

Shepherd University Board of Governors  
October 12, 2006  
Agenda Item No. 4

### **Intent to Plan for Master of Arts, Liberal Studies**

Board of Governors approval is sought to plan a Master of Arts, Liberal Studies (MALS) degree program. Following Board action, the Intent to Plan will be submitted to the Higher Education Policy Commission for its approval. Once the program proposal has been composed, it will be brought to the Board of Governors for approval, and then the program must be approved by the HEPC and the North Central Association of the Higher Learning Commission before it is implemented. Details about this degree program are included on the following pages of the agenda book.

The following resolution is recommended for adoption by the Board:

**RESOLVED**, That the Shepherd University Board of Governors approves the Intent to Plan for a Master of Arts, Liberal Studies and directs the President to file the Intent to Plan with the Chancellor of the Higher Education Policy Commission for approval.

## Shepherd University

### Master of Arts, Liberal Studies

#### Intent To Plan

##### 3.7.1 Educational Objectives

At Shepherd University, the Master of Arts, Liberal Studies (MALS) degree is tied to the earliest ideas of education. In 1852 John Henry Cardinal Newman wrote in *The Idea of a University* that the liberal education “is simply the cultivation of the intellect, and as such its object is nothing more or less than intellectual excellence.”

Some objectives include: A greater understanding of cultures and values, an expanded historical and geographical context in which to consider current issues, the exchange of viewpoints in a diverse classroom, objectives which help to develop skills that students can continue to use in their personal and professional lives.

A major goal of this program is to provide increased access to affordable, quality graduate education for students in the tri-state area. Through this advanced program of study, students (learners) will be afforded the opportunity to develop the habits and skills necessary for critical thinking and self-directed growth. The program will specifically target the local adult population but will also be appropriate for more traditional students seeking a graduate education with a humanities or liberal arts emphasis.

##### Relationship of Objectives to Mission of Institution

According to its Mission Statement, Shepherd University is committed “...to developing and implementing a selected number of graduate programs.” Shepherd University understands that these graduate programs are essential if it wishes to meet the needs of its students.

The University Mission also states that... “The faculty, staff, and administration of Shepherd University are dedicated to remaining in the forefront of advances in contemporary education and professional programs as we serve our students, community, and region in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.” Graduate programs are essential in order to achieve this goal.

The University Mission Statement shows that the University is committed to “expanding intellectual and cultural resources.” The Mission states that “Student learning is central to the culture of our institution, and finding ways to improve student learning is a continuing process.” Advanced studies through well planned graduate programs serve as a primary means for achieving these goals.

In addition, the Mission observes that, “[t]he heart of our baccalaureate curriculum is a formal General Studies Program that prepares a student to take his or her place as an educated citizen in a changing world. The University is committed, as well, to developing and implementing a

selected number of graduate programs.” The Master of Arts, Liberal Studies will aid the University in meeting the goals of its Mission Statement.

### Special Features That Make The Institution a Desirable Place to Initiate a Program

Located just seventy miles from the Baltimore and Washington metropolitan areas, Shepherd University’s unique location within the Eastern Panhandle provides learners of many ages with the unique opportunity to avail themselves of the intellect and talent of Shepherd’s best faculty. In addition, this geographical proximity will afford the students easy access to well-established educational resources that will enhance their learning experience.

#### 3.7.2 A Brief Description of the Program

Shepherd University proposes a thirty-two credit Master of Arts, Liberal Studies degree.

The Master of Arts, Liberal Studies Program at Shepherd University will offer a selection of seminars in subjects such as those within a flexible graduate program that gives students the freedom to chart their own course of study. Designed for adult, part-time students, community members and returning students, the program will be housed mostly within the School of Arts and Humanities, with selected courses being offered in other schools on a rotating basis.

The program will offer an introductory course (Perspectives on Liberal Studies), a selection of eight seminar courses from the Liberal Studies Graduate Curriculum, as well as a capstone course. The capstone will include a thesis or significant project designed to encourage a sustained interaction with a specific issue or problem. Courses for the Master of Arts, Liberal Studies will be largely drawn from existing graduate seminars in the Curriculum and Instruction and Music Education programs and from undergraduate honors seminars cross listed and augmented to reflect graduate expectations in reading and writing assignments.

#### **\*REQUIRED COURSES: 9-credit hours**

Introductory Course: Perspectives in Liberal Studies (3)

Thesis Preparation Course (3)

Master’s Thesis or Capstone Project (3)

**Students will choose 24 hours of elective credit in MALS courses of their choice.**

#### 3.7.3 The Institution Will Assure High Quality Standards for the Program and Maintain a Continuing Assessment of Quality

##### High Quality Program

Shepherd University believes it has the capacity to provide a high quality master's degree program in the area of liberal studies. In addition to its faculty's outstanding credentials, according to the Association of Graduate Liberal Studies Programs (AGLSP), many students enter a Master's Program of this type because of their commitment to learning. The MALS Program and Shepherd will honor this commitment and provide a rigorous, high-quality graduate education to those who share it. The program's emphasis on critical thinking skills will help students sustain their quest to become lifelong learners and develop skills that can be used throughout their personal and professional lives.

### Assessment

Three goals, or intended student outcomes (ISO's), will be established for students in the MALS program. Each ISO will be assessed via direct and indirect measures over the course of 18 months. The data from these assessment measures will be reported to the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Graduate Studies Office, as well as the Director of Liberal Studies, and will be used to monitor the quality of the program.

