



Office of the Vice Provost

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August 28, 2014

Les L. Steele
Executive Vice President
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
8060 165th Avenue N.E., Suite 100
Redmond, WA 98052-3981

Dear Vice President Steele,

Attached is Eastern Oregon University's NWCCU Ad Hoc Report on Recommendation 4 of the Fall 2013 Year Three *Resources and Capacity* Peer-Evaluation Report.

NWCCU had recommended that Eastern assess its Liberal Studies program for academic coherence, faculty oversight, and resource capacity, with special attention to Standards 2.C.4 and 2.C.5. Eastern's Ad Hoc Report addresses these issues directly. In addition, an Action Plan for implementing proposed changes to the Liberal Studies Degree is attached as an addendum.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours in writing,

Donald Wolff
Vice Provost

cc: Dr. Jay Kenton, President
Dr. Sarah Witte, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs



NWCCU Ad Hoc Report on Recommendation 4
Fall 2013 Year Three *Resources and Capacity* Peer-Evaluation Report
August 28, 2014

Abstract: This ad hoc report addresses Recommendation 4, presenting the main features of a proposed Liberal Studies Degree, whose design will ensure program coherence and faculty oversight. The redesigned program will be fully vetted with the interdisciplinary Liberal Studies Faculty Council and the rest of the faculty through shared governance in Fall 2014, with implementation in Fall 2015. The Addendum that follows provides an Action Plan for achieving this goal.

NWCCU Recommendation 4: In reaffirming Eastern Oregon University's accreditation, NWCCU added a fourth Recommendation to the Fall 2013 Year Three *Resources and Capacity* Peer-Evaluation Report. Recommendation 4 states:

4. Although the majority of EOU's academic programs demonstrate a coherent design with appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing of courses, and synthesis of learning, the Liberal Studies degree program represents an exception. While recognized as meeting the needs of a large number of students, and resulting in the second highest number of degrees awarded annually, the Liberal Studies degree program is vulnerable to weak academic oversight, a potential paucity of senior-level credits, and an inadequate number of faculty to oversee capstone experiences. The commission recommends that the University refocus assessment efforts on the Liberal Studies program (Standard 2.C.4 and 2.C.5).

Liberal Studies Program Coherence, Goals, and Outcomes: The Liberal Studies (LS) Degree will be completely redesigned in Fall 2014 in order to establish an academically sound, coherent course of study with assessable outcomes. The plan establishes faculty oversight of curricular developments and creates clear entry and exit points for the LS major. The curricular work will be completed by the Liberal Studies Faculty Council (LSFC) by the end of Fall Term 2014 in order to navigate shared governance for formal approval and complete implementation for Fall Term 2015. The LSFC is comprised of twelve faculty members from across disciplines and the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Education, Business, and the Library. The Council is convened by Donald Wolff, Vice Provost, but the LSFC itself will have the responsibility for the design and revision of the LS curriculum. These Council responsibilities directly address NWCCU Standard 2.C.4: *Degree programs, wherever offered and however delivered, demonstrate a*

coherent design with appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing of courses, and synthesis of learning. Admission and graduation requirements are clearly defined and widely published.

This past summer 2014, a team of Eastern faculty and administrators attended AAC&U’s 2014 Institute on Integrative Learning and the Departments (ILD) in order to draft a plan of action for redesigning the LS major. The ILD Team drafted LS Goals to be reviewed and revised as necessary by the LSFC as a whole.

