

## LONG RANGE CURRICULUM PLANS

by  
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Provost

For the past three weeks and more I have immersed myself in the richness of your advice and ideas for the improvement of our College curriculum. Almost half the faculty replied to the questionnaire with thoughtful ideas and useful suggestions. I reread the LRCDTF Report and all of the issues papers prepared for the Dec. 1 Faculty Meeting. Most of the material contained in the paper which follows can be traced to that collective input. I have pondered the issues and weighed the alternatives and am now ready to state what we will do and how we will proceed.

The overall outline seems clear to me as a result of this study. We can undertake certain changes now, others will require a continuing process of planning. The immediate outcome of this effort will not be as much as some had hoped but more than others may have wanted. It is what we can and should accomplish at this time. These steps will put us in a position to do more at a later date when new growth and new conditions make further revision possible.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE:

Let me first give you some indication of the response to the questionnaire of Dec. 9, accompanied by my apologies for the difficult timing which this presented to many of the faculty. Nonetheless, I received 43 responses from a wide variety of points of view. Only ten of these were from members of the DTF; many were from persons who have not expressed themselves previously. I will make available in my office both the original replies and my tabulations to any who wish to read them. Here is a numerical summary of the results, recognizing that the wealth of ideas which I received cannot possibly be appreciated in this form:

1. Role and Mission: 27 felt that there was no necessary dichotomy between the two role and mission statements (bridging the separation between liberal/practical education and becoming a rigorous Liberal Arts College).  
9 felt that there was a serious dichotomy and that the Liberal Arts role alone should be preserved.  
6 gave an indeterminate response.  
1 did not respond to this item.
2. Curriculum Pathways leading to Career Options:  
25 felt that we should clarify and develop these further. Most want to avoid narrow pathways.  
8 felt that we should reduce or eliminate pathways.

5 felt that interpretation was unclear and definitions were needed.  
5 did not answer this item.

3. Advanced Work: 26 felt this was a problem for the college.  
2 felt it may be a problem.  
11 felt it was not a problem for them.  
4 did not answer this item.

4. Innovation and Structure:

16 wish to keep Annuals, perhaps modified, renamed, better defined, screened more thoroughly.  
8 favor letting a structure evolve naturally.  
7 favor focusing innovation through Specialty Areas or Divisions.  
6 favor Academic Centers (with or without Annuals being continued) as the focus for innovation.  
1 favors Non-permanent Specialty Areas.  
7 did not answer this item.

5. Divisional Structure:

26 favor Specialty Areas or other interdisciplinary groupings for curricular planning. 8 of these are vigorous opponents of traditional divisions; 4 others would like to have divisions or disciplines to cross-check the curriculum.  
6 were in favor of traditional Divisions as faculty organizational units and curricular planning units  
7 replies were ambiguous or seeking some other alternative structures  
4 did not reply to this item.

6. Power of Convenors/Divisional Chairs:

18 wanted stronger convenors or divisional chairs  
17 wanted weaker or the same convenor authority as at present  
8 thought maybe stronger convenors would help

7. Wholesale or Piecemeal Restructuring:

17 preferred an evolutionary change  
6 favored an abrupt change  
9 found this a non-issue  
11 did not reply to this item.

8. Time schedule for Change:

27 feel we should get started very soon, either with evolutionary or abrupt change.  
9 feel we should move slowly.  
7 either didn't know or didn't reply to this item.

### PARAMETERS FOR THE NEW PLAN:

After all the advice is in, it seems to me clear that most of us are ready to accept the challenge of designing a curriculum for the 1980s and 1990s: one that is based in the traditions of the liberal arts, that faces forward toward the opportunities and demands of the coming decades (as best we can interpret them), and that prepares students with necessary skills to become effective and responsible contributors to the society of that future.

