



Replacing Mystery with Meaning:

What can we do to help students understand and appreciate general education requirements and a liberal arts curriculum?

Presiding: **Gerald R. Greenberg**
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SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

The College of Arts and Sciences





Panelists

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I HAVE TWO TEACHERS?

REPLACING MYSTERY WITH MEANING:
PROVIDING STUDENTS CONTEXT FOR OUR
GENERAL EDUCATION CORE – EXPECTATIONS
AND REALITIES OF A NEWLY LAUNCHED
PROGRAM



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Panelists

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COMMUNICATING PARK UNIVERSITY'S
EDUCATION PROGRAM



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Panelists

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Replacing Mystery with Meaning:

A Proposal for a New Way of Thinking About and Seeing a
Liberal Arts Curriculum



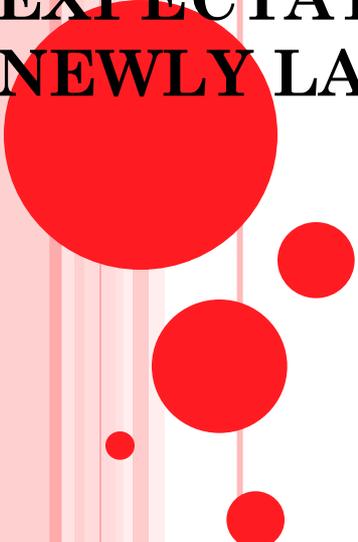
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I HAVE TWO TEACHERS?

REPLACING MYSTERY WITH MEANING: PROVIDING STUDENTS CONTEXT FOR OUR GENERAL EDUCATION CORE – EXPECTATIONS AND REALITIES OF A NEWLY LAUNCHED PROGRAM



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CCAS Montreal, November 2011
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THE COMPASS WE INTENDED -- WHAT OUR STUDENTS WILL KNOW TO ENHANCE THEIR UNDERSTANDING, OWNERSHIP, SATISFACTION AND SUCCESS.

- Our operational definition of liberal education – Why, if, then
- The fit of our newly revised General Education curriculum within our liberal education expectations
- The objective, core mission of the University's new GE program – its centrality, intentionality, explicitness, responsiveness and accessibility
- The curricular integrations – major, GE, developmental interweaving
- The supporting structures of the campus culture – equal understanding, common interpretation, university-wide oversight
- The communications plan for disseminating the expectation
- The plan for assessing the who, what and how of the shared expectation and the core's ongoing relevance



THE REALITY OF OUR EXPERIENCE: THE ROADS TO AND BEYOND BUY-IN

- What we got right:
 - Our GE program renewal effort was driven by a focus on improved outcomes for our students.
 - Those outcomes were well defined, cleanly articulated and demonstrated support for a broad range of student needs and expectations.
 - The GE reform team engaged students and student leaders in working sessions and later focus groups. The working groups provided concrete and practical examples of the proposed curriculum's intentions and benefits. The focus group inputs were recycled to enhance the unfolding curriculum.
 - The “big picture” view of the proposed curriculum resonated with our students and student buy-in was facilitated easily and quickly.



THE REALITY OF OUR EXPERIENCE: THE ROADS TO AND BEYOND BUY-IN – CONT.

- The potholes:
 - The work of engaging faculty was far more labor intensive and far less productive and, unfortunately, quickly became the Committee's priority. This work was not student focused.
 - The work of securing administrative commitment to dedicated leadership for the program extended over a year; leadership by committee opened the door for missed opportunity.
 - While student support in the developmental phases was strong, these would not be the affected students.
 - The work of engaging and educating prospective students was relegated to a bottom rung on the list of priorities and was readdressed only days before new student orientation. Work at the leadership levels was never approached.
 - While the response of students to individual courses was overwhelming positive, student knowledge regarding the overarching program mission and goals was low.



RECLAIMING THE MISSING PIECES: REDEFINING OUR CENTER, RESHAPING OUR COMMUNICATIONS AND BROADENING OUR EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Students as focal – The comprehensive response
- Supporting structure maintenance
 - Dedicated leadership
 - Mission alignment
 - Broad message dissemination – proactive(?), responsive, integrated(?), ongoing
- Curriculum deconstruction to fuel knowing – The what of our messages
 - Why prescribed courses and developmental sequence
 - Why opportunity for choice
 - Why collaborative and interdisciplinary course design and delivery
- Curriculum assessment to connect students' understanding of program intentions with their ability to assess program validity and reliability in real time and overtime relative to their learning needs and interests independent of and in support of their disciplinary and occupational pursuits



AN EVOLVING DESIGN – DEVELOPING OUR OWN BEST PRACTICES

- Creating the common thread
- Marketing in-house and on the road
 - The targets
 - The team
 - The media
- Assessing our progress
 - What
 - When
 - How
- Retooling what we know



Communicating Park University's Liberal Education Program



Park University Campus Centers



From General Education to Liberal Education

PROBLEMS:

- In Effect, Two Different General Education Requirements: One for Traditional 16-week students and Another for Distance Students (Campus Center and Online)
- Different Application of GE requirements: Just about any course in a discipline would count for 27 of the 52 hours required for Distant Students
- Different Organizational Cultures

Process: Year One

YEAR ONE

- Initially a Faculty Taskforce worked in isolation. They proposed a good plan, based on best practices. Their only feedback was from other faculty.
- Once campus wide discussions started, it became apparent that the plan was unworkable for the whole university.

