The special majors program is designed for strongly motivated students to design a special BA/BS Interdisciplinary academic programs leading to a degree not offered through exiting standard degree programs.

Students must provide a rationale and a cogent explanation of the academic and professional goals for undertaking the interdisciplinary study and must specify the learning outcomes for their baccalaureate study. Students must demonstrate that the program has coherency and is built upon a clearly articulated conceptual framework - not merely a collection of courses from various disciplines.

**Student Learning Outcomes (2004)**
The learning goals for undergraduate special majors will vary in accordance with the specific disciplinary elements of their unique programs. The following displays overall student learning goals typically expected for a student in this special major:

*Competence in the Disciplines and Interdisciplinary*
1. Demonstrate knowledge of the disciplinary elements of their interdisciplinary study, the relationships among these disciplinary courses, and the ways in which these disciplinary perspectives are integrated and transformed through interdisciplinary studies.

2. Demonstrate knowledge, skills, and values appropriate to their interdisciplinary studies programs.

3. Demonstrate ability to analyze complex issues, draw reasoned conclusions, and evaluate effectiveness of proposed solutions to problems.

4. Demonstrate understanding of diversity of human experiences and cultures, globally as well as within context of their interdisciplinary studies.

*Written Communication*
5. Demonstrate ability to write effectively in a variety of written and quantitative formats appropriate to the disciplines and the differing audiences and contexts.

*General Education*
6. Demonstrate achievement of the university’s general education learning goals.

**Assessment Methods**
By design, the number of special majors is small; thus, the numbers of students evaluating program effectiveness is limited as well. The following methods are employed for program evaluation:

1. Graduating Senior Survey – a written survey administered by the Office of Institutional Research.

3. Student Exit Survey or Exit Interviews – a written survey administered by the college near the end of the semester in which the student is graduating or an exit survey with individual or group of students conducted by the college dean or designee.

4. Student Portfolio/Sample Student Work – For each of the overall student learning outcomes for the special major, students submit selected work that demonstrate achievement of the outcomes:
   - A total of 12 submissions maximum; one or two work samples for each student learning outcome.
   - Students develop a portfolio of their work, with names or names redacted.
   - The portfolio is most useful for examination by evaluators if it is organized with the following characteristics:
     a. Items are arranged in chronological order and each item has a month and date of completion.
     b. Items are works that have been graded by the professor.
     c. The course syllabus from the course in which the item was developed accompanies the assignment.
     d. The student provides a summary of the insights gained by reviewing the portfolio, including commentary about overall quality of the special major program.
   - With students' permission, sample portfolios are maintained in the archives of the Office of Assessment and Quality Assurance for use during academic program review and regional accreditation reviews.
   - Faculty who serve on Special Major Committees across the colleges are invited biennially to participate in a review and discussion of the portfolios as a means to evaluate the overall quality of the special major program and any areas for program improvement.

5. Faculty/Dean Focus Group—a focus group of faculty who have served on Special Major Committees, the Deans, and the Vice Provost.

**Recommendations for Improving Student Learning**
Created a program template that requires students and faculty advisors to identify student learning objectives and illustrate how each applies to the student learning goals for the special major program.