1. Please list any issues or concerns about liberal education reform that you would like the University Liberal Education Committee (ULEC) and the Academic Policies Committee (APC) to address:

I was at the noon meeting on 2/1/2011 and we were told the "framework" for LE had not been developed yet. How is it that no one wanted to talk about the framework that is posted online as having been revised on 11/11/11?

The wellness requirement.

I think integrative learning is very important. It concerns me that we would no longer require a science lab and we would no longer require a wellness credit. I believe that the requirement for immersion needs to be very broad because not all students can leave Eau Claire.

There seems to be considerable pressure coming from the campus administration to push through reform in a short amount of time, which may not be the ideal way to gain widespread support for major reform efforts. There also seems to be a schism between the faculty-determined curriculum and the Blugold Commitment process for funding new and ongoing initiatives. Could this be problematic?

I would like to see the "assigned" credits incorporated into/under the university goals. I think it sends more of the message of what we are trying to do and still can require students to get a certain number of natural sciences etc.

The proposal does not seem to have achieved a major change in our program design. It is still essentially a distribution model, albeit somewhat simplified vs. our present model. Layered on top of the distribution model is some attention to the LE outcomes, such that we can ensure (or at least hope) each student has had at least some minimal exposure to each of the LE outcomes. (By virtue of having the courses that satisfy the distribution model requirements also address the LE outcomes.) This is a far cry from having a system designed around the LE outcomes themselves. It also divorces the remaining 78 credits from attention to or recognition of attention to the LE outcomes. Here is an alternative proposal: Have the distribution model as proposed. (Math comp, Engl comp, Comm, Ethics, Arts/Hum, Soc Sci, Nat Schi, etc.) There is no specific credit requirement, just be able to check off that each of these bases have been covered as part of getting a well-rounded college education. Separately, we should require each student to have a certain degree of exposure to each of the LE outcomes. These exposures could be scattered across the entire 120 credits. The requirement does not need to be so high that graduating within 120 credits to degree is challenged. Some of the exposure naturally would come from the courses taken as part of the distribution model requirements. But some would come from courses in the major, or elsewhere. This model unifies the entire campus toward the LE goals, rather than making it primarily the responsibility of a 42 credit subset of the students program. I do not envision each student having to individually wade through the course selection in order to find the right courses necessary to satisfy the required exposure to each LE outcome. Rather, the majors could be designed, as a package, to provide whatever minimal exposure is required, beyond that provided by the distribution model. My primary concern here is the implication of the current proposal: Our attention to campus learning goals is contained within 42 credits. The LE goals are broader than that, can be and should be recognized as infused throughout all the majors in this university.

Combining university and GE requirements into a single LE core is a great idea! Reducing it by 10-ish
credits is a step in the right direction. Leaving 18 open electives is a good idea, too. I hope they remain pretty much unallocated so students can put unusable transfer credit, courses from prior majors/minors, etc. That will let them still graduate in 120 credits even if they changed their major or otherwise accumulated credit that isn't directly applicable to the program in which they finally graduate. Maintaining service-learning is a good idea. We ought to remove the prohibitions on religious service and remunerated service and add quality constraints so we don't have accusations that meaningless activity can qualify as service. Requiring an immersion experience is good--as long as it can be part of the major (e.g., an internship). Having a global learning requirement is good--as long as it really is global. Having a regular on-campus course defined as global won't serve the purpose. Preserving a breadth requirement is good--but see my comments next about how it's still inadequate because "breadth" still apparently equals A&S. The proposed framework apparently continues the A&S stranglehold on general-cum-liberal education at UW-Eau Claire. This is bad for at least two reasons: 1) it maintains the same old turf and resource allocation and hence kills any real innovation in its crib. 2) Students will continue to get the same point of view in their liberal education which, though certainly one valid viewpoint, is not the only one. Instead, for example, UW-Eau Claire biology students should take at least some of their liberal education courses from the college of business or nursing or education. If integrative Learning is primarily a way UW-Eau Claire instructors are to approach their curriculum development and teaching, then it's not a learning goal. If it's something we expect students to learn--i.e., if we expect UW-Eau Claire graduates to be able to engage on their own throughout their lives in integrative learning, then it is a learning goal (that would need to be assessed). The discussion I've heard so far has indicated to me that there's been much more thinking about integrating learning as a pedagogical approach than as a learning goal; thus I think it's presently premature to make it a UW-Eau Claire learning goal. It needs to be clearly defined as such to be adopted as such. A rubric for each learning goal is necessary for assessment, but they look to me like they could easily become a mechanism for ending academic freedom: "Anything not approved by a rubric has no place in UWEC courses!" Scary. I very sincerely hope this will be explicitly laid to rest before these (or any other campus-wide) rubrics are officially adopted. The homegrown rubrics (race/class/gender and global learning) need to be validated at a regional/national level before being adopted. After all, a major use of them will be for HLC accreditation.