Process: Year Two

- We tested the proposed (Liberal Arts) program with actual transcripts of transfer students
- Compromises reached. Program renamed “Liberal Education”
- Program approved by Faculty Senate

Process: Year Three

- Park Distance Learning introduces new objections
- Objections further investigated
- Adjustment made to transfer guidelines
- A proposal to further delay the program is rejected by the Faculty Senate
- Program ready for AY 2010-2011

Park University Liberal Education Program

The Liberal Education (LE) Program at Park University—*Integrative Literacies for Global Citizenship*—is education that develops an awareness of human potentials. It develops proper attitudes for realizing such potentials through critical and informed judgments that foster concern for individual and social well-being. It develops a love for learning by encouraging activities that promote knowledge of the basic concepts, methodologies, and rewards of learning. It builds skills and competencies that help students acquire the distinctive outcomes defined in the University vision, mission, core values, and literacies. These outcomes include:

1. Analytical and Critical Thinking
2. Community and Civic Responsibility
3. Scientific Inquiry
4. Ethics and Values
5. Literary and Artistic Expression
6. Integrative and Interdisciplinary Thinking

For more information on the Park University Literacies, and the specific subcompetencies of each, visit

https://my.park.edu/ICS/Offices/Academic_Affairs/Faculty_Manual/Curriculum_Issues/Literacies_in_the_Curriculum/

In shifting our terminology from “general” to “liberal” education, Park University also aligns itself with the American Association of Colleges and Universities’ definition of liberal education:

“An approach to college learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity and change. It emphasizes broad knowledge of the wider world (e.g., science, culture and society) as well as in-depth achievement in a specific field of interest. It helps students develop a sense of social responsibility as well as strong intellectual and practical skills that span all areas of study, such as communication, analytical and problem-solving skills, and includes a demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings.”

II. Overview of LE Program Requirements

The following curriculum is required of students in all Bachelors degree programs, at all Campus Centers, and in all modes of instruction who enter the University under the 2010-11 Catalog.

Core Courses Credits

EN 105, First Year Writing Seminar I	3
EN 106, First Year Writing Seminar II	3
MA 120, Basic Concepts of Statistics <i>or</i> MA 131, College Algebra, <i>or</i> higher	3
CA 103, Public Speaking <i>or</i> TH 105, Oral Communication, <i>or</i> CA 105, Introduction to Human Communication	3
CS 140, Introduction to Computers <i>or higher or departmental equivalent</i>	3
Science with a lab	4

Liberal Education Electives

At least 6 hours LE designated courses in the Social Sciences	6
At least 6 hours of LE designated courses in the Arts & Humanities	6
At least 3 hours of LE designated courses in the Natural and Physical Sciences (except computer science)	3
LE 300, Seminar in Integrative and Interdisciplinary Thinking	3

TOTAL

37 cr.

PARK UNIVERSITY
LIBERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (starting fall 2010)

Core Courses	
EN 105, First Year Writing Seminar I	3
EN 106, First Year Writing Seminar II	3
MA 120, Basic Concepts of Statistics <i>or</i> MA 131, College Algebra, <i>or higher</i>	3
CA 103, Public Speaking <i>or</i> TH 105, Oral Communication, <i>or</i> CA 105, Introduction to Human Communication	3
CS 140, Introduction to Computers <i>or higher or</i> <i>departmental equivalent</i>	3
Science with a lab	4
Liberal Education Electives	
At least 6 hours LE designated courses in the social sciences	6
At least 6 hours of LE designated courses in Arts & Humanities	6
At least 3 hours of LE designated Natural and Physical Sciences (except computer science)	3
LE 300: Seminar in Integrative and Interdisciplinary Thinking	3
TOTAL	37 cr.

III. Graduation Requirements

Not included in the Liberal Education Program are the following graduation requirements:

- LE 100, First Year Student Seminar (for first-time freshman)
- EN 306, Professional Writing in the Discipline (or departmental equivalent)
- The Writing Competency Test

