

ACADEMIC PLAN

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Note: Bold, italicized notations refer to the University Academic Plan goals

1. MISSION STATEMENT

The Torrington Campus: A Landscape for Arts and Humanities

The landscape of Litchfield County—open fields, forests, streams, and great rivers—has fed the creative imagination of writers and artists who, for more than a hundred years, have come to live here because of its beauty. This same setting is a source of our strength in the arts and humanities.

The physical landscape has also, here as everywhere, given rise to economic, social, and cultural traditions, which are now changing. These too have become a focus of our planning.

While its beauty still serves as an inspiration for contemplation and creativity, the preservation of the landscape itself is becoming a center of concern. Threatened by development, rising real estate values and the near demise of dairy farming, the rural character of Litchfield County is changing in every aspect of life.

At the same time, the city of Torrington is undergoing an equally challenging transformation with the loss of the industry that played so vital a part in its development. The future of older industrial cities is of equal concern to that of disappearing dairy farms and loss of open space in Litchfield County. The revitalization of the urban environment is as much of a challenge to us and to our students as they are to the government and other agencies that are making the effort to cope with and improve life in the city (*Goal 5, Strategy A, #4; Goal 5, Strategy A, #5*).

If we hope to continue to be nourished by our surroundings, the Torrington Campus must reach out to participate, along with town governments, the state, and the conservation organizations in their efforts to help discover what is needed and enlist public support to keep the land and the communities that inhabit it productive, economically sound, and still beautiful.

By drawing on the cultural organizations fostered by the presence of so many artists and writers—the historical societies, theatrical groups, and art spaces in the community—we will further enrich our course offerings, as will increasing the participation of the writers, artists, and performers. The American Studies Program and the involvement of the Litchfield County Writers Project (LCWP) in the academic life of the campus have enlivened interest throughout the region (*Goal 1, Strategy C, #4*).

The programs of the Torrington Campus in the social sciences, business, psychology, urban and community studies, as well as the arts and humanities, will focus on the community in order to draw on its resources as well as contribute to its well being. We will learn locally while we continue to think globally. The aim of this locally based inquiry of global issues is to better understand the setting in which economic activity—enabled, shaped, and mediated by social relations—takes place (*Goal 5, Strategy A, #6*).

The combination of beauty and urgency in Litchfield County's rural and urban landscapes creates a vital environment for scholarship in the arts and humanities and social sciences that crosses borders and breaks new ground. Our faculty's work includes emphasis on social and environmental justice, women's rights, children's advocacy, and the rights of prisoners at home and abroad. The Torrington Campus is a unique place where engaged scholarship works for change both inside and outside the classroom (*Goal 5, Strategy A, #4*).

With the cooperation of the other regional campuses in Hartford and Waterbury as well as the Litchfield County Cooperative Extension Center, and with the support of the main campus at Storrs, the Torrington Campus will offer innovative interdisciplinary and interdepartmental courses both within and across programs. The emphasis throughout will be on critical and creative thinking to educate our students for work and for life in a changing world (*Goal 5, Strategy E, #2*).

2. UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

Goals, Strategies, Actions

Our emphasis on interdisciplinary courses and the focus on our connection to the community have been introduced into our academic plan to enhance rather than alter the traditional role the Torrington Campus was designed to fill. The Torrington Campus remains dedicated to providing commuter students with an education equal to any, in fact, surpassing some in the quality of our faculty and the ratio of faculty to students. Our small classes create opportunities for help, guidance, and encouragement that are rare on most campuses.

The course innovations that are planned are also aimed at a closer connection between the students who live and work here and their community. Learning locally and thinking globally will entail bringing people in the community with special talent, expertise, and experience directly from the world of work into the university course work. In every field—the arts, social service, urban, community, environmental studies, and human rights to mention only a few—there are individuals in this community who are on the cutting edge of both theoretical and practical knowledge and who can support and give new meaning to what is happening in our classrooms (*Goal 1, Strategy B, #2*).