The program will also be required to meet all requirements as established by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

All of these measures will continually address the viability and necessity of the program to ensure that curricula objectives and goals are being met.

### 3.7.4 Other Institutions Offering Similar Programs

Marshall University, which is located 357 miles from Shepherd University, and West Virginia University, located 153 miles from Shepherd, are the only state institutions in West Virginia that offer a similar degree to the MALS program proposed by Shepherd. It should be noted that these programs feature very different curriculum guidelines and are not designed to offer unique specialization concentrations and themes within the overall curriculum design.

In addition, the nearest out-of-state public institutions of higher education that offer similar graduate level programs include the University of Maryland, located 75 miles from Shepherd, George Mason University in Virginia, located 62 miles away, and University of Delaware, located 165 miles from Shepherd University. Private institutions in the region that offer similar graduate programs include: Loyola College (MD), College of Notre Dame (MD), Hollins University (VA) and Georgetown University (DC).

Shepherd University therefore offers the best opportunity within the Eastern Panhandle and the tri-state region to provide a quality program to meet this student need.

### 3.7.5 Statement of Societal, Occupational, Research, or Public Service Needs That Will be Met, as Well as Anticipated Student Demand for the Program

The Master of Arts, Liberal Studies at Shepherd University will be designed to serve the local, adult population of the West Virginia Panhandle and the surrounding region. This entire region has experienced rapid growth over the past ten years, and the same rate of growth is expected to continue in the foreseeable future.

Currently, members of this population take courses of interest at Shepherd University as non-degree seeking students. Since the fall of 2003, between 115 and 135 non-degree students have taken courses at Shepherd each semester at both the graduate and the undergraduate levels. During the 2005-2006 academic year, non-degree students—many of whom fit the profile of the students we expect in the MALS program—generated 846.5 credit hours at Shepherd, demonstrating a strong market for a graduate program aimed at this population.

Semester	Undergrad credit hours	Grad credit hours	Number of Non-degree students
Fall 2003	446	0	115
Spring 2004	411	3	111
Fall 2004	447	6	136
Spring 2005	338	0	122
Fall 2005	449	33	126
Spring 2006	343.5	21	136

One of the significant advantages of this program to Shepherd University is that almost all of the instructional, support, and library resources that it will use have already been created for other programs. In the initial phase of operation, all elective courses will be drawn from courses in the English and History Curriculum and Instruction strands, the College Student Development and Administration program, and the Honors Program. As these courses are chronically under-enrolled, the Liberal Studies program will strengthen other programs at the same time that it builds its own enrollment. Furthermore, a Director of Liberal Studies and a programmatic advisory board have already been created to guide the approval of an undergraduate Liberal Studies degree. The same oversight structure will be used for the graduate degree.

### 3.7.6 Additional Resources Needed to Offer Program

Resources for implementing the MALS degree program will be minimal. The academic foundation and faculty of the MALS program is built through Shepherd’s current course offerings in other graduate degree programs and its Honors Program. The administrative structure necessary to supervise the degree (including a program coordinator and an advisory board) will serve both the graduate population and the undergraduate population in the prospective BA in Liberal Studies degree.

Required human resources include the following:

1. Program Coordinator (release time required): This position will direct both the graduate and the undergraduate liberal studies degree programs.
2. Clerical Assistant: In the initial phase of the program, clerical assistance will be provided through the Office of Graduate Studies. Should program demand warrant it, dedicated clerical assistance will be considered at a later date.
3. Advisory Board/Committee (non-paid): The Liberal Studies Advisory Board will oversee both the graduate and the undergraduate liberal studies degree programs.
4. Classroom Instruction: Salaries for instructors teaching the introductory course and supervising capstone theses or projects: Instructors in dedicated courses will be paid the normal graduate rate, which ensures that any class, no matter how small, will be financially self-sufficient.
5. Additional Faculty Lines: As demand in the undergraduate and graduate Liberal Studies programs warrants, we will consider using revenues to fund additional faculty lines in areas such as philosophy, humanities, or comparative literature

Facilities Requirements:

There will eventually be a need for additional office space for the new full-time faculty member and for the program coordinator.

## Enrollment and Budget Projections

	First Year	Second Year	Third year	Fourth Year	Fifth Year
Number of Students served through the offerings of the program	10	15	25	25	25
Three-semester headcount	30	45	75	75	75
FTE/Year	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Student Credit hours Generated in academic year	135	202.5	337.5	337.5	337.5
<b>Income by year</b> (80% instate @\$235 20% outstate @ \$335)	<b>\$34,425.00</b>	<b>\$51,637.50</b>	<b>\$86,062.50</b>	<b>\$86,062.50</b>	<b>\$86,062.50</b>

## Operating Requirements and Expenses

<b>FTE Positions</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Administrators	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25
Fulltime Faculty	0	0	0	0	
Adjunct Faculty	0.75	1	2	2	2
Graduate assistants	0	0	0	0	0
Clerical	0	0	0	0	0
Professionals	0	0	0	0	0
 <b>Personnel Costs</b>					
Administrators	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
Fulltime Faculty	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Adjunct/Overload Faculty	\$18,000.00	\$24,000.00	\$48,000.00	\$48,000.00	\$48,000.00
Graduate Assistants	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Non Academic Personnel	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Clerical					
Professionals	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
 Total Salaries	 \$21,000.00	 \$27,000.00	 \$51,000.00	 \$51,000.00	 \$51,000.00