VII. LE Program Policies and Transfer Credit Evaluation

- Up to **six (6) hours** of LE-designated credit may *concurrently* fulfill the requirements of the LE program *and* a student's major.
- *All* LE-designated courses may be applied to the requirements of a student's *minor*.
- Accommodations may be made to meet individual program accreditation requirements.
- LE Program requirements are waived for students who transfer with AA and AS degrees from accredited colleges/universities.
- Transfer credit will be accepted for LE-designated courses:
 1. If the transferred courses match LE-designated courses in the Park University catalog **or**
 2. If the transferred courses are designated as "general education" courses in the social sciences, humanities, or natural and applied sciences at the accredited institution from which they are being transferred **or**
 3. In cases where neither #1 or #2 apply, the transferred courses are evaluated as equivalent based on **discipline-specific criteria** provided to the Registrar's Office by the academic departments or, when necessary, by Department Chairs themselves.
 4. If a student is transferring **60 or more hours** but does not have an AA or AS degree, the Registrar's Office may accept those courses based on discipline, and only if the courses are at the 100 or 200-level. These 60 or more hours must be from accredited colleges/universities, or credit recommended by the American Council on Education (ACE)

Communication Actions

- Distribution and presentation of new LE Curriculum to Academic Advisors and Park Student Success Center (Summer 2010)
- Distribution of new LE Curriculum to incoming freshmen at Freshman Orientation (August 2010)
- Distribution of new LE Curriculum at Fall Faculty Conference to all faculty (August 2010)
- Distribution of new LE Curriculum at the gathering of all Campus Center Directors (September 2010)

Major Issues

- Need new courses for LE program

Decided on a 2-year transition in which current GE courses would count for certain LE courses

- How do faculty propose new courses?

Website dedicated to the process with a flow chart

- Working out details of transferability with Registrar's Office

Numerous meetings between Interim Provost and Registrar

- Appointment of Individual in charge of the program

Assistant Dean of CLAS

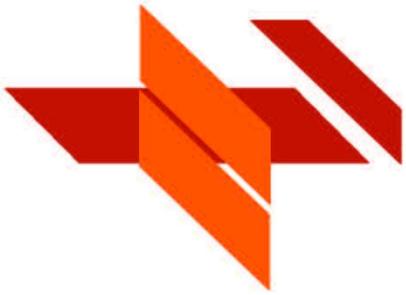
Problems

- LE 300: Integrative and Interdisciplinary Learning course

Not enough courses

Communication from the Assistant Dean to faculty and campus centers

- So far the effect on the students have been the least problematic



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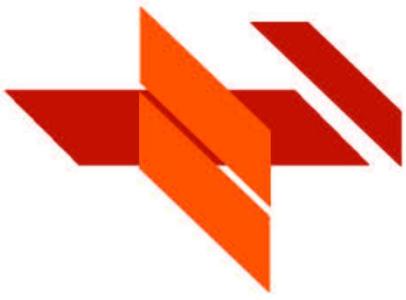
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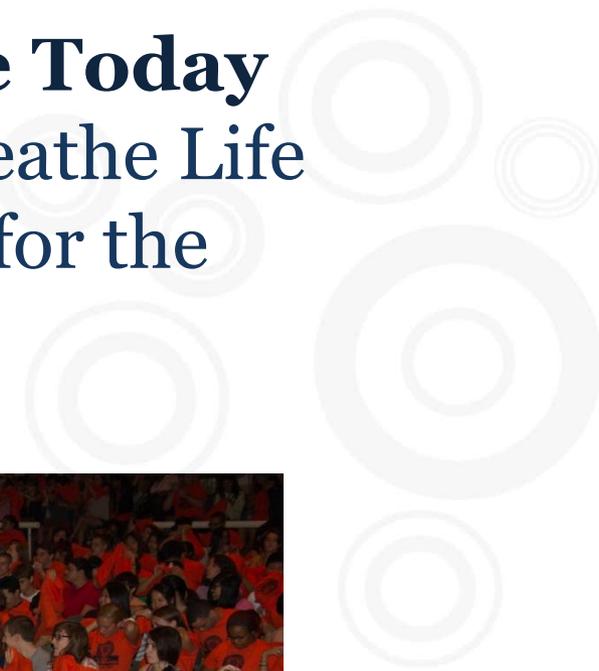
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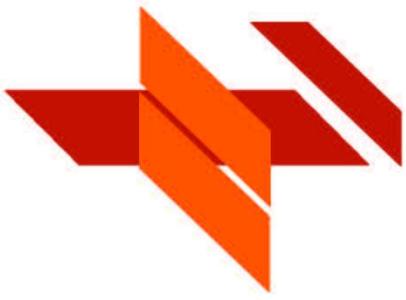
Why We're Here Today To Develop a Way to Breathe Life Into the Liberal Arts for the Class of 2015