The emphasis on interdisciplinary courses is a recognition that the world and how it works is changing at an ever increasingly rapid rate. The relations between fields of knowledge have become as important as special knowledge within those fields. New ways of thinking about what we know – and what we don't know – will be important. Interdisciplinary courses will be designed to help both teachers and students find new approaches to solving old problems and to realize the importance of facing new ones, some of them created by insufficiencies in what we thought we knew (*Goal 1, Strategy D, #3*).

With that said, the Torrington Campus will continue to serve its traditional students – those who come here for two years to complete the basic requirements before transferring to the Storrs campus, those who come to pursue one of the four year majors for an undergraduate degree from this campus, and those interested and qualified to pursue a four year Bachelor of General Studies Degree. Individual attention to students in each of these categories has been and is still a primary concern.

Described below are current bachelor's degree programs that, in cooperation with the other regional campuses, are now being offered. They are American Studies, Urban and Community Studies, Psychology, Human Development and Family Studies, English, and Business and Technology. Some of the descriptions include suggestions for new interdisciplinary courses both within and across these programs (see Part 4 of this document). These will be followed by the description of a proposed four-year undergraduate degree program in Global Studies.

A new five-year MFA program in English, a second master's degree program in Liberal Studies, and a five-year master's degree in English have been proposed and are still in the planning stage. Two additional innovations will be two new seminars—a one-credit Freshman Seminar, tentatively titled *Introduction to Knowledge*, and three-credit Humanities Seminar, tentatively titled *Introduction to Ideas*. The seminars will serve to help create an intellectual community of both teachers and students on campus. The readings for discussion will be chosen by the faculty members who volunteer to lead the seminars, two leaders for each section of each seminar. In these seminars, the teachers are not the experts. The experience of joining with one another and with students in reading works that none may have read before is both delightful and exciting. Offering an opportunity for all freshmen to participate in one course in which everyone is reading the same works is a fine introduction to knowledge. The same is true of the proposed Humanities Seminar in which the readings may include more difficult writings in philosophy, political science, science, mathematics, literature, and psychology that will constitute a solid humanistic base for future thinking and learning. The Humanities Seminar will further the Academic Plan's interdisciplinary aims and include a new and timely emphasis on human rights.

The Torrington campus hopes to offer a minor in Human Rights. Several courses to support the minor are already offered, or could be scheduled on a regular basis and the proposal has support among administrators, faculty, and students (**Goal 1, Strategy C, #2**). The primary obstacle to moving forward is the lack of several additional full time lecturers—faculty who would also support existing programs and the proposed Global Studies major. The Human Rights minor fits seamlessly in the Torrington campus Academic Plan with its embedded interdisciplinary character and the strength and breadth of human rights in our existing faculty and course offerings.

Three-week intensives are being proposed to bring in writers and experts in the community to enrich learning in many fields. The Litchfield County Writers Project has been active in this role through its ongoing course series, ENGL 3623 Literature and Culture: The Writers of Litchfield County which is open to the public, as well as for courses taught by others. We propose that a standing committee be established to help in this effort (**Goal 1, Strategy C, #4**).

All General Education courses now being offered will remain in place. A few suggestions for additional interdisciplinary humanities courses will complete this section of our plan.

Enrollment Management

As the emerging Arts and Humanities mission of the Torrington campus takes hold, we have seen an increase in the number of students whose first choice is Torrington—as well as an increase in the number of students who understand the mission and choose Torrington because of the opportunities to pursue interdisciplinary humanities and social sciences majors, with an emphasis on writing across the curriculum. For the spring 2010

semester we will offer for the first time our Humanities Seminar to sophomore and junior level students. The course, run as a seminar with faculty from different disciplines, will encourage critical thought, interdisciplinary learning, and creative discourse.

Additionally, we have begun to work aggressively with our local community college (Northwestern Connecticut Community College) to make faculty, staff, and especially students there aware of the academic opportunities at the Torrington campus. Our plan is to extend this model (of regular meetings, and academic advisors and program faculty making regular visits to the community college) to Tunxis Community College in Farmington next fall (*Goal 1, Strategy A, #2*).

We anticipate that these combined efforts will continue to positively impact our recruitment goals—and hope to increase our traditional undergraduate population by at least 10% per year (an increase we could accommodate with very few additional resources).