The proposed LS Goals, based on the salient features of Integrative Learning, provide program coherence:

- To Inspire Intellectual Curiosity and Intentional Purpose
- To Explore Interdisciplinary Connections Cogently
- To Establish Co-Curricular and Applied Connections
- To Cultivate Intercultural Knowledge
- To Encourage Purposeful Civic Engagement
- To Examine Ethical Responsibilities
- To Engage in Active and Critical Self-Reflection

These goals must then be translated into assessable outcomes. The ILD Team drafted the outcomes, which will be reviewed by the LSFC and revised as necessary:

LS Outcomes	Proficient	Adequate	Inadequate
Intellectual Curiosity and Intentional Purpose: Explores Authentic, Unscripted Question	Identifies & explores an authentic, unscripted question	Identifies an authentic, unscripted question but does not explore it in much depth	Fails to identify or explore an authentic, unscripted question in any depth
Crosses Disciplinary Boundaries	Exploration necessitates crossing disciplinary boundaries	Disciplinary boundaries crossed at a superficial level	Fails to cross disciplinary boundaries with any cogency
Includes Co-Curricular or Applied Learning	Exploration includes discussion of relevant co-curricular or applied learning	Connections to co-curricular or applied learning are superficial	Few authentic connections to co-curricular or applied learning
Effectively Communicates	Exploration effectively communicates using appropriate evidence, forms, and cross-disciplinary methods	Communication shows weaknesses in use of appropriate evidence, or forms, or interdisciplinary methods	Communication shows little to no facility in use of appropriate evidence, or forms, or interdisciplinary methods
Deepens Cross Disciplinary Understanding	Exploration demonstrates a deepened interdisciplinary understanding	Exploration demonstrates a somewhat superficial cross-disciplinary understanding	Little to no interdisciplinary understanding demonstrated
Cultivates Awareness of Cultural Diversity	Exploration demonstrates a deepened awareness of Cultural Diversity	Exploration demonstrates a somewhat superficial level of Cultural Diversity awareness	Little to no awareness of Cultural Diversity demonstrated
Reflects Personal, Professional, Civic and Ethical Conduct	Implications for Personal, Professional, Civic, and Ethical Conduct clearly identified and explored	Implications for Personal, Professional, Civic, and Ethical Conduct are superficial	Little to no authentic Reflection on Personal, Professional, Civic, and Ethical Conduct provided.

Faculty Oversight: The LSFC will be responsible for defining the goals and outcomes for the new LS degree. It will ensure academic oversight by creating a coherent program, establishing a clear entry point for the LS degree with a new core, recruiting faculty to teach the capstone course to be offered each term online, and assessing the program. The LSFC will see all the necessary paperwork through shared governance. It will establish an LS assessment plan based on outcomes vetted with all stakeholders. Thus, the Liberal Studies Faculty Council directly addresses NWCCU Standard 2.C.4: *Faculty, through well-defined structures and processes with clearly defined authority and responsibilities, exercise a major role in the design, approval, implementation, and revision of the curriculum, and have an active role in the selection of new faculty. Faculty with teaching responsibilities take collective responsibility for fostering and assessing student achievement of clearly identified learning outcomes.*

New LS Core: Eastern's ILD Team sees that a clear entry point for LS is necessary. The Team recommends each LS major create an e-portfolio to track progress, reflection, and intentionality. It should be designed in a junior-level required course for program admittance focused on creating an LS e-portfolio. In addition, upper division Library course should be required, which would emphasize not only sound research methods in the disciplines, but also focus on the discourse traits and use of evidence in the two disciplines housing the minors the LS student has selected. This LS Core, along with methods courses in each minor, would provide a solid foundation for the degree.

New LS Capstone and Program Assessment: An LS Capstone course will be created, offered each term online by a faculty member interested in interdisciplinary pursuits and overseen by the LSFC. In this way, faculty will administer the new Liberal Studies major. The LS Outcomes will be used not only to evaluate the capstone itself, but also to assess the program. Canvas, Eastern's technology and learning program, will be used as a data collection tool for program assessment based on the e-portfolio mentioned above. Use of the LS rubric will provide meaningful program assessment, highlighting both strengths of the new program and areas to be strengthened. The LS e-portfolio will create a rich site for assessment and program improvement. One concern NWCCU expressed in Recommendation 4 is "an inadequate number of faculty to oversee capstone experiences." The LSFC will be responsible for staffing a quarterly capstone course, with professors who identify integrative learning as primary interest. This arrangement guarantees faculty commitment to overseeing LS capstones.