I attended the presentation at the College meeting on Tuesday. I believe the elements of the framework are well structured, except the "Additional Requirements," which include immersion and service-learning. This aspect of the structure is not really unified with the other items -- naming it "additional requirements" suggests it does not really have a place. But its place would be obvious if the service-learning requirement were just subsumed under immersion. Then this whole category could be called "immersion." But I am not just talking about the naming of requirements. Someone suggested that some service-learning projects might not live up to an "immersion" ideal -- implying a certain grandness to the immersion experience. However, we are not in a financial position to make the immersion experience so grand. If all students need to complete such an experience, it make sense to start with modest or more-short lived experiences -- for example, service-learning -- that still constitute immersion. Moreover, the established guidelines for what constitutes service-learning would be a reasonable starting point for defining what kind of assessable activity constitutes immersion more generally.

I graduated from a school that emphasized liberal education, so I have taken 21 credits of philosophy and theology, 6 credits of math, 6 credits of English, 6 credits of European history, 6 credits of math, 12 credits of economics, etc. At our ULEC meeting, we suffered through one presentation last week during which we were told, "there is no framework". Within five minutes of returning to my desk after the meeting, I printed the non-existent framework from UWEC's website. ULEC has seriously damaged its
credibility. In addition, ULEC reps said UWEC needed to get away from a distribution model based on solid research and then proceeded to present a NEW distribution model that incorporates only A&S classes. Seems to me ULEC’s contribution is to include English and Math competences into LE. Can you imagine the nightmare this will be for our transfer students--just under 10% of our student body? What about the UW-College student with 2-year degree? Do they meet LE? How is the transfer student with 60 credits supposed to meet 18 credits of integrative experiences and complete the required courses in a major? I thought one of our objectives was to facilitate transfers, not hinder. No one addressed this issue. The questions as to how the professional schools could contribute was not addressed adequately. I didn’t see any reference to foreign language education. I assume there will be a foreign language competency component to this plan. Global learning is basically empty without this component; it is like saying "study abroad in English speaking countries only, please."

How will LE reform impact interdisciplinary program requirements and elective offerings? What changes may need to be made to the current LE reform proposal to assure that the limitations to the number of credits under a certain prefix does not limit the indisciplinary offerings under prefixes like AIS, LAS, WMNS, and IDIS?

Clarify the relationship between integrative learning as a general principle of liberal education in the reform proposal under consideration versus integrative learning as one of six specific liberal education learning goals. Clarify the relative weight we plan to give to each of the six liberal education learning goals and associated outcomes. Clarify why we will maintain the kind of compromise between an outcomes-based model of liberal education and a distribution-based model that we are currently considering. Clarify how this change from the current general education system will be implemented, in what stages and phases, and involving what delegation of authority and responsibility to whom. Clarify how emphasis on teaching that results in engaging in processes as well as teaching that results in producing products will be effectively assessed. Clarify as well how knowledges and skills which are sites of conflict and struggle, of difference and contestation, will be effectively assessed. Clarify what will happen to existing general education courses once the new model for liberal education is passed.

