

Ad Hoc Committee on General Education Curricular Reform

Report to Faculty Senate – March 11, 2015

Committee Members: Sandy Henry (Committee Chair, School of Journalism and Mass Communication), Erik Maki (Vice Chair, College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences), Carrie Dunham-LaGree (Cowles Library), Bruce Gilbert (Drake Curriculum and Assessment Committee), Todd Hodgkinson (University Curriculum Committee), Jerrid Kruse (School of Education), Laura Linn (Admissions), Kevin Maisto (Student representative), Jennifer McCrickerd (Arts and Sciences), Mandi McReynolds (Community Service and Engagement), Olivia O’Hea (Student representative), Diana Reed (College of Business and Public Administration), Kevin Saunders (Institutional Research and Assessment).

Charge

As approved by Faculty Senate in April 2014, the Ad Hoc Committee on General Education Curricular Reform was charged with investigating the viability (with a view to both resources implications and implementation considerations) of the alternative models of general education identified by the University Curriculum committee (UCC) in its March 12, 2014 report to Faculty Senate.

Consistent with the UCC Recommendations, this Ad Hoc Committee included a wide range of constituents, including representatives from the UCC, the Drake Curriculum and Assessment Committee (DCAC), one elected representative from the six colleges and schools at Drake University, and representatives from various administrative offices. Per a recommendation submitted to the Senate Executive Committee by DCAC, the Ad Hoc Committee also included student representatives. The membership of this committee was selected by the 2014-15 Senate Executive Committee with input from the respective academic units.

The Ad Hoc Committee submitted a preliminary report to Senate Executive Committee and Faculty Senate in November 2014. This is the final report of this Ad Hoc Committee.

History

In the March 2014 report of the UCC to Faculty Senate, the recommendation was made to vote to approve a revision of the Drake Curriculum (Appendix A). The creation and charge of this Ad Hoc Committee were born of this report.

Two options were provided in the report: improve the efficacy of the existing Drake Curriculum or embrace an alternative model of education.

As outlined in their report, two alternative approaches to general education appealed to the UCC. The first was a “major-minors” approach to general education. The second was an “integrated core” approach.

The UCC was of the opinion that transitioning to a major-minors approach to general education would be easier and require a fewer resources (both human and financial) than an integrative “core” approach to general education; however, they also felt that both of these models would provide a more cohesive general education experience for students—and build on the positive experiences that Drake students and faculty have had in the current Drake Curriculum (e.g., FYS, Senior Capstone).

Clarifications

UCC did not vet their recommended alternative models of general education, so there was some confusion regarding the purpose and desired outcome of this committee. Clarification was sought and the following guidance was provided:

- This Ad Hoc Committee should provide preliminary thoughts on both the Integrated Core and the Majors/Minors model at the November meeting of the Senate Executive Committee. If the committee is favoring one model at that time, it is acceptable to report such an opinion, but both models should be examined throughout this process.
- The models do not need to be evaluated with regard to the current outcomes of the Areas of Inquiry (AOI). The committee should be concerned with the general purposes of the Drake Curriculum (see <http://www.drake.edu/dc/>), including any thoughts on what we expect a liberal education to entail in 5 years, what a Drake degree will mean in the future and how the curriculum will serve our students. The committee is not expected to develop a new list of outcomes.
- The committee should evaluate and recommend one, both, or neither of the models. If we cannot come to a strong consensus, a majority and minority opinion is welcome. The hope is that the work of this Ad Hoc committee will lead to a faculty vote so development and implementation can begin. The committee does not need to gather data from other institutions using these models, but should focus on the projected impact at Drake. But if data from other institutions supports our stance, such information can be included in both the preliminary and final reports.

Methodology

To provide structure and clarity to our purpose, the committee identified the process to be followed

1. Develop an in-depth understanding of each model

2. Gather information, primarily quantitative, from a variety of academic and administrative units
3. Evaluate the information gathered
4. Collect additional information, as needed
5. Formulate decision on the viability of each model
6. Formulate recommendation of preferred model, if possible

Prior to collecting data from various academic and administrative units on campus, the Ad Hoc Committee determined that the models must meet a minimum of 2 criteria, without which the models are inherently nonviable:

Each model must fulfill the promise of our General Education Curriculum as publicly declared on the university website:

“The purpose of the Drake Curriculum is to provide students with a meaningful liberal education. Drake students will gain the breadth of knowledge and skills necessary to successfully function in a complex and rapidly changing world. The Drake Curriculum prepares students to live fulfilling lives and to contribute to their communities.”

Each model must fit within the credit hour limitations of the most complex majors. Through discussions with the various academic departmental and dean’s offices, it was determined that a total of 27 credit hours outside of the major requirements was the largest number of hours possible for several majors, mostly in the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences and the College of Business and Public Administration. It was also noted that certain education majors with multiple endorsements could allow as few as 6 credit hours outside of the courses required for those endorsements.

To this end, the committee determined that both models could fill the promise of the Drake general education curriculum if properly crafted. The committee also determined that the Integrated Core required 27 credit hours to complete and would fit within the curricula of most majors.

However, it was learned that the Majors/Minors model would not, if following the College of Idaho model. In this model, minors require at least 15 hours of course work, not including prerequisite courses. Another shortfall of the Majors/Minors model was the lack of intentional interdisciplinary coursework. The College of Idaho requires students to study in areas outside of their primary discipline, but the choices made by students can be random in nature without any intentional connection. Because of these factors, the Ad Hoc Committee found it necessary to redefine this model before collecting data.

Integrated Core Curriculum (Emphasizing Pervasive Skills and Ways of Thinking)

From the viewpoint of the Ad Hoc Committee, his model was the more difficult of the two to understand. However, when looking at the Portland State model presented in the March

2014 UCC report and applying the terminology of the current Drake Curriculum, the model became clearer to envision.

The Freshman Inquiry (FRINQ) is similar to the First-Year Seminar, teaching specific skills in communication and technology, over the course of two semesters. The Ad Hoc Committee finds this to be very appealing; currently, we feel the FYS is trying to do too much, in too short a time period, with little consistency in skills, outcomes and assessment between sections. A more tightly administrated, two-semester FYS could be much more effective.

The Sophomore Inquiry (SINQ) requires students to take 3 different interdisciplinary thematic courses; at Portland State, 15 themes are defined and students take a course in 3 different themes. The Ad Hoc Committee feels existing courses might fit this mold; we liked the flexibility to identify themes – and change them as the world around us changes; we see many different forms these courses could take; collaboration among faculty to create “qualified” courses would probably be necessary as the interdisciplinary nature of the courses should introduce students to a variety of subjects. The committee also feels there could be some flexibility as to when they are taken.

The Upper Division cluster allows a student to customize according to interests: the student picks one of the 3 themes they pursued during their SINQ courses, then takes 3 courses from a variety that are related to that particular theme. In the Drake vernacular, these thematic clusters are not unlike our AOs in that existing courses would be identified as being part of a theme cluster, must like our existing courses are identified as fulfilling an AOI. At Portland State, these courses must be taken outside of the student’s primary area of study.

The last piece of the Integrated Core is the Senior Capstone. Portland State teaches it in a similar manner to the FRINQ, but such a thing wouldn’t be possible at Drake, as the professional schools have practical capstones, which incorporate all skills and experiences in a largely experiential setting (e.g. student teaching). At Drake, the capstone experience would likely be similar to what is currently in place.

The Majors-Minors model

While easier to understand, the Ad Hoc Committee agrees with the UCC assertion that if Drake were to adopt a model similar to the College of Idaho Majors/Minors, the number of semester hours required for a minor would need to be considered, and that the concept of what a “minor is” would to be re-envisioned.

The committee has been calling the following modified model the “Drake Concentrations,” to avoid confusion with our traditional minors. The Drake Concentrations are not as prescriptive as the Integrated Core, but will require 24 credit hours to complete; if including the Senior Capstone, the total number of hours is 27. As such, students will probably be taking these courses during all four years at Drake.

Summary:

- First Year, first semester
 - 3-credit-hour FYS, possibly modified
- First Year, second semester, through Fourth Year
 - Interdisciplinary concentration
 - 9 credit hours in a prescribed area
 - A second concentration; student choice
 - Interdisciplinary in a second prescribed area
 - Traditional minor outside of the primary area of study
- Fourth Year
 - Senior Capstone

In this model, the traditional minors do not change. Any number of interdisciplinary concentrations will need to be developed, which will include an FYS. Many existing interdisciplinary concentrations will fit this model. Students will be required to complete 2 concentrations of 12 hours each, with at least one of those being an interdisciplinary concentration. The second concentration can be a traditional minor if the student so chooses. If taking a traditional minor, the minor must be outside of the primary department of study (as defined by that department). The Senior Capstone is expected to continue as part of the major course of study, but is not a part of these concentrations.

This model can also incorporate new concentrations created by units that are NOT interdisciplinary or traditional minors; they can be minors developed specifically as a Drake Concentration.

Information Gathering

This committee was charged with investigating the viability (with a view to both resources implications and implementation considerations) of the alternative models of general education identified by the University Curriculum committee in its March 12, 2014 report to Faculty Senate.

To effectively meet this challenge, the Ad Hoc Committee collected data from a wide variety of academic and administrative offices. As such, a committee member contacted each of the following departments during the week of October 20 to schedule a meeting or other such conversation:

- College of Arts & Sciences
- College of Business and Public Administration
- College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences
- School of Education
- School of Journalism and Mass Communication
- Cowles Library
- Office of Admissions

- Academic Achievement Coordinator
- Office of the Provost
- Student Life
- Office of Development and Grants
- Student Senate
- Department of Athletics
- International Study Abroad Office
- Honors Program
- Student Records

During that meeting, the representative asked several questions about each of the models; (Appendix B); the goal was to gather objective information from each department about each model; this committee was tasked only with determining the viability of the models and, as such, attempted to keep bias out of the equation so that an effective, credible investigation could be completed.

The Ad Hoc Committee acknowledges that opinions exist about what may or may not work for Drake. It is expected that Faculty Senate will provide an opportunity for those opinions to be voiced, once it is determined that these models are (or are not) viable. But this committee did not solicit such feedback at this time.

An explanation of each model and the questions being posed were provided to each department prior to the initial contact. In addition, the Committee Chair presented the same information to Dean's Council and the Council of Administrative and Academic Departments (CAAD) prior to the departmental meetings. The committee welcomed any and all methods deemed to be the most efficient and effective way possible to provide the information being requested.

Based on the results of these initial questions, the committee anticipated more specific questions would follow in the coming months.

Initial Findings

Generally speaking, the feedback provided by academic units showed both general education curriculum models to be viable, but there were many caveats; without a specific definition of the model as it would be implemented and function at Drake, departments had difficulty providing specific, definitive feedback.

Administratively, the feedback received also indicated that either model can work if developed properly. The one exception to this is the Office of Admissions. This unit expressed a fear of change and no excitement about the proposed models because the current model (AOIs) is attractive to prospective students; it suggests freedom to customize their curriculum, it preserves the ability of an undecided student to sample different disciplines and make progress toward a degree while doing so, it supports the

ability to pursue a double major/degree, and it does an apt job accommodating transfer students and AP/IB credits.

Following are a sampling of specific comments received from various academic and administrative units during interviews:

Integrated Core Feedback – Pros

(These responses were based on the Portland State model mentioned above.)

This model is exciting for students and provides more benefits, such as the opportunity to improve a weakness while working in another subject (e.g in a food and health class, you could learn about math by counting calories and determining percentages of recommended daily allowances). It is more sequential; more developmental; provides greater depth.

Interdisciplinary studies really provide an opportunity for more community-based projects and more service learning. There are opportunities to expand this in the learning communities.

If we design this intentionally and build on our strengths, this could really distinguish the institution.

The interest in developing interdisciplinary courses would be strong.

This model sounds similar to the Honors model, with such courses spread across the entire university.

There are more benefits to this model, but also more risks; it's a genuine opportunity to intentionally create impact, but is more likely to fail than Majors/Minors.

