**Date:** October 27th, 2012

**To:** UNI Faculty Senate

**From:** The Liberal Arts Core Committee

**Re:** Liberal Arts Core Committee Response to LAC-RSC Recommendations and Form L

After review of the LAC-RSC recommendations for changes to the UNI Liberal Arts Core, the UNI Liberal Arts Core Committee recommends the actions stated below. Our recommendations fall into three categories: a) Overall changes recommended (with procedures to implement noted in italics after recommendation), b) Areas to be maintained/continued, and c) Recommendations for changes to the process for future changes to the Liberal Arts Core.

This occasion provides us with an important opportunity to continue the development of clear student learning outcomes and assessment practices, aligned with LAC goals and outcomes for LAC categories (or sub-categories). The LACC emphasizes the crucial importance of assessment to the strength of the Liberal Arts Core program and encourages the development of assessment strategies that involve faculty in their creation and implementation, measure student performance as well as student perceptions of learning, recognize the value of both student and faculty time, and provide useful information for ongoing improvement of teaching and learning.

1. **Overall Changes Recommended**

**Phase 1: Changes to propose during 2012-2014**

1. **Change Humanities requirement to 2 required 3-hour courses: Humanities I & II.**

*This would require Form L (LACC would do) and curricular course change forms for courses (Humanities faculty group would do).*

***Comments from LAC-RSC Final Report*** [*http://www.uni.edu/vpaa/documents/LACRSCFINALREPORT\_000.pdf*](http://www.uni.edu/vpaa/documents/LACRSCFINALREPORT_000.pdf)

*The LAC-RSC supports the Humanities Coordinating Committee’s proposal to offer Western Humanities in two 3‐hour courses (as opposed to the current requirement to take 2 out of 3 Humanities courses).*

*Survey results are not particularly helpful here. Faculty comments suggested that there is a lack of faculty understanding regarding the current requirements for humanities. In the survey, 43.7% of faculty strongly agreed or agreed that a sequenced, 6‐hour Western Humanities was best. 56.2% of faculty strongly agreed or agreed that a sequenced 6‐hour Global Humanities was best. The difficulty with using survey results for making recommendations in this category is that questions regarding diversity also included options for Global Humanities. Moreover, there was much debate about the idea of Global Humanities within the LAC-RSC. Given the changing world that we live in, a number of LAC-RSC members support the creation of a global humanities sequence that would give students a more comparative perspective on cultural continuity and change. A number of LAC-RSC members emphasize our students’ need to understand the Western culture of which they are a part, and think that Global Humanities would dilute focus away from Western Humanities. The compromise solution within the committee was to offer an option that would give students a choice. The creation of a Global Humanities sequence would require interested faculty and faculty development.*

1. **Add First-Year Cornerstone as an alternative for current Category 1A & 1B.**

 *This will require a new course add form (Cornerstone Coordinator would submit).*

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**A 6‐hour Cornerstone course, integrating written and oral communication, as well as first‐year experience outcomes, should be developed.** This course would be an option for first‐year incoming students who have not satisfied either the LAC oral communication or the writing requirement. The current “College Writing andResearch” and the “Oral Communication” courses would remain as options for those students coming in whoneed one of these courses, or who choose not to take the Cornerstone course. Since this course includes anorientation to academic expectations at UNI, this course can only be taken at UNI.

In the 2010 survey, 50.4% of faculty strongly favored and favored this idea, though 62.3% of respondents to a question asking about the current writing and oral communication courses preferred the current requirements. In responses, there were concerns about having enough interested and /or capable of teaching Cornerstone. Faculty development in the areas of first year experience, reading and writing will alleviate fears of faculty capability in teaching incoming‐first year students the appropriate processes for writing and speaking. Putting Cornerstone into the LAC as an option gives students more opportunities to meet oral communication and writing requirements.

1. **Remove Personal Wellness from the LAC**.

*This would require Form L (LACC would do). The LACC encourages faculty with expertise in this area to propose coursework in other categories and consider teaching in interdisciplinary courses such as First-Year Cornerston*e.

***Comments from LAC-RSC Final Report***

[*http://www.uni.edu/vpaa/documents/LACRSCFINALREPORT\_000.pdf*](http://www.uni.edu/vpaa/documents/LACRSCFINALREPORT_000.pdf)

