Board of Visitors Action Item
New Program Approval
Bachelor of Integrated Studies (BIS),
September 18, 2026

Proposed CIP Code: 30.9999
Proposed initiation semester and year: Spring 2028

Background: The University of Mary Washington proposes to establish a Bachelor of Integrated Studies (BIS), an interdisciplinary 90-credit degree program designed for working adults. The program responds to the large and growing population of adults in Virginia and the Fredericksburg region who have earned college credit but no credential and who are seeking flexible, career-aligned pathways to complete a bachelor's degree. The proposed program also renews UMW's longstanding service to adult and professional learners—a role previously filled by the Bachelor of Professional Studies (BPS), which was discontinued in Summer 2016 as part of a broader reorganization of academic units rather than for lack of demand; more than 250 students were enrolled at the time of closure. The Bachelor of Integrated Studies is identified in UMW's 2025 Six-Year Plan. Following review through University governance, the next step—prior to seeking approval to offer the degree program from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)—is to obtain Board of Visitors approval.

Description: The purpose of the Bachelor of Integrated Studies at the University of Mary Washington is to provide working adults with a structured, technically focused degree-completion pathway that integrates artificial intelligence, leadership, communication, entrepreneurship, ethics, and technology. The BIS is designed for nontraditional adult students—including working professionals, military-affiliated learners, federal employees, healthcare professionals, and community college transfers—who bring prior college credit and life experience and who seek to complete a bachelor's degree. Graduates will develop proficiency in the following areas:

- AI literacy
- Applied workplace technology
- Professional and digital communication
- Ethical and critical reasoning
- Entrepreneurial thinking
- Organizational leadership

To maximize flexibility for adult learners, the program will be offered online.

90 Credit/120 Credits: This degree could be either 90 credits (if Virginia moves in this direction) or 120 credits (the standard amount of credit traditionally required for a Bachelor's degree). At this time, we are asking the Board to approve both following consultation with the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV). As with the BLS degree, students would be eligible to translate documented work and life experiences into academic credit through a portfolio review of up to 30 credit hours. The degree does not lead to professional licensure.

Need for the Program: The University of Mary Washington is well positioned to serve a large and underserved population of adult learners. The proposed Bachelor of Integrated Studies responds directly to workforce and degree-completion needs at the regional, state, and national levels, and it aligns with UMW's mission to advance the professional advancement of its students and the quality of life of the region it serves.

Local Need: Fredericksburg Region. There is strong regional demand for fully online adult degree completion. GO Virginia identifies information technology and management roles as the highest-priority growth clusters for the Fredericksburg region and calls for expanded skills and training pathways to more rapidly match working adults to open local positions, noting that traditional local graduate pipelines cannot fill these roles quickly enough.[1] A large population of working adults, military-affiliated learners, federal employees, healthcare professionals, and community college transfers is actively seeking flexible, career-aligned bachelor's pathways that fit around work and family obligations. A conservative estimate places 5,000 to 6,000 regional adults with "some college, no credential" who are interested in returning to college with a preference for structured online programs; accounting for local brand recognition, price point, and competition, a conservative estimate of annual enrollment is 25 to 40 students. The discontinuation of UMW's Bachelor of Professional Studies in 2016—when more than 250 students were enrolled—further indicates a regional need for adult degree completion that extends beyond UMW's more traditional Bachelor of Liberal Studies option.

State-Level Need: Virginia. Hundreds of thousands of Virginia adults lack a postsecondary credential or need upskilling, representing a large and ongoing pipeline of potential adult learners. By 2031, an estimated 42% of jobs in Virginia will require at least a bachelor's degree, while only 28% will be accessible to those with a high school diploma alone.[2] Virginia's higher education strategy emphasizes returning adult learners to complete degrees and expanding flexible and online formats. The share of Virginia community college students taking all of their courses online grew from 17% in 2015–16 to 41% in 2024–25, underscoring both the demand for and the viability of flexible delivery.[3]

National Need: United States. Adult learners are an increasing segment of postsecondary enrollment, driven by labor-market pressures and the need for reskilling.[4] Nationally, there are approximately 43.1 million adults with "some college, no credential," a key target group for structured, adult-centered degree-completion programs.[5] Surveys show that more than two-thirds of U.S. adults considering further education prefer flexible or alternative pathways. A Bachelor of Integrated Studies at UMW would contribute directly to meeting this national need by offering working adults an accessible, career-relevant route to degree completion.

