

MEMORANDUM

TO: Faculty Mentors

FROM: Bachelor of Individualized Study Program (BIS)

SUBJECT: BIS 390 Faculty Mentor Expectations

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a mentor for a BIS student. Your expertise helps ensure that BIS students create rigorous and comprehensive academic concentrations and complete an interdisciplinary capstone project that is grounded in the appropriate literature.

A BIS student for whom you are serving as mentor is enrolled in BIS 390 – The Research Process – this semester. In this course, students create a proposal for their interdisciplinary senior capstone research. A BIS generalist teaches this course, and with Faculty Mentors filling in as subject matter specialists.

In the past, BIS students have worked closely with faculty mentors in the disciplines on an individualized section of BIS 490. Since 2009, BIS 490 is offered as a course to provide consistent support to students as they create a critical analysis paper that addresses an issue, topic, or problem related to their self-designed concentration and demands investigation from two or more disciplinary perspectives. BIS students are no longer required to produce original research for their capstone projects. Enclosed is a copy of the rubric used in BIS 390 to evaluate proposals. This assessment tool may be helpful to you as you help your advisee meet the expectations for this research proposal.

For exceptional students, there is now an Honors in BIS option. This honors program will support ambitious students with appropriate preparation in methodology in pursuing independent research projects with a faculty mentor. These honors projects closely resemble the former BIS 490 model in that the faculty mentor is the instructor of record for this exceptional academic endeavor. This honors option became available beginning fall 2009.

The BIS Faculty Mentor brochure describes these refined expectations. As a content expert, you provide important insights and feedback to BIS students as they design their senior capstone project. We hope you will agree that this structure gives you ample opportunities to shape BIS students' academic programs and research proposals without demanding constant vigilance in guiding students through the research process.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact BIS at 703-993-2305, the BIS Director, Ken Thompson at 703-993-2305, or our Advising Director, Mark Sistik, at 703-933-4568. We value your role and want to develop strong lines of communication with the faculty who provide this vital guidance to BIS students.

A complete copy of the BIS 390 syllabus will always be made available upon your request and may be available on the BIS website under "Courses."