To: LE Reformers  Re: Initial Impressions  2/15/12  Hello, I have taken a few moments to respond to the LE reform proposals with some of my initial thoughts. I included some quotations which can be ignored or heeded accordingly. First, I would like to state I support rethinking Liberal Education. I sincerely hope that the motivations for these changes will remain focused on students’ ability to synthesize knowledge and on pedagogical concerns and not on increased four-year graduation rates and increased assessment ease. I hope that we do not begin to create educational products for consumption. Revisions to General Education are not going to keep students from being indecisive and changing majors nor will it make the difficulty of assessing the creative arts’ contributions to society cleaner or less recalcitrant. “...not simply because it can be reduced to a statistical fact, but also because it has been reduced to a commodity. In such a system there is no space for experience...Nor is there space for the social function of subjectivity. All subjectivity is treated as private, and the only (false) form of it which is socially allowed is that of the individual consumer’s dream.” Another Way of Telling, John Berger A few concerns I have with the current six credit requirement in the arts is that I would like to distinguish between two types of Humanities. These categories might be defined in several ways, but I think descriptions such as Theory and Practice, Reflection and Generation, or Theory and Process might serve as beginning points. Such categories would separate requirements between courses where creative action is primary, such as writing a poem, making a painting, or performing or interpreting a song or composition as opposed to courses where critical reflection is primary. Obviously these approaches overlap. We do not make a poem without thinking critically, and we do not write about philosophy without some creativity. But the primary origin of brain activity emphasized in these
activities is different, especially in the visual arts or music where language is obscured and communication is complicated. I also acknowledge that such terms as reflection or creativity are loaded terms already assimilated into the Liberal Education reform proposals. Perhaps a recommendation might take the form of nine credits required with at least one of these involving a generative action as a primary outcome rather than reflection as the primary outcome. I think that this might be applied in the sciences much like the lab requirement, but that is outside my immediate sphere. I also understand that perhaps the 6 credits in each area was a necessary compromise, and so then it could be one and one. I would suggest departments and instructors would define their courses as being primarily reflective or generative. If this is viewed to be impossible, I would then argue for distinguishing Arts from Humanities, though in my mind, any distinctions made in this way would be less effective and honest to what actually separates student activity in courses than the proposal above. “On the part of the consumer, the enjoyment of beauty is a kind of contemplation, but on the part of the producer, art is action.” The Arts of the Beautiful, Etienne Gilson  “It is a queer thing that so few reviewers seem to realize that one writes poetry because one must... It is quite possible to have a feeling about the world which creates a need that nothing satisfies except poetry and this has nothing to do with other poets or with anything else.” Wallace Stevens  Next, I’m curious about the pyramid structure of 60, 42, 18. Sciences, Arts and other areas are being reduced from 15 credits to 6. Yet, the pyramid shows a net reduction of only 3 GEs with the 42 in place. I can only assume these other credits will be absorbed by new GE requirements, but without knowledge of what those courses entail, who teaches them and what form they take it is difficult to exert enthusiasm or skepticism. Finally, I would suggest that the definition of immersion be broadly interpreted to incorporate more courses than is currently practiced. Immersion, for the arts, might involve a workshop with a writer, musician or artist—a studio visit or a reading/interview. It might include a “behind the scenes” view of a non-profit arts organization, publisher or radio station. It might involve going to a music festival or a writing conference. In the past, immersion has implicitly been defined to me as having an ethical or moral dimension which I think is encouraging. However, I think the arts are a perfect place for immersion and have been overlooked in the past. I do not think this should be confused with Service Learning which has always had a specific goal of involving the student in a social relationship within the Eau Claire community, whereas the immersion experience does not imply or necessitate the Eau Claire community at all, perhaps the contrary. Service Learning has always been about building up and supporting the community of which you are currently a part. Furthermore, I may be alone in this, but I do not think students should receive credit for Service Learning. Though I am aware that requiring service at all dilutes the concept of volunteerism or service, offering credit for such experiences will obfuscate this to point where I could not explain it or justify how it is different than an immersion or integrative learning experience to a student. Immersion, in my understanding, exists to remove the student from their normal social and geographical comfort and immerse them in new social and cultural situations, as well as engaging them in new ideas and concepts. I also think this should not be confused with integrative learning, which might involve collaboration with community organizations on projects conceived within the structure of a course. In conclusion, we must be careful that clear definitions are in place if we are to require these expectations for students across the disciplines. “…We can count on it/when we're sure of nothing/and curious about everything...” from A Few Words on the Soul by the late great, Wislawa Szymborska, Translated from the Polish by, Stanislaw Baranczak and Clare Cavanagh  “To suppress the freedom of the artist is not only to cut off knowledge of the actual movements of human feeling but also, and more disastrously, contact with the realities of life.” Joyce Carey, from Art and Reality
continue to view these requirements as a checklist to be crossed off -- but I don't see any way around that. 2) How will we track this? At the moment checking service learning (which can be met several ways) requires an office with 20 hours a week of clerical help, a part-time director, and student workers. Will we need a similar level of effort to track integrative learning? Immersion experience? Anything that is not easily coded as a course attribute will be a challenge. 3) PLEASE consider modifying the "maximum two courses from any one prefix" requirement. This is extremely difficult to code and takes a huge amount of processing time. Many students will look only toward checking off the requirements and will not think until too late about the max two courses from any one prefix. It seems to me that by excluding major courses from the 42 credits you are creating diversity. An added complication with the PeopleSoft degree audit program (that we hope to bring up next year) is that when there is a limit like this, the system only sees and only prints the first two courses taken chronologically in a given prefix. It might be in a student's interest to use course #2 and #3, but I don't know how we'll do that. 4) There are some requirements that I don't see addressed here at all. We have residency and senior residency requirements, major/minor concentration and overlap requirements, and requirements for a minimum number of upper-division credits. Some of these may no longer be necessary as part of the new philosophy. If not, state explicitly that they are going away. 5) Implementation is not a trivial exercise. Students are held to the requirements outlined in the catalog during their first UW-Eau Claire term unless they request a change to a more recent catalog. If the student body perceives the new requirements as better (or easier) there is going to be a mass shift to the newer catalog and a high demand for courses to meet the new requirements. DON'T change the requirements until a means of meeting them is in place. Other comments: 6) We have one University-wide set of requirements now. Each college has tweaked the University requirements for reasons that have to do with that College's mission. Teacher education majors will still have to take the courses required by DPI (economics, conservation of natural resources, Wisconsin history) as well as the teacher education courses as well as their major courses. Social Workers, Communication Disorders majors and Nurses will need to take the courses outside the major required for certification. No matter what philosophy you start with, majors that are preparing students for a given career will have requirements beyond the liberal education requirements. 7) It has not been 30 years since GE was looked at. The redefinition of the baccalaureate degree in the 1980s was a huge undertaking. Becky Drout

Here are some of my major concerns: 1. Departments/disciplines remaining "territorial" about LE courses, rather than focusing on students' needs for meaningful learning and the university's obligation to advance an educated citizenry. 2. Ensuring that any new LE program can be meaningfully assessed in terms of learner outcomes. 3. Developing a coherent, integrated system that works for the university as a whole and that remains true to major national standards for LE frameworks, philosophy, and goals/objectives. 4. Establishing student learning outcomes with sufficient academic rigor and advanced cognitive development to ensure that UWEC graduates demonstrate the distinctiveness envisioned in our university vision/mission statements. 5. The challenge of providing student and faculty supports to deliver the kinds of high-level teaching/learning envisioned in our centennial plan. 6. Developing and sustaining a shared university culture of commitment to effective liberal education learning outcomes.