Degree Programs

American Studies

American Studies and the Torrington Campus Mission

American Studies, one of the four-year majors offered at the Torrington Campus, is an interdisciplinary degree program based in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The American Studies program attempts to address multiple aspects of American experience. The basic plan of study encompasses six core courses that explore America through the different perspectives of history, literature, social science, and anthropology.

Our interdisciplinary program prepares students to pursue a wide range of careers in education, government, community relations, public policy, public history, environmental advocacy, journalism, or museum work. Many will pursue graduate study in one of the disciplines encompassed in the major, including programs in law, literature, history economics, or American Studies.

AS and Linkages to other Programs

The nature of the AS major allows for close collaboration with the other four-year programs –Urban and Community Studies in particular– currently offered at the Torrington Campus. The major’s hemispheric focus also would dovetail nicely with the proposed Global Studies program. Additionally, American Studies, itself a form of study rooted in activism, can help to foster an increased focus on human rights and social and environmental justice at the Torrington Campus.

Business and Technology

Business & Technology and the Torrington Campus Mission

The Bachelor of Science degree in Business and Technology is a four-year, undergraduate business program designed to prepare future business leaders for the business and technological challenges of today's marketplace. The Business and Technology major combines a general business education with a special emphasis on the application of technology to modern-day business problems.

The curriculum contains an extended core of information technology courses for students interested in a wide variety of different functional areas. Added to the core curriculum are required concentration courses, electives, and general education requirements.

BSBT and Linkages to other Programs

Instead of focusing on one area, the BSBT degree combines a flexible set of courses of a selected concentration with an extended core in information technology. Among the concentrations offered to students are: Finance & Risk Management and Entrepreneurship. The BSBT program allows students to focus on critical success factors in manufacturing, financial services, health services and high-tech business environments.

Human Development and Family Studies

Human Development & Family Studies and the Torrington Campus Mission

HDFS focuses its teaching, research, and outreach activities on the well-being and healthy development of individuals and families over the life course, including dynamic relations within the family as well as the family's interactions with other social institutions.

The program presents a multidisciplinary understanding of individual and systemic change over the life span. Students are oriented to the broad social, cultural and historical contexts within which families function and how context is reflected in developmental variations related to issues of diversity such as family structure, race, gender, class, and ethnicity.

HDFS and Linkages to other Programs

An interdisciplinary approach emphasizes the importance of a broad-based liberal arts education, and requires courses in the humanities, physical and biological sciences, diversity and in the behavioral and social sciences. Undergraduate concentrations are available in: Childhood and Adolescence; Family Relationships, Services, and Counseling; Family and Society; Social Policy and Planning; and Adulthood and Aging.

Psychology

Psychology and the Torrington Campus Mission

The psychology program is designed to prepare students for advanced work and professions in psychology and related areas. The curriculum reflects the nature of the field as both a social and a natural science.

Psychology and Linkages to other Programs

For the allowed twelve credits of related courses, links might be made with Urban and Community Studies and with HDFS.

In addition, opportunities for research experience allow students to work directly with a faculty member actively engaged in conducting research (Psychology 3889). Students may also develop and conduct their own independent research project while consulting with a psychology faculty member (Psychology 3899). Either way, students will learn the skills necessary to design behavioral studies, and to collect, analyze, and interpret the data. Some advanced undergraduate students have presented their findings at scientific meetings and publish their results in psychological journals as co-authors with faculty.

Urban and Community Studies

Urban and Community Studies and the Torrington Campus Mission

Urban and Community Studies, one of the four-year majors offered at the Torrington Campus, is an interdisciplinary degree program based in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The UCS major enables students to better understand the challenges and opportunities of urban life from the local to the global level and to participate in strengthening the institutional and social fabric of communities. The flexible degree in UCS draws on a variety of fields including anthropology, economics, geography, political science, public policy and sociology.

Based on the foundation of a traditional liberal arts education that fosters critical thought, the degree provides students with a first-rate interdisciplinary preparation for careers and/or graduate study in fields such as social work, public health, urban and regional planning, urban policy, geography, law, public administration, survey research, education and business administration.

USC and Linkages to other Programs

The nature of the UCS major allows for close collaboration with the other four-year programs—especially American Studies—currently offered at the Torrington Campus, as

well as with the proposed Global Studies program. Additionally, the UCS major can play a significant role in fostering an increased teaching and research focus in human rights and social and environmental justice at the Torrington Campus.

