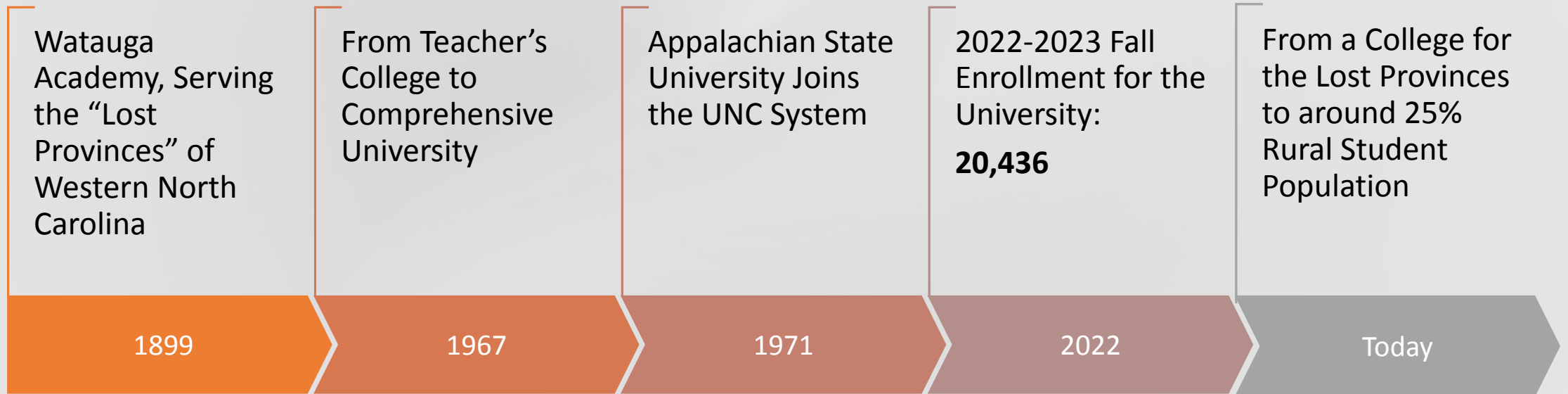


# **From Interdisciplinary Studies to Individually Designed**

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Appalachian State University

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# 1972: Watauga College

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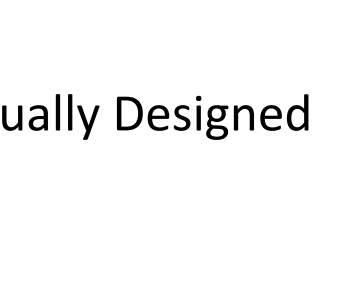
- Residential, Co-Ed
- Alternative to Gen Ed
- Interdisciplinary
- Team-Teaching
- “Experimental”
- Housed under General College



## The General Studies Program

The university offers an undergraduate degree program in general studies which is designed for those students whose educational needs are not best being served by their pursuing the existing major and minor programs leading to a baccalaureate degree. The general studies degree program provides for this type of student in that the student would not be required to complete a major or minor as they are presently established, but rather he would plan a program of study from courses offered by the university which he believes will best enable him to realize educational objectives which in turn best prepare him to attain his post-college goals.

1973:  
“Interdisciplinary  
Programs”

- General Studies
  - Business, Individually Designed
  - Science
  - Social Science
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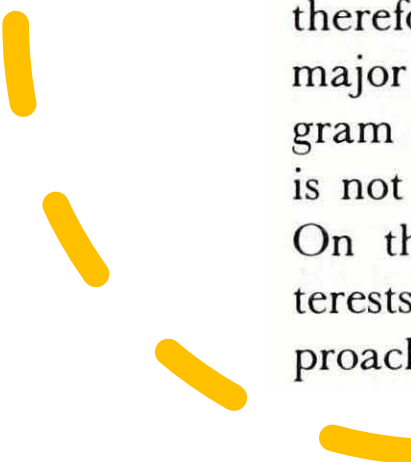




1979:

## Bud Gerber's Bulletin "Error"

The B.A. with Individually Designed Major Degree is designed for those students whose educational goals would not be attained by their following existing baccalaureate degree programs. This degree program exists to serve those students whose unique educational objectives suggest a cross-departmental curricular strategy. It is administered through the General College.



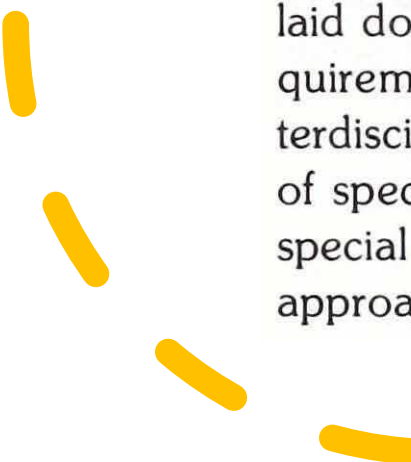
Through the Individually Designed Major, students may plan their own majors, selecting advanced courses from a variety of departments. Such students do not, therefore, need to fulfill the requirements laid down for any of the established major programs. Rather, they must meet the requirements stipulated by the Program of Study Contract. It must be stressed that the Individually Designed Major is not an option for students who wish to avoid the responsibility of specialization. On the contrary, the program offers itself mainly to students whose special interests are so inherently interdisciplinary as to preclude a purely departmental approach.