Additional NWCCU Concern: NWCCU's Recommendation 4 pointed to "a potential paucity of senior-level credits." Minors at EOU each require at least 15 credits of work at the upper division level. EOU minors have multiple senior-level offerings. By combining two minors, students will actually have additional opportunities to take 400-level courses. The LS capstone itself is of course a senior-level course. The LSFC and Vice Provost will monitor offerings at the 400-level to ensure students take at least 4 senior-level courses, including the capstone course.

Conclusion: Using Integrative Learning to redesign the Liberal Studies degree will constitute a substantive change in the degree, ensuring program coherence, while the LSFC will provide academic oversight. There is clear commonality of purpose among all university stakeholders in creating academic coherence for LS program, helping to focus the entire university community on the importance of Integrative Learning to Eastern students' success from matriculation to graduation to their chosen careers.

Addendum

Action Plan: Redesign of the Liberal Studies Degree with a Focus on Integrative Learning Liberal Studies Faculty Council (LSFC)

Liberal Studies Action Plan: For the Redesigned Liberal Studies Major (LS), with an Integrative Learning (IL) Focus

LSFC Goals for Fall Term 2014

- LS IL Goals approved by LSFC
- LS IL Outcomes for the Major
- LS Core: Required LS IL Program Entry Course
- LS Core: Required 300-Level Information Literacy Course
- LS IL Capstone Course
- LS IL Assessment Plan
- Submit All Forms to Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee for Review
- Key Advising to LS Goals and Outcomes

LSFC Goals for Winter Term 2015

- See Redesign of LS Major through entire Shared Governance Process

LSFC Goals for Winter Term 2015

- See New LS Major through Sate Approval Process

LS Redesign Actions and Timeline

Action	Who	Purpose	When
Prepare Draft of LS Redesign	Vice Provost and available Liberal Studies Faculty Council Members	Redesign to be submitted to Liberal Studies Faculty Council	Deadline August 15
Finish Redesign of LS, incl. course descriptions, course outcomes, program outcomes, and assessment plan	Vice Provost and Liberal Studies Faculty Council	Shared Governance and the Administration approval	Deadline December 15 for implementation Fall 2015
Regular Faculty, Staff, Student Updates in wide variety of venues	Vice Provost and Liberal Studies Faculty Council	Vetting; Garnering Faculty, Staff, Student Support	September, October, November 2014
Focus Faculty Colloquia on Integrative Pedagogies	Vice Provost and Faculty Colloquia Coordinator	Build Faculty, Staff, Student Understanding of Integrative Learning	Academic Year 2014-15
Re-Focus Summer Institute on Integrative Learning	Center for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment (CTLA)	Build Faculty Understanding of Integrative Learning	Summer 2015 and continuing

Integrative Learning Faculty Development Workshops	CTLA	Build Faculty Understanding of Integrative Learning	Academic Year 2014-15 and continuing
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Evidence of Success

- FTE Support of new LS Major
- Approval of LS Curricular Redesign
- Increased LS Capstone Completion Rate
- Increased LS Graduation Rate
- Consistent Assessment of Outcomes and Closing the Loop for LS Program Improvement
- Refocus of CTLA on Integrative Learning
- Stage Set for General Education Reform focused on Integrative Learning

Resources: Collaborative Effort of Faculties in College of Arts & Sciences, College of Business, College of Education, and Library Faculty Interest, Integrative Pedagogy, and Agency; Vice Provost Logistical Support; CTLA Explicit Focus on Integrative Learning during 2014-15; Administration Support; Growing Research on Integrative Learning—Conference Presentations and Scholarly Bibliography, both Local and National Growing Research on Integrative Learning—Conference Presentations and Scholarly Bibliography, both Local and National.

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