The concept of liberal education seems to be a good one. My concern is how to measure outcomes (achievement). I don't agree with vague statements that don't measure it. I would like to see colleges across campus working together more. Why can't we team up and develop clinical experiences for nursing students with our colleagues?

My primary concern revolves around what the phrase "liberal education requirements common to all degrees" means. The draft of the proposal I saw said that colleges and majors could add requirements
but they wouldn't be considered part of the liberal education requirements. I think we need to be very clear about this. Students don't care what is part of the "liberal ed core"----they just care about what courses they need to take. So let me ask specific questions:  1) Will the B.A. be "allowed" to require a foreign language?  Will A&S be "allowed" to require more humanities in the B.A.  2) Will Nursing students be "allowed" to count their science courses and their Psychology 230 as part of liberal education?  If G.E. courses are grandfathered as L.E. for a while, then these would count as L.E. I assume.  I could go on, but you get the idea.  If these are allowed, then the phrase "common to all degrees" means exactly what it means now and time to degree will not be helped.  We have common G.E. requirements, but no one follows them.  I understand the reasoning behind the different requirements, I just don't want people to think that we are really streamlining requirements if we aren't.  We will advise students exactly as we do now----if you are Nursing you take these G.E. courses (now L.E.) and if you are Education or Business, etc. you take these.  Secondly, I am concerned about the lack of any developmental component to this plan.  I really liked the original L.E. plan with Gateway and milestone courses.  I think it is crucial to have something at the freshman level that transitions a student from the way they are taught in high school to the way they need to think at UW-Eau Claire.  I would prefer to have another one at the sophomore level, because I think you can introduce more at that level.  But I really would like to see a capstone L.E. course.  If we don't do something like that, this model will be no less like a "check-box, pick twofers and threefers" than the current model is.  Some specific comments:  1) I have concerns about reducing the global culture to one course----which is not at all in keeping with our mission statement.  2) We can't sustain two courses in "race, class and gender equity" without dramatic changes in our staffing or diluting the requirement.  I also hope that we don't go with the multi-cultural rubric that is currently under consideration.  It biases the curriculum in ways that I don't think are in keeping with helping our students to think critically.  3) The ethical reasoning requirements seems like a "throw-in."  Since we need to look at the learning outcomes anyway, broadening that one would be helpful.  "Individual and social responsibility" is about much more than "ethical reasoning"--as the AAC&U outcomes indicate.  Moreover, I thought that one of the ideas of our redefining our liberal education was to get away from "one course equals one outcome" and looking at the entire baccalaureate experience.  4) I think we need to broaden the math requirement to be more about quantitative literacy, as the AAC&U has it.  And I think "information literacy" is even more important.  A technical issue -- We can say that courses in the major can't be used for L.E., although even that gets very tricky with multi-disciplinary majors.  The no more than 2 courses in any departmental or program prefix gets much more complicated.  We can't do departments, since they change and the degree audit wouldn't know.  If you do prefixes, you could just have the proliferation of prefixes---and "home departments" of cross-listed courses become even more crucial.  While I applaud the work of ULEC, I want to make sure that everyone understands that this is no less complicated than our current model---it is in some ways more complicated.  Good luck.  Thanks for your work and thanks for the opportunity to have input.  Debbie Gough

Students may potentially have less GE requirements that they can take while studying abroad.  For academic disciplines where students easily can study abroad in their major/minor, this change may have a limited impact.  However, for others with more rigid curricular requirements and sequencing, it could make it more difficult to study abroad.  Under the proposed framework, students will have 42 credits of “Common Liberal Education Core”, which encompass university requirements such as math requirement, writing, communication, and some of the former GE categories: Arts and Humanities, Social Science, and Natural Science.  Students will also need to take 18 credits in integrative learning, these are cross disciplinary courses that help student integrate learning across academic disciplines.  As I understand it, students would only need to take 6 credits in each of these former, remaining GE categories, meaning they most likely will have fulfilled many of these requirements by the time they are
eligible to study abroad. First-year students will still be fulfilling them during much of their first year since they often don’t have a declared major or minor and can’t necessarily access major/minor course work due to the priority registration system. Also I see in advising students that many of them fulfill GE requirements through AP and test credits, which further reduces what they need to take at UWEC and consequently can take on study abroad. At this point, it is not clear to me whether students would be able to take the integrative learning credits abroad. The impression that I received is that it could be difficult to fulfill the integrative learning requirement abroad unless the student can demonstrate that the course is purposefully making connections across disciplines. I would hope that study abroad would be considered when defining what qualifies as integrative learning at UWEC and how transfer credit would be evaluated for integrative learning. I also think further discussion on how study abroad students could fulfill integrative learning while abroad would be useful.