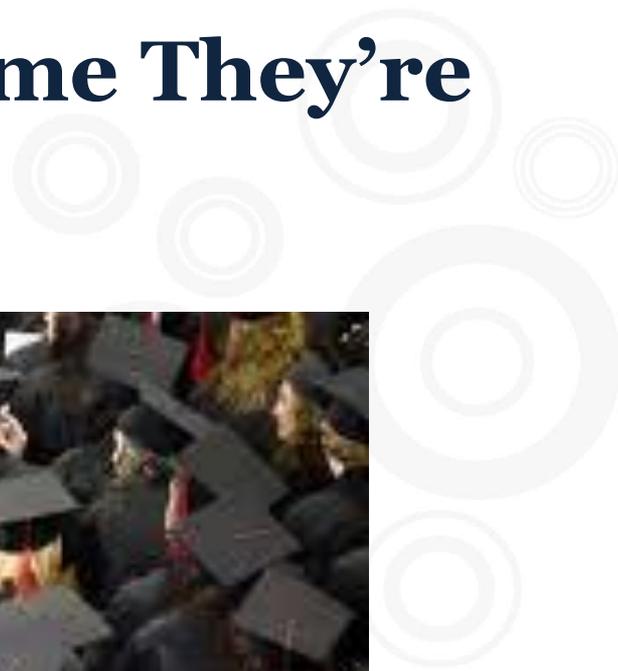
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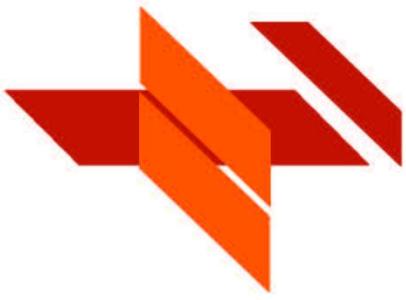
So That By The Time They're Here....



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They Think More About Their Education Than This



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We know why studying the Liberal Arts is important:

- **Lays foundation for a career by learning more than facts**
 - Forms opinions and judgments, rather than deferring to outside authorities
 - Develops a moral compass – knowing good from evil, justice from injustice, civility from disrespect
 - Prepares for the marketplace of ideas rather than acquiring time-bound skills driven by the marketplace



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The Discussion of What is a Liberal Arts Education has a Long and Rich History:

- Captured in Bruce Kimball's *Orators and Philosophers*
- Of concern to professional organizations like AAC&U and CCAS

As a curriculum it is:

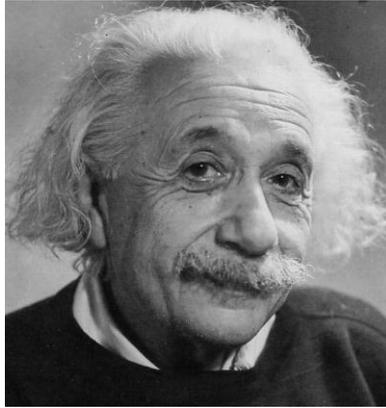
- Typically defined as groupings of required coursework
 - Liberal Arts Core at Syracuse
 - General Education in the SUNY System
 - Essential Learning Outcomes by AAC&U's LEAP Initiative (Liberal Education & America's Promise)



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Albert Einstein

"It is not so very important for a person to learn facts. For that he does not really need a college. He can learn them from books. The value of an education in a liberal arts college is not the learning of many facts but the training of the mind to think something that cannot be learned from textbooks."

--1921, on Thomas Edison's opinion that a college education is useless

"Wisdom is not a product of schooling but of the life-long attempt to acquire it."

--Letter to an admirer, March 22, 1954



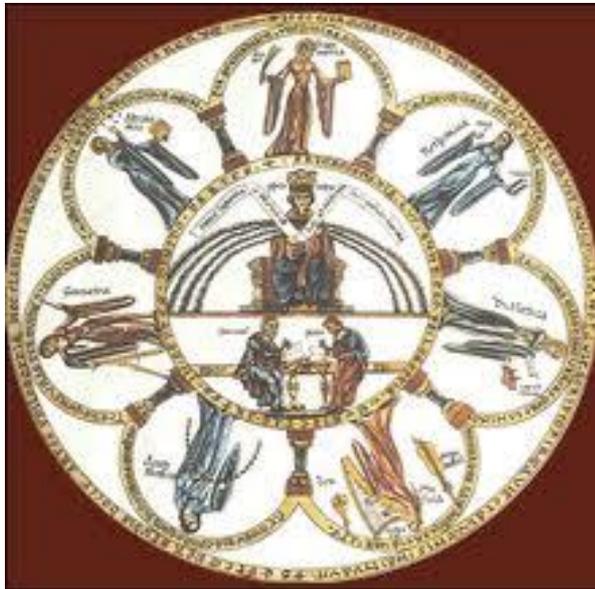
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Then Why Do We Reduce Something So Noble as the Liberal Arts Curriculum....



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To This?