Integrated Core Feedback - Cons

Most units noted that this model would require a significant amount of faculty time and energy to develop the courses and implement the curriculum. In particular, the professional schools felt this model would put significant stress on faculty time; most don't have capacity to teach a partial load, resulting in either a need for more adjuncts or a need to cut classes for majors (a similar phenomenon is occurring right now in relation to FYS requirements and even Honors classes – the majors suffer). A long-term plan would need to be in place to deal with the need for adjuncts.

This model could cause the LEAD program to decline if leadership is not a designated track.

Are these truly Liberal Arts? Where's the math, where's the science, where's the STEM for all? Parents and students are talking about this because of the intense media coverage and our new initiatives, so we have to take this into consideration.

AP and IB likely won't be fulfilling general education requirements, as they do now; whether we like it or not, students are looking to start Drake with some requirements already filled because it shortens the duration of their expensive college career, or it opens the opportunity to pursue more majors and minors. Approximately 75% of undergraduates and pharmacy students enter with AP/IB/CLEP/transfer credits; HS students want to get ahead intentionally so that they can focus on the major more, not less.

Time for faculty will be a key factor. In fact, moral could become an issue because of this – it's possible a faculty member would want to work on this, but be denied because of responsibilities within the unit; or a professor could be required to work on it when the interest and time isn't there, resulting in lower quality work both in the general education curriculum and in other responsibilities. In summary, this model would require a paradigm shift to co-planning and co-teaching the curriculum. Money would have to be committed.

In the SINQ and Cluster courses, students will still be choosing courses from a list, much like they do now with our AOIs.

A huge impact would be a two-semester FYS instead of just one. There is a big problem now within the FYS courses in terms of topics, requirements, assignments, etc. The variation among the courses and instructors would be compounded if required for two semesters.

A "year-long" FYS might impact the Library's ability to support FYS courses; or it might simply shift the emphasis from Fall to Spring. (But a year-long two-course sequence for first-year students might help us to redefine the FYS, as is so desperately needed.)

The majority of this model takes place in the sophomore and junior year. This could leave students too vulnerable in their first year, without enough guidance through the general education curriculum to help them discover a major or make an appropriate major change; these are very common in the first year. Additionally, several majors take a majority of their general education course work in their first year, then focus on major course work in their upper-class years. This will burden them in their sophomore and junior years with courses that are NOT in their major, which will hamper the intermediate level opportunities that they currently get at Drake. This could have a domino effect that will leave them at a disadvantage in their senior year (when their schedule is mostly wide open) to be prepared for senior internships, research, and the high-level opportunities our students currently have.

These courses would funnel all sophomores and juniors through a limited listing of course options that everyone will have to take simultaneously. That will probably increase the average class size in these courses. Suddenly you will have juniors in courses with 30-40 students where we currently have juniors bragging on visit days that their upper-class courses are small and intimate.

How do you project enrollment in cluster courses? If a particular SING is popular (or is not popular), registration becomes chaotic.

Integrated Core Feedback – Developmental Thoughts

The social themes must be broad enough to appeal to all the professional schools and students in Arts and Sciences.

How does a transfer student fit in with the sequencing of themes and integrate with groups of students who might have been together for a while?

If a student gets out of sequence in the Integrated Core, how can that student compensate?

Do the clusters need to be transcriptable?

Majors-Minors Feedback – Pros

(These responses were based on the revised Majors/Minors model mentioned above, involving 1 interdisciplinary minor and 1 additional minor of the student's choice.)

The Major/Minor model would be less risky and not as attractive from an educational standpoint, but easier to implement and more stable in our current infrastructure.

Of the two models, this one seems like it would be far easier to align with things like transfer credit evaluations, students who enter Drake with enough credits to be considered sophomores, and accommodating professional programs that last more than four years.

We expect the desire may be strong among our faculty to help develop and teach course in new minors, but time is key. (adjuncts!)

There is possibly less faculty development with this model.

The LEAD curriculum could grow and it's aligned with the mission of the program.

In terms of recruitment, this could be a selling point: transcriptable minors?

Currently, 11-12% of our students are student-athletes (approximately 370 students). They are more likely than the general student body to be double majors or carry extra minors.

Within this model, a library-designed concentration is a possibility.

Majors-Minors Feedback – Cons

The LEAD concentration is currently 20 hours. Fewer hours might shift the focus of the concentration. We don't want to lose things that make the program unique.

For students who, in our current curriculum, happily pursue one major and nothing else, would they feel 'punished' by being required to pursue minors?

This could require more seats in classes that are already at capacity, requiring significant university resources.

There would be more demand on units if there is more demand for specific minors, requiring significant university resources.

There would be more demand on units if they are expected to deliver new minors, requiring significant university resources.

If they come in at the junior level, with transfer students be behind?

Are these truly Liberal Arts? This doesn't seem broad enough. It certainly isn't as broad as the AOs.

Majors-Minors Feedback – Developmental Thoughts

How would the interdisciplinary concentrations be governed? For example, what entity (or entities) would be charged with maintaining the catalog of courses, approving which courses may be taken toward the concentration, providing the faculty to teach them, etc?

We would need to clearly define a student's "primary department of study." For example, could an LPS major also minor in Politics or Sociology?

What would the impact be on students whose courses simultaneously meet major and interdisciplinary concentration requirements? How much overlap might there be in courses that meet major requirements and concentration requirements?

How will students' ability to select a multitude of combinations of majors and minors be affected? How easily would they be able to declare changes to their majors, minors, or concentrations?

Would there be a limit to the number of majors (or majors + minors) that students could pursue? And if a student wished to pursue, for example, three majors and two minors, could one of the interdisciplinary concentrations be waived?

Would this model hinder students who wish to pursue multiple majors or major-minor combinations?

Would this model make it hard to transfer in?

This is a neat concept, but it sounds pretty similar to what our students are already doing organically at Drake.

Would this scare off an undecided student who isn't sure about ONE major, much less a major and three minors?

Would this impact the ability to graduate on time from Drake if you are undecided in the beginning?

Both models – Pros

Both are more outcome-based; they include intentional sequencing.

Both models give students a broader view.

Both provide opportunity to increase the integration across curricular and co-curricular experiences.

Integrated courses are going to be more helpful for students.

Both provide opportunities for partnering with non-library faculty to co-teach and/or embed librarians within courses.

One important opportunity could be an increase in international programs. There might be opportunity for more students to study abroad.

We have foundation and grant opportunities for redesigning curriculum. Amounts range from \$5,000 - \$250,000+. Both models are feasible for seeking additional funding support. The key for cultivating support is what happens within each of the models and elements of the curriculum (I.E. Experiential Education, Research, STEM, Integration of the Liberal Arts etc.). In reviewing the funding sources if we move in the direction of deflating the FYS back to writing, and creating perhaps a 2nd-YS and 3rd-YS to address research/info literacy and maybe critical thinking, and such, we will still have the opportunity to seek additional external funding. All in all, funding is out there for us to seek once a decision is made on the general education curriculum.

Both a pro and a con: depending on the department, A&S course offerings could

open up by 50%-60%. If we stopped teach AOIs. That is, 50%-60% of courses in any given department are taught because they count toward AOIs. This would provide some capacity for new courses.

Both models – Cons

This is just going to be the same lackluster program we've currently got because we haven't actually defined the problem with the current system.

Both a pro and a con: depending on the department, A&S course offerings would open up by 50%-65%. That is, 50%-60% of courses in any given department are taught because they count toward AOIs. This might create panic among the chairs of departments.

Both require resources and administrative support, they will simply be needed in different ways.

Each model will be complex to track. Administrative support will be needed for faculty and students, and/or a more robust solution to our current computer information system must be purchased/developed (probably including a full-time person to work on it and troubleshoot problems).

Course management – providing enough seats for those who want them – may be tough. How can we project this in a model that maintains the flexibility to change their coursework as the current system does?

If faculty had to be supported by adjuncts in general education course work, it could get tricky. It's much more difficult for adjuncts to collaborate with others to develop interdisciplinary work – they aren't physically here and they usually have another full-time job.

Getting enough faculty to commit to a change will be an issue.

The Student Senate echoes the concern that these models aren't sufficient enough in guaranteeing a true "liberal arts education," but there is a consensus that a change to the current model is needed.

It seems like the 3+3 programs won't be possible in either model.

Currently, the FYS program is supposed to be something along the lines of what we are thinking about re: integrated courses. At best, the FYS has been less than stellar. There are major inconsistencies between different sections, different experiences among students and, thus, different levels of preparation as they move out of the FYS.

If new interdisciplinary courses have a hands-on component, facilities could be a huge issue because our computer labs are already stuffed – and we need to convert more of our lab space to collaborative spaces without built-in computers because the university can't afford the computers and the software anymore.

Both models – Developmental Thoughts

We must be intentional in developing the interdisciplinary classes/minors and we must be intentional in building schedules to serve the curriculum (we are having issues with that right now). We have to work tighter so students can get everything done. We have to schedule more classes outside of the 10:00am-2:00pm window.

Will students still be able to graduate early?

Faculty structure must also come into play when deciding on a new model.

We need to provide promotion and tenure credit for interdisciplinary developmental work across the university; new ways of thinking about tenure; changes in job responsibilities, etc.

A physical teaching and learning center would help enormously. Faculty (from across campus) need a place to gather, connect, and identify opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration.

Teaching credit-bearing courses is part of the job descriptions for three librarians, so we expect to still teach courses that satisfy the general education curriculum.

We know the students like the freedom of the AOIs, but we are the experts; it's OK to limit their options based on what we know about what they need. It's all about how we sell it.

Where does the Honors program fit into these models?

We need some lines tied to general education.

If the faculty thinks of the general education program as their own, the faculty will commit to the program (and promote it).

Administratively, what role will UCC/DCAC play in oversight? Given the current make-up of committees, we need an administrative unit to oversee the program.

With as different as all of the majors are, we have to maintain the freedom of each college to manage the path for students through the program.

The requirements in some majors might be affected by either model.

As it is, coaches have difficulty scheduling practices because of student schedules; we have to be cognizant of that fact.

For athletic eligibility, students must carry 12 hours and show progress toward a degree at a certain percentage each semester and year (i.e. 6 hours toward the major in each semester); eligibility and progress toward the degree could be very complicated.

Athlete transfers would be a bigger challenge.

It could be very difficult, if not impossible, to teach courses that both satisfy existing AOIs (which would have to be taught in the overlap years) and courses that meet new curricular requirement IF those are indeed different courses.

Committee Concerns – Preliminary Report

The above information was summarized and presented to the Executive Committee and Faculty Senate in November 2014. The Ad Hoc committee noted how most feedback included the words "if," "could" and "might." As the committee discussed the unknowns being referenced by those words, the committee came to the conclusion that attempts to verify the viability of the models were hampered at the university level. Issues discussed with Senate Exec included (but were not limited to):

- A lack of identity at the university level; is Drake a liberal arts university? If so, then the professional majors need to conform to the needs of the general education curriculum; if not (as we are structured), then a general education curriculum that is both broad and deep won't fit. Drake must clarify this and to commit to it.
- A lack of definition in what the outcomes of the general education curriculum need to be. Is the general education curriculum about being truly interdisciplinary? Is it about providing true depth in an area outside the major area of study? Is it about the breadth of a Liberal Arts education, and exposing professional students to the STEM disciplines and vice versa? Drake must identify this and to commit to it.
- A lack of commitment to the administration of the general education curriculum. The AOI system was excellent when it started, but suffered from "mission creep;" as time passed, the system veered away from the initial intentions because it did not have a central point of administration. Each of these models will fall prey to the same creep unless an administrative unit owns it. Without a home, either of these models will ultimately be neglected, as well. One person with multiple responsibilities can't do it; the job is too big and too important.
- A lack of resources to precipitate change. Either model will need both time and money.
- A fear that it is unwise to define the university and the curriculum when in leadership transition. Time could be spent addressing the methods needed for this paradigmatic shift, but it could be for naught if the new administration has a different vision for

Drake.

- A fear that the administrative program review currently under way could shift or reduce resources and may impact the ability to develop, implement and maintain either curriculum.

