I. Overview of APC Proposal

A. Upper division courses will be included in the new Liberal Education program. These courses will address outcomes across all four goals, especially Responsibility and Integration outcomes.

B. Many learning experiences will address multiple outcomes. This integration is by design; it is not about ‘gaming the system’. Notice that the sample degree audit we have distributed includes 12 experiences for a total of 39 credits. APC’s proposed core envisions many departments and many instructors offering courses for LE core credit that satisfy at least two outcomes, and thereby two core requirements especially one outcome in relation to the Knowledge goal and one outcome in relation to the Skills, Responsibility, or Integration goal.

C. APC’s LE core proposal combines GE requirements and University requirements. All of these requirements are brought into the core. No university requirements, beyond the major and the secondary area of concentration, stand outside the core. The purpose of all university-wide requirements as providing an intellectual foundation in relation to our eleven liberal education learning outcomes is clear when we do not separate core requirements and university requirements.

D. The core requirement of approximately 40 credits is in line with national averages of 40-45 such credits at comparable institutions.

II. Mapping Exercise

A. Implementation: Campus Capacity and Faculty Commitment

1. As some of you may know, this semester, Arts & Sciences conducted what’s being referred to as the “mapping exercise.” A&S identified the GE courses taken by the largest numbers of students, and departments indicated which outcomes would be addressed by each of these high-demand GE courses. The mapping exercise gives us a snap shot of currently available resources.

2. One interpretation of the results is that we have the capacity to meet the needs of the new liberal education program. Some administrators, however, caution that we cannot find adequate support based on current allocations of resources. Let me tell you why there are reasons for optimism and where the challenges lie.
3. We know from the results of the mapping exercise that our campus has a substantial base from which to build.

a. Classes included as part of this exercise already meet capacity for 5 of the 10 outcomes (10 outcomes because K3 and K4 were combined). Of the 5 outcomes that are not fully met, current capacity comes reasonably close to fulfilling 3 of the 5.

b. A shortage of seats for some outcomes is to be expected because the mapping exercise is based on classes that fulfill requirements of the existing GE program, not requirements of a new program. Shortages are in areas of the proposal that are new and that represent our signature components.

4. It is also reasonable to conclude that the mapping exercise underestimates existing capacity.

a. For one, only a subset of the much larger array of current GE courses was used, and a sizeable number of departments limited themselves to just one outcome per course, painting a more conservative picture of available resources than what actually exists. In reality, many courses will meet 2+ outcomes.

b. Some departments misunderstood certain outcomes and, therefore, did not map these outcomes to their classes.

c. Only A&S courses are included in the mapping exercise. Other Colleges will participate in the new liberal education program.

d. Only 100- and 200-level courses are included in the mapping exercise. Upper-division courses will address outcomes across all 4 goals, as Bob mentioned, and are especially likely to address Responsibility and Integration outcomes (areas with deficits in the mapping exercise).

e. Service-learning from extra-curricular projects and from specialized course credits earned within programs are outside of GE and, therefore, not reflected in mapping exercise data for R3.

f. The mapping exercise is based only on stand-alone courses, which have very limited ability to meet the integration outcome. Estimated need will come from experiences not reflected in the mapping exercise, such as paired courses, linked courses, bundles, living learning communities, etc.
5. Still, some administrators are concerned that these conclusions are overly optimistic. For the sake of the argument, let’s grant that their concerns are at least partly justified. Even so, we have ample reasons to persevere.

6. While it is surely the charge of the administration to match resources to program expenditures, it is just as surely the duty of the faculty to design and teach the best liberal education we can offer our students, and to know how to use our resources wisely to support the program.