General Studies

Bachelor of General Studies and the Torrington Campus Mission

The Bachelor of General Studies (BGS) program is an individualized, interdisciplinary degree for adult learners who have completed an associate degree or earned 60 or more credits from a regionally accredited college or university. The program responds to community needs in a number of ways. It enables individuals to pursue personal and intellectual enrichment and/or professional advancement by providing an opportunity for students to complete their college degrees within the constraints of family and work commitments. The BGS program also serves the greater community by providing the educational opportunities for the creation and strengthening of an educated local workforce.

Bachelor of General Studies and Linkages to Other Programs

The single greatest defining aspect of the BGS program is its interdisciplinary character. All BGS students, with the assistance of academic advisors, craft individualized programs of study that reflect each student's needs and interests. As such, BGS students inevitably take advantage of courses offered throughout the existing majors and broader course offerings as they develop their own academic programs.

Global Studies (Proposed)

Global Studies and the Torrington Campus Mission

One aspect of the University of Connecticut Torrington's role as the "Arts and Humanities" campus is to encourage students to "learn locally, think globally." In keeping with this focus, the program in Global Studies provides an interdisciplinary approach for students to gain a deeper understanding of world cultures—with particular emphasis on that of non-western and developing countries—and the relationship between those cultures and our own (*Goal 4, Strategy A*). Students are encouraged to take advantage of one or more of the University's opportunities for study abroad including semester, summer service, and 3-week winter term programs.

The courses included in the Global Studies major reflect a variety of traditional disciplines including Anthropology, Art History, Drama, Economics, Geography, History, Music, Political Science, and Sociology. It draws upon existing academic strengths of the campus and provides direction for growth of future course offerings. Students in the Global Studies major may choose to concentrate their work in the areas of

Culture/History, Politics/Economics or may develop a focus on a specific geographic core (Asia, Latin America, Africa, etc.).

This proposed major will be developed gradually, in close collaboration with (and with guidance from) the university-wide Developing Global Citizens Curriculum Committee.

Global Studies and Linkages to other Programs

Because of its fundamentally interdisciplinary character, the Global Studies major will involve close collaboration with other established programs, including Urban and Community Studies. Additionally, the importance of studying other cultures does not minimize the value of understanding the influences those cultures have had on our own. As such, the major will make linkages to programs in American Studies and Asian American Studies (both of which are already represented on the campus).

The emphasis placed on study abroad will also result in closer collaboration with the Study Abroad office at the Storrs campus.

Proposed Interdisciplinary Humanities Courses

Nature, Writing, and the Literature of Place (Cross posting with English, Humanities, American Studies, and Naturalist programs): This course would be designed to study the impact that nature and landscape play in American Literature. For many years, the term “nature writing” has been used to identify works in which nature figured prominently. However, recently critics have begun referring to “literature of place” to identify works which deal with communities and human interaction with nature. The term, therefore, seeks to consider the cultural component of man’s interaction with nature, which is expressed in works of literature.

The goal of this course, therefore, would be to explore the impact of nature on human culture and the impact of communities on nature through the writings of American authors. Likely authors to be studied would include, Henry David Thoreau, Herman Melville, John Muir, Willa Cather, John Steinbeck, William Faulkner, Wendell Berry, and Annie Dillard (*Goal 1, Strategy C, #1*).

This course will be developed in close collaboration with (and with guidance from) the university-wide Environmental Literacy Committee.

The Science of Science Fiction (Rather than an interdisciplinary course, this would be a pairing of two courses: English 1011 and Physics 1010Q). As a humanities campus, we would have the opportunity to encourage faculty in all disciplines to teach their courses with a humanities slant. This pairing would allow two courses to interconnect. The basic concepts and applications of the physics course would be demonstrated in works of fiction in the Freshman English course, and the validity of the science described in

science fiction texts would be discussed in physics class. By combining these two courses, students could recognize the validity of science for the humanities student, and the lessons that literature can offer towards the study of science.

A similar pairing could be made between Physics 1030Q (physics of the environment) and an introductory naturalist course.