The committee felt that the recommended general education curriculum model must be as resource neutral as possible and must cause only modest changes as the new president acclimates to the university.

Additionally, the committee believed either one of these models will develop the problems of the AOIs unless the underlying issues are solved.

The committee also requested permission to explore developing a third model for consideration, perhaps based on the AOI system, in which:

- AOI categories would be reduced and redefined
- The FYS would regain the focus on writing
- Additional seminars would be created - perhaps a 2nd-YS and 3rd-YS - to address research/info literacy.

The committee noted that while the UCC recommended a change from the AOI system, Faculty Senate has not actually voted to dispose of the AOI system; they have simply acknowledged that it is broken.

The Executive Committee suggested the change of leadership, the administrative program review, and the need to be resource neutral not be considered at this time. The committee did, however, expand the charge of the Ad Hoc Committee to include:

1. Develop basic precepts upon which the General Education Curriculum must function beyond the credit-hour limitations already considered.
2. Develop a basic understanding of what the General Education Curriculum should provide for our students.
3. Look at the current curriculum (AOIs) and determine what works; explore the history/evolution of the system, why changes were made, why/when it became disconnected from the promise of the General Education Curriculum.
4. Explore an additional model, perhaps based on the AOI system, if we determine that's an appropriate and seemingly viable option.

Understandings and Precepts

Our understanding of what the General Education Curriculum should provide for our students follows the efforts of DCAC and includes:

- Communication Skills

- Analyzing Information Critically
- Social Perspectives / Engagement
- Creativity / Problem-Solving / Content Creation
- Support for the building and sustaining of academic communities providing for innovation and experimentation
- Experiential learning
- Interdisciplinary learning

Our understanding of the basic precepts upon which the General Education Curriculum must be built includes:

- Must be flexible to function within the credit-hour limitations of the most onerous majors (27 hours for most majors, a very small number of students have only 24 hours available)
- must be flexible to accommodate fluctuating enrollment
- must be flexible to allow transfer students to enter with some requirements filled or be able to finish in 2 years, including the transfer of AP/IB credits
- must not prevent the possibility of double majors or perhaps double degrees (currently more than 30% of students do so)
- must allow undeclared majors to sample various facets of the university in the first year without impeding their ability to graduate in 4 years
- must maintain the ability to sample various facets of the university throughout their career
- must maintain the ability to take courses in the curriculum of the chosen major in the first year
- must allow for Study Abroad, and for courses taken abroad to be considered to fill requirements in the general education curriculum
- must be structured in such a way that faculty, administration and staff will support this and participate in the development
- must continue to evolve, driven by data and informed analysis
- must be as resource-neutral as possible; resources are limited
- must uphold the mission as a liberal arts institution

Evolution of the Areas of Inquiry

An historical analysis of the current AOI system was developed (Appendix C). The rationale for each review of the curriculum seems apparent, as do the reasons for the problems in the curriculum.

Consistent themes through the years include:

- The need for shared understanding of learning goals
- The need for measures of progress/achievement with respect to goals
- The call for developmental sequencing of courses
- The desire for opportunities to integrate knowledge
- The complexity of the curriculum

Additionally, a review of the Qualtrics surveys sent to faculty at the time of the last curriculum review indicate they are more focused on responses to proposed changes to the curriculum, rather than responses to what is working and what needs attention in the curriculum.

Given this, and the understanding that the AOI system is viable since it is currently in place, the Ad Hoc committee opted to create a revitalized AOI model for consideration, as well.

Determinations

As a precursor, this committee feels strongly that the issues plaguing the AOI system will also plague any new model unless the circumstances causing these issues are identified and solved; most notably, accountability and oversight of the general education curriculum is vital.

Summary Analysis: Integrated Core

Integrated Core Description:

The following model was created by the committee, drawing from the Portland State model. However, the Portland State model is overly complex and too large to fit within the precepts given. The model below relies on a sequence of courses that would provide an intentional and developmental learning experience.

- Year 1 (6 credits):
 - Students complete the modified FYS two-course sequence
 - Communication Seminar
 - Research Seminar
 - The two courses above are assumed to contain components of information literacy and critical thinking.
 - These courses will be separate from students' major requirements.
- Years 1-4 (12-16 credits)
 - Students will also complete at least one course in each of the following disciplines:
 - Mathematics

- Natural Science
- History/Social Science
- Arts
- Years 2-4: (6 credits, perhaps more)
 - Students complete at least two* thematic/interdisciplinary courses
 - These courses will likely not be existing courses and must include aspects of the following
 - Engaged Citizenship
 - Global & Cultural Understanding/perspectives
 - Values and Ethics
 - These courses may be modeled after current Honors Program courses.
 - These courses will include experiential education
 - These courses will be separate from students' major requirements.
 - These courses could be cross-listed with major courses.
 - Ideally, students will complete the disciplinary courses in years 1, 2, and 3 with the thematic/interdisciplinary courses taken late in their time at Drake (years 3 or 4) so they can draw upon the disciplinary ideas in the thematic/interdisciplinary courses.

*The AOI system requires 11 courses. If only two thematic/interdisciplinary courses are required, this model requires 8 courses. Therefore, students could be expected to take up to 5 thematic/interdisciplinary courses, but because these courses will not count for major requirements, requiring five courses is likely untenable. However, only two thematic/interdisciplinary courses may be too few to realize the benefits of such courses.

Aspects of Integrated Core Implementation:

- Disciplinary courses in Mathematics, Natural Sciences, History/Social Science and Arts already exist as part of the AOI system, so little modification to the current system must occur for this aspect. However, full-scale implementation will likely require a review of existing courses in light of intended outcomes to ensure courses align with the Drake Curriculum.
- There will be implications for course enrollment, scheduling, and planning based on changes to the amount of AOI courses (e.g., reduction in history, science).
- For year one courses, the FYS already exists to emphasize writing. A second course, or set of courses, will need to be created for the research seminar component.
- Thematic/interdisciplinary courses will need to be created within the university. A robust implementation of thematic courses will require additional professional development and course development support.

However, incoming students will not need these courses until at least their sophomore year (preferably their junior or senior year) so at least a year is available for development once implementation begins with modified FYS courses.

- A robust implementation of experiential learning will require additional professional development and course development support.

Pros/Cons of Proposed Integrated Core:

- Pros

- Intentional curriculum design that is focused on Drake Mission and aligns the course sequence to achieve a smaller set of learning outcomes in a developmental progression.
- Incorporates four of the existing AOI categories to maintain multidisciplinary focus as well as ease transition and need for new courses.
- Revitalizes FYS to expand focus on skills students need to be successful at Drake University.
- Separate courses are created to increase the likelihood that students engage in interdisciplinary thinking rather than hoping students make connections across disciplinary courses.
- Reduction in AOI categories and not allowing the thematic/interdisciplinary courses to count toward major requirement means a reduced number of credit hours and more opportunities for students to take courses out of the major.

- Cons

- Creation of new courses requires instructors for these courses. We recommend that these instructors be full-time faculty.
- To maintain flexibility, some students will take the thematic/integrated courses in their sophomore year. This may limit instructors' ability to draw from disciplinary knowledge.
- Reduction in AOI categories and not allowing the thematic/interdisciplinary courses to count toward major requirement means students will take more courses out of the major.
- Need for ongoing structures (development, promotion and tenure, faculty and staff engagement with outcome areas) to promote successful integrative learning experiences. The developmental sequence relies on continued structures and support that push beyond traditional disciplinary areas of focus (e.g., applying courses taught for majors to the Drake Curriculum without intentional design).
- Model does not currently build on capstone experience or offer strategies to ensure capstone course aligns with curricular goals.

Our understanding of what the General Education Curriculum should provide for our students follows. This model fulfills all of these key provisos:

- Communication Skills
- Analyzing Information Critically
- Social Perspectives / Engagement
- Creativity / Problem-Solving / Content Creation
- Support for the building and sustaining of academic communities providing for innovation and experimentation
- Experiential learning
- Interdisciplinary learning

Our understanding of the basic precepts upon which the General Education Curriculum must be built follows. This model fulfills all of these key provisions; some will require thoughtful adaptation of the structure of the core, denoted with *.

- must be flexible to function within the credit-hour limitations of the most onerous majors (27 hours for most majors, a very small number of students have only 24 hours available)
- must be flexible to accommodate fluctuating enrollment
- must be flexible to allow transfer students to enter with some requirements filled or be able to finish in 2 years, including the transfer of AP/IB credit.*
- must not prevent the possibility of double majors or perhaps double degrees
- must allow undeclared majors to sample various facets of the university in the first year without impeding their ability to graduate in 4 years
- must maintain the ability to sample various facets of the university throughout their career
- must maintain the ability to take courses in the curriculum of the chosen major in first year
- must allow for Study Abroad, and for courses taken abroad to be considered to fill requirements in the general education curriculum
- must be structured in such a way that faculty, administration and staff will support this and participate in the development*
- must continue to evolve, driven by data and informed analysis*
- must be as resource-neutral as possible; resources are limited*
- must uphold the mission as a liberal arts institution

When developed as such, 100% of the committee agrees that this model is viable.

Summary Analysis: Majors/Minors (see also APPENDIX D)

After carefully reviewing the College of Idaho model and the comments received during the interviewing process, the Ad Hoc Committee decided that the College of Idaho model could work in the Drake environment, if carefully implemented and administered. This analysis considers that model, rather than the “Drake Concentrations” model discussed earlier.

Excerpt from 2013-14 UCC Report (APPENDIX A):

One example of the “major-minors” approach to general education is the PEAK (Professional, Ethical, Articulate, and Knowledgeable) program at the College of Idaho. The College of Idaho is a private, liberal arts college with an enrollment of 1,122 students. Its mission as a liberal arts institution and its academic structure are comparable to Drake University—and in many respects the institution could be considered a peer institution (Although the UCC noted that the demographics of its student body were not comparable).

In 2011, the College of Idaho chose to abandon its discipline-specific distribution model of curriculum in favor of a major-minors approach to general education. The impetus given for this change was a conscious decision to do away with “the aimless, cafeteria-style model of general education in which undergraduate students simply checked-off requirements for completion” (PEAK, 2013, p. 1).

The new model adopted by the College of Idaho required students to complete three minors in an area outside of their established major field of study. To promote experimentation and to ensure that students were choosing minors that broadened their horizons, the College organized its majors and minors offerings into four categories: 1) Humanities & Fine Arts, 2) Social Science & History, 3) Natural Sciences & mathematics, 4) Professional Studies and Enhancements. Students were then limited to selecting minors from outside of their major “category” of study.

To ensure that students acquired the practical knowledge and skills they needed to be successful in the 21st century, the College of Idaho mandated that faculty integrate four general learning outcomes into all coursework: Critical Thinking, Analytic Reasoning, Problem Solving, Written Communication.

What attracted the UCC to this model of general education was the fact that it combined a liberal arts education with professional studies in a unique way. It was noted by several committee members that the Drake Curriculum did the same—but in a less cohesive manner. The College of Idaho’s model also appealed to the UCC, because it allowed students to explore multiple areas of interest but also guaranteed a liberal and professional education—and because it allowed students to explore an “area of inquiry” more in-depth.

In our discussion of this the major-minors approach to general education, the UCC recognized that the number of semester hours required for a minor would need to be considered, if Drake were to adopt a similar model. The UCC also agreed that the concept of what a “minor is” would need to be re-envisioned if such a model were adopted. For example, in a professional school such as the School of Education, a minor in education might focus more on social foundations of schooling and the place of school in society than on professional preparation.

