DePaul University Academic Program Review

Cycle 6: Spring 2003--Spring 2004

Memorandum of Agreement – September 2004

Liberal Studies Program

As a result of the sixth cycle of DePaul University's Academic Program Review Process (Cycle 6), the participants in the process enter into the following agreements. The participants understand that this document will be available to be made public once all the signatures are in place.

University Commitments for the Academic Year 2004 – 2005:

1. The EVP for Academic Affairs is committed to serious consideration of a proposal for additional resources to compensate Advisory Committee chairs and others who have significant responsibility for monitoring the quality of courses in their area, for administrative support to general education at DePaul, and to financially support faculty orientation and development. The EVP and Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences commit to discussions regarding budgets and staffing with the submission of said proposal. (See items A, B, and D under resources/actions requested.)

2. The EVP recognizes the time and energy invested by members of Liberal Studies advisory committees and is committed to ensuring that this University service is appropriately recognized in the evaluation of faculty for the purposes of Promotion and Tenure as well as in annual evaluations and workload assignments. (See item C under resources/actions requested.)

3. The EVP for Academic Affairs will consider a proposal for a comprehensive communication plan including development and maintenance of web pages to address the needs of faculty, students, and advisors with regard to the Liberal Studies Program, and for the possible production of a Liberal Studies handbook. The EVP encourages the Liberal Studies Program to work with the VP of Enrollment Management regarding the creation of a marketing brochure for potential and new students highlighting DePaul’s Liberal Studies Program and agrees to take part in discussions concerning these matters. (See item E under resources/actions requested.)

4. The EVP strongly supports the creation of a University-wide evaluation form, which would include items about Liberal Studies outcomes, and the dissemination of aggregated data from this evaluation. The EVP will hold conversations regarding this topic with the Deans’ Council and work with appropriate University offices to facilitate the implementation of this form and dissemination of data. (See item F under resources/actions requested.)

Liberal Studies Council Commitments for the coming Academic Year 2004 – 2005:

1. Curriculum, goals, and outcomes:

   a. By December 2004, the Liberal Studies Council will articulate a set of expected learning goals for the Liberal Studies Program as a whole. Likewise, the thirteen Advisory Committees will each submit to Liberal Studies Council a set of expected learning outcomes for each component part of the program so that they can be approved by the Liberal Studies Council by June, 2005. (See Common Item: Domain Goals and Learning Outcomes.)
b. Each of the thirteen Advisory Committees will submit to Liberal Studies Council a statement establishing standards for the amount and type of writing to be required in their part of the program so that they can be approved by the LSC by June 2005. (See Common Item: Writing Standards.)

c. Liberal Studies Council will review syllabi to track whether and how current courses address oral communication skills.

d. The Liberal Studies Council will investigate and then recommend to the Advisory Committees ways in which students’ gains in reflectiveness and value consciousness can be brought more into line with their reported gains in other learning goals of the program and the domains.

2. Liberal Studies Council will consider a plan, being written by a subcommittee composed of members of the Quantitative Reasoning committee, CTI, and the Math department, and expected by fall, 2004, to bolster preparation in math and quantitative reasoning for those students not required to take calculus. Key points and dates of this plan are:

   a. In autumn and winter of the 2004-2005 the Quantitative Reasoning Advisory Committee will undertake a coordinated faculty development effort.

   b. In autumn and winter of the 2004-2005 existing sections of the Quantitative Reasoning course will pilot new materials for the revised version of this course

   c. In winter and spring 2005 two pilot sections of the second course, in the proposed sequence, will be taught. Students will be solicited from the first course and will receive Scientific Inquiry Quantitative credit.

   d. The new materials and pilot sections will be carefully monitored and assessed. The number of sections being taught will be increased in future academic years as the faculty core grows.

3. Overall quality:

   a. During the coming year, Liberal Studies Council will establish a sub-committee to consider ways to ensure the academic quality of LSP courses. While it remains the responsibility of Liberal Studies Council to set standards for rigor and challenge, this subcommittee will make recommendations to the LSC about mechanisms and processes to ensure those standards are maintained. As part of its recommendations, this committee will identify distinct roles and lines of authority for the advisory committees and contributing departments in carrying out their responsibilities in maintaining the quality of Liberal Studies courses. Once the Liberal Studies Council approves these recommendations, it will be the responsibility of the advisory committees and departments to carry out the tasks assigned to them. (see Common Item: Quality Control.)

   b. The Liberal Studies Council will set up a process to examine the relationships among class size, student performance/outcomes, and various pedagogical methods.

