



# Academic Futures: Interdisciplinary Undergraduate Education (IUE)

Jack Hanna, Kailey Epp, Alex Harms



# Why is IUE so important?

- Develops creative ways to solve multifaceted problems  
(*Brassler et al., 2017*)
- Each discipline offers a unique perspective
  - Meshing perspectives together means unique solutions  
(*Brassler et al.*)
- Endless real world application
  - Many careers are interdisciplinary by nature



# Metrics for Successful IUE Programs

- Integration into University
  - Surface-level exploration to quench student curiosity
- Depth of Knowledge per Discipline
  - An ideal balance of curriculum structure and freedom
- Application to Job/Field
  - Designed to fulfill a certain career niche
- Variety of Topics of Exploration
  - Amount of topics available to students



## **Metrics for Successful IUE Programs -** *Integration into University Design*

- CU Continuing Education's Complete Major
  - Allows "former students" to complete their degree
- University of Michigan's Joint Degree Program
  - Pursue programs from different schools or colleges
  - Easily specialize in two or more fields



# Metrics for Successful IUE Programs - *Depth of Knowledge Per Discipline*

- CU Boulder's Applied Mathematics Department
  - Take emphasis credits with upper division credits
  - Structured emphasis plans or build your own
- CU Denver's Individually Structured Major
  - Depth in 2-3 fields within the LAS college
- MIT's Interdisciplinary Majors
  - 6 IUE degrees, several ID minor options
  - Focus on integrating STEM and AHUM



# Metrics for Successful IUE Programs - *Application to Job/Field*

- University of Wisconsin Madison
  - MA and PhD in Theatre studies
    - conduct inquiry through scholarly research
    - practice as research
    - meaningful teaching experiences
  - Several ID courses
    - Usually 1 credit
    - Degree choice and its implications to society



## **Metrics for Successful IUE Programs -** *Variety of Topics of Exploration*

- Miami of Ohio's School of Interdisciplinary Studies
  - ID course options to take while pursuing a major
- Cal Berkeley's ISF Program
  - Research Program and Course of Study
- University of Michigan's IMP Program
  - B.S. in General Studies
  - Allows students to propose a major idea



# Consulting Recommendations - *Mild and Radical Implementations*

- Mild - Small steps to IUE
  - Less enrollment restrictions
  - Interconnect majors in collaborative work environments
  - Incentivizing faculty to teach interdisciplinary classes
- Radical - Tailored to students
  - Break silos between departments completely
  - Offer a large variety in IUE degree options
  - B.S. in General Studies (Like Michigan's IMP)





## **Consulting Recommendations -** *Prospective IUE Program - Moderate*

- Easily integrated and depth of knowledge
- Modeled after:
  - Miami of Ohio's School of Interdisciplinary Studies
  - CU Boulder's Applied Mathematics Department
  - Michigan's Joint Degree Program
- Fulfill "major" requirements in 2, 3, or 4 disciplines
- Cross-disciplinary implementation for lower-division courses
- Discipline-specific upper-division courses