According to this Ad Hoc Committee, the understanding of what the General Education Curriculum should provide for our students follows. This model fulfills all of these key provisions:

- Communication Skills
- Analyzing Information Critically
- Social Perspectives / Engagement
- Creativity / Problem-Solving / Content Creation
- Support for the building and sustaining of academic communities providing for innovation and experimentation
- Experiential learning
- Interdisciplinary learning

Our understanding of the basic precepts upon which the General Education Curriculum must be built follows. This model fulfills all of these key provisions:

- must be flexible to function within the credit-hour limitations of the most onerous majors (27 hours for most majors, a very small number of students have only 24 hours available)
 - If the Majors-Minor model was adopted in its original form and students were required to earn three minors (15-18 credits each) *outside* of their major field of study, students would need to complete anywhere from 45-54 hours of general education coursework. This is significantly more than the number of hours currently required of students in the current AOI model (35 credit hours)*
 - If the Majors-Minor model was modified so that students were required to earn three minors (12 credits each) *outside* of their major field of study, students would need to complete anywhere from 36 hours of general education coursework. This would be nearly equivalent to the number of hours required of students in the current AOI model (35 credit hours)*

* It is important to note that, although students are required to complete 35 hours of general education credit within the current model, most students meet

these requirements by substituting a significant amount of coursework from their major field of study (anywhere from 6-12 hours).

- If the Majors-Minor model was modified so that students were required to earn two minors (12 credits each) *outside* of their major field of, students would need to complete 24 hours of general education coursework. This would be well below the number of hours required of students in the current AOI model, but more “in line” with the actual number of credits that students are completing when you take into consideration course substitutions.
 - It should be noted that a *significant modification* to the Major-Minors model, in terms of number of the credit hours required, would work against the original intention of this model, which is to give students a broad exposure to studies in the liberal arts.
- must be flexible to accommodate fluctuating enrollment
 - This model would not be affected if enrollment fluctuates.
 - must be flexible to allow transfer students to enter with some requirements filled or be able to finish in 2 years, including the transfer of AP/IB credit.
 - Depending on the amount and type of coursework taken by the student, the committee believes that it would be difficult for a third-year transfer student to complete all of the coursework required in this model in 2 years, regardless of the number of credits attributed to a minor.
 - must not prevent the possibility of double majors or perhaps double degrees
 - The Major-Minors model would actually enhance a student’s ability to earn a double-degree, in that students could apply coursework from a minor field of study towards a second major.
 - must allow undeclared majors to sample various facets of the university in the first year without impeding their ability to graduate in 4 years
 - Although, the committee could foresee how this model may limit course sampling by non-majors—and possibly result in some students taking coursework in an unwanted field of

study (in order to fulfill the requirement of an academic minor)—the committee feels that this model would not *overly prohibit* course sampling or be significantly detrimental to undeclared majors.

- must maintain the ability to sample various facets of the university throughout their career
 - A significant strength of the Major-Minors model is the fact that it *requires* students to sample a variety of programming across subject-disciplines.
- must maintain the ability to take courses in the curriculum of the chosen major in first year
 - This model would not prohibit students from taking coursework in their major field of study during their first-year. In fact, the model accommodates this.
- must allow for Study Abroad, and for courses taken abroad to be considered to fill requirements in the general education curriculum
 - The Major-Minors model would not limit students from taking the opportunity to study abroad, as long as study abroad coursework was applied to a student's major/minor program of study.
- must be structured in such a way that faculty, administration and staff will support this and participate in the development
 - Because this model is oriented around major/minor disciplines of study, faculty would play a significant role in its implementation.
- must continue to evolve, driven by data and informed analysis
 - By its very structure, the Major-Minors model of general education necessitates a more decentralized system of accountability, where individual faculty are responsible for teaching and assessing identified learning outcomes for students.
 - For example, to ensure that students acquired the practical knowledge and skills they needed to be successful in the 21st century, the College of Idaho mandated that faculty integrate four general learning outcomes into all

major/minor coursework: Critical Thinking, Analytic Reasoning, Problem Solving, Written Communication.

- must be as resource-neutral as possible; resources are limited
 - The Major-Minors model of general education would require: 1) less new course development and 2) less administrative oversight. The committee believes that this model would therefore be attractive, from a resources standpoint, to Drake faculty, administration, and staff.
- must uphold the mission as a liberal arts institution
 - Because it requires students to broadly explore disciplines outside of their major field of study, this model aligns with the mission of Drake as a liberal arts institution. The committee warns, however, that if a two minor conceptualization of this model become adopted—or if the number of credit hours required for a minor become less than 12—this would greatly reduce the ability of this model to fulfill its liberal arts mission.

As such, 100% of the committee agrees that this model is viable.

Model and Summary Analysis: Revitalized Areas of Inquiry: “Concentration-“ centric

First round: Reform the FYS Experience (Suggested Implementation: Pilot Fall 2016, Full in Fall 2017)

- A. Eliminate (at least) the following existing requirements/AOIs/Seminars:
 - a. Critical Thinking
 - b. FYS
 - c. Experiential Learning
- B. REPLACE with a two-course FY sequence (transfers would be exempt):
 - a. One Semester: Writing Seminar
 - b. Next Semester: Research / Experiential Seminar
- C. Outcomes: TBD:
 - a. Mission-centric
 - b. Concentrated on a basic level of skills/understanding to do higher-level integrative and experiential work

Second round: Re-vitalize through greater depth (Possible Implementation: Fall 2018 or 2019)

- A. Eliminate (at least) the current following AOI's / Seminars:
 - a. Information Literacy

- b. Engaged Citizen
- c. One History
- d. Multi-Cultural/Global
- e. One additional (perhaps Values/Ethics)
- B. Replace with:
 - a. A single 12-credit "concentration" that must be either Integrative in nature (e.g., Women's Studies) or truly multi-disciplinary (e.g., an Act Sci major must do a concentration in something like Art, and not in Accounting)
 - b. Could also be fulfilled by either a "true" minor or major that is in a different discipline
- C. Throughout, we keep the following AOI's:
 - a. Life Science
 - b. Physical Science
 - c. Quantitative Literacy
 - d. Artistic Experience
 - e. Historical Experience
 - f. Written Communication
- D. "New" and existing integrative concentrations would be reviewed (at the PROGRAM level, not at the course level) to emphasize:
 - a. Information literacy
 - b. Written and oral communication
 - c. Experiential learning
 - d. Project-based learning
 - e. Integrative learning
 - f. Developmental in nature
- E. Outcomes-based: TBD

Strengths:

- Allows for integration of liberal arts and professional programs, which ties into mission
- Allows for study abroad
- Allows flexibility in sequencing for part-time students
- Allows flexibility for professional schools in meeting rigorous accreditation standards
- Allows for dual degree programs
- Allows colleges and schools to develop guiding structures that provide intentional sequencing
- Allows colleges and schools to make decisions about how AOIs overlap with their curriculum (i.e. how many courses count toward both majors and AOIs)
- Allows all students to participate in the Drake curriculum (students changing majors, transfers, bringing credit)
- Provides a diverse set of experiences due to the large number of combinations available
- Flexibility allows students to meet their diverse individual needs

- Implementation would be less complex
- Implementation would be less disruptive than other models
- Requires fewer resources (resource neutral)
- Allows changes to curriculum to be incremental, potentially leading to less less risk of failure
- Allows for incremental, data-driven change over time
- Does not require a major curriculum change in current Drake environment, for which there may be limited support and capacity
- Provides a distinctive curriculum tied more clearly to mission
- Provides shared ownership of offering AOIs across colleges and schools - all offer courses that satisfy AOIs
- Allows for strong interdisciplinary focus
- Interdisciplinary courses can and do satisfy many AOIs, and more can be developed

Weaknesses:

- Need for shared understanding of learning goals
- Need for measures of progress/achievement with respect to goals
- Need for developmental sequencing of courses
- Need for opportunities to integrate knowledge
- Complexity of the curriculum
- Lack of accountability
- Some superfluous AOIs; they should be infused into all courses

Necessary Processes:

- Move to simplify and refine outcomes
- Limit number of outcomes for courses, as well as number of AOIs courses can satisfy
- System for measuring accountability (metrics, measuring mission-specific outcomes)
- Focus on mission and measurable outcomes
- revise functionality of UCC/DCAC to ensure faculty ownership of the general education curriculum with resources allocated to administrative support

As such, and given that an AOI system is currently in place, 100% of the committee agrees that this model is viable.

Conclusions

This committee has carefully considered all of the information summarized in this report. The differing points of view of the committee members led to rich discussion and a deep understanding of all of the approaches to general education presented in this report.

This understanding is, in fact, so complete that *this committee was able to envision ways to overcome any shortcomings or incompatibilities with any of these models*; with the proper structure and flexibility, any of these models can meet the needs of Drake University in the 21st century and beyond.

As such, a unanimous recommendation was not reached. The committee is split between the 3 models presented, with no model achieving a majority. While a recommendation was not required, it was an internal goal of this committee.

The committee is, however, in agreement that a new FYS is needed regardless of the model. Consistent curriculum and instruction, accountability and oversight are vital to the success of this seminar. The current difficulties in coordinating discussions among the many groups affected, including but not limited to academic units, UCC, DCAC and Faculty Senate, point to the need for a dedicated and focused administrative structure; not only for the FYS, but for the new general education curriculum as a whole.

It is also vital that the faculty support this effort. Without the faculty, no curriculum can succeed. Extensive efforts must be made to communicate with the faculty and staff; they must be educated about the benefits of this new curriculum, whatever it may be, both for the students and for themselves as teachers; this new model could create a very rewarding teaching and learning environment. Faculty and staff should be given the time and opportunity to develop a deep understanding of the model and why it was chosen.

Conversely, those developing this curriculum must listen to the concerns and needs of the faculty when developing this model. Naturally, it is impossible to make everyone happy, but we can't make anyone happy without taking concerns and needs into consideration.

The implementation of the new curriculum must also be planned as meticulously as the curriculum itself. An incremental roll-out, allowing for one year of implementation at a time over a 4-year period, not only would allow the new curriculum to be developed over time, but would allow for a gradual phasing out of the old curriculum. This avoids the need to maintain 2 complete general education curricula at the same time.

Furthermore, we operate in an extremely competitive environment; we must serve both the educational needs of the students and the goals of the students. Flexibility is a key component of our structure and is expected by prospective students; we must find a proper balance between general education and professional preparation within the capacities of this institution.

Ad Hoc Committee on General Education Curricular Reform

Report to Faculty Senate – March 11, 2015

APPENDIX A

The University Curriculum Committee, 2013-14 Report to the Drake University Faculty Senate

Committee Members: Todd Hodgkinson (Chair) (Education), Michael Andreski (Pharmacy), Bill Boal (Business), Maria Bohorquez (Chemistry), Lee Joliffe (Journalism), Marcia Keyser (Cowles Library), Karen Leroux (History), Joanna Mosser (Political Science), Daniele Shelton (Law), Arthur Sanders (Ex-officio member), Chrystal Stanley (CAAD representative),

Consulting Members: Kevin Saunders (Office of Institution Research & Assessment), Kevin Moenkhaus (Office of Student Records).

Introduction

In August of 2013, the Executive Committee of the Drake Faculty Senate charged the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) with reviewing the efficacy of its general education program, commonly referred to as the Drake Curriculum (appendix A). In addition to engaging in broad, theoretical discussions about the purposes of general education at a liberal arts institution, the UCC explored how the Drake Curriculum might be redefined in order to create a distinctive learning experience for all students. This report presents recommendations from the UCC to the Drake Faculty Senate along with the research and rationale upon which these recommendations were based.

Responding to the Charge

Initially, there was confusion by some UCC members (and some Drake faculty) over whether the Executive Committee wanted the UCC to conduct a comprehensive *review* of the Drake Curriculum or a comprehensive *reform* of the curriculum. Concerns regarding the impetus for curriculum reform soon followed, as did concerns over the limited timeframe for such an endeavor.

In response to these concerns, the Executive Committee emphasized that the UCC was *not* tasked with *reforming* the Drake Curriculum, but rather with *reviewing* its purposes and structure in an effort to determine its efficacy. It was further noted that ongoing curriculum review reflects best practice and that—whether or not the work of the UCC resulted in a reform of the Drake Curriculum—the time spent by the UCC in reviewing its efficacy would be time well spent.

After clarifying the expectations put forth by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, the UCC created four goals to help us accomplish our charge:

1. To review the body of literature on liberal arts and general education.

2. To gather data and feedback from Drake students and faculty on their perceptions of and experiences with the Drake Curriculum.
3. To review the Drake Curriculum (its purposes and structure) and identify points of pride, as well as areas for improvement.
4. To explore alternative approaches to general/liberal art education that could help to inform our own model.