1983:

## B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies

The B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies degree is designed for those students whose educational goals would not be attained by their following existing baccalaureate degree programs. This degree program exists to serve those students whose unique educational objectives suggest a cross-departmental curricular strategy. It is administered through the General College.



In this program, students may plan their own majors, selecting advanced courses from a variety of departments. Such students do not, therefore, need to fulfill the requirements laid down for any of the established major programs. Rather, they must meet the requirements stipulated by the Program of Study Contract. It must be stressed that the Interdisciplinary degree is not an option for students who wish to avoid the responsibility of specialization. On the contrary, the program offers itself mainly to students whose special interests are so inherently interdisciplinary as to preclude a purely departmental approach.

**By 2000-2001:**

**Fourteen  
Concentrations**

- American Studies
- Appalachian Studies
- Environmental Policy & Planning
- **Individually Designed**
- International Studies: Asia
- International Studies: Eastern Europe, Russia & Central Asian Studies
- International Studies: Germany

- International Studies: Latin America
- International Studies: Modern Europe
- International Studies: Third World
- Liberal Studies: Classical Period
- Liberal Studies: Modern Period
- Urban Studies
- Women's Studies



# The Big Move “Out” in 2008-2009....

The mission of Interdisciplinary Studies directs us to foster awareness of the interrelatedness of existing forms of knowledge and to create new interrelated knowledge while recognizing that knowledge is partial and is shaped by historical, social, cultural and personal contexts.

The Interdisciplinary Studies program pursues its mission through the Bachelor of Arts degree in Interdisciplinary Studies, encompassing six concentrations connected by a common core, and four undergraduate minors. Interdisciplinary Studies is committed to experimentation and innovation in curriculum, teaching, research, and creative activity.

Interdisciplinary Studies offers courses that bridge academic disciplines, involve knowledge generated in multiple disciplines, and make connections between academic knowledge and knowledge generated outside academics. Interdisciplinary methodologies take root in the complexity of the opportunities and problems we encounter in the twenty-first century; they offer responses that connect, rather than fragment, the elements of experience. Rather than stressing the uniqueness of separate disciplines, interdisciplinary inquiry leads students towards syntheses, and thus towards an appreciation of the interconnectedness of the world.

Interdisciplinary pedagogy emphasizes low teacher-student ratios that enable highly interactive discussion-oriented classes, seminars, team-teaching, self-directed inquiry, and experiential education. Experimentation and innovation in teaching and learning styles lead to a flexible, progressive, and integrated curriculum. Interdisciplinary Studies encourages students and faculty to develop a sense of the world that is both broad and deep, to embark upon a practice that allows one to learn, teach, create and research across the boundaries that separate academic disciplines and that separate academic from other forms of knowing.

The Interdisciplinary Studies program offers the following:

- Bachelor of Arts degree in Interdisciplinary Studies (250\*/24.0101) with concentrations in: American Studies (250B), Environmental Policy and Planning (250D), Individually Designed (250E), Internet Studies (250Q), Labor Studies (250S), and Liberal Studies: Modern Period (250L)

- Department (in CAS since 1989) Dissolved, Programs Moved to University College
- Separate Majors for Appalachian Studies, Global Studies, Sustainable Development, & Women’s Studies
- Down to 6 Concentrations
- Restructured *again* in 2013

## ... and “Back” in 2013-2014!



# From Then to Now....

- 2014-2015: First Chair Hired for New Department (That's Me!)
- 2016-2017: End of Concentrations (technically, *one* concentration: "Individually Designed")
- 2020-2021: B.S. in Interdisciplinary Studies
  - 30 semester-hours of individually-designed coursework, vs. 24 semester-hours for the B.A.
  - B.A. vs. B.S. approved through both advisor and department, along with the program of study
  - Designed without concentration with the assumption that *all* degrees are individually designed
- 2021-2022: Proposal to change names of both degrees from "Interdisciplinary Studies" to "Individually Designed"

# Shot Down by the College of Arts & Sciences

- The End of Interdisciplinary Studies, AKA: **Stay in Your Lane**

- “Interdisciplinary studies” is not what we are currently doing, and it is not recognizable to students
- Current focus on emerging disciplines and parallel programs at other universities

- There is No *There* There, AKA: **Get Off My Turf**

- Other degree programs have interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and individually designed concentrations
- Approval process to ensure focus, substance, viability, and non-duplication



# Now What?

- **2022-2023:** New chair for Department of Interdisciplinary Studies: Dr. Maria Pramaggiore; pause in name change plans
  - As of Spring 2023: 21 B.S. and 23 B.A. students
  - Regardless of name, we will continue to serve students as an individually designed degree program
  - This semester's statements of intent include programs in: *Arts Marketing, Community Outreach & Engagement, Documentary Photography, Movement Studies, Social Entrepreneurship, Studies in Lifestyle Medicine, Sustainable Arts Practice, and User Experience*
- **2023-2024:** University College will launch a B.S. in Professional Studies, further distinguish "Individually Designed" from completion degree
- **2024-2025:** and onward: Integrating Census of U.S. Individualized Postsecondary Programs findings into our ongoing strategic planning