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[1]GO Virginia Region 6, Talent Pipeline / Business Cluster & Workforce Development Board report (2024). https://govirginia6.org

[2]Educate & Elevate, 2024 Virginia State Data Sheet. https://educateandelevate.org

[3]Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC), Virginia's Community Colleges and the Changing Higher Education Landscape (2025). https://jlarc.virginia.gov

[4]Jobs for the Future (JFF), Adult Learners. https://www.jff.org/idea/adult-learners/

[5]National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, Some College, No Credential. https://nscresearchcenter.org/some-college-no-credential/

Admissions Requirements: Admission to the Bachelor of Integrated Studies is designed for adult students seeking to complete a bachelor's degree. To apply for admission, all prospective students must submit:

- An Application for Admission (including the Virginia In-State Tuition (VIT) determination)
- Official transcripts and certifications
- A resume

The University Admissions staff will verify prior academic work via official transcripts. Students may submit a documented life and work portfolio for assessment toward academic credit; a maximum of 30 credit hours may be earned through portfolio review. Transfer courses may be applied toward elective credit but cannot be substituted for core coursework.

Curriculum: The Bachelor of Integrated Studies will require 90 to 120 credit hours: 90 credit hours of core coursework, including a capstone requirement, and could include up to 30 credit hours drawn from a documented work/life portfolio and electives. The core curriculum integrates professional and digital communication, digital studies, logic and practical ethics, statistics and data science, computer science and cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, entrepreneurship, and management and leadership. Together, this coursework grounds students in structured reasoning, ethical and critical thinking, AI literacy and applied workplace technology, entrepreneurial thinking, and professional communication. The capstone requirement gives students the opportunity to integrate and apply this learning to authentic professional problems. New courses developed specifically for the program are denoted with an asterisk (*).

Program Requirements:

Core Courses – 90 credit hours
COMM 205 Public Speaking (3 cr)
COMM 379 Professional Communication (3 cr)
DGST 101 Introduction to Digital Studies (3 cr)
ENGL 203 Writing with Digital Media (3 cr)
SOCG 105 The Social World (3 cr)
COMM 209 Argumentation (3 cr)
PHIL 151 Introductory Logic (3 cr)
PHIL 225 Practical Ethics (3 cr)
STAT 180 Introduction to Statistics (3 cr)
CPSC 110 Introduction to Computer Science (3 cr)
CPSC 302 Computer Ethics (3 cr)
CYBR 102* Cybersecurity Essentials (3 cr)
CYBR 104* AWS Cloud Technology Essentials (3 cr)
DATA 101 Introduction to Data Science (3 cr)
AILA 201* Introduction to AI (3 cr)
AILA 206* AI and Small Group Collaboration (3 cr)
AILA 303* Building with AI — Tools, Products, and Ventures (3 cr)
AILA 304* Managing AI in the Workplace (3 cr)

MGMT/MKTG 302 Foundations of Entrepreneurship (3 cr)
MGMT/MKTG 351 Entrepreneurial Venture Design (3 cr)
MGMT 366 Social Entrepreneurship (3 cr)
PSCI 102A Introduction to International Relations (3 cr)
ENTR 305* Design Thinking and Creativity for Business and Entrepreneurship (3 cr)
PSYC 100 General Psychology (3 cr)
MGMT 301 Principles of Management (3 cr)
MGMT 347 Organization Development and Change (3 cr)
MGMT 425 Leadership Theory & Practice (3 cr)
MGMT 460 Creative Thinking for Managers (3 cr)
Capstone – 6 credit hours
AILA 305* AI Capstone Project (3 cr)
BIS 401* Professional Communication Capstone (3 cr)

Portfolio and Electives – 30 credit hours
Students may submit a documented life/work portfolio to be assessed for potential academic credit, earning up to 30 credit hours through portfolio review. Any additional credits needed after portfolio review are treated as electives and may be drawn from any discipline.