Given our limited timeframe, the UCC decided to break up into four sub-committees—one for each goal. What follows is a report of our findings.

Review of Literature

In reviewing the body of literature on liberal arts and general education, the UCC identified several trends:

- A recognition that higher education is attempting to educate more students at a much higher level of learning than ever before—and that, this new cohort of college students is larger, more diverse, and probably less well prepared for college level learning than were cohorts in earlier eras. (LEAP, 2012)
- A conscious move away from “traditional” conceptualizations of liberal education and the abandonment of “learning for its own sake” in favor of “learning for practical value in the real-world.” (Humphreys, 2009).
- A move away from discipline-based distribution models of general education (Gaff, 1991).
- A push for greater “coherence” in general education experiences (Boning, 2007).
- A demand for greater accountability in higher education (Penn, 2011).

Although most committee members did not look favorably upon the shift away from “learning for the inherent value of learning”—it was acknowledged that the demographics of our student body are changing, that students and parents are looking for more “practical value” in their education, that colleges and universities are being held to new standards of accountability, and that Drake University needs to be responsive to the changing landscape of higher education.

One study that caught the UCC's attention was an analysis conducted by Bourke, et al. (2009) on how top liberal arts colleges and doctoral granting institutions structured their models of general education. Noting that the liberal arts have been a "great bastion of [higher] education for centuries," (p. 221) but that "precisely which subjects have been considered so essential that all students should be exposed to them has changed" (p. 222), Bourke, et al. (2009) explained how the liberal arts tradition has "morphed and transformed" into what we now know as the "general education requirements," taking shape through either a core curriculum or distribution model.

According to the authors, 80% of liberal arts colleges currently employ a distribution model of general education; however, not all of these models included the same types of course requirements. For example, some distribution models included more traditional liberal arts requirements (e.g., coursework in the humanities and sciences, etc.), while others incorporated a range of coursework focusing on traditional liberal arts, as well as on courses designed to promote skills like written and oral communication.

The UCC recognized this shift away from the liberal arts—towards a more practical approach to general education rooted in pervasive skills (e.g., critical thinking, writing, oral communication, quantitative reasoning, etc.) and noted that, in many respects, the Drake Curriculum reflects this "hybridized" approach to general education.

It was also noted in the literature that, for too many undergraduates, this distributive model of curriculum amounts to "required electives," largely because many student fail to see how they fit into a coherent whole, (Irvine Group, 1990). As a result, many institutions have worked to implement "across-the-curriculum" themes to provide coherence to their general education curriculum.

In the name of coherence (Boning, 2007), other institutions have moved towards a core approach to general education, where students take a purposely-sequenced core of courses during their four years of study.

The UCC found both of these trends intriguing, mostly because they worked to give purpose to general education, and because they allowed for a greater focus on student developmental needs.

An additional point of discussion that resulted from our review of literature focused on a recent initiative meant to combine liberal education with the acquisition of professional knowledge and skills (Humphreys, 2009; Albertine, 2012).

Endorsed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) and launched in 2005, the LEAP initiative "challenges the traditional practice of providing liberal education to some students and narrow training to others" (AACU, 2013).

According to Humphreys (2009):

The LEAP vision updates, as well as demonstrably builds on, the enduring aims of liberal education: broad knowledge, strong intellectual skills, and a grounded sense of ethical and civic responsibility. But LEAP also moves beyond the traditional limits of liberal or liberal arts education—moving most notably away from the self-imposed non vocational identity and rejecting the more recent association with learning for its own sake, rather than learning for its practical value in real-world contexts” (p. 16)

The LEAP initiative also promotes ongoing assessment of four essential learning outcomes (Appendix B) and the integration of “High Impact Practices” (Ishler, 2003, p. 1), including but not limited to: first-years seminars, collaborative and experiential learning, internships, capstone projects, writing intensive coursework, and project-based learning.

Although the UCC appreciated the vision of the LEAP initiative, some committee members questioned whether or not a model of general education could accomplish all of its “essential outcomes.” Other committee members expressed a concern about the LEAP initiative’s focus on “professional skills”, arguing that college was an exploratory time for students to discover their passions and test ideas—not solely to prepare for a career. Still other members praised the LEAP outcomes and suggested that, in many respects the current incarnation of the Drake Curriculum reflected a conscious effort at achieving them.

Student and Faculty Perspectives

To help inform our recommendations, the UCC made a concerted effort to engage students and faculty in sharing their perspectives on and experiences with the Drake Curriculum. It should be noted that members of the Office of Institutional Research & Assessment helped to conduct focus group interviews with Drake upperclassman (Appendix C) and that an open forum was held to gather input from faculty about the Drake Curriculum. Faculty were also encouraged to post their comments about the Drake Curriculum Review on the Faculty Senate webpage—and several faculty members made a concerted effort to reach out to UCC members to share their ideas. What follows is a detailed description of the points of pride and expressed concerns identified by students and faculty.

Many faculty and students liked how the Drake Curriculum allowed for a great degree of flexibility. Students, especially, liked how many of the Area of Inquiry (AOI) requirements counted for requisites in their major field of study. Students also liked the fact that they could choose from a menu of options—and how the AOI courses expanded their horizons by forcing them to take coursework outside of their major. Others saw a benefit in taking courses with a mix of majors and non-majors.

Several students praised the experience they had in their First-year Seminar course; others claimed that the Senior Capstone experience was their favorite part of the Drake Curriculum.

Students and faculty also liked how the Drake Curriculum allowed for a liberal arts education but also emphasized “21st Century learning skills”, such as: information literacy, communication, and engaged citizenship.

However, not all perceptions of and experiences with the Drake Curriculum were favorable. In fact, several students and faculty expressed dissatisfaction with their AOI experience.

Some students believed that the system of AOI requirements was too complex and that it lacked “cohesiveness.” Students and faculty also wondered about the purpose of some AOI requirements. For example, one student wondered why they needed to take two history requirements. Another failed to see why they needed to take an artistic experience at all. Yet another student questioned why her experiences studying abroad could not count for the “Global and Cultural Understanding” AOI.

In our conversations with faculty, many called into question the need for a category in Critical Thinking. In the words of one faculty member, “Critical thinking is a skill that should be integrated into all courses at Drake...not designated to a single category.”

Another frequent criticism of the Drake Curriculum was its lack of rigor. When compared with coursework in their major, several students claimed that their AOI courses were “not very challenging.” Others admitted to taking specific courses, because they were “easy.”

On more than one occasion, students admitted to not being interested in their AOI courses, and some students confessed that they were “just getting the credits out of the way.” Students also expressed frustration with the AOI requirements, and how they “took away” from courses that they “actually cared about.”

Several students commented on how courses intended for majors were extremely difficult for non-majors who might not have the appropriate background knowledge or interest in the topic. They also noted that faculty teaching these courses had mixed expectations for students.

Some students and faculty expressed concerns about the availability AOI coursework, especially in certain categories: Values and Ethics, Artistic Experience, Engaged Citizen, and Information Literacy; however, many students claimed that they did not have great difficulty getting into AOI courses.

Other students found that the published list of AOI offerings on the Drake Curriculum website differed greatly from the designations found in BlueView during registration.

Some faculty expressed concerns about the fact that a single AOI course can “count” for two different sets of AOI requirements; however, others faculty liked this dynamic of the Drake Curriculum, because it allowed students to complete the requirements sooner and take more classes in their major.

Other faculty believed that the Drake Curriculum had strayed from its original purposes, citing the fact that many students transferred in credit or substituted credit from coursework in their majors.

Drake Student Survey (DSS), the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), and the Wabash College Report

In our review of the Drake Curriculum, the UCC also considered data provided to us by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA).

Since 1991, the OIRA has administered the Drake Student Survey (DSS) as a way to assessing student satisfaction and the perceived effectiveness of specific components of the Drake curriculum. In spring of 2011, the DSS was administered to undergraduate and Pharmacy students via the Internet. On this survey, Drake students were asked to report their perception of whether their skills had become “better or worse in each of the general education (AOI) areas since enrolling at the institution” (Appendix D).

The results this analysis show that 83% of Drake students believe their ability to “acquire, analyze, & interpret information” improved by taking AOI coursework, that 77% of students felt their ability to “raise questions about ethical issues in their field of study” was enhanced, and 75-76% of students felt that their ability to “evaluate and construct reasoned arguments” improved after taking AOI coursework.

Unfortunately, only 55% of students reported that their ability to “understand historical developments of periods and regions” increased after taking AOI coursework, and 35% of students reported that their ability to “interpret art” improved.

It is important to note that there was considerable variation on items across schools and colleges in this report. For example, 75% of students in the School of Journalism felt their ability to “participate in the democratic process” was “better or much better,” but only 42% of the students in the College of Pharmacy felt the same. Similarly, 75% of students in the College of Business and 70% of students in the College of Pharmacy felt their ability to “execute appropriate mathematical operations for a given question” had improved since

taking AOI coursework, but only 39% of students in the School of Education and 36% of students in the School of Journalism believed this was the case.

This large variation across colleges suggests that students could be mastering the learning outcomes connected with the Drake Area of Inquiry requirements (AOI) in their major field of study. If this is the case, the committee wondered if the Drake Curriculum was achieving its intentions.

Of course, these results may also reflect the limited amount of time that students spend mastering the learning outcomes tied to each AOI. For example, students in Education are only required to take one math course in their program of study (The AOI Quantitative Literacy requirement). Students in Pharmacy, on the other hand, take several courses in mathematics, in addition to completing the Quantitative Literacy requirement. Given this possibility, the UCC wondered about the value in requiring a single AOI.

In addition to reviewing the results of the Drake Student Survey (DSS), UCC also considered results from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) (Appendix D).

Administered bi-annually, this survey attempts to provide institutions with data on students' engagement in effective learning practices. The results of the NSSE for 2013 show that, compared to students at peer institutions, Drake seniors report lower levels of "understanding people of other backgrounds". First year students also scored lower than students from peer institutions on "writing clearly and effectively" and on "developing or clarifying a personal code of values or ethics."

Both first-year students and Drake seniors responded lower on: "Combining ideas from different courses when completing assignments", "Including diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments," "Examining the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue," "Trying to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective", and "Learning something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept."

The UCC noted how these findings mirrored those of the Drake Curriculum and Assessment Committee's (DCAC), in their assessment of the "Critical Thinking" and "Global and Cultural Understanding" AOI learning outcomes. Analyzing student work samples, DCAC found that

Drake students struggle in the areas of “understanding others’ perspectives, identifying their own assumptions, and making arguments” (Appendix D).

Given that the Drake Curriculum is intentionally designed to increase student achievement in each of the above-mentioned areas, the UCC found the results of the NSSE survey disconcerting. The committee was also troubled that “academic challenge” appeared to be a problem for Drake seniors—although this result was not surprising, based on the results of the OIRA student focus groups. What was more surprising—and equally alarming—was the fact that first-year Drake students claimed to rarely be exposed to “reflective and integrative learning experiences.”

The UCC also took into consideration the findings of a working group hired to conduct an external review of Drake’s assessment practices. In their report to Drake University, members from the Wabash College Center for Inquiry concluded that Drake’s general program was “virtually impossible to assess” (Appendix D). The rationale given for this conclusion was that the Drake Curriculum targeted 40 learning outcomes (spread out over 10 categories). This finding struck a chord with members of the UCC, and it was decided that—if a reform of the Drake Curriculum were to occur—an emphasis should be placed on either streamlining the number of identified learning outcomes or considering a less structured approach to assessment.

Analysis of the Drake Curriculum

In our analysis of the Drake Curriculum, the UCC identified several points of pride, as well as several concerns.

Points of Pride:

- Allows for a great amount of choice.
- Gives students the freedom to explore personal interests, while exposing them to a liberal arts education.
- Emphasizes 21st Century skills (critical thinking, written communication, information literacy, etc.)
- Allows for students to count major coursework towards general education requirements.

