represented in the program.
- Written and oral communication skills that meet or exceed campus expectations for competency, and conform to the norms of the disciplines represented in the program.
- Information literacy and/or computer technology skills appropriate to the specific subject matter and disciplines represented in the program.
- Advanced ability to integrate and apply these skills and knowledge to challenging intellectual and/or real world problems – usually demonstrated in a capstone integrative learning experience.