Here are the planning parameters which we shall use. Each of these will be discussed in more detail later:

1. We must keep the heart of the college in the liberal arts. Maintaining a strong Basic or Core Program is crucial to this mission.
2. We must provide many more things which students can become good at doing. The catalog must make this richness apparent to the prospective student. Some of these should be in the traditional liberal arts subjects; others should be in the newly developing or the older traditional career areas which require specialized skills beyond the liberal arts. We must view this as providing a rich set of career development opportunities for our students.
3. To start, we must choose those things that we have the capability to do and that are broadly based. But, in the future, we must also be willing to investigate other career areas which may seem narrow as traditionally taught but which we would be able to broaden through our methods and experience.
4. After reviewing the arguments for and against traditional divisions, I continue to believe that it is impossible to protect the interdisciplinary nature of our curriculum from rapid erosion by such divisions. I therefore believe that we should continue with interdisciplinary faculty groups (Specialty Areas) for the planning of curriculum. We should not reduce the total number of Specialty Areas very much, if at all, but we should investigate the possibility of eliminating some and merging others so that we can create several new Areas. Traditional divisions may have other useful functions which we should explore but they should not produce the curriculum.
5. We must liberate ourselves from forcing the entire curriculum into large structural blocks. Coordinated Studies and Group Contracts are the most effective formats for some purposes but serve other purposes only poorly. The twin problems of prerequisites and advanced work must be addressed through this liberation. Different Specialty Areas must have more flexibility in using different combinations of block programs and of courses.

6. To protect opportunities for innovation, we should continue an Annuals Program area but with modifications and a more descriptive name. In addition, we must encourage innovation throughout the curriculum.

7. We should create one or two Academic Centers during the next two years in order to gain experience with this new concept as a way for enriching the educational opportunities of our students and our faculty.

8. We must establish some more explicit graduation requirements to assure that our students have obtained the full experience of an Evergreen education. Students should be encouraged, with proper faculty advice, to identify an Area of Concentration on the transcript if they so choose.

9. We should begin the detailed planning for these changes as soon as we can do so in order to have some effect on the 1984-85 catalog. Obviously, the work will continue on beyond the production of that catalog and into the next several years. The expressed reluctance of the faculty, and the favorable national publicity we have recently received argue against abrupt upheaval of the curriculum. But we must be tough with ourselves in assuring that we do make some real improvements within the next several months.

10. Marketing improvements must go hand in hand with the revisions of curriculum, both in the sense of determining directions for revision and in the sense of making the special Evergreen opportunities known to the public in an effective way.

#### DETAILS OF THE PLAN:

1. The Liberal Arts must remain at the heart of the college and permeate all of our educational efforts. It should be our objective throughout our curriculum that all students should learn to:

- a). think clearly, logically and critically
- b). read, write, compute and speak well
- c). develop the initiative to investigate & analyze & solve problems
- d). express their creativity through a variety of modes
- e). develop social responsibility for citizenship within a democracy.

To begin this developmental process, all students must experience the seminar mode of learning: reading original texts, discussing ideas around the table, writing about those ideas, learning to use the tools of scholarship. For all students, then, our Core Programs (or some advanced equivalents yet to be developed) are an essential component of the Evergreen experience. We must give careful attention to maintaining the strength of our Core Programs in the face of all other curricular change we undertake. These should be first planned and first staffed each year to protect their integrity. New starts should be available each quarter and repeated programs should have some faculty carry over to provide continuity.



We should consider developing an interdisciplinary Senior Symposium to provide a capstone at the advanced level for senior students to recapture this experience just before graduation.

To give emphasis to the Liberal Arts, we should strongly consider developing a Master's level degree program in Liberal Studies (the M.L.S. degree). We should also consider a Bachelor's level equivalent as one structure for a humanities/social science/natural science/arts concentration.

2. Career Development Opportunities must be provided in our structure in order to broaden our appeal to current potential students. We cannot rely solely on the traditional liberal arts to provide our growth potential toward 3500 students. Certainly some substantial fraction of our student population can and should be liberal arts students of the traditional type within our overall mix. However, the new pedagogical and intellectual challenge for us should be the development of educational opportunities in a selected number of professional and career fields of study within this liberal arts setting. We should choose these fields from both the newly developing and from the more traditional professional areas of importance to modern society. This is a task of innovation worthy of our experience and effort. Those of us already engaged in this combination of liberal and practical studies know the challenge, are pleased with the results and do not fear the outcome of further developments in this direction. Indeed, if we wish to be socially responsible as an institution, we must not banish practical, technical and professional education to those institutions which do not ask their students to examine the ways in which their professions influence our society and our lives.