Expressed Concerns:

- Lacks rigor and relevancy.
- Has deviated from its original intentions (e.g., transfer coursework counting AOI credit, major coursework counting for two AOI requirements).
- Too complex (Conceptual framework)
- Too many course offerings in some AOI categories (History, Global and Cultural Understanding); too few in others (Artistic Experience, Values and Ethics, and Information Literacy.)
- Too ambitious (Hybridized model attempts to provide both a liberal arts and “ways of thinking” experience.)
- Lacks cohesiveness.
- Perpetuates a “checklist mentality.”
- Is difficult to assess (10 separate AOI categories with 39 outcomes).
- Has failed to achieve its desired learning outcomes.

Alternative Models for General Education

In addition to reviewing the literature on liberal arts and general education—and considering data points on student and faculty experiences with and perceptions of the Drake Curriculum—the UCC also explored several alternative models or approaches to general education (Appendix E). Our purpose in doing so was not to search for a replacement to the Drake Curriculum, but to provide the committee with context for its analysis.

In addition to exploring several “promising models” identified by the AACU, the committee also looked at models from “peer institutions.” Considerable attention was given to the academic structure of each institution, its mission, the demographics of its student body, its geographic location, and its student-faculty ratio, in an effort to “match” these institutions with the context of Drake.

In our analysis of alternative models of liberal arts and general educations, the UCC identified several trends and/or themes:

- A trend away from disciplinary-centered, distributive models of general education.
- A focus on integrative coursework that invites cross-disciplinary reflection and action upon a common theme or problem.
- Linked/clustered courses that invited students to explore a common theme from a multi-disciplinary perspective.
- Sequenced curricula designed to span a student's four-year experience.
- A focus on academic skills development (e.g., writing, speaking) across the curriculum.
- An emphasis on fostering students' ability to think and act across disciplinary boundaries.
- An emphasis on outcomes-based assessment targeting identified learning outcomes.

The UCC also noticed a wide array of implementation models—ranging from “modified” distributed models (i.e. the Drake Curriculum), to common core models, to decentralized approaches to general education.

In the end, the committee kept returning to two models that could help to inform Drake's own approach to general education. These were: a “major-minors” approach to general education and an “integrative core” approach. Both of these models are described in detail below.

Major-Minors Model

One example of the “major-minors” approach to general education is the PEAK (Professional, Ethical, Articulate, and Knowledgeable) program at the College of Idaho (Appendix E). The College of Idaho is a private, liberal arts college with an enrollment of 1,122 students. Its mission as a liberal arts institution and its academic structure are comparable to Drake University—and in many respects the institution could be considered a peer institution (Although the UCC noted that the demographics of its student body were not comparable).

In 2011, the College of Idaho chose to abandon its discipline-specific distribution model of curriculum in favor of a major-minors approach to general education. The impetus given for this change was a conscious decision to do away with “the aimless, cafeteria-style model of general education in which undergraduate students simply checked-off requirements for completion” (PEAK, 2013, p. 1).

The new model adopted by the College of Idaho required students to complete three minors in an area outside of their established major field of study. To promote experimentation and to ensure that students were choosing minors that broadened their horizons, the College organized its majors and minors offerings into four categories: 1) Humanities & Fine Arts, 2) Social Science & History, 3) Natural Sciences & mathematics, 4) Professional Studies and Enhancements. Students were then limited to selecting minors from outside of their major “category” of study.

To ensure that students acquired the practical knowledge and skills they needed to be successful in the 21st century, the College of Idaho mandated that faculty integrate four general learning outcomes into all coursework: Critical Thinking, Analytic Reasoning, Problem Solving, Written Communication.

What attracted the UCC to this model of general education was the fact that it combined a liberal arts education with professional studies in a unique way. It was noted by several committee members that the Drake Curriculum did the same—but in a less cohesive manner.

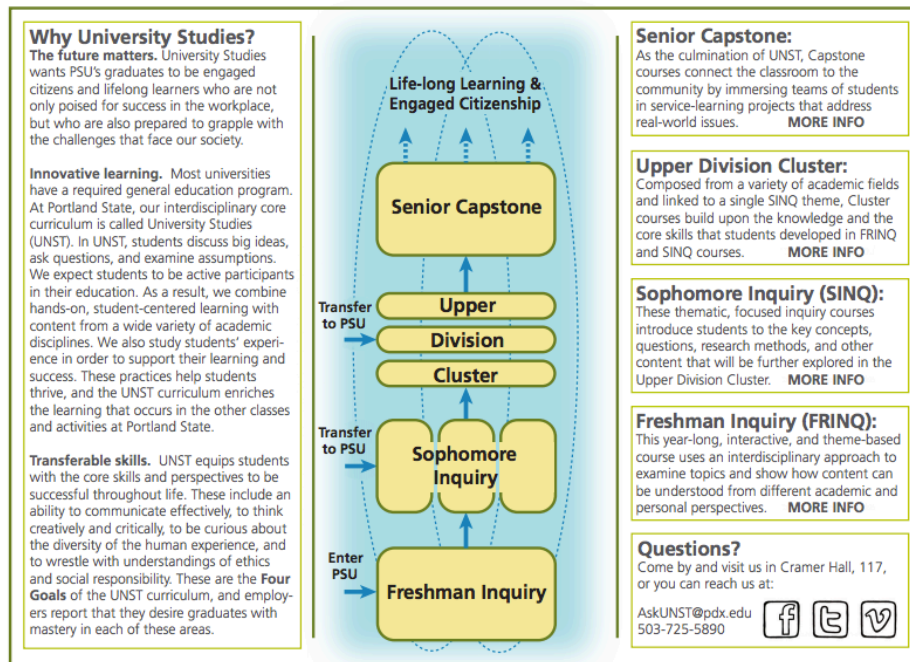
The College of Idaho’s model also appealed to the UCC, because it allowed students to explore multiple areas of interest but also guaranteed a liberal and professional education—and because it allowed students to explore an “area of inquiry” more in-depth.

In our discussion of this the major-minors approach to general education, the UCC recognized that the number of semester hours required for a minor would need to be considered, if Drake were to adopt a similar model. The UCC also agreed that the concept of what a “minor is” would to be re-envisioned if such a model were adopted. For example, in a professional school such as the School of Education, a minor in education might focus more on social foundations of schooling and the place of school in society than on professional preparation.

Integrated Core Curriculum (Emphasizing Pervasive Skills and Ways of Thinking)

As evidenced by its name, students involved with this approach to general education take a prescribed set of “core” of courses over four years. This coursework is typically interdisciplinary in nature (although it does not have to be), organized around themes to encourage “connection-making,” and purposefully sequenced to target the developmental needs of students. Courses are also designed to teach students a specific set of core knowledge and skills (e.g., problem solving, information literacy, systems thinking, etc.)

One example of an Integrated Core approach to general education can be found at Portland State University (Appendix E). As illustrated in the figure below, Freshman begin with a year-long “inquiry” in which they explore topics from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. Students continue this type of inquiry in their sophomore and junior years and conclude their general education experience by completing a Senior capstone project in their community.



Source: Portland State University. Retrieved from <https://www.pdx.edu/unst/home> on February 25th, 2014.

Another example of this approach to general education is at Fairleigh Dickenson University (Appendix E). In addition to taking several distributed courses in the liberal arts, students are required to complete a set of purposely-designed, seminar-based courses organized around four themes (Perspectives on the Individual, The American Experience, Cross-Cultural Perspectives, and Global Issues).

An obvious benefit to this approach to general education is its intentional structure. Given that all students are required to complete the five core courses, it guarantees that students experience a cohesive general education curriculum.

Another benefit to this model is that it allows faculty to be more purposeful in their curriculum design. Faculty teaching in such a model could better target the developmental needs of students and work purposely to scaffold their instruction.

It should be noted that, although the UCC found this model of general education attractive for its cohesiveness and emphasis on the developmental needs of students, the UCC also recognized that the implementation of an integrative core curriculum approach would require an inordinate number of resources (both human and financial). The committee also questioned the extent to which such a model “fits” within our mission to provide a liberal arts education for all students.

Attributes of a Distinct Drake Curriculum

In its charge, the Faculty Senate asked the UCC to develop a list of attributes (including both skills and knowledge) that were both critical for a distinctive general education curriculum and aligned with Drake University’s mission and 2013-17 strategic plan. If a reform of the Drake Curriculum is to occur, we believe that a “truly distinctive” general education curriculum would:

- Realize the mission of the university to integrate liberal arts education with professional preparation for all students.
- Emphasize the acquisition of 21st Century learning skills and dispositions (e.g., systems thinking, communication skills, information literacy, personal and social responsibility, etc.) and incorporate best practices in teaching and learning (integrative and applied learning, ongoing reflection, etc.)
- Have a simple conceptual framework that could be explained in a clear, compelling way.
- Encourage students to experiment broadly outside their major and develop interests to be pursued in their years beyond college, while giving some coherence to that experimentation.
- Be considerate of the developmental needs of students.
- Discourage the “checklist/requirement” mentality, often associated with distribution models of general education.
- Be taught by existing faculty in the disciplines, interdisciplinary programs, and professional schools, without a large investment in faculty development or in additional hiring.
- Preserve and build on existing FYS and Senior Capstone experiences.

- Maintain or reduce to the current number of credits required to complete the general education curriculum.
- Decentralize the teaching and assessment of pervasive thinking skills to the colleges and schools.

Recommendations

After reviewing the current body of literature on liberal arts and general education—and after enlisting feedback from Drake students/faculty and analyzing data on student achievement—the UCC has come to the following recommendations:

Recommendation #1: *Vote to approve a comprehensive revision of the Drake Curriculum.*

Option # 1: Improve the efficacy of the existing Drake Curriculum by:

- Exploring ways to inform students about the larger purposes of the Drake Curriculum.
- Determining if students are unable to enroll in specific Area of Inquiry requirements and, if so, why this might be.
- Working to increase the number of AOI offerings, where needed.
- Working to improve the quality of AOI course offerings, focusing on High Impact Learning practices (integrative and collaborative learning).
- Reducing the number of AOI categories.
- Re-considering the number of AOI requirements a course can fulfill.
- Reducing the number of learning outcomes associated with general program.
- Decentralizing more curricular authority and responsibility to the departments and programs.

Option # 2: Embrace an alternative model of general education.

In our analysis of the Drake Curriculum, the UCC found that some students failed to see the purpose and value of general education at Drake. Others perceived the Area of Inquiry (AOI) requirements as “extraneous” and “burdensome.” The UCC also noted that, for many students and faculty, the Drake Curriculum “lacked cohesion.” For these reasons, as well as others stated in this report, the UCC recommends that the Drake Faculty Senate consider adopting an alternative model of general education.

As we outlined in our report, two alternative approaches to general education appealed to the UCC. The first was a “major-minors” approach to general education. The second was an “integrated core” approach.

The UCC believes that transitioning to a major-minors approach to general education would be easier and require a fewer resources (both human and financial) than an integrative “core” approach to general education; however, we also believe that both of these models would provide a more cohesive general education experience for students—and build on the positive experiences that Drake students and faculty have had in the current Drake Curriculum (e.g., FYS, Senior Capstone).

Recommendation #2: Vote to establish a working group to revise the Drake Curriculum.

If the Faculty Senate votes to approve a comprehensive revision of the Drake Curriculum—or to pursue the development of an alternative model of general education—it is the recommendation of the committee that a “working group” be established to carry out this reform. It is the opinion of the UCC that this working group not be an existing committee (e.g., UCC, DCAC, etc.) The UCC also recommends that this working group include a wide range of constituents, including but not limited to: members of the UCC, the Drake Curriculum and Assessment Committee (DCAC), representatives from the six colleges and schools at Drake University, and representatives from various administrative offices

Summary

The University Curriculum Committee has offered a set of recommendations for a revision to the Drake Curriculum that draws from current research, is responsive to the context and aspirations of our students, and is guided by a clear purpose that underlies its goals and strategies. We are convinced that our recommendations address several institutional issues, including: the challenges associated with preparing students for the workplace at a liberal arts institution, parent and student concerns about the value of higher education, student satisfaction and retention, and student achievement.