The only concern I have is the efficiency in which students that have a declared major and minor at UWEC will be able to graduate. For example, as nursing professor we have a number of undergraduate students that are also Spanish minors. The students work hard and have a demanding schedule that requires them to work their additional Spanish classes around their core nursing courses. If we limit them to choose no more than 2 classes from one of the listed headings (i.e., Arts & Humanities) can be used to graduate, meaning they need courses from other areas within this heading, will this impact the timeliness of their graduation or their choice to choose a minor?

It is very important that the committee consider how transfer students will meet the requirements. Nearly all students attending the Marshfield site for nursing are transfer students and need to meet the Liberal Education requirements for UWEC.

Dear colleagues, In our department, Foreign Languages, we have been discussing the university-wide foreign language / foreign culture requirement for graduation. As you know, currently there are three ways to satisfy this requirement. Does the proposal from the ULEC to reform our GE program subsume and replace this university-wide requirement? If so, what is your rationale given that this is a university requirement and not part of the current GE program? To us this seems to work against the Goal #3 of the Centennial Plan which looks to accelerate global learning on campus. If the proposal presented were to take the place of the current requirement, students could end of taking one class, instead of studying abroad, or the 9 required credits of foreign culture, or a foreign language. Thanks for considering these comments. Carter Smith

I am concerned that the proposed LE framework fails to maintain sufficient 'breadth' across the disciplines of the Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences. In fact, I believe the new LE Framework flies in the face of a long history of faculty participation (which are actually documented on the LE reform webpage): 1) The final report of the General Education Reform Committee states on page 3 (The Faculty Voice page with 'We Heard You!' stamped across it) that one of the first primary faculty desire is to MAINTAIN BREADTH, and the following page (p. 4) indicates reform efforts SUCCEEDED in this goal; 2) The final report of the Strategic Planning Group 2, on page 5, recommends as Objective 1, Academic Breadth, to... 'Create and approve a simple, balanced, and flexible provision that requires a minimum number of credits across a few general areas, perhaps 9-10 credits in each of the following: social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences' How did the 6-6-6 plan ever get hatched. This plan cuts breadth requirements by 50%. Please FIX this!

Please do not eliminate lab science from the undergraduate liberal education requirements. Currently, it is one of the few required courses that incorporates high impact pedagogical practices of active learning and immersion, which have been shown to be especially effective for students from underserved populations (including first-generation, off-the-farm students). True, if some lab science courses are failing to provide our general education students what we want them to get, than we can
identify that with our new assessment instruments and fix them. But it seems the only reason to ELIMINATE this requirement would be for financial reasons, and this is counter to what LE reform at UWEC was supposed to be.

I think it is very important that a serious discussion be held about high impact practices with the curriculum, and how they are going to be maintained and enhanced under the new curriculum. Exactly how high impact practices, immerions experiences and other activities are going to be developed and integrated is very unclear, and cannot be left to figure out at a later date. For example, it is apparent that the poll taken on the role of lab science in the natural science curriculum has been ignored. This is an opportunity to develop a set of truly integrated high impact lab sciences within and across disciplines that would revolutionize the current system, and replace a number of less useful experiences. This idea should be explored, not ignored.

I have two concerns about the nature of faculty feedback with the use of this particular Qualtrics survey:

1) I think the effort at publicizing this feedback form was weak, at best. The link was contained in an email sent by 'Paula Collins', but I think it would have generated significant more interest if it came from Dean Marty Wood, and had in the email the presentation of the proposed new framework with an explicit itemization of what is NEW and DIFFERENT about the new framework compared to the existing one.

2) I very much hope that comments submitted through this portal do not end up in a 'Black Hole', that is that they are published somewhere so that we can all see the concerns of the faculty with this radical change in the liberal education of our UW-Eau Claire undergraduate students.

I have always heard that Liberal Education teaches one HOW to think, rather than WHAT to think. I had an excellent Liberal Education from Madison, and learned a lot about many subjects I would not have thought would be at all practical. I have had a long life, and it is amazing how the skills and subject matter I learned in my late teens and early twenties has helped me in a huge variety of employment experiences and life adventures. I took one language in college, and the techniques that I learned have helped me read and even speak a few others. I have used my smattering of science, anthropology, even the two courses I took in Library Science to help me in advancing the education of my children. Today, I teach—not in the original plan! But shifting from parenthood to the workforce to graduate school to my current role was made possible by the excellent background Madison forced me into! I deplore the loss of the General Education in favor of a more vocational approach. I am concerned that the "get them out of here in 4 years" approach is not necessarily favorable for the student, or the society at large. Are we going down a road that will guarantee a work force of pliable and sheep-like workers who don't have the background to question, to change, to think? Do we want to be a vocational school—because that is where the money is?

Currently, many of our ensembles are repeatable for credit. For example, non-music majors take a choral ensemble for three semesters to satisfy GE-4. In the new LE model, how would this work? Perhaps, since this is a single course that is repeatable for credit, students could take it for their 6 credits of Humanities/Creative Arts, taking 3 credits of, for example, Concert Choir 188, and three credits of Concert Choir 388. OR it could be interrupted to mean that only 2 credits (for example, 1 course repeatable for credit, taken twice) could 'count' in their degree for the 6 credits of Humanities and Arts. It would seem that any course that is repeatable for credit could be repeated for the maximum amount of credit in a category. I do not think music, theatre and dance are unique in this. For our non-majors, this has been a recruitment factor for our department. In some form, I hope we can keep these credits as a potential in a liberal arts education.-Vanissa Murphy

How would the new proposal change this?