The College of Arts and Sciences Core and General College Requirements Checksheet

Name: _____ **Core Status:** Incomplete Program: _____

SUID: _____ Level: _____

This report is based on successful completion of currently enrolled courses

LIBERAL SKILLS REQUIREMENT

Writing Studio (6 credits) Incomplete

1. _____ 2. _____

Intensive Writing (3 credits)

1a. _____

Language OR Quantitative Skills

(6-12 credits) Incomplete

1. _____ 2. _____

DIVISIONAL PERSPECTIVES REQUIREMENT

- Four (3 or 4 credit courses in each division incl. a 2 course seq.)
- Of the 12 courses required in the Divisional Perspectives, no more than 3 courses may be from the same dept.
- Lines 3 and 4 are reserved for sequence courses

Humanities Incomplete

1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____

Social Sciences Incomplete

1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____

Natural Sciences and Math Incomplete

LAB: _____

1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____

CRITICAL REFLECTIONS Incomplete

(two approved courses 6-8 credits)

1. _____ 2. _____

- AP - Advanced Placement
- TC - Transfer Credit
- (IP) - Course In Progress
- (BP) - Approved by Petition

Reflects academic changes posted on or before: _____

Major(s): _____

Declared? _____

Minor(s): _____

Minimum Required A&S Credits: 96

Total Earned A&S Credits: _____

Total In Progress A&S Credits: _____

Total A&S Credits: _____

Minimum Remaining: 96

Minimum Required Upper Division Credits: 30

Total Earned Upper Division Credits: _____

Total In Progress Upper Division Credits: _____

Total Upper Division Credits: _____

Minimum Remaining: 30

Total Credit Status: Incomplete

Minimum Required: 120

Minimum Remaining: 120

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And This?

UNIVERSITY CORE REQUIREMENTS		COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS REQUIREMENTS	
Academic Area (state core #) CORE = 42 HOURS		Foreign Language: A level of proficiency equal to or above completion of the fourth semester in one language	
First-Year Signature Course (300)	UGS 302 or 303 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Communication (010)	RHE 305 <input type="checkbox"/>		
WRITING FLAGS		WRITING FLAGS	
Core Writing Flag (010) 3 hours May not fulfill another Core requirement	<input type="checkbox"/>	Liberal Arts Writing Flag 2 courses May be fulfilled by Core or other requirement One must be upper-division	<input type="checkbox"/>
Humanities (040)	E 316K <input type="checkbox"/>		
American & Texas Government (070)	GOV 310L (required) and <input type="checkbox"/> GOV 312L, 312P or 312R <input type="checkbox"/>	Social Science: 3 hours Must be in a different field from that used in the core. Core approved courses in Social Science will count toward this requirement. List of additional approved courses available in the Liberal Arts Student Division or in your department.	<input type="checkbox"/>
American History (050)	3 hours US History ^A <input type="checkbox"/>		
	3 hours US (or TX) History ^A <input type="checkbox"/>		
Social and Behavioral Sciences (060)	3 hours ^A <input type="checkbox"/>		
Mathematics (030)	3 hours ^A <input type="checkbox"/>	Math: 3 hours excluding M 301, 316K, and 316L. May be fulfilled by Core Requirement in Mathematics	<input type="checkbox"/>
Science & Technology, Part I (030)	6 hours in a single field of study ^A <input type="checkbox"/>	Natural Science: 6 hours Selected from Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Geology, Marine Science, Nutrition, Physical Science, Physics, Mathematics, Computer Science, Statistics and Scientific Computations, or from list of approved alternatives available in the Liberal Arts Student Division. ^B	<input type="checkbox"/>
Science & Technology, Part II (031)	3 hours in a field of study different from that used in Part I ^A <input type="checkbox"/>		
Visual & Performing Arts (050)	3 hours ^A <input type="checkbox"/>	Cultural Expression, Human Experience & Thought: 3 hours List of approved courses available in the Liberal Arts Student Division or in your department.	<input type="checkbox"/>
NOTES FOR CORE & LIBERAL ARTS REQUIREMENTS:		NOTES FOR CORE & LIBERAL ARTS REQUIREMENTS:	
¹ A Must be from acrossed core list on reverse side. ² Hours for Core Math, Science & Technology and Liberal Arts Math & Science requirements: ³ Max. 9 hours in one subject can be used for the Core Math, Science & Technology and Liberal Arts natural sciences/math requirements combined. ⁴ Max. 12 hours in M, CS, & SSC combined can be used for the Core Math, Science & Technology and Liberal Arts natural sciences/math requirements combined. ⁵ Max. 3 hours in either the history of science or the philosophy of science may be used.		⁶ Courses that count for Core & Liberal Arts requirements may also count for the major or minor	
MAJOR & MINOR REQUIREMENTS			
MAJOR: GENERAL (CONSULT 2010-2012 UNDERGRADUATE CATALOG FOR SPECIFIC MAJOR REQUIREMENTS)			
* At least 18 hours of the major must be done in residence			
Total hours required: <input type="checkbox"/>			
Total upper-division hours required: <input type="checkbox"/>			
MINOR: Consult 2010-2012 Undergraduate Catalog for specific minor requirements			
* At least 6 hours of the minor must be done in residence			
For most majors, 12 hours (including 6 hours upper-division) in any one other field of study outside the major <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>			
ELECTIVES	Additional hours as needed to complete the minimum 120 hours required for a B.A. and upper-division and in residence hours (see checklist below). The following courses will <u>not</u> count toward electives: PHY 306, PED, PI, and KIN 119; SPE 140L; Music 200, 200A, or 200B.		
GENERAL DEGREE REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST:			
<input type="checkbox"/> A minimum of 120 hours total <input type="checkbox"/> 36 hours upper-division (18 hours upper-division in residence) <input type="checkbox"/> 60 hours in residence (Not credit-by-examination, correspondence, extension) <input type="checkbox"/> 18 hours of major and 6 hours of minor in residence <input type="checkbox"/> 24 of last 30 hours in residence		<input type="checkbox"/> No more than 36 hours in one subject <input type="checkbox"/> No more than 36 hours in one college (except Liberal Arts & Natural Sciences) <input type="checkbox"/> No more than 16 hours pass/fail (only electives may be taken pass/fail) <input type="checkbox"/> UT Grade Point Average of 2.00 in all courses attempted <input type="checkbox"/> Major Grade Point Average of 2.00 (see specific majors for exceptions)	
NOTES:			