Comprehensive curriculum reform is a multi-stage, long-term process—beginning with a decision to adopt a reform and continuing with its design, implementation, and assessment (Academic Leadership Learning Collaborative, 2010). With this in mind, it should be noted that our recommendations were consciously and deliberately developed to reflect the

mission of our institution and the needs of our student body. We believe that a revision of the Drake Curriculum will not only lead to significant enhancements in our students' learning but also increase the university's reputation as a quality institution for higher learning.

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Motion: Create an Ad Hoc Committee on General Education Curricular Reform

The Ad Hoc Committee on General Education Curricular Reform is charged with investigating the viability (with a view to both resources implications and implementation considerations) of the alternative models of general education identified by the University Curriculum committee in its March 12, 2014 report to Faculty Senate.

Consistent with the UCC Recommendations, this Ad Hoc Committee shall include a wide range of constituents, including representatives from the UCC, the Drake Curriculum and Assessment Committee (DCAC), representatives from the six colleges and schools at Drake University, and representatives from various administrative offices. Per a recommendation submitted to the Senate Executive Committee by DCAC, the Ad Hoc Committee shall also include student representatives. The membership of this committee shall be selected by the 2014-15 Senate Executive Committee with input from the respective academic units.

There is an expectation the Ad Hoc Committee will submit a preliminary report to Senate Executive Committee in November 2014 and a final report by March 2015.

Rationale:

This motion concurs with the point made in the UCC Report (Recommendation #1, Option 2) that, assuming viability in the Drake context, both of the alternative models it identified could provide a more cohesive general education experience for students and could build on the positive experiences that Drake students and faculty have had in the current Drake Curriculum (e.g., FYS, Senior Capstone).

This motion also is supported by key findings of the Wabash Report regarding challenges to assessment posed by the Drake Curriculum, including the argument that it is a general education curriculum that ‘will be virtually impossible to assess.’ The Wabash Report characterizes the Drake Curriculum as one with a complex structure, including ten AOIs with 40 outcomes that “should be covered in various combinations of 12 courses selected from a list of over 500 courses.” It further comments on the varying class sizes and pedagogies in AOI courses that are likely to hinder the curriculum’s ability to promote the development intended learning outcomes.

Although the UCC report (Recommendation #1, Option 1) also indicated that the revision of the existing Drake Curriculum might be pursued as a means to address the limitations of the Drake Curriculum while preserving its benefits, this motion reflects the view that a bolder response is warranted. Whereas certain potential revisions identified by the UCC (for example, reducing the number of AOI categories or reducing the number of categories a particular course can fill) would reduce the complexity of the AOI system, such revisions risk reinforcing turf-consciousness and silo mentalities to the extent that some AOI categories would be subject to elimination (or reduction in the number of course offerings) while others would not. The UCC recommendation to revise the Drake Curriculum by increasing the number of AOI course offerings might exacerbate the complexity of the AOI system, already criticized by the Wabash Report as having so many course options that it undermines the purposefulness of the general education system. Other recommendations for revision have merit and can be pursued through existing systems and committee structures even while an Ad Hoc Committee on Curricular Reform investigates a broader potential curricular reform. For example, it is already within the purview of the UCC to explore reducing the number of learning outcomes associated with particular Areas of Inquiry, a potential revision identified in the UCC report.

In summary, this motion does not preclude efforts to improve the Drake Curriculum via minor revisions and does not presume that the Faculty Senate ultimately will approve the adoption of an alternative model. The motion does seek to create space for the possibility of more ambitious change by creating a committee charged with conducting an in-depth examination of the resource implications and potential implementation challenges to inform future action by Faculty Senate on the question of curricular reform.

Ad Hoc Committee on General Education Curricular Reform

Report to Faculty Senate – March 11, 2015

APPENDIX B

The Ad Hoc Committee on General Education Curricular Reform needs your help.

This committee is charged with investigating the viability (with a view to both resources implications and implementation considerations) of the alternative models of general education identified by the University Curriculum committee in its March 12, 2014 report to Faculty Senate.

To effectively meet this challenge, the Ad Hoc Committee needs to collect data from a wide variety of academic and administrative offices. As such, a committee member will contact you during the week of October 20 to schedule a meeting. During that meeting, the representative will ask you several questions about each of the models; those questions are included below; the goal is to gather objective and quantitative information from your department about each model.

Below, you will find an explanation of each model and the questions we are posing at this point of our process; in preparation for the meeting with the Ad Hoc committee representative, we ask that you please review both the models and the questions.

After reviewing this information, you may decide to pass this information along to others in your unit, include them in your meeting with the committee representative, or suggest individual meetings with others. We welcome any and all methods you feel will be the most efficient and effective way possible to provide us with the information we are requesting.

Based on the results of these initial questions, more specific questions will follow in the coming months.

As stated above, the committee is currently gathering objective and quantitative information. This committee is tasked only with determining the viability of the models and, as such, is required to keep bias out of the equation. It is only by remaining unbiased that an effective, credible investigation can be completed.

We understand that everyone on campus will have a personal opinion about what may or may not work for Drake. It is expected that Faculty Senate will provide an opportunity for those opinions to be voiced, once it is determined that these models are (or are not) viable. But this committee will not be collecting such feedback at this time.

Thank you for your assistance in this very important process.

Sincerely,

Sandy Henry, chair

Ad Hoc Committee on General Education Curricular Reform

Alternative models of general education as determined by the University Curriculum Committee

Two models are being reviewed: an Integrated Core, based on the general education curriculum at Portland State University; and a Majors/Minors model, a modified version of the general education curriculum in place at College of Idaho. As presented below, each model meets the promise of our general education curriculum, provides depth of study in an area of interest to the student outside of the primary unit of study, and provides an intentional, interdisciplinary course of study.

It appears that each model fits within the general credit hour limitations of every major on campus.

It is important to note that current AOI courses can continue to be taught as part of these models, and that there are current courses and concentrations already in existence that can fill the new and specific needs of these models.

The Integrated Core

Summary:

- First Year
 - 2 semesters of FYS, including writing, public speaking, research and computer skills
- Second Year
 - 3 – 3-credit-hour courses chosen from the list of 15 interdisciplinary classes
- Third Year
 - 3 – 3-credit-hours courses from the cluster of courses related to one of the Second Year courses taken
- Fourth Year
 - Senior Capstone

The Integrated Core is designed to span all four years of the student's academic career, although adjustments/reductions are allowed for transfer students at each step of the process. There is some flexibility in when these courses are taken. It requires 27 credit hours to complete.

First-year students engage in two semesters of Freshman Inquiry. This is similar to the FYS currently in place, but it is longer and includes study in public speaking, research and computer skills, in addition to the current emphasis on writing.

Second-year students engage in three semester-long courses chosen from a list of 15 interdisciplinary classes in categories defined by the university. Existing courses may fit

this mold, but collaboration will be necessary among faculty across academic units to create courses to fill this need.

Third-year students choose one of the categories from which they took a class during their second year to pursue in-depth study. The student chooses 3 “cluster” courses from that category. This is not unlike our AOI system in which courses will need to be “qualified” for a specific cluster. Existing or new classes can fit this mold.

For example: In the second year, a student takes *Popular Culture, Interpreting the Past* and *American Identities*. The student really enjoys *Interpreting the Past*, so during the third year, the student takes *Greek History, 19th Century Art* and *European Prehistory*, all of which are part of the *Interpreting the Past* cluster.

In the final year of student, the student completes a senior capstone, which will most likely continue to look like our current capstone experiences.

The Majors/Minors model (Drake Concentrations)

Summary:

- First Year, first semester
 - 3-credit-hour FYS, possibly modified
- First Year, second semester, through Fourth Year
 - Interdisciplinary concentration
 - 9 credit hours in a prescribed area
 - Another concentration; student choice
 - Interdisciplinary in a second prescribed area
 - Traditional minor outside of the primary area of study
- Fourth Year
 - Senior Capstone

The Majors/Minors model as it exists at College of Idaho cannot be implemented at Drake University, as it requires too many credit hours to fit within some of our majors. This Ad Hoc committee has modified the model to fit not only those limitations but also to provide an intentionally interdisciplinary component to the model; College of Idaho requires students to study in areas outside their discipline, but the choices made by students can be random in nature.

The committee has been calling this modified model “Drake Concentrations,” to avoid confusion with our traditional minors. The Drake Concentrations are not as prescriptive as the Integrated Core, but will require 24 credit hours to complete; with the Senior Capstone, the total number of hours is 27. As such, students will probably be taking these courses during all four years at Drake.

In this model, the majors at Drake do not change and the traditional minors do not change. Any number of interdisciplinary concentrations will need to be developed, which will include an FYS. Students will be required to complete 2 concentrations of 12 hours each, with at least one of those being an interdisciplinary concentration. The second concentration can be a traditional minor if the student so chooses. If taking a traditional minor, the minor must be outside of the primary department of study (as defined by that department). The Senior Capstone is expected to continue as part of the major course of study, but is not a part of these concentrations.

This model can also incorporate new concentrations created by units that are NOT traditional minors.

Ad Hoc Committee on General Education Curricular Reform Interview Questions – October 2014

a. Human Resources

- i. Describe the human resources needed in your unit to implement and sustain each model.
- ii. What barriers do you see given your current staffing levels?
- iii. What new opportunities do you see for staffing in each of these models?
- iv. Within the last two years, your unit has offered AOIs.
 1. If the AOI requirements didn't exist, how many fewer sections of these courses would you teach?
 2. What other non-AOI needs are filled by these courses?

b. Capital Resources

- i. What types of support would be necessary for faculty to be able to deliver this curriculum (e.g., faculty development, course design, new hires, faculty reassignment, administrative support)?
- ii. Describe resource constraints that you could anticipate in implementing each model.
- iii. What institutional resources would be needed to enhance successful
- iv. implementation (e.g., technology, space, teaching and learning center)?

c. Student impact

- i. What specific issues do you see when thinking about the impact of each model on students (e.g., program requirements, value and applicability of skills, resources for transition)?
- ii. What specific opportunities do you see when thinking about the impact of each model on students (e.g., program requirements, value and applicability of skills, resources for transition)?

- iii. What issues or opportunities arise in each model when considering non-traditional, transfer or part-time students?
- iv. Can you share a specific example that demonstrates how each model might impact students?

d. Broader Impacts

- i. What are other issues or areas that need to be considered?
- ii. What institutional policies and practices might be affected?