After reading through the minutes of many of the APC meetings, attending College and university-wide meetings to present the various iterations of the LE reform proposal, it is still unclear to me if the
College requirements will remain or if the reform will subsume them. Has this been, or will this be, discussed?

It is important for students' overall citizenship skills that we significantly improve their scientific literacy. This means that ALL students should be exposed to courses that enable them to experience the scientific reasoning process (not merely memorize some "scientific facts"). It is VITAL to our future that citizens understand how science is conducted and can both appreciate the value of scientific evidence as the result of a systematic process of controlled inquiry and understand the limitation of scientific knowledge as only giving information about what is quantifiable. Students must learn to critically consume scientific information to be prevented from either blindly waiting for scientists to tell them what to do OR rejecting all scientific evidence out of hand. Our efforts toward LE reform represent an opportunity to fundamentally re-evaluate how we're promoting these literacies in our students. Let's take advantage of all this work and really get it right this time!!

I hope that ULEC and APC are able to keep the proposal reasonable simple, so that the number of sub-requirements are not excessive. For instance, I don't think there should be disciplinary breadth requirements within the integrated learning requirements. Whatever can be done to make the new system simple enough that students & faculty can easily follow it should be done. The current system includes a great deal of subrequirements, not only through disciplinary categories/subcategories, but because of minimum requirements for upper division GE courses, upper division courses overall, etc. These policies affect everyone in that they're visible on everyone's degree audit, but they only apply to small numbers of students. It's not worth making overall requirements more complex in order to target these small populations. Please go on to pass a reasonable reform, but keep it simple, and save everyone some time and headache that accumulates on a daily basis with more complicated (but un-assessed) systems.

So it is a matter of record, I am submitting a copy of a possible rearticulation of the ULEC Framework for Undergraduate Liberal Education Core Requirements, that I first shared with APC colleagues on April 3, 2012. This rearticulation is simply an attempt at offering one possible way of overcoming some hesitancies and confusions in moving forward within APC, in considering specific requirements as part of an overall framework. It also attempts to provide a structure which more directly reflects and aligns with our liberal education learning goals and outcomes,. And it further incorporates suggested modifications and additions to the framework that reflect and respond to where many faculty, academic staff, and others have expressed concern and offered recommendations for modification. In doing so, this rearticulation attempts to incorporate these concerns and recommendations logically so that we can carefully consider whether they make good sense, and if we find them strongly compelling. Finally, this rearticulation attempts to offer a potentially more elegant presentation of our liberal education core. In sum, however, this effort is only an attempt to help move discussion and decision past obstacles that have slowed the process, and it is not a new framework but based directly upon the ULEC framework. It is not 'my framework'; it is merely an attempt to help us work our way through discussion and revision of the ULEC framework effectively, so that we within APC can bring to University Senate as soon as is reasonably possible a framework that Senators, and colleagues across campus, will be able to support. Bob Nowlan

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Possible Rearticulation of ULEC Framework for UWEC Undergraduate Liberal Education Core Requirements

A. Requirements: Knowledge of Human Culture and the Natural World

1. Arts and Humanities:  
   a. At least nine credits, from at least two different prefixes.  
   b. At least three credits should be in the Arts and at least three credits should be in the Humanities.

2. Social and Behavioral Sciences:  
   At least nine credits, from at least two different prefixes.

3. Natural Sciences, Physical Sciences, and Mathematics:  
   a. One course or the equivalent in Mathematics and/or Statistics.  
   b. One natural or physical laboratory science course or the equivalent.  
   c. One additional
natural or physical science course, or the equivalent, from a prefix other than that from which the student earned laboratory science course credits.   

B. Requirements: Creative Thinking, Critical Thinking, and Effective Communication

1. Creative Thinking: one course, at least one credit, or the equivalent. According to the AAC&U Creative Thinking Value Rubric, Creative Thinking involves “both the capacity to combine or synthesize existing ideas, images, or expertise in original ways and the experience of thinking, reacting, and working in an imaginative way characterized by a high degree of innovation, divergent thinking, and risk taking.” Moreover, “creative thinking in higher education can only be expressed productively within a particular domain. The student must have a strong foundation in the strategies and skills of the domain in order to make connections and synthesize. While demonstrating solid knowledge of the domain’s parameters, the creative thinker, at the highest levels of performance, pushes beyond those boundaries in new, unique, or atypical recombinations, uncovering or critically perceiving new syntheses and using or recognizing creative risk-taking to achieve a solution.” A minimum of one credit of the course must be dedicated to these topics. Courses meeting these requirements are identified by “CREATE” in the catalog.  

2. Critical Thinking: one course, at least one credit, or the equivalent. According to the AAC&U Critical Thinking Value Rubric, Critical Thinking “is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.” Moreover, critical thinking integrates articulation of a position (perspective/thesis/hypothesis) as well as of conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences) with rigorous explanation, rigorous selection and use of evidence, and rigorous analysis of context and assumptions. A minimum of one credit of the course must be dedicated to these topics. Courses meeting these requirements are identified by “CRIT” in the catalog.  

