

## SUGGESTED ADVISING SCRIPT

As a Liberal Arts advisor, please take advantage of the “hand-off” meeting to:

1. Discuss the scope, opportunities, and goals of the divisional curriculum.
2. Remind them of “big picture” issues related to integrating liberal arts courses into their program of study.

### 1) FOR THE DIVISIONAL CURRICULUM DISCUSSION

Feel free to use the following statements for talking points around introducing the liberal arts curriculum and to explaining the three undergraduate departments to your advisees:

**The role of LA at RISD** (language offered from Dan Cavicchi’s syllabus statement):

There are three undergraduate departments in RISD’s Division of Liberal Arts: Literary Arts & Studies (LAS), Theory and History of Art and Design (THAD) & History, Philosophy, and Social Sciences (HPSS). At RISD, the liberal arts are integral to the process of becoming an accomplished artist or designer. Creativity depends on curiosity, empathy, and communication—a desire to explore and share about the world in which we live. In fact, the word “liberal” in liberal arts comes from the Latin *liber*, meaning “free,” and it is meant to convey that learning about culture, history, and literature can liberate the mind and thus provide the foundation for truly imaginative and innovative work. Liberal Arts classes are intended to shape fundamental aspects of your vocation by instilling in you a lifelong curiosity about the world, enhancing your capacity to analyze situations and act on ideas with independence and confidence, and enabling you to communicate effectively in a variety of contexts.

**The Division houses three undergraduate departments** (from [risd.edu](http://risd.edu)):

**History, Philosophy, and the Social Sciences:** An interdisciplinary liberal arts department, History, Philosophy and the Social Sciences (HPSS) offers a wide variety of courses on the nature of human life—past and present—in its psychological, social, political, intellectual, philosophical and cultural contexts and manifestations.

Courses in world history, philosophy, psychology, anthropology, political science, sociology, religion and American and cultural studies help you broaden your knowledge while developing stronger critical thinking, reading and writing skills.

**Literary Arts and Studies:** Literary Arts and Studies offers a broad and synthetic understanding of literary periods, genres, movements and issues. It reinforces keen critical thinking and reading skills, helps you develop an effective and individual writing voice, and provides you a solid foundation for engaging contemporary culture in an informed, responsible way.

**Theory and History of Art and Design:** Theory and History of Art and Design (THAD) offers thought-provoking courses that cover a wide range of media, span time periods from ancient to contemporary and embrace diverse critical perspectives. Rooted in reading, discussion and close examination of actual works, the curriculum emphasizes critical thinking and analysis, clarity of communication, and an understanding of artistic expression across cultures and throughout time.

You may also want to remind students of our graduate programs (GAC and TLAD) and the opportunities they offer for advanced study after the BFA.

2) FOR BIG-PICTURE ISSUES RELATED TO LIBERAL ARTS STUDY AND PROGRAM TRAJECTORY:  
(Credits are capped at 30/year and 15/semester; eight semesters of a full courseload required; WS is optional; careful planning for the full academic year is necessary.)

- **120ers** should be advised not to exceed 30 credit hours per year and are capped at 15 credit hours per semester. If circumstances demand it, students may take up to 33 credits per AY. (No student without a program requirement can exceed 33 credit hours per year.) Students will be required to balance their credits across **eight semesters** of a full courseload.  
\*Exceptions: BArch students (follow up with their major advisor)
- **For 120ers**, the decision to do Wintersession or not must be made in correlation with their plans for the rest of the academic year. If a student opts to take a Wintersession course, they ought to plan to take 12 credit hours in either the fall or spring. They are limited to 3 credits/WS (with the exception of 6-credit travel courses and special studios like “Drawing Marathon”).  
\*(Exceptions: First-year students and BArch students are required to take WS)
- **Remind your students: because of these changes, meeting with your advisors before registration is essential (this is what this in-person meeting aims to do).**
- Provide an overview of the liberal arts requirements and what they mean (use the [“at-a-glance” card for Liberal Arts Graduation Requirements](#) to talk students through the requirements and explain that LAEL credit applies to any course offered by the Liberal Arts division, including SCI courses).
- Remind them that they will need to take 2-4 LA courses a year to fulfill their graduation requirements. (BArch students are the exception.)

- Remind them about the possibility of [concentrations](#) and explain that they ought to consider them early in their time at RISD (declaration by the beginning of sophomore year is ideal)
  - If students have already declared, remind them to connect with the Concentration Coordinator before registration (and that their concentration Coordinator is their official liberal arts advisor).
  - For students who do not want to concentrate, learning about some of our major curricular areas can suggest ways of intentionally structuring their liberal arts courses (the [HPSS concentration tracks](#) provide a good model).
- Fall 2025 registration begins on **April 28, 2025**. Liberal Arts division staff (Gail Hughes, Senior Academic Specialist, M-W; Anna Cimini, Senior Academic Specialist, W-F; Patricia Barbeito, Dean of Liberal Arts, M-F) in College Building 418 will also be available between April 16 and 28 to help with questions about Liberal Arts credits in preparation for registration.
- If they have any questions and want to follow up with you, how should they get in touch with you? Share email, contact information, office hours.  
(Remind them to check their Liberal Arts advisor assignment on Workday before the beginning of the fall semester as advisor assignments may change).