

Students earning a bachelor's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies take command of their own educational goals by designing their own program, or by selecting one of four existing cross-disciplinary concentrations (Fine and Performing Arts, Humanities, Pre-Law, or General Science Initial Teacher License (5-8)). Whether in an existing concentration or a self-designed program of study, students learn to use different disciplinary methods strategically, in order to address real world issues in innovative ways.

## HOW TO USE THE ACTION PLAN

Use the Action Plan timeline to explore potential career paths and plan for success during and after your college experience. The Action Plan provides suggestions and a place to start the conversation with your advisor, but every person and every career journey is unique. Customize your own personal action plan using the **My Action Plan** tool (next page).

Maximize the time you have in college to prepare for your future. What do you want to do after you graduate?

The Action Plan helps you to come up with tentative goals (remember, it's ok if these change as you continue to learn more about yourself and the field!) so you can start working on short-term steps to help you reach those goals or shift directions. Remember, you do not have to do this all on your own, get the support you need from your department and from Student Support Services like **Career Services and Advising (CSA)**.

## WHY CONSIDER AN INTERNSHIP?

- Discover areas of interest
- Gain experience in potential career field
- Build your professional network

## PAST STUDENT CAPSTONE PROJECTS

- The Crippling Stigma of Mental Illness (Nursing / Disability Studies) – Published in Undergraduate Journal of Psychology
- Helping Deaf Children with Mental Health Disability Achieve Social Integration (Psychology / Sociology / Disability Studies)
- Recycling from the Perspective of Environmental Philosophy (Earth Science / Philosophy / Psychology)
- The Importance of Play in the Context of Elementary Education (Education / Sociology / Psychology)
- The Role of Science in Anatomical Advances in Renaissance Art (Art History / Biology / History)
- Certified ASL Interpreters in Television Media (Disability Studies/Communications)

## ALUMNI STORY BRIDIE WOLEJKO, '20

**Fine & Performing Arts concentration**

“ I was accepted to the Fitchburg State Arts Education M.Ed. program, and had my artwork included in the Fitchburg Art Museum's Summer 2021 Regional Exhibition. I won the best of show award in that exhibition, which awarded me a one-person show at the Museum in summer 2022. ”

## ALUMNI STORY KERRY O'GORMAN, '20

**Art minor / Neuroscience, Behavior, and Cognition minor. Research Assistant at the Marcus Institute for Aging research at Hebrew SeniorLife.**

“ The Marcus Institute is a Harvard Medical School-affiliated lab that tackles Gerontology from an interdisciplinary approach! I work in the “mobility and falls” section, but there are many other branches of research here. I work on the “Individualized Brain Stimulation to Improve Mobility” study. My main job is to recruit, perform cognitive and physical assessments, and to administer non-invasive brain stimulation to our participants. ”

## CORE COMPETENCIES

### Critical Thinking:

Evaluate and question information, arguments, and evidence from a variety of perspectives and sources across disciplinary boundaries, and interpret that information with awareness of one's own biases and preconceptions

### Communication:

Integrate multiple perspectives and ways of knowing, in order to clearly address a wide variety of audiences, with deep understanding of meaning and intent

### Collaboration:

Develop one's own perspective and self-awareness, and empathy for other perspectives, allowing one to listen effectively and respect diverse viewpoints in the pursuit of common goals

### Intercultural Fluency:

Cultivate perspective-taking, and develop a broadly global awareness, appreciation, and understanding of attitudes and values beyond one's own personal experience

### Creativity/Problem Solving:

Solve complex problems by integrating insights from diverse disciplines and perspectives, and risking unconventional connections in order to outline novel solutions to meet a given purpose

### Flexibility/Adaptability:

Effectively navigate constantly changing conditions by utilizing multiple ways of knowing and integrating across conflicts

### Work Ethic:

Set and meet goals; maintain motivation, persistence, and resiliency; develop and maintain a growth mindset; and sustain focused attention to detail

# INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES ACTION PLAN

Take a look at the suggested activities in the Action Plan below. You do not need to complete all these tasks, but it is a place to start generating ideas. Think about what you would like to work on now in order to feel well prepared to enter your career field or graduate school upon graduation. Use the blank My Action Plan tool with your advisor to come up with the action items that are priorities for you. Revisit and revise this action plan each semester.

## FIRST YEAR

## SOPHOMORE YEAR

## JUNIOR YEAR

## SENIOR YEAR

### ACHIEVE ACADEMIC MILESTONES

Take classes that interest and challenge you, particularly when selecting your General Education classes, and reflect on how they align with possible future careers.

Confirm major choice is right for you.

Go over your full plan of study with your advisor and make sure you are on track to reach your goals.

Go over remaining degree requirements with your advisor and apply for graduation.

### BUILD EXPERIENCE

Take a career strength/skills assessment.  
Consider a part-time job to build your experience.  
Activate your Handshake account.

Apply to summer jobs/internships that will build relevant experience.  
Consider participating in alumni job shadowing or informational interviews with professionals in potential career fields.

Pay attention and attend events with employers on campus/career fairs/opportunities to network within your interdisciplinary departments.  
Search and apply to internships in your career field.

Develop a list of potential employers and check for recruitment events/open positions throughout the year.  
Apply to jobs, and keep track of and follow up with job applications.

### JOIN THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY

Join university clubs and organizations in your interest area - consult with faculty and students within your interdisciplinary departments.

Attend university and department events and performances, and ask questions of alumni and guests.

Seek out leadership positions in university clubs and organizations.

Attend campus events and performances and connect with alumni and guests to build your network.

### EXPLORE CIVIC & GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

Explore local agencies and organizations of interest.

Talk with your advisor about opportunities to study abroad.

Consider volunteering with local arts agencies and organizations.

Consider participating in a service organization or fellowship after graduation.

### PREPARE FOR LIFE AFTER GRADUATION

Familiarize yourself with CSA workshops and services.  
Create resume and have it approved by an advisor in CSA Center.

Talk to advisor about opportunities within your interdisciplinary departments for internships/experiential learning.  
Consider participating in alumni job shadowing or informational interviews with professionals in potential career fields.  
Begin to collect material for a professional portfolio (if applicable).

Attend a CSA workshop or one-on-one meeting to go over cover letters and interview preparation.  
Update Handshake profile.  
Create a LinkedIn account and other accounts on industry-specific platforms.  
Consider graduate/professional programs, and decide if they are right for you and your career path.

If applicable, take graduate school entrance exams and complete applications.  
Practice skills by doing at least 2 mock interviews and getting feedback.  
Finalize your professional portfolio (if applicable).