Univ. of Texas – Austin



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Or This?

Graduation requirements:

- > 122 credits
- > 30 credits must be 300-400 level
- > 25 credits of coursework from IUPUI (or other IU campuses)
- > 64 credits maximum from a 2 year college or institution
- > minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0
- > all students must file an application for graduation by posted deadlines.

Majors within the School of Liberal Arts:
(see separate sheet for requirements in the major)

- African Studies (AFRO)
- American Sign Language/English Interpreting (ASL) (B.S.)
- Anthropology (ANTH)
- Communication Studies (COMM)
- Economics (ECON)
- English (ENG)
- French (FREN)
- Geography (GEOG)
- German (GER)
- History (HIST)
- Individualized Major Program (IMP)
- International Studies (INTL)
- Philanthropic Studies (PHST)
- Philosophy (PHIL)
- Political Science (POLS)
- Religious Studies (REL)
- Sociology (SOC)
- Spanish (SPAN)

Principles of Undergraduate Learning (PULs):

1A	Language Skills
1B	Quantitative Skills
1C	Information Resources Skills
2	Critical Thinking
3	Integration and Application of Knowledge
4	Intellectual Depth, Breadth, Adaptiveness
5	Understanding Society and Culture
6	Values and Ethics

CORE COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

First-Year Experience

1 course/ 1-3 credits

_____ SLA-S 100: First Year Success Seminar

_____ UCOL-U 110: First Year Seminar

Waived/ Transfer student with 18 credits or more

AREA I: COMMUNICATIONS CORE

A. English Composition

2 courses/ 6 credits, must earn C or higher

_____ ENG-W 130/131 or ENG-W 131 or ENG-W 140: Elementary Composition I

_____ ENG-W 132 or ENG-W 231 or ENG-W 150: Elementary Composition II

B. Speech Communication

1 course/ 3 credits

_____ COMM-R 110: Fundamentals of Speech Communication

C. Foreign Language

up to 10 credits; first year proficiency in a single language

Language: _____ choose from:

American Sign Language (ASL), Arabic (ARAB), Chinese (EALC), French (FREN), German (GER), Italian (ITAL), Japanese (EALC), Latin (CLAS), Spanish (SPAN), 117, 118 and 119: Beginning or Basic I, II and III

131 and 132: Intensive Beginning I and II

Placement in 200-level or higher (fulfills requirement but earns no credit %)

Non-English native speaker with approved waiver

AREA II: BASIC COURSES

A. Analytic Skills

2 courses/ 6 credit hours (See note about courses that will not count.)

- Choose one MATH course from the following:
- _____ MATH-M 118: Finite Mathematics
 - _____ MATH-M 119: Brief Survey of Calculus
 - _____ MATH 15300: Algebra and Trigonometry I
 - _____ MATH 15400: Algebra and Trigonometry II
 - _____ MATH 15900: Pre-calculus
 - _____ MATH 16500: Analytic Geometry and Calculus I
 - _____ MATH 22700: Calculus for Technology I
 - _____ MATH 23700: Calculus for Life Sciences I

This checksheet is for planning purposes only. See the bulletin for official degree requirements- <http://bulletin.iupui.edu/>.

Additional mathematics, statistics, computer programming or logic course

- Mathematics:**
- See previous list
- Statistics:**
- ECON-E 270: Introduction to Statistical Theory in Economics
 - GEOG-G 488: Applied Spatial Statistics
 - POLS-Y 205: Analyzing Politics
 - PSY-B 305: Statistics
 - SOC-R 359: Introduction to Sociological Statistics
 - STAT 30700: Elementary Statistical Methods I
- Computer Programming:**
- BUS-K 201: The Computer in Business
 - CSCN-N 201: Programming Concepts
 - CSCN-N 207: Data Analysis Using Spreadsheets
 - CSCN-N 211: Introduction to Databases
- Logic:**
- PHIL-P 162: Logic
 - PHIL-P 265: Introduction to Symbolic Logic

Courses in the above category may apply toward both the Major and Analytic Skills requirements, but the course will count only once in credit hours toward degree requirements.

