

[Liberal Arts Not Dead](#) at Centenary: Dr. Rowe's Email to Newsweek Reporter

This email was sent as a follow-up to one of the reporter's follow-up interview questions.

Just for clarification, I am posting the email I sent to Ms. Cook on 3/31/10 in response to her follow-up inquiry about the programs at Centenary she identifies as examples of the trend she is trying to describe. I don't believe the totality of our decision-making, the makeup of our current offerings or our discussions about the future support her conclusion. I have had to break up the message and eliminate some hypertext links in order to fit the word limit of the discussion board.

From: David Rowe
Sent: Wednesday, March 31, 2010 9:56 AM
To: Cook, Nancy M
Cc: Rick DelaHaya; David Rowe
Subject: Graduate Professional Programs (GPS)

Hi Nancy,

Thanks for your follow-up inquiry.

The repositioning of the academic program has resulted in the College focusing the undergraduate program almost exclusively on arts and sciences (or "traditional liberal arts" programs). All but one of the majors remaining for undergraduate study are categorized by Carnegie Foundation for Teaching as [Arts and Sciences Disciplines](#).

Once the changes are phased-in, Centenary will more likely be classified by Carnegie as an Arts and Sciences Focused Institution as described by [Carnegie](#).

So, contrary to the tenor of the article in *Inside Higher Education*, our move to our strengths is a move to focus our undergraduate program on Arts and Sciences (or traditional liberal arts) disciplines. Relatively speaking, therefore, the Liberal Arts will draw a higher proportion of resources than before. These programs exist and will be strengthened in the move and do not need to be created. The changes also allow us to concentrate resources and creativity in emerging interdisciplinary arts and sciences fields such as Neuroscience, Biophysics, Biochemistry and Communication.

The GPS programs, however, are the parts of the curriculum that would be new or expanded. Centenary has developed a tradition of strong professional and pre-professional programs in addition to our programs in arts and science disciplines. In the repositioning I have, therefore, called on the faculty to consider translating that strength into offering professional graduate degrees designed to complement our undergraduate arts and sciences degrees.

The model for these programs will be a degree already offered at Centenary and at many other similar schools – the **Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT)**. It is a degree focused on professional training and developing a required set of applied skills. In the case of teaching, it is designed to impart the academic requirements for teacher certification in particular states. Centenary will

be phasing-out its undergraduate education programs in favor of an approach to teacher certification that moves students through an undergraduate degree (most likely in the arts and sciences) that will become a content area specialty for that student, who will then attain certification through the Alternative Certification Program imbedded in our [NCATE](#) accredited MAT. The advantages to students are that they emerge with a professional credential, the benefits of a liberal arts undergraduate educational experience in a particular content area and enter the workforce at the higher salary levels reserved for teachers with graduate degrees.

Over time, I'd like for the faculty to consider adding other graduate degrees in areas that meet the needs of students pursuing professions in a few limited sectors. For instance, we have the faculty and curricular resources to design a graduate program in Music Education at the master's level. This may emerge as a variation of the MAT or a standalone master's level degree (**MAT in Music Education** or **Master of Music Education**). The business school faculty is researching a graduate program that might be a more appropriate complement to an arts and sciences degree than a traditional MBA. We don't know for sure what shape or name it would take, but **Master of Global Entrepreneurship** or **Master of International Business** are subject area models that are being considered.

In addition to the emerging GPS programs, I have also called upon the faculty to explore the possibility of facilitating international study experiences for all of our students by establishing sustained and nurtured relationships with institutions and communities in a few countries around the world, which are emerging as important to understanding and navigating the dynamic global context in which our graduates will lead.

With our historic Louisiana connections to the French language and Haiti, we will take the first steps in the new year to internationalize the study experience by creating a French Living Learning Community in one of our Residence Halls. The members of the community, which will include American students and French exchange students, will converse mainly in French. Co-curricular programming will focus on studies of, at least initially, Haitian culture and Creole, with an aim at examining educational service-learning connections with Haiti.

So the potential emerging hallmarks of a cohesive Centenary Education will be:

Focus on Undergraduate Arts and Sciences Disciplines
Complementary Graduate Professional Degrees
Global Engagement and Trans-cultural Competency

You asked about student reaction. One student who comprehends the new cohesive dual-degree (Arts and Sciences – GPS – Global Engagement) experience that we are beginning to frame is pioneering this pattern. She has already put together a track that weaves these elements together.

She is an outstanding musician and vocal performer, who is active in our most selective choral ensemble. She will major in French, has begun making arrangements to study abroad while pursuing the MAT. She estimates that she will complete this program in under 5 years total. I'd be happy to put you in touch with her if you'd like a student story to amplify your piece.

She is on the path to embodying Centenary's image of a *globally-engaged ethical professional who leads with the creativity of an artist and the curiosity of a scientist.*

I am sure this is way more than you wanted, but I hope it includes the information you need and provides clarifying context for my responses.

Take Care,

David

B. David Rowe, Ph.D.

President

Centenary College