Ad Hoc Committee on General Education Curricular Reform

Report to Faculty Senate – March 11, 2015

APPENDIX C

Selected Faculty Senate Action: a Drake Curriculum History Summary

1996	April	University General Education committee report submitted which called for the elimination of academic unit specific general education requirements
1997	May	Faculty Senate accepts recommendations and endorses General Education Proposal (Communication, Critical Thinking, Artistic Experience, Historical Consciousness, Information and Technology Literacy, International and Multicultural Experiences, Science and Quantitative Literacy, Values and Ethics)
Within the 1996-98 General Catalog, the colleges and schools individually outlined their General Education requirements.		
1998	May	Faculty Senate adopted the Drake Curriculum with proviso of ratification by general faculty vote. Designated a minimum of 30 credit hours for general education.
1998	Sept	General Faculty voted ratification of Drake Curriculum; Pre-approved Outcome Paths (POP's) and Individual Outcome Paths (IOPs). Outcome descriptions updated.
1998-99		Outcome Committees developed course and non-course requirements; Also, colleges/schools were solicited courses for the Outcome requirements
1999	May	Outcomes Path A and Path B were created; Path A was a set of flagged-pre-approved courses and Path B involved student-designed study plans
Within the 1999-2001 General Catalog, the Drake Curriculum is outline beginning on page 32. (NGeiger note: I could not locate a General Catalog published between the 97-98 and 99-01 versions).		
2000	March	Path B eliminated. Outcome descriptions and requirements reviewed.
	Fall	FYS/Paths to Knowledge alternative track proposed to develop an integrated approach to knowledge, support the "community of learners" vision, and develop a progressive learning process.
	Spring	Four principles of Drake Curriculum: integration of liberal and professional education, student-centered learning environments, outcomes-based educational planning, individualized student-advisor educational planning. Use of "The Drake IDEA" as an online newsletter of the Drake Curriculum for faculty, students, and staff. Individual Curriculum Plan must contain at least 30 credit hours of approved coursework and satisfy 17 Flag requirements. Noted a problem of too many rules and too few innovations (ICP process cumbersome and complex, difficult to create curriculum innovation with limited resources, advising is difficult and focused on meeting requirements). 30 hours include 17 requirements under: Communication, Critical Thinking,

		Information and Technological Literacy, Artistic Experience, Historical Consciousness, International and Multicultural Understanding, Scientific and Quantitative Literacy, Values and Ethics. FYS and Senior Capstone do not meet 17 requirements but can be used for 30 hour minimum.
<p>Drake Curriculum Committee Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Education Committee (committee of the Faculty Senate) <i>The GEC is responsible for implementation and oversight of the Drake Curriculum. It shall direct operations and coordinate work of the Outcomes Subcommittee, Advisement Subcommittee, and the First-year Seminar Subcommittee.</i> • The Outcomes Subcommittee is responsible for defining outcomes achievement guidelines, approving courses for Path A flagging, and reviewing individualized Path B proposals. • The FYS Subcommittee is responsible for developing and implementing policy, operational guidelines, and support activities. It shall solicit, review and approve or disapprove First Year Seminars. • The Advisement Subcommittee is responsible for developing and implementing policy, operational guidelines, and support activities regarding student advisement processes. 		
<p>General Principles Statement from Academic Program Review Document</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop more learning communities – “Drake is a community of learners” is the first sentence in the mission document. Steps must be taken to make this a reality. First, we need to develop more learning communities on campus. Some already exist and attest to the powerful learning experiences students have in such settings. Learning communities need to become commonplace. Every entering student should be required to participate in a learning community...Second, we need to considers seriously how we create a greater sense of community across all constituents on campus...The central purpose for our existence is learning, and we must work together to ensure that our community as whole is both build around and permeated by a devotion to that goal. 2. Develop a general education program of cross-disciplinary courses – The best part of the Drake Curriculum is the First-Year Seminar program. The capstone has the potential to become a powerful learning experience. The current structure that specifies which existing courses meet outcome requirements often seems little more than pouring old wine into new bottles. Outstanding general education programs tend to have core courses organized around themes or ideas rather than disciplines. “Paths to Knowledge” is an example of such an approach. If the Drake Curriculum is to realize its potential, more options must be available to our students. 3. Emphasize active learning, discovery, student-faculty interaction, and collaborative inquiry – Prominently featured in the mission document are such phrases as “support of inquiry and the discovery of knowledge,” “encourage and support the acquisition, application, and transmission of knowledge,” “appreciation of the joys of discovery and the liberating power of knowing,” and the “provision of guidance and support from recognized experts.” 		
<p>Four foundational principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of liberal and professional education • Student-centered learning environments • Outcomes-based educational planning • Individualized student-advisor educational planning 		
<p>Brief outcome descriptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication – the Drake graduate will be able to read with discrimination and 		

understanding, write clearly and persuasively, and speak and listen effectively.

- Critical Thinking – the Drake graduate will be able to make and understand logical arguments, identify assumptions in arguments, distinguish fact from opinions, value skepticism, and understand that conclusions must be based on relevant evidence.
- Information and Technological Literacy – The Drake graduate will be able to acquire, integrate, analyze, and interpret information and to use appropriate technology to assist in these processes.
- Artistic Experience – The Drake graduate will understand historical development in the fine arts, that artistic expression (including music, art, literature, and drama) communicates ideas, emotions and values, and will appreciate that the arts can humanize, stimulate, and engage.
- Historical Consciousness – the Drake graduate will be able to view him/herself and society in the context of a historical narrative, will understand how the current period differs from other historical periods, and will appreciate historical geographic and cultural differences.
- Integration and Multicultural Understanding – The Drake graduate will have the skills to analyze the world in relation to nationality, race, ethnicity and culture, including the interactive nature of relations among peoples who differ according to these categories, will have the skills to analyze the relation of the individual to his or her larger communities of identity and affiliation, will understand that knowledge reflects the perspective of the knower, and will understand the value of inquiring into the perspectives and experiences of others.
- Scientific and Quantitative Literacy – The Drake graduate will have a basic understanding of the logic, methods, and terminology of the sciences and be able to comprehend (both physical and biological) scientific phenomena and to evaluate scientific and mathematical information and its impact on decisions.
- Values and Ethics – Drake graduates will have enhanced both their skills to engage in ethical inquiry and ethical reasoning and their moral imagination which includes the ability to recognize ethical issues and the demands of conscience.

Working Planning Document for Strategic Plan Development
The Drake Curriculum 2010: A Strategic Vision

The essential vision of the Drake Curriculum involves:

- Student-centered learning environment emphasizing choice, active learning, and learner responsibility
- Integration of liberal arts and professional education
- Outcomes-based general education plans and assessment
- Strong faculty advisement
- Uniform general education requirements across all schools and colleges
- Innovative teaching and learning strategies
- Interdisciplinary general education course offerings
- Wide choice of majors that are integrated with general education goals and outcomes
- Preparation for lifelong learning

The key elements of the Drake Curriculum are:

- Student self assessment and faculty advisement
- First Year Seminars
- Outcomes-Based General Education Achievement Guidelines

- Individualized General Education Curriculum Plans
- Student-centered teaching and learning strategies
- Innovative courses and related experiences
- Integrated general education and major/professional studies
- Expanded use of technology and web-assisted learning
- Outcomes-based formative and summative learning assessment
- Senior Capstone Experiences

Problems:

- Faculty and students find the Individualized Curriculum Planning processes to be cumbersome and the guidelines to be unclear.
- Course “flagging” processes and assessment of student progress are too complex and time-consuming.
- Curriculum innovation is required to provide new/more courses carrying “flags,” but course innovation is difficult to achieve with limited resources (budget, faculty availability, time).
- The advisement process is increasingly difficult and time consuming and is too often focused on “meeting requirements” rather than upon achieving the values of the new curriculum
- In short, we have too many rules and too few innovations

On Revision (selected statements)

- Quite simply, we want our students to achieve general education competence in eight Outcome areas...Quite complexly, we have established multiple sets of guidelines and controls that get in our way.
- We can create an elegant solution by placing emphasis upon teaching and learning rather than upon rules and administrative processes, by decreasing our attention to specific course requirements and increasing our attention toward achieving general education outcomes in all courses.

2001	April	A plan was proposed to change the Outcome Approach
2001	Fall semester	<p>Drake Curriculum revisions; Included the elimination of the Outcomes approach and creation of the AOI for Engaged Citizen. The rationale stated for the revision included: change in focus, simplicity, more realistic description, clarity, fit, engaged citizen, and creating new courses and learning opportunities. Proposal requires two courses in Historical Consciousness and Science areas, reflecting judgment that these areas warrant additional attention. Speech requirement removed.</p> <p><u>Concerns with Current Model</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome requirements are too complex, cumbersome, and confusing. • Need for shorter approved course lists. • No attempt to measure progress or achievement with respect to specific learning goals. • Outcome system overlooks the important goal of preparing students for their role as citizens. <p><u>Rationale for AOI Revision</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for simplicity, clarity, and realistic descriptions

2002	March	Honors AOI Track created
2004-05		Mission explication developed and approved 1/05. Committee begins mapping outcomes from explication against current Drake Curriculum. Introduction to committee report names an effort to “achieve an active pedagogy that enhances responsible learning and critical thinking,” “achieve reflective practitioners and engaged citizens,” and “realize the promise of integration of liberal and professional studies.”
2006		<p>Proposal “Achieving Mission Learning Outcomes Through the Drake Curriculum,” approved by Faculty Senate.</p> <p><u>Concerns with Current Model</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaps between curriculum expectations and new outcomes and a lack of understanding of the outcomes • Need to develop a more consistent understanding of key outcomes and adopt pedagogical strategies to engage students in learning. Common understanding of outcomes will provide students with context for general education and allow faculty to assess achievement of learning and discuss improvements • Need for a developmental sequence in the Drake Curriculum <p>Engaged Citizen changed to 2nd year experience with implementation Spr 2008. Described as “an example of mission-driven curriculum revision.”</p>
2007-08		Implementation of Engaged Citizen Experience supported partially by AACU Bringing Theory to Practice grant.
2008	April	Faculty Senate Task Force authorized to review general education curriculum
2008-09		<p>Drake Curriculum Task Force published 1st Revision Proposal</p> <p><u>Rationale</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire to align general education curriculum with Drake Mission learning outcomes • Shaping students as creative, self-directed learners; Guide students to take responsibility for own learning with greater understanding of the purpose underling the general education program • Sequencing the development of knowledge and skills leading to integrative/interdisciplinary experiences, integrate and apply the knowledge drawn from individual courses • Create wider range of opportunities for students to integrate knowledge: connecting achievement of learning outcomes across general education, the major, and co-curricular experiences • Develop consensus on learning goals for course design and achieving measurable outcomes. 2008 HLC team noted that collaboration on achieving university-wide learning outcomes might help to break down decentralization at Drake and give more faculty a sense of “university-wide identity.”

		<p><u>Concerns with current model</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help students identify own learning goals • Provide students with frequent opportunities to practice skills or apply knowledge • Align learning so that junior and senior courses deliberately build on skills and knowledge developed in first and second year courses • Provide students with an understanding of the connections between AOIs and the mission outcomes • Provide students with an understanding of the connections between general education courses/experiences and their major fields of study • Expanding spaces for interdisciplinary learning and making connections across disciplines and between academic, co-curricular, and experiential learning in a more intentional manner than a variety of discreet disciplines in a cafeteria-style <p><u>Positives of current model</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breadth of current curriculum • Individual pieces: FYS, interdisciplinary courses, senior capstone <p>Current Drake Curriculum 39-40 hours, proposed 40-41 hours or 34-35 if Integrative Seminar and Experiential Learning courses also fulfill AOI</p>
2010-11		AOI revisions were passed or not
2014		<p>UCC Review of Drake Curriculum</p> <p><u>Points of Pride:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows for great amount of choice. • Gives students freedom to explore personal interests, while exposing to a liberal arts education. • Emphasizes 21st Century skills • Allows for students to apply major coursework toward general education requirements. <p><u>Concerns:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of rigor and relevancy. • Deviation from original intentions • Too complex • Too many courses in some AOI categories, too few in others. • Lacks cohesiveness, perpetuates a checklist mentality • Difficult to assess (39 outcomes) • Failed to achieve desired learning outcomes

Ad Hoc Committee on General Education Curricular Reform

Report to Faculty Senate – March 11, 2015

APPENDIX D

PEAK FOR TRANSFER STUDENTS

The College of Idaho accepts up to 70 transfer credits from accredited community colleges and up to 90 transfer credits from accredited four-year colleges and universities.

There is often a challenge, however, in transforming the credits transferred to the College into a coherent liberal arts course of study on the PEAK model. As far as possible, students, in concert with their advisors, are expected to shape their course of study according to the expectations of the PEAK curriculum.

Students who transfer to the College with 60 or more semester credits (Junior standing or above) will be required to complete PEAK programs covering at least two of the PEAK areas (to include at least one major), with additional liberal arts experience planned in collaboration with the advisor.

Students who transfer to the College with 28 to 59 semester credits (Sophomore standing) will be required to complete PEAK programs covering at least three of the PEAK areas (to include at least one major), with additional Liberal Arts experience planned in collaboration with the advisor.

All first-time students and all students who transfer to the College with fewer than 28 credits are expected to complete the full PEAK curriculum.

Alternative Credits (AP and IB) and concurrent/dual-enrollment credits are not considered transfer credits. Although these types of credits may allow a student to enroll in the College with advanced standing, they do not count toward the 28 transfer credits that would allow a student to complete less than the full PEAK curriculum.

PEAK MAJOR AND MINOR LIMITATIONS

While students must complete at least one PEAK major and three PEAK minors, in order to ensure appropriate liberal arts breadth, students may earn no more than a combined total of five PEAK majors and minors.