3. First-Year Writing requirement: one course or the equivalent.  

4. Intensive Oral Communication requirement: one course or the equivalent.  

C. Requirements: Individual and Social Responsibility, Respect for Diversity Among People, and Integrative Learning

1. Ethical Reasoning: one course, at least one credit, or the equivalent. At least one course which includes a focus on all the following topics (from the AAC&U Ethical Reasoning VALUE rubric): ethical self-awareness, understanding different ethical perspectives/concepts, ethical issue recognition, application of ethical perspectives/concepts, and evaluation of different ethical perspectives/concepts. A minimum of one credit of the course must be dedicated to these topics. Courses meeting these requirements are identified by “ER” in the catalog.  

2. One Immersion Experience. Immersion experiences may be completed by either coursework or non-coursework activities. The following experiences may meet the immersion experience criteria: study abroad, domestic intercultural immersion (including relatively short, inexpensive options), faculty mentored scholarly/creative activity, national student exchange, internships, student teaching, and clinical/field experience. Courses meeting the immersion experience requirement are noted by “IM” in the catalog.  


4. Race/Class/Gender Equity Studies: two courses in race, class, and/or gender equity studies. At least one of which will focus on the following ethnic groups in the United States: African-American, Native American, Asian-American, and Latino/a-American consistent with the UW-System’s “Cultural Diversity graduation requirement. Courses meeting this requirement are noted by “RCG” in the catalog.  

5. Global Learning: at least one global learning course or a study abroad experience. Courses meeting this requirement are noted by “GL” in the catalog.  

6. Integrative Learning: at least fifteen credits or the equivalent of integrative learning. According to the AAC&U, “integrative learning” is an understanding and a disposition that a student builds across the curriculum and co-curriculum, from making simple connections among ideas and experiences to synthesizing and transferring learning to new, complex situations within and beyond the campus. Integrative Learning may include thematic bundles, which center on fundamental questions and are defined, developed, and delivered by a team of educators, linked courses, interdisciplinary courses, liberal studies courses, and other courses noted by “INT” in the catalog as well as various
Dear Members of the Academic Policies Committee: We write as concerned members of the English department faculty, representing the literature and creative writing programs, to advocate for the inclusion of a “Creative Thinking” requirement in the revised LE core. The Short Version: 1. We believe that, given the explicit inclusion of “Creative Thinking” among the approved Liberal Education Learning Goals, and given UWEC’s expressed commitment to outcomes-based education, and given UWEC’s expressed commitment to intentionality in matters of instruction and curriculum, that the omission of a specific “Creative Thinking” requirement from the proposed LE core represents an obvious and problematic oversight. 2. We believe that “creative thinking” is a specific set of processes and modes of thought (such as metaphorical/analogic thinking, imagination, narrative construction, explorative risk-taking, intuition, connection-making/synthesis, and so on) that transcends the commonplace conception of creativity as “thinking outside the box.” 3. We believe that while “creative thinking” as a specific set of processes and modes of thought (see above) may be present in many disciplines, the logical home for required courses in “creative thinking” would best be situated in the arts and arts-related humanities, where creative thinking processes used across intellectual domains are the overt subject of the discipline. 4. We believe, based upon much external evidence and AAC&U endorsement, that in the 21st Century, our students will need a heightened ability to understand, nurture and apply their creative aptitudes in whatever intellectual domain they engage. 5. Therefore, we propose the creation of a three-credit (one course) “Creative Thinking” requirement, to be designated “CT” in the catalog. We believe that the inclusion of a “Creative Thinking” requirement in the LE core is essential to the fulfillment of the LE Goals. 6. We suggest (although we stop short of a proposal, as this is a separate discussion) that APC might consider a reduction in the number of “Integrative Learning” (INT) credits from 18 to 15, as a means of leaving the total credits for the core at 42. 

Full Rationale

At the moment, the LE framework does not specify any requirement or set of requirements to address the “Creative Thinking” goal. It does, however, associate numerous specific requirements with other goals: the first year writing requirement and an additional “communication intensive” requirement appear to be linked fairly explicitly to the “Effective Communication” goal; two courses in the natural sciences would appear to address the “Knowledge of the Natural World” goal; courses in the humanities and social sciences account for the “Knowledge of Human Culture” goal, and so on. In addition, there are several requirements that seem designed to address specific learning outcomes, such as the proposed “ethical reasoning” requirement, the proposed two-course requirement in race/class/gender equity studies, a one course (or “experience”) requirement in “Global Learning,” and of course the proposed eighteen-hour “Integrative Learning” requirement, for which ULEC took the extraordinary step of creating an additional LE Learning Goal, since it was the view of the committee (full disclosure: Jon Loomis is a current ULEC member) that requirements should align as specifically as possible with goals/outcomes and, apparently, vice versa, in the spirit of curricular “intentionality.” In that light, the lack of a specific requirement designed to address the “Creative Thinking” goal outcome appears to many of us in the arts and humanities as a glaring inconsistency in the proposed framework. (No doubt there are others, but those are separate issues for another day.)