From a faculty perspective, we would expect course redesign and resource redistribution to be outcomes of this reform. . .

   a. Remember, the mapping exercise simply asked departments to match existing courses to the new learning outcomes. If our campus accepts the recently adopted goals/outcomes as our core educational values, then we should expect that existing courses will be revised and new learning experiences created to address the outcomes—contributing significantly to capacity.

   b. We should also expect that resources allocated to components of our current GE system that will not be part of a new liberal education program (e.g., physical activity) will be redistributed.

   c. Finally, most of the departments and disciplines in Arts and Sciences already devote a significant portion of their faculty time in service of the GE program. As the needs of the liberal education core evolve, that same portion of faculty time stands ready to be deployed in support of the new requirements. Not only is it logical that our departments would want to modify their courses so that they can continue to make a substantive contribution to our students’ liberal education; it is also obvious that our faculty always rises to the occasion. We have always stood ready to offer the education students need. That’s why many of us chose to become members of this faculty.

Let’s not lose sight of the need for our vision to direct our resources, not the other way around.

III. Signature Components of Proposal

A. Multicultural and Global Learning

1. Core requirements in relation to multicultural, global, and integrative learning are signature components in what APC proposes as the core. These will distinguish our university; these represent the most
exciting, visionary forms of innovation.

2. In relation to both multicultural and global learning requirements (Responsibility outcomes 1 and 2) APC has proposed what it does on the basis of recommendations from campus experts in these areas. If we require only one core experience in relation to responsibility outcome 1 we do nothing of our own but simply follow the UW System Design for Diversity requirement. And two core experiences in relation to Responsibility outcome 2 is in line with our current Foreign Language and Foreign Culture requirement. Six credits in each case, in relation to central values of our institution, is hardly excessive.

3. A premiere liberal arts and sciences institution should focus on engaging social differences, seeking better to know and understand these, and working in accord with this enhanced knowledge and understanding, to contribute usefully toward enabling people to unite together, on the basis of respect for their mutual differences, to address urgent social problems confronting us all. APC’s proposal envisions this is what we should be about, and it starts with the intellectual foundations we provide our students in our liberal education core. This university has again and again indicated how important we regard matters of education in equity, diversity, and inclusiveness—and of global learning. APC’s proposal in relation to Responsibility outcomes 1 and 2 takes this commitment seriously.

B. Integrative Learning

1. UW-Eau Claire has, for years now, accepted integrative learning as not only a fundamental goal of liberal education, but also as a guiding principle underlying reform. The GE Review Workgroup recommended that our GE program be revised such that students would take two multi-course bundles, and the ULEC framework for a new liberal education program recommended 18 credits of integrative learning. The APC requirement of 3 experiences for integrative learning upholds the well-informed decisions of these two other major reform groups.

2. Integration is the very feature that our current GE framework most glaringly lacks. When distribution models were first developed, it was assumed that students could integrate on their own; there is no proof that this was ever true; however, even if it was true for some students 40-50 years ago, it’s an assumption that fails the majority of our students today.

3. We now are able to identify those students who are most harmed: the very students many of us most want to help succeed—historically underserved students—students who have never maintained equal access to the benefits of public higher education. By foregrounding integrative learning in our liberal education core, we provide the component most needed for student
success—all students’ success. Integrative learning is about diversity of perspectives and diversity of our student body.

C. Conclusion

1. At our last Senate meeting, we had a workshop about university branding and marketing. The facilitators asked us who we are as a campus—the one thing that emerged as a theme across the board, across our small groups, was diversity. Who are we and who are we not? Senators, we said we are not diverse. When asked what angers us, we were painfully honest—we said we’re a racist campus, and our students experience prejudice and discrimination at UWEC. We said that. Where do we want to be in 5 year’s time? Senators said, we want to be more diverse. When asked about promises we make to students, we said that we promise diversity and when asked about promises we break, Senators, we said diversity. Diversity is our broken promise. This reform is our opportunity to keep that promise to our students; to take these expressed beliefs and, with our liberal education program, make them real.

2. In conclusion, APC offers this proposal for your consideration. By all means, if you find inadequacies and shortcomings, please help make it stronger, broader, richer. We believe that the resources are there and, more to the point, the interest and commitment and engagement of the faculty are there as well. We urge the Senate to consider the proposed program carefully, and to modify the parts that need to be improved. By the time you have fully considered and amended this proposal, it will represent the will of the faculty. On that foundation we are ready to build.