Total Credit Hours = 90-120

Faculty Resources: The Bachelor of Integrated Studies will be delivered by existing University faculty (fulltime and adjunct) drawn from the three colleges, who possess the disciplinary expertise to teach the program's core coursework. No new full-time faculty will be hired in this program to teach core or required courses during the first three years of the program. The program therefore initiates and sustains its curriculum within existing faculty resources.

Employment Demand: SCHEV uses information from the Virginia Office of Education Economics (VOEE) “Degree Program Labor Market Profile” to assess employment demand. The VOEE report did not provide aligned-occupation data for the proposed program's CIP code (30.9999, Multi-/Interdisciplinary Studies), and no explanation for the absence of data was provided. Because graduates of an integrated studies program enter a broad range of business, operations, communications, and management occupations, employment demand is documented below using U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Occupational Outlook Handbook projections and Virginia Works long-term occupational projections for representative aligned occupations.

National Labor Market Information for Aligned Occupations (BLS, 2024–2034)

Occupation	Percent Change, 2024–34	Employment Change, 2024–34
Financial Analysts	6%	25,000
Financial Examiners	19%	12,100
Logisticians	17%	40,300
Management Analysts	9%	94,500
Meeting, Convention, and Event Planners	5%	7,500

Occupation	Percent Change, 2024–34	Employment Change, 2024–34
Property Appraisers and Assessors	4%	2,900
Purchasing Managers	5%	32,700
Training and Development Managers	11%	48,700
Project Management Specialists	6%	58,700
Marketing, Advertising, and Public Relations Managers	6%	26,100
Human Resources Specialists	6%	58,400
Operations Research Analysts	21%	24,100

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook.

State Labor Market Information for Aligned Occupations (Virginia Works, 2022–2032)

Occupation	Numeric Change (10-yr)	Percent Change (10-yr)
Management Analysts / Consultants	391	14%
Logisticians	82	19%
Meeting, Convention, and Event Planners	20	13%
Project Management Specialists	55	7%
Marketing / Advertising / Public Relations Managers	19	5%
Human Resources Specialists	13	8%
Operations Research Analysts	60	21%
Market Research Analysts	79	8%
Business and Operations roles overall	914	19%
Management occupations overall	642	4%

Source: Virginia Works, Long-Term Occupational Projections.

Duplication: No four-year Virginia public institution offers a comparable interdisciplinary studies degree program in central Virginia or in the greater Fredericksburg and Northern Virginia region; the closest related program is in Richmond. Existing similar or related programs are classified under CIP 30.9999 (Multi-/Interdisciplinary Studies, Other). Although the University of Mary Washington's proposed program integrates artificial intelligence, technology, communication, entrepreneurship, and leadership for the working adult, it shares the interdisciplinary studies classification with the programs identified below.

A. Similar or Related Degree Programs

Institution Name	Degree Program Designation and Program Name	CIP Code	Similar or Related
Christopher Newport University	Interdisciplinary Studies, BA/BS	30.9999	Related
College of William & Mary	Interdisciplinary Studies, BA/BS	30.9999	Related
Norfolk State University	Interdisciplinary Studies, BA/BS	30.9999	Related
Old Dominion University	Interdisciplinary Studies, BA/BS	30.9999	Related
Radford University	Interdisciplinary Studies, BA/BS	30.9999	Related
University of Virginia	Interdisciplinary Studies, BIS	30.9999	Related
Virginia Commonwealth University	Interdisciplinary Studies, BIS	30.9999	Related
Virginia State University	Individualized Studies, BIS	30.9999	Related