Artists, and those who study the creative processes practiced by artists, might recognize “creative thinking” as a specific set of skills or processes, including metaphorical thinking, imagination, narrative construction, risk-taking, intuition, connection-making/synthesis, and so on. These are non-linear, right brain, often very subjective modes of thought that allow for skipping steps and thinking around corners. The specific “creative thinking skills” such as those noted above are essential to areas outside the arts and humanities, but it is within the arts and humanities that such subjects as metaphorical thinking, narrative, aesthetics and the creative process actually overtly define the field. If we are, in fact, designing an LE core that is truly “outcomes based,” and if we are doing so in a truly “intentional” way—
which is to say, leaving as little as is feasible to chance—and finally if we recognize that “creative thinking” is a specific set of processes and modes of thought that transcends the commonplace conception of creativity (i.e., “thinking outside the box”), then it’s reasonable to suggest that there is a need for a specific “Creative Thinking” requirement within the LE core. We would suggest exactly that. We would suggest further that the logical home for such a requirement would be located mostly in the arts and humanities (particularly those of the humanities that focus on the arts). We thank the members of APC for their time and attention in considering this matter. Sincerely, Jon Loomis Allyson Goldin Loomis Jenny Shaddock

I’d like to urge the committees to discuss ways that a civic engagement component could be added to courses across the curriculum as we continue to refine our ideas about Liberal Education requirements. I believe a civic engagement component should be a part of ALL the LE breadth requirements. I know you’re about to begin discussion of the "Knowledge of Human Culture and the Natural World" learning goal. To my mind, one of the best ways to increase the effectiveness of student learning toward this goal would be to place students in all programs into meaningful community partnerships that enable them to experience the rich complexity that accompanies the application of their knowledge in realistic situations. I know that civic engagement is both expensive and logistically more complicated than delivering instruction entirely within a classroom setting, but I believe the benefits to such engagement/partnerships will justify the additional cost and trouble. Thanks for reading and considering my feedback!

My primary concern about the proposed Social Sciences requirement relates to the “outside the student’s major” language. I support the idea of not counting courses in the major to ensure greater breadth and exploration of other disciplines and topics. But I wonder how this would apply to our comprehensive major in criminal justice. Students are required to take Crmj 103, Pols 110, Psyc 100, and Soc 101 for the criminal justice major. Would that satisfy the proposed Social Sciences requirement or would these four courses be considered “inside” the student’s major since they are major requirements? I assume it would be the former, but the language leaves open the possibility of the latter interpretation.

Dr. Pratt, Thanks for keeping me posted about developments with regard to Liberal Education reform. Thanks to you and APC for your hard work in this debate – it goes to the very heart of the UWEC educational experience. I have spoken with my geology faculty and other science faculty about Liberal Education reform. However, I am only speaking for the Dept. of Geology in this message. Based on what you sent to chairs, I understand APC just voted to amend the motion as follows: “Liberal Education Breadth Requirement comprising 18 credits of intentionally designed, integrative learning Arts and Sciences experiences with 6 credits in each of the following three major categories: Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences.” I think this language is largely designed for the three-credit courses that are common all across the university. However, I think this structure is a strong disincentive for students to take lab science courses. Lab science courses are typically four credits (three hours lecture and two hours lab). Labs are places where students have the chance to perform simple experiments and observe processes at work in the natural world. In doing so, students can work in groups, receive more feedback from faculty members, and discover how learning pertains to the real world – some activities classified as high-impact practices by Kuh (2008). In Geology specifically, we use labs in 100-level Liberal Education classes to help students make observations and interpretations in the field. Of course, we take students to sites with nice rocks. However, students also visit a landfill and the Eau Claire wastewater treatment facility (not necessarily “highlights” for most students, but potentially life-changing experiences for educated citizens...!). This is not just a trendy thing being done in the UWEC Geology Dept. to get students outside. Employing a focus on field experiences
enhances student motivation, learning, and problem solving (NSF Advisory Board, 1996; Committee on Undergraduate Science Education, 1997). Lab classes facilitate field trips. Students typically find field trips fun, but they also learn how a scientist uses the scientific method to study the world of biology, chemistry, geology, geography, and physics. (I can’t say if this is true for Materials Science.) If our Liberal Education reform is intended to provide students with a better depth of knowledge about the natural world, then I think lab science is an important aspect of that foundation. I think the Liberal Education framework should include a lab science requirement. The definition of “integrative” is very important as well. In my opinion, the working definition will need to be quite broad in order to help our students move toward graduation. I look forward to the APC discussion today. References cited Committee on Undergraduate Science Education, 1997, Science Teaching Reconsidered: Washington, D.C., National Academy Press, 97 p. Kuh, G.D. 2008. High impact educational practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities. NSF Advisory Board, 1996, Shaping the Future: New expectations for undergraduate education in science, mathematics, engineering, and technology: Arlington, VA, National Science Foundation Publication 96-139, 76 p. Dr. Kent M. Syverson Professor and Chair (posted by permission)

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