B. Natural Science

fulfills PULs 1B, 2, 3

9-11 credit hours, 2 departments, one laboratory science course, no courses in the major

- ANTH-A 103: Human Origins and Prehistory (3 credits)
- AST-A 100: The Solar System (3 credits)
- AST-A 105: Stars and Galaxies (3 credits)
- AST-A 130: Short Courses in Astronomy (1 credit)
- BIOL-K 101: Concepts of Biology I (includes lab, pre-professional) (5 credits)
- BIOL-K 103: Concepts of Biology II (includes lab, pre-professional) (5 credits)
- BIOL-N 100: Contemporary Biology (3 credits)
- BIOL-N 107: Exploring the World of Insects (includes lab) (4 credits)
- BIOL-N 200: The Biology of Women (3 credits)
- BIOL-N 212/ N 213: Human Biology (with lab) (3 credits, 1 credit)
- BIOL-N 214/ N 215: Human Biology (with lab) (3 credits, 1 credit)
- BIOL-N 217: Human Physiology (includes lab) (5 credits)
- BIOL-N 251: Introduction to Microbiology (includes lab) (3 credits)
- BIOL-N 251: Human Anatomy (includes lab) (5 credits)
- BIOL-N 322: Introductory Principles of Genetics (3 credits)
- CHEM-C 100: The World of Chemistry (3 credits)
- CHEM-C 101/ C 121: Elementary Chemistry I (with lab) (3 credits, 2 credits)
- CHEM-C 105/ C 125: Principles of Chemistry I (with lab) (3 credits, 2 credits)
- CHEM-C 106/ C 126: Principles of Chemistry II (with lab) (3 credits, 2 credits)
- GEOG-G 107/ G 108: Physical Systems of the Environment (with lab) (3 credits, 2 credits)
- GEOG-G 303: Weather and Climate (3 credits)
- GEOG-G 307: Biogeography: The Distribution of Life (3 credits)
- GEOG-G 107/ G 117: Environmental Geology (with lab) (3 credits, 1 credit)
- GEOG-G 109/ G 119: Fundamentals of Earth History (with lab) (3 credits, 1 credit)
- GEOG-G 110/ G 120: Physical Geology (with lab) (3 credits, 1 credit)
- GEOG-G 206: Advanced Physical Geology Laboratory (lab) (1 credit)
- GEOG-G 115: Introduction to Oceanography (3 credits)
- GEOG-G 130: Short Courses in Earth Science (1 credit)
- GEOG-G 132: Environmental Problems (3 credits)
- GEOG-G 180: Dinosaurs (3 credits)
- PHYS 10000: Physics in the Modern World (includes lab) (5 credits)
- PHYS 14000: Short Courses in Physics (1 credit)
- PHYS 15200: Mechanics (includes lab) (4 credits)
- PHYS 20000: Our Physical Environment (includes lab) (3 credits)
- PHYS 21800: General Physics (includes lab) (4 credits)
- PHYS 21900: General Physics II (includes lab) (4 credits)
- PHYS 25100: Heat, Electricity, and Optics (includes lab) (5 credits)
- PHYS-P 201: General Physics I (includes lab) (5 credits)
- PHYS-P 202: General Physics II (includes lab) (5 credits)
- PSY-B 105: Psychology as a Biological Science (3 credits)

C. History

2 courses/ 6 credit hours

- _____ HIST-H 108: Perspectives on the World to 1800 QR
- _____ HIST-H 113: History of Western Civilization I
- _____ HIST-H 109: Perspectives on the World since 1800 QR
- _____ HIST-H 114: History of Western Civilization II

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We contend that by doing so our students see the Liberal Arts Core Curriculum as:

- Nothing more than a checklist of courses to get “out of the way” rather than as laying a foundation for further study and intellectual growth
- A series of boxes or lines to be filled in

And nothing more than a thoughtless process done once a semester when choosing courses for no other reason than to fulfill requirements



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Liberal Arts Core Checklists Provide:

- No context for individual courses selections
- No interconnectedness of courses to goals

And this is as true for students as it is for advisors and faculty

Why?

Because the original intentions of a deliberative faculty when creating the requirements are overshadowed by categories, lists of courses, and checklists



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What's Next?

What can we do to help students, advisors, and faculty to understand and appreciate:

- The goals and underlying purpose of a LAC
- How a LAC enhances the educational outcomes of a baccalaureate degree
- How a LAC provides the foundation for majors and minors, and life after college
- Why choosing courses in a LAC should be a meaningful and creative experience rather than an exercise in checking boxes



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Our proposal/pilot for change

Adding meaning to a LAC curriculum means adding engaged and interactive interest

- We have guidebooks and checklists that all look the same to individual students – representations are not unique, although the goal is to provide students with their own experience with a LAC
- We have faculty and advisors who don't see a LAC as the foundation for strengthening a student's intellectual experience with majors and minors
- We want to develop an interactive and creative process for student and advisors to engage in that results in a visual representation – a type of mapping that is unique