Freshman Seminar (1 credit) The proposed course is aimed at introducing incoming freshmen to the ‘University of Connecticut Torrington Campus Experience’ and is currently being developed with the working title *Introduction to Knowledge*. As envisioned, the course will use Litchfield County as a setting for an interdisciplinary analysis of the physical landscape as a setting in which economic and cultural activity—enabled, shaped, and mediated by social relations—takes place. The course is composed of the following parts related to Litchfield County: 1) The Physical and Cultural Landscape 2) How did we get here? The History of Litchfield County 3) Litchfield County: Through the Eyes of Artists and Writers.

Humanities Seminar (3 credits) The seminar will meet once a week to discuss readings assigned by the faculty seminar leaders that deal with ideas and issues of concern to all citizens, young and old. Currently planned under the title *Introduction to Ideas*, the readings will be chosen from major works of all times and places. Examples might be a dialogue of Plato, readings from Aristotle's *Ethics* and *Politics*, selections from Hobbes and Locke, John Stuart Mill, Isaiah Berlin, Nelson Mandela, E. F. Schumacher, Rachel Carson, and Aldo Leopold concerning our relations to one another and to the Earth. Some works of fiction and poetry may be included.

Student Enrichment—Study Abroad and Local Internships

Study abroad and local internships will be an important extension of all the Torrington campus’ academic programs as well as valuable experiences in their own right.

The University of Connecticut offers over 200 study abroad programs in sixty-five countries on six continents, as far away as China or as close as a small village in Mexico. The programs include university courses in Ireland, field research in Brazil, and study with other UConn students in Florence, Italy. Students can spend an entire semester abroad and still graduate on time. Other programs run for three-week winter or during summer sessions.

In order to take advantage of these opportunities that may not occur again in their lives, students at the Torrington Campus can coordinate study abroad with most of the academic programs offered at home and will be encouraged to do so (*Goal 1, Strategy B, #2*).

Local internships will also be an important experiential component of the interdisciplinary programs. Businesses, community organizations, and government

agencies can provide opportunities in almost every field from social service to journalism (*Goal 5, Strategy A, #6*).

Along with a focus on our changing landscape, on the arts and humanities, and on the connections between them in the interdisciplinary programs, an emphasis on study abroad and local internships will be a distinctive part of all study and research that goes on at the Torrington Campus. Opportunities like these for students to learn, live, and work outside of the classroom underscore our campus mission, both in its commitment to forging ties with local communities and belief in the value our students will gain from experience in the larger world.

To further interest on the part of students and faculty, and insure the active participation in both programs, a staff member will need to be hired (or dedicated staff time allocated to one or more staff positions) to coordinate with Storrs on study abroad programs and with agencies and organizations in the community for local internships.

3. RESEARCH

As we have rebuilt the ranks of tenure-track faculty at the Torrington campus, we have sought out teachers and scholars whose research could be accomplished best at our location, and within our academic mission. Recent hires in American Literature, American History, and Composition and Rhetoric Theory have been quite successful both at attracting grant funding (NEH, e.g.) as well as connecting their scholarship with local and regional organizations, resources, and initiatives (Harriet Beecher Stowe birth site, Litchfield County history relative to the Civil War and slavery, Contemporary Litchfield County authors) (*Goal 3, Strategy B, #2*).

By focusing our search efforts on the advantages of a regional campus locale, we have helped ensure the professional vitality of these new hires, and also extended the academic reach of the University to the local and regional community in ways relevant and beneficial. Further, the recently created Faculty Speakers Bureau at the Torrington campus will allow community organizations to take advantage of faculty expertise on a more regular basis (*Goal 5, Strategy A, #1 and #2*).

4. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Litchfield County Writers Project

The LCWP offers ongoing combined undergraduate courses and public presentations linking the vast literary talent of the county with focused areas of academic inquiry. As the central public engagement program of the Torrington campus, LCWP engages the local community on a regular basis—strengthening both the undergraduate experience as well as that of residents of northwestern Connecticut (*Goal 5, Strategy B, #1 and #2*).