Faculty are clearly divided on the inclusion of Personal Wellness in the LAC. 42.1% of faculty strongly agree or agree that we should eliminate Personal Wellness as a requirement in the LAC. 39.7% of faculty strongly agree or agree that we should require a 3-hour Personal Wellness course with activity labs. The LAC-RSC understands that any recommendation that we make will leave a large group of faculty dissatisfied. It is true that, as a number of faculty commented on the survey, personal wellness is a goal of the LAC. Some wellness issues, such as healthy behaviors, alcohol abuse, and relationship issues are addressed in the Cornerstone course being piloted in fall 2011. The LAC-RSC would also like to see courses in Public Health, Epidemiology, and Global Health, such as those recommended by AACU’s report, “Curriculum Guide for Undergraduate Public Health Education,” be developed in the Critical Thinking, U.S. Experience or Social Science categories of the LAC. These inclusions would require Personal Wellness to be re-conceptualized within the LAC. In terms of broader educational outcomes, it should be noted that many wellness programs are offered to students in dorms and in extra-curricular programs. The LAC-RSC would also support an exit requirement that required students to take 2-3 Lifetime Activity courses (student athletes exempted). When we asked faculty which courses they would cut from the LAC to make it shorter, 55.9% would remove personal wellness.

**Phase 2: Future Considerations**

1. **Reconfigure Social Science category (or other components of the LAC) to include a U.S. Experience requirement (set of courses). [Explore interdisciplinary possibilities for these offerings.]**

*A faculty committee would develop this course (or set of courses), and propose it in a future curriculum cycle. This would eventually require a Form L submitted by faculty committee. If new courses are added, the LACC suggests the faculty committee follow the First-Year Cornerstone model in initially offering an experimental version, with assessment and faculty development built in from start. The faculty committee or LACC could pursue Carver money or grants to help pay for faculty development.*

1. **Upgrade writing instruction and assessment, with writing-enhanced courses/majors as an exit requirement.**

*LACC would set up a faculty committee to develop a proposal to submit to UNI’s Faculty Senate, with consultation from the Educational Policies Commission. The Faculty Senate would ultimately decide if this is part of the LACC or an exit requirement only and how to administer it. The faculty committee could pursue Carver money or grants to help with faculty development to adapt current courses and majors for this purpose.*

1. **Develop Global Humanities sequence, adding as an option to Humanities requirement.**

*A faculty committee would be set up to develop these courses, with the goal of proposing them in a future curriculum cycle (which would require new course add forms eventually). LACC suggests the faculty committee follow the First-Year Cornerstone model in offering initially experimental versions of the courses, with assessment & faculty development built in from the start. The faculty committee could pursue Carver money or grants to help pay for faculty development.*

1. **Add Transfer Cornerstone course (for students who don’t take First-Year Cornerstone course) [explore possibility of 2 hour vs. 3 hour Transfer Cornerstone course].**

*Faculty committee set up to develop this course and propose it in future curriculum cycle (would require new course add form eventually & Form L, since it is a new requirement that has not existed before). Suggestion to follow First-Year Cornerstone model in offering initially in experimental version, with assessment & faculty development built in from start. Pursue Carver money or grants to help pay for faculty development.*

1. **Develop Scientific Literacy course and add to category of Natural Sciences. [Explore possibility of interdisciplinary offering of this.]**

*A faculty committee would be set up to develop this course (or set of courses), and propose it in a future curriculum cycle (which would require a new course add form eventually). The LACC suggests the faculty committee follow the First-Year Cornerstone model in offering initially an experimental version, with assessment and faculty development built in from start. The faculty committee could pursue Carver money or grants to help pay for faculty development.*

1. **Replace Capstone with Critical Thinking requirement.**

*LACC would set up a faculty committee to develop goals/outcomes, course requirements, assessment plan, and set of courses which would meet these goals. This change requires Form L (LACC does) for dropping Capstone & replacing with Critical Thinking set of courses. This would be phased in, with students being able to take Capstone until enough Critical Thinking courses are available. The faculty committee or the LACC would pursue Carver money or grants to help pay for faculty development.*

1. **Explore possibility of time-sequencing of LAC program (first-year, second-year, third-year, & fourth-year).**

*The LACC recommends waiting until other changes are done, and the LAC program is stabilized with these changes. This could be pursued by LACC at that time, if there is still impetus on campus for this change.*

1. **To Be Maintained/Continued**
2. **Retain current category system (vs. another organization of categories).**
3. **Continue development of clear student learning outcomes and assessment practices, aligned with LAC goals and outcomes for LAC categories (or sub-categories).**

*The LACC emphasizes the crucial importance of assessment to the strength of the Liberal Arts Core program and encourages the development of assessment strategies that involve faculty in their creation and implementation, measure student performance as well as student perceptions of learning, recognize the value of both student and faculty time, and provide useful information for ongoing improvement of teaching and learning.*

1. **Process for Changes Recommended (in addition to the italicized suggestions above)**
2. Adopt the changes independently, since some require more courses and faculty development than others.
3. Take this response to the university Faculty Senate in fall 2012. Consider feedback at the LACC level. Send to full faculty and put on LACC website, asking for feedback to LACC representative.
4. Pursue multiple-year Carver grant money for faculty and curriculum development for above changes, when necessary.