B. Enrollment and Degrees Awarded for Comparable Degree Programs in Virginia

Enrollment	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024	Fall 2025
Christopher Newport University	154	126	151	182	169
College of William & Mary	230	200	186	215	234
Norfolk State University	190	187	182	195	157
Old Dominion University	710	574	499	397	456
Radford University	497	385	362	311	313
University of Virginia	205	239	254	254	273
Virginia Commonwealth University	544	426	366	339	345
Virginia State University	29	35	43	67	109
Degrees Awarded	**Year 2021**	**Year 2022**	**Year 2023**	**Year 2024**	**Year 2025**
Christopher Newport University	40	47	52	63	68
College of William & Mary	129	110	86	101	114
Norfolk State University	53	56	62	72	61
Old Dominion University	280	218	191	159	189
Radford University	165	126	111	102	101

University of Virginia	38	49	53	64	75
Virginia Commonwealth University	272	218	196	158	161
Virginia State University	15	15	17	30	41

Enrollment in similar and related programs declined for four years but is rebounding. Approximately 2,000 students were enrolled in fall 2025 across these programs, and approximately 810 degrees were awarded in 2025. None of these programs is located in central Virginia or serves Northern Virginia, and the closest related program is in Richmond—leaving the Fredericksburg region without a comparable public interdisciplinary studies pathway for adult learners.

Relationship to Other Programs at UMW: The University of Mary Washington offers one degree program that is related to the proposed program: the Bachelor of Liberal Studies (BLS), offered in the College of Arts and Sciences. The two programs share a general, interdisciplinary orientation, but they differ substantially in purpose, structure, and outcomes. The Bachelor of Liberal Studies is designed for nontraditional adult students who wish to complete a bachelor's degree by translating career and life experiences into academic credit; students complete general education coursework and then choose a major in the liberal arts and sciences, in leadership and management, or an individually designed major, with skills and outcomes varying by the major chosen. The proposed Bachelor of Integrated Studies, by contrast, is a technically focused, highly structured degree that integrates artificial intelligence, leadership, communication, entrepreneurship, ethics, and technology for the working adult. Rather than a general liberal studies degree with a traditional major, the BIS is designed to build the specific, employer-sought competencies described above. The two programs are therefore complementary rather than duplicative, and the addition of the BIS is not anticipated to reduce enrollment in the BLS.

Return on Investment: SCHEV requires that Board approval include an assessment of "return on investment" information from the Foundation for Research on Equal Opportunity (FREOPP), available at https://freopp.org/roi-landing/. Because the proposed program is classified under CIP 30.9999, the ROI data below use the Foundation's "Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies, Other" field of study for Virginia institutions, the field of study that corresponds most directly to the proposed degree program:

Institution	Field of Study	Earnings (1 year)	Earnings (10 years)	ROI (on-time completion)	ROI (non-completion)
Christopher Newport University	Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies, Other	32,125	49,404	69,667	46,101
Old Dominion University	Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies, Other	39,246	60,869	365,527	160,197
Radford University	Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies, Other	37,640	58,275	299,243	140,218

Institution	Field of Study	Earnings (1 year)	Earnings (10 years)	ROI (on-time completion)	ROI (non-completion)
University of Virginia–Main Campus	Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies, Other	44,781	69,843	583,500	557,084
Virginia Commonwealth University	Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies, Other	32,549	50,084	86,861	49,987
William & Mary	Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies, Other	39,944	61,998	377,329	334,481
Bluefield University	Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies, Other	37,409	54,401	183,233	16,504
Liberty University	Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies, Other	41,333	64,247	450,502	290,204
University of Richmond	Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies, Other	46,576	72,763	617,554	520,485

Source: Foundation for Research on Equal Opportunity (FREOPP), Return on Investment analysis (https://freopp.org/roi-landing/). Earnings and ROI figures are reported in dollars.