All of our four-year degree programs have imbedded within them significant opportunities for effective public engagement with the residents, agencies, and businesses of Litchfield County (*Goal 5, Strategy B, #1, #2, and #3*). By degree program, some of these opportunities are as follows:

American Studies

The AS program is well-positioned to develop community connections through the establishment of internship programs and community service learning courses. Because of the wide reach of American Studies scholarship, American Studies lectures and events are likely to appeal to a broad cross-section of the local community.

Business and Technology

Designed in cooperation with the Connecticut business community to meet the needs of students who live and work in the areas of the regional campuses, it is an applied major with casework, experiential learning and other educational applications geared toward the types of manufacturing, high-tech, health services and financial services companies in the surrounding regions. Since it is a broadly generalized degree, it is excellent preparation for the MBA program at Storrs.

Human Development and Family Studies

HDFS integrates classroom and service-learning education with opportunities for research and internships. It thereby assists students to develop skills relevant to career objectives such as family services, education, human services, marriage and family counseling, health services, and business or community activities related to children or families.

Psychology

The program has been designed to take advantage of the locales of the regional campuses. Students are encouraged to take Psychology 3380 (Field Experience) in their

chosen areas of interest. These experiences should enable students to build their resumes and career opportunities while completing their degree.

The numerous career opportunities for those with a degree in psychology include such fields as sales, human relations, management training, public relations, research, technical writing, advertising, computer programming, psychological services, childcare management, and teaching. Many law, medical, and education students have undergraduate degrees in psychology.

Urban and Community Studies

With its focus on community service, the UCS program can act as the spearhead for linkages between the communities of Litchfield County and the Campus through the fostering of existing and development of new relationships, such as programming aimed at bringing students into the community (e.g., internship programs, community service learning programs) as well as programming aimed at bringing the community to the campus (e.g., film series, speaker series).

With a graduate degree in psychology numerous career options in the public and private sectors are available. A few examples are Clinical, Geriatric, Health, Industrial, Forensic, School, and Sports Psychology. Other career opportunities include Human Factor's Engineering, Community Psychology, Counseling Psychology as well as in academia.

General Studies

BGS students come to the Torrington campus as adult learners with strong existing links to their communities. They are not only residents but often parents, workers, community volunteers, and leaders. Through our BGS students, the Torrington campus has direct connections with the wider community. In addition, BGS students, like all Torrington campus undergraduates, are eligible to create additional linkages through participation in internships and other opportunities that will involve them with a variety of community resources including businesses, local governments, museums and historical societies, cultural institutions, etc.

Global Studies (Proposed)

It is anticipated that courses and programs in Global Studies will continue to have great appeal to the wider community—as well as strengthening the diversity of the Torrington campus (*Goal 4, Strategy A*). As evidence of this, past offering such as History 270/Drama 252: Views of China Through Film and “Breaking Open Japan” with guest speaker George Feifer have been very well received (*Goal 5, Strategy F, #1 and #2*).

5. PHYSICAL PLANT AND INFRASTRUCTURE AS IMPACTING ACADEMIC GOALS

1. Another seminar room is first among the recommendations of the Academic Planning Committee in order to accommodate all courses that depend more on discussion than lectures, as well as being essential to the proposal for a required freshman and Humanities Seminar.
2. An adequate G.I.S. (Geographic Information Systems) Lab will be essential. This will enable students at the Torrington campus a wider variety of science courses and would compliment the overall interdisciplinary focus of the campus in that many of these courses would support other academic programs, including (but not limited to) UCS and Global Studies.
3. A few more classrooms will be needed as well as faculty office space.
4. A science lab for Biology and Chemistry.
5. Last, but perhaps not least, is an exercise room with shower facilities. This is not a frivolous request. It was agreed that one of the important functions would be to keep faculty and students alike on campus longer, that the more we have to make us a community, whatever it takes, the better all will fare. Getting some exercise is of course important, and so is not having to go home or to a gym to do it. But like the required seminars with readings chosen by the faculty, or a new faculty position that will encourage some current adjuncts to be here, teach full time, and take responsibility for making their lives better, as well as the lives of their students, exercise facilities will serve several ends, all of them good. With all the land around us, a fitness trail, cross-country skiing trails in winter, and a better basketball net than the one in the parking lot should not be beyond consideration.