

TIMELINE

Independent Major Program

October 18, 2022: First meeting w/ advisor

- “Bitcoin is too narrow; you should study the Gold Standard”

October 31, 2022: Initial Proposal Submission



Ella Hough <[REDACTED]>

Mon, Oct 31, 2022, 8:25 AM



to [REDACTED]

Hi [REDACTED],

I hope this note finds you doing well!

Thank you very much for your time to discuss my independent major proposal and for the advice and suggestions you shared.

Attached through [this link](#) is the write-up you asked me to prepare. I apologize it is longer than the half-page we discussed, but I hope you find the additional information I included is relevant.

Additionally, I went online to schedule an appointment with you to discuss this in person if it would be helpful; however, I am in class during your available times this week. Do you, by chance, have any availability in the afternoon?

Again, thank you very much.

Warmly,

Ella

November 6, 2022



[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>

Sun, Nov 6, 2022, 10:00 AM



to me ▾

Hi Ella,

Sorry for the delay in getting back to you—it's been a crazy week.

Your proposal seems too narrowly focused to be a major. I think Bitcoin is an important development and would be interesting as a thesis topic, but it seems way too specific to base a major on, in our college at least.

One thought I had was to look to designing a major focused on money, viewing it from different perspectives. Bitcoin would be part of that major, but it wouldn't be the focus. Maybe we can chat about it?

Best,

November 9, 2022: Second meeting w/ advisor

November 21, 2023: Meeting w/ potential faculty sponsor. Unable given prior commitments. Advised to think about what (innovation) is inevitable, for implementations can fade. "Blockchain is the true innovation, not Bitcoin."

January 23, 2023: Third meeting w/ advisor

February 23, 2023: Meeting w/ potential faculty sponsor



[Redacted]
to me ▾

Thu, Feb 23, 2023, 2:37 PM ☆ ↩ ⋮

Dear Ella,

My apologies for the slow response. I've thought about this a lot and don't think I would be able to write a letter in support of the independent major, in part because I don't feel I have the expertise and in part because I think engaging with an established curriculum could help you develop your ideas in productive ways. I'd encourage you to reach out to [Redacted] though, and you could look into the Department of Science and Technology Studies as a major that's by nature interdisciplinary and might allow you to pursue your interdisciplinary interests. <https://sts.cornell.edu/science-technology-studies-major>

Best,

April 12 -14: Declared CogSci major.



[Redacted]
to [Redacted] me ▾

Apr 12, 2023, 4:09 PM ☆ ↩ ⋮

Hey [Redacted]

Just wanted to touch base with you about one of your cog sci advisees, Ella Hough. Ella is a sophomore and will be declaring this semester. She has already taken the three core courses, not to mention a handful of others. She also has a good roster of other courses she plans on taking, so she's in good shape.

For her research in regard to her interest, Bitcoin, she's come up against a few naysayers here at Cornell. She believes that Bitcoin is more than just economics, but I will let her explain this all to you, as Bitcoin and blockchains sound more like a heavy metal band to me, than currency.

Ultimately, Ella would like to research Bitcoin and use those findings, along with her very interesting and outside-the-box opinions, in an honors' thesis, but finding someone to work with on campus has been near impossible. Ella, please expand on this and hopefully between the three of us, we can make this work.

Very best,

May 5, 2023:



to me, [redacted] ▾

May 5, 2023, 12:44 PM



Dear Ella,

sorry for the delay. I'm on leave and have buried my head in research.

I'm afraid I share the concern about narrowly focusing on Bitcoin. I presume that you are really thinking of Bitcoin as a representative example of a certain kind of technology, e.g., cryptocurrency. Is there some reason for explicitly framing it in terms of Bitcoin, apart from using it as the most famous example? I mean, you could use it as *the* representative example, while still having the broader category (e.g., cryptocurrency) as the real target of investigation.

I'll try to be faster to respond now!

July 16, 2023: Sent letter to the President of the University



Office of the President <[redacted]>

Tue, Jul 18, 2023, 8:26 AM



to me ▾

Dear Ella,

Thank you for your email to President Pollack. While she is not able to schedule a meeting, she sends best wishes for a healthy and restful summer.

Sincerely,

July 19, 2023: Sent letter to a member of the Board of Trustees

August 9, 2023: Met w/ CogSci advisor to discuss Honors Thesis focused on Bitcoin

College Scholar Program

October 11, 2023: 1st meeting w/ new advisor & learned independent major program is on pause.

November 29th, 2023: In response to my ask if I could be considered a late applicant for the College Scholar Program, I received word it was unlikely, but they would look into it.

December 4th, 2023: Received word I could apply to the College Scholar Program.

December 20th, 2023: Submitted formal application.

January 11th, 2023: Received acceptance email!

What were my proposals, letters, and email responses?

Here they are! [Link.](#)

What is the program I am pursuing?

[“The Robert S. Harrison College Scholar Program](#) represents the pinnacle of the liberal arts experience at Cornell. The program is focused on a small group of stellar students whose interests transcend disciplinary boundaries. These students have demonstrated exceptional promise and maturity to plan and carry out a well-designed individualized program of study and research.

Students design their own interdisciplinary major, organized around a question or issue of interest, and pursue a course of study that cannot be found in an established major.

College Scholars explore subjects with a broader integration of related disciplines than most students would attempt.

They pursue their subjects using advanced, often graduate-level, techniques. As a capstone to their studies, all Scholars undertake an independent senior project, usually culminating in an honors thesis. It is a unique opportunity within the College of Arts & Sciences for engagement and learning, in the classroom and beyond.”

What does this mean now?

By May ‘25, I will produce an honor thesis (with an oral defense), which will be displayed in Klarman Hall and kept in the permanent library of the program. Notably, I will get to choose a title for my diploma/transcript.