At the outset we must, of necessity, develop those fields of study which we are currently equipped to handle. As we gain the opportunity to grow, we must be willing to look carefully at some of the traditionally more narrow career options to see if it is possible for us to offer them in our own liberal arts way. We should not be afraid to examine; we do not have to select those that are rigidly circumscribed by external accreditation rules.

3. Curriculum Pathways are those institutionally defined routes through our curriculum which allow students to become good at something. Some will lead to the traditional liberal arts outcomes; others will lead to selected career options. We should always leave open the opportunity for students to define their own pathways through the curriculum as well. In a more traditional college structure these would be considered Majors; in our structure they can be more broadly defined and could be considered Areas of Concentration.

These should be chosen, at the outset, to be broadly based and within the capabilities of current faculty expertise. They should not require an elaborate set of prerequisites and they should not consume more than 48 to 60 quarter hours to complete. This, then, would leave time in the upper division years for work in other than the field of concentration.

In a traditional school of our size it is not unusual to have 15 or more

majors available. We should be able to do as well with our curricular pathways so that students looking at our catalog can say, "My what a great number of things there are to do at Evergreen". It has been very hard for students to see this in our present catalog because we do not give much time to thinking about the issue ourselves. It will be the responsibility of each of our curriculum planning areas to identify as many curriculum pathways as possible, both within and in conjunction with other areas.

4. Specialty Areas should be retained as the principal vehicles for curriculum planning. We have some valuable experience in using these interdisciplinary and/or interdivisional units for planning. Most of the faculty seem to prefer that these units be retained. Several of these areas are functioning well; others could benefit from broadening or merging; others may need to be eliminated or reconstituted. The Deans and Provost will establish a review process within the next few weeks for those Areas which have been traditionally weak or hard to staff. Candidates for review include: European and American Studies, Health and Human Development, Scientific Knowledge and Inquiry, and Expressive Arts. At the same time, proposals for new or combined Areas should be seriously explored as replacements for or additions to our current Areas. These include: Liberal Studies; Communications and Expression; and Science, Technology and Society. Proposals for other possible new or combined areas should be entertained and explored during the Winter Quarter and beyond.

The question of single versus multiple affiliation must also be addressed. The main advantage of single affiliation is to provide faculty with the opportunity to make a serious intellectual and pedagogic commitment to a specialty area, and thereby gain professional rewards from such a commitment. Multiple affiliation, on the other hand, cross fertilizes the curriculum planning process and produces beneficial results to the overall outcome. On balance, dual affiliation is preferable and should be our common expectation. Each faculty member should have one major and one minor commitment during any three year planning cycle. Affiliation with Core Programs is to be considered equivalent to affiliation with any other Specialty Area.

I have studied carefully the proposals for organizing the faculty according to traditional divisions as the preferred curriculum planning units. Most of the curriculum benefits to be realized from this scheme can be obtained by other means within the interdisciplinary planning units. And we do not run the very great risk suffered by many other schools in having the divisions simply kill the interdisciplinary nature of the college. There are other legitimate and valuable roles which the traditional divisions might play however. They provide a professional home for the faculty, they can sponsor professional activities such as regular campus symposia for faculty and students, they can provide an overview function for the curriculum to assure breadth of coverage and reduction of duplication, and they can provide cluster contract coverage for students interested in specialized work within the traditional divisional boundaries. Indeed, the 1976 LRC report provided space for traditional divisions to carry out most of these functions but they were never implemented. The Deans should charge a group to investigate these possibilities and prepare a proposal for faculty consideration.

5. Form must follow Function in Curricular Structures. We have saddled ourselves for too long with massive curricular blocks as the sole legitimate teaching structure. We must analyze what various modes can do best and organize the curriculum accordingly. Large blocks of 12 to 16 quarter hours can best provide opportunity for interdivisional and intradivisional work, projects and research within an academic setting, internships imbedded in a theoretical structure, a wholistic view of a field, and study in the history and sociology of knowledge. Sometimes 8 quarter hour blocks can provide the same opportunities. Courses of four quarter hours or less can best provide survey material, content of a sequential nature, regular and continuing practice, and the study of methods in various fields.

