



LIBERAL ARTS STUDIES  
GRADUATE SCHOOL M.A.  
*Wake Forest University*

December 2019

**DEAR WAKE FOREST SENIORS AND YOUR PARENTS OR SPONSORS,**

The big day is approaching. Congratulations as you prepare to graduate!

Are you ready for what comes next? Some seniors have already lined up a job, some have opportunities just over the horizon, some have chosen an advanced degree in a specific field, and some want to take a little more time to consider options. A Liberal Arts Studies Master's degree adds just one calendar year to your time here at Wake and it's nothing like undergrad life!

There is a lot to gain if you choose it:

- Liberal Arts Studies is a chance to put it all together, to integrate the diverse learnings of your bachelor's degree years – to own your learning as an integral part of your life, your purpose and your aspirations. Like almost all colleges, Wake Forest leaves this work of integration to the individual and it's easy to graduate without quite getting how everything fits. The capacity for seeing the whole picture from various points of view is one of the strengths employers want to see in job applicants.
- LAS's interdisciplinary courses designed for the intelligent non-specialist provide a creative context for thinking about how things fit together. Many studies show that liberal arts students develop stronger integrity and empathy because of their exposure to different time periods, societies, ethical situations, and human triumphs and failures. Empathy is essential for constructive and creative leadership in any organization.
- Students working with a professor on a research project often regret stepping away from it after B.A. graduation. With LAS you can continue that work and, if you're so inclined, use your M.A. as the basis of applying for Ph.D. programs in that field.
- Liberal Arts Studies also offers an opportunity for internships in which you can pursue your interests by working in a local business or non-profit. This will help you see what it means for you to "live the liberal arts," bringing your strengths to your pursuit of excellence in your workplace.
- Maybe you're like me and have only just discovered the field you are really passionate about but it's time to graduate. With LAS you have another year to pursue that field in the liberal arts context of an outstanding university faculty without committing to a specialized advanced degree.
- And by August of the year after undergrad commencement, you hold both a B.A. and an M.A. from Wake Forest!

Most college graduates would probably say that their current employment doesn't have all that much to do with what they majored in in college. But their liberal arts studies have everything to do with how they approach their work, how they work with others, how they balance work with family and community, how they express what they want for themselves and their families, how they understand what's going on in the world, how they relate to their neighbors, in short, what kind of person they are.

But what about jobs?

A colleague of mine, Professor Elisabeth Liebert at Louisiana State University - Shreveport, recently completed a survey of major employers in her local community. In response to her question of what employers from all types of businesses and organizations want first and foremost in people they hire, they said critical thinking, writing, oral communication, ability to see the organization as a whole in its context, problem-solving, and a work ethic – as well as skill relevant to the product of the company or organization. Clearly the practices central to liberal arts education are what everybody wants, particularly in cultivating potential leaders in their organizations.

Her study confirms what many other national studies show. Surveys of current leadership in various kinds of organizations from business to government to non-profits reveal that most people in leadership positions have a liberal arts education. This flies in the face of intense media criticism that the liberal arts aren't worth it. Liberal Arts Studies is our antidote for that all-too-common misunderstanding through the life and work of our graduates.

The Liberal Arts Studies Master's degree is a chance to take your formation in liberal arts practices to another level. We hope you'll check us out.

Best wishes for your road ahead.

Thomas E. Frank  
Program Director  
Associate Dean of Continuing Studies  
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

[frankte@wfu.edu](mailto:frankte@wfu.edu)