4. Communication:

   a. The Liberal Studies Council Chair, in cooperation with the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences office staff, will develop a plan to ensure better communication with the university at large about the Liberal Studies Program and related on-going activities. Such a plan may include the development of a Liberal Studies Handbook
and annual Liberal Studies overview sessions for faculty.

b. The Liberal Studies Council will seek ways to facilitate conversation and the exchange of ideas/best practices, etc. among the various Advisory Committees.

c. The Liberal Studies Council will work with LSC representatives from Music and Theatre, along with their deans and/or associate deans, to further study their students’ perceptions and experience of the Liberal Studies Program. The LSC reiterates its commitment to working with Deans who wish to tailor specific parts of the LSP for their students.

Items Referred to in University and Liberal Studies Council Commitments

Common items for the Liberal Studies Program Spine Units and Learning Domains:

Domain goals and learning outcomes:

Each Advisory Committee will articulate its specific goals, consistent with the DePaul Learning Goals, and will then derive from them assessable expected student-learning outcomes which are to be included in all unit syllabi. This task is to be completed according to a schedule to be provided by the LSC and/or its chair so that the LSC can approve these goals and outcomes by June 2005.

Writing standards:

Each Advisory Committee will determine the acceptable amount and type of writing to be required in its courses, taking into consideration the variety of courses offered in that domain, and being sure that such assignments are sensitive to and consistent with the students’ prior and/or concurrent writing experience and preparation, including the first year writing course(s). This task is to be completed according to a schedule to be provided by the LSC and/or its chair so that the LSC can approve these standards by June 2005.

Quality control:

During the coming year, Liberal Studies Council will establish a sub-committee to consider ways to ensure the academic quality of LSP courses. While it remains the responsibility of Liberal Studies Council to set standards for rigor and challenge, this subcommittee will make recommendations to the LSC about mechanisms and processes to ensure those standards are maintained. As part of its recommendations, this committee will identify distinct roles for the advisory committees and contributing departments in carrying out their responsibilities in maintaining the quality of Liberal Studies courses. Once the Liberal Studies Council approves these recommendations, it will be the responsibility of the advisory committees and departments to carry out the tasks assigned to them.

Resources/actions requested from the University:

A. Appropriate compensation, either an appropriate stipend or course reduction, for Liberal Studies Advisory Committee chairs and any other designated faculty assigned a significant responsibility for monitoring the quality of courses offered by individual units.

B. Increased staffing under the direction of the Assistant to the Liberal Studies Program. To support current activities (especially the annual assessment projects), Liberal Studies needs four additional student workers. Currently, the Assistant to the Liberal Studies Program
devotes one third to one half of her time to the program. To support any additional quality control efforts, Liberal Studies will need a full-time staff person and part time staff. The optimal situation would be to have a Liberal Studies Office which would house resources for faculty as well as a meeting place.

C. Make certain that the time and energy invested by Advisory Committee members in assessment and monitoring in their area is appropriately recognized in the evaluation of faculty service and the assignment of faculty workloads.

D. Support for faculty orientation and development efforts; including, minor stipends for adjunct faculty attending such meetings, refreshments, photocopies, etc.

E. Funding for carrying out a communication plan, including development and maintenance of web pages for the thirteen Advisory Committees to address the needs of faculty, students and advisors, which may include augmenting current web pages to include orientation information, learning goals and outcomes, best practices, and sample syllabi), and possibly for the production of an LSP handbook, etc.

F. The creation of a university-wide course evaluation form, currently being investigated and developed by the Office of Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, including, among other things, a number of items reflecting Liberal Studies Program learning outcomes, the data from which can be easily aggregated and made accessible.

Signed:

Associate Dean, Liberal Arts and Sciences: ____________________________

Dean of the College: ____________________________

Associate V.P. for Academic Affairs: ____________________________

Executive V.P. for Academic Affairs: ____________________________

APRC Subcommittee Chair: ____________________________

APRC Subcommittee Chair: ____________________________

Chair of APRC: ____________________________