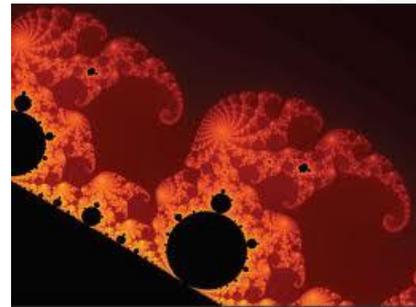
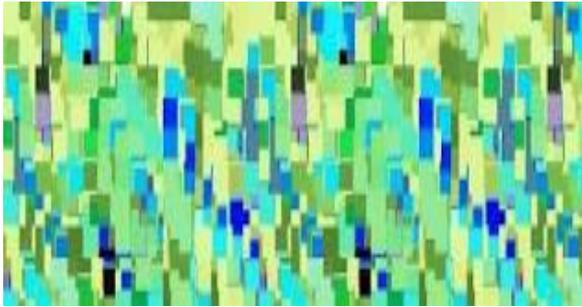
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Visualization, individualizing, and interaction



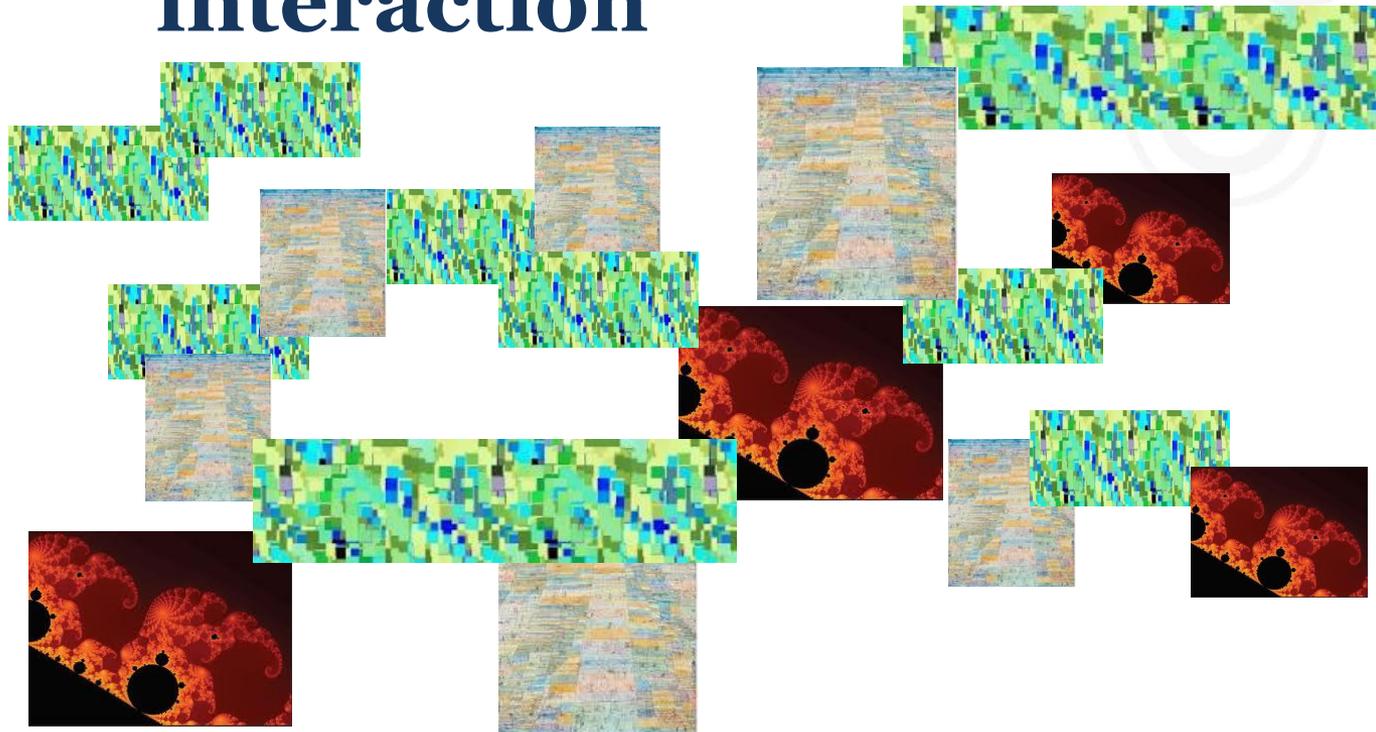
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Visualization, individualizing, and interaction



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Visualization, individualizing, and interaction



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Why may this approach work?

Some preliminary thoughts:

- Students and advisors see something grow and evolve as each student develops an individual roadmap through a LAC
- Narratives that describe the goals of different conceptual elements of a LAC would be incorporated into the process of developing these visualizations
- The look of each student's outcome would be unique – although the basic goals of a LAC would be realized
- The process may be more intellectually engaging than interacting with a checklist

It may even prove to be fun!



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Replacing Mystery with Meaning:

What can we do to help students understand and appreciate general education requirements and a liberal arts curriculum?

Presiding: **Gerald R. Greenberg** [ggreenbe@syr.edu]
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