We now have many years of experience with a mandatory large block structure and its success is quite mixed. For some purposes it is superb. But in much of the curriculum we have found it difficult to provide prerequisites for intermediate and advanced work. Availability of advanced work itself has been very limited, in many areas of study, when restricted to the large block mode. It has been difficult for students from one area of study to achieve the breadth of a Liberal Education without making an enormous and sometimes impossible investment of time in the block programs of another area. Courses developed for part-time students are used more and more by full-time students to provide the desired diversity. Their importance to students is verified by the S. & A. gift last year to preserve this element of our curriculum. Meanwhile, the planning of these courses has occurred primarily outside of the Specialty Areas and often with little correlation to the full-time curriculum. As a further result, the curriculum for part-time students is spotty and lacking in continuity and in advanced work.

Specialty Areas must be given the opportunity to design their sequences using a combination of large blocks and of courses which best fits their material. The only planning requirements that should be placed on each Area are that both modes need to be provided and that both modes are a necessary part of the curriculum pathway sequence for a student remaining in that Area. To assure an adequate mix of opportunities, each Area should provide up to one-third of its credit hours in courses. At least two-thirds of the credit hours will then remain in large block programs. On a college-wide basis, one of the graduation requirements should be that students have experience in both modes so that all graduates will have gained the pedagogic values of both ways of learning. The presence of courses in all Specialty Areas will assure that students from outside the Area who wish to gain breadth can do so; the presence of blocks in all Specialty Areas will assure that students will gain a wholistic view of the subject matter of that Area.

Considerable interest has been expressed in various "shapes" to our curriculum: hour-glass model, pyramidal model, sinusoidal model, etc. I think we all agree that the first year program must be our current large block Core Programs. Beyond that, Specialty Areas should be allowed to experiment with the shape most appropriate to their subject matter. In many cases, for the second year it would be helpful to have available a combination of courses to be used as prerequisites and as general cultural opportunities, perhaps along with one or more large block programs of either eight or twelve quarter hours duration. The third and fourth years can then either be large blocks followed by courses or the reverse. The former seems more likely to be successful, given the usual drive of a senior student to specialize. But again, each Specialty Area should be allowed to experiment to find the best combination. This design will then provide more opportunities for part-time students at both the lower and the upper division levels.



Rather than overly empower the Convenors of the Specialty Areas, we should restructure the Academic Deans so that each of the four is in charge of two or so curricular areas. The Convenors and the Deans should meet together regularly in a Convenors' Forum to discuss overall curricular issues and staffing matters. The Provost will convene a task force in the next few weeks to consider the details of such a reorganization of the Academic Deans' responsibilities.

6. Annuals should be retained as a curricular entity to provide a structured forum for invention and innovation. The name should be changed, however, to Yearly Specials, or Innovations, or some new title yet to be invented, to more clearly specify their function. The number of options available each year should be limited and should be selected on a competitive basis by the Forum of Convenors from among a group of proposals submitted by the faculty. Each program selected for inclusion in this section of the curriculum will be required to produce a Program History and Evaluation. It is also expected that successful innovations would be submitted for outside publication. A specified number of faculty FTE positions should be allocated to this Area each year, in advance of the competitive selection process, to assure that a place will be held for such activity. One or two of these FTE could be reserved for student initiated programs as well. Clearly, our intention must be to provide a serious opportunity for true innovation outside the Specialty Areas.

7. Academic Centers are a new concept initiated by the LRCDTF and one which is of considerable potential value. Two ideas have been proposed: a Community Studies Center (Russ Fox) and a Language and Culture Center (Gordon Beck). Both ideas are full of promise and they should be actively explored as soon as possible. Design teams will be appointed to fill out the details of these proposals in the near future.

8. Graduation Requirements must be reconsidered as we move into a curriculum with more emphasis on career opportunities. Narrow career specialization may best be prevented with some set of requirements. The opportunity for graduates to list an area of concentration on the transcript may best be defined by a set of requirements. A degree taken "With Honors" could be defined through a required Senior Project. A Portfolio Requirement has been discussed. A new DTF needs to work on these issues and bring suggestions back to the faculty later this year.

9. Marketing Improvements can go hand-in-hand with revisions of our curriculum beginning immediately. The Enrollment Coordinating Committee and the Office of Institutional Research will continue to work on these tasks. However, a wider participation in the generation of ideas and the analysis of data is also desirable. The Provost will therefore appoint a faculty study group on marketing to bring faculty ideas to that activity and to keep the faculty informed on the nature and quality of the marketing efforts of the College.