Common items for the Liberal Studies Program:

1. Domain goals and Learning Outcomes:

   1. Work Completed:
      The Chicago Quarter Committee refined their six learning goals that can be found on the course proposal form for Discover/Explore Chicago: [http://condor.depaul.edu/~firstyr/faculty/discoverpro.html](http://condor.depaul.edu/~firstyr/faculty/discoverpro.html). Faculty proposing courses must identify how the course will meet the learning goals. The committee also created five Learning Outcomes that can be found on the Discover/Explore Chicago website: [http://condor.depaul.edu/~firstyr/faculty/best_practices/main.html](http://condor.depaul.edu/~firstyr/faculty/best_practices/main.html). This website also has a link to Best Practices for accomplishing these learning goals. These Learning Outcomes were approved by the Liberal Studies Council. In an effort to ensure that faculty were aware of these new Learning Outcomes, we hosted a Best Practices workshop during the Spring Quarter for faculty, staff, and students teaching in the program in the upcoming Autumn Quarter, 2006. Furthermore, the former director of the First-Year Program, Midge Wilson, sent out an e-mail to all faculty providing links to the above the websites identifying the new Learning Outcomes and Best Practices. Faculty were informed that their syllabi must reflect the Learning Outcomes.

2. Writing standards:

   2. Work Completed:
      The Chicago Quarter Committee created a set of writing requirements for the Chicago Quarter classes as follows:
      - Discover and Explore Chicago courses will require:
        1. a minimum of 7 – 10 pages of formal writing (typed and graded) and at least 12 pages of writing overall.
        2. This amount of writing should be divided between at least two different types of assignments (e.g. journal, group projects, site visit reports, readings-based assignments).
        3. At least one of these assignments should involve critical analysis of concepts, texts, or arguments.
      These writing requirements were approved by the Liberal Studies Council and were shared with faculty teaching in the Chicago Quarter program through a mass e-mail from Midge Wilson and a Best Practices workshop held during Spring, 2006. The Best Practices workshop stressed different types of assignments that could meet these writing requirements. Furthermore, the chair of the Chicago Quarter Committee is participating in a summer Liberal Studies Writing Workshop in an effort to identify ways to help faculty improve writing among Chicago Quarter students.

3. Quality control:
Work Completed:
The Chicago Quarter Committee will focus on the academic rigor of the program in the upcoming year. We will carefully monitor the writing requirements and writing quality of the first year program. This year’s assessment project (2006) examined fifty randomly selected Chicago Quarter student papers.

Actions agreed upon by the Chicago Quarter for the coming academic year (2004 – 2005):

1) 1. Rigor:
   a. The Advisory Committee will work to increase the consistency and where necessary the rigor of Chicago Quarter courses by implementing minimum reading requirements. Determine the minimum amount of reading required for various types of texts.
   
   Actions Taken: The Chicago Quarter Committee was quite busy this year with the refinement of learning goals, creation of Learning Outcomes, and creation of writing requirements. Consequently, we did not develop a set of minimum reading requirements. We will do so next year.
   
   b. The Committee will explore and implement ways to bridge the perceived gap between Common Hour material and discipline-specific course content. The Committee will consider the use a common reading assignment in the Common Hour which will also integrate the pragmatic goals of the Common Hour with the overall goals of Discover and Explore Chicago courses.
   
   Actions Taken: The Liberal Studies Council is now undertaking a discussion concerning possible changes to the Common Hour curriculum. These changes include an examination of Common Hour learning goals, goals of the Chicago Quarter classes, and advising that occurs through the Common Hour. A committee has convened that is creating a Common Hour advising pilot program that will be tested in select classes this Autumn Quarter, 2006.

1) 2. Learning Goals and Assessment:
   a. The learning goals for this domain will be refined by its Advisory Committee to make its uniqueness as an introduction to college level learning more evident.
   
   Actions Taken: See the information above concerning learning goals and the website that identify these refined goals.

   b. The Chicago Quarter Advisory Committee will consider adopting oral communication as a domain goal. Should oral communication be adopted, the Committee will develop assessable Learning Outcomes for this goal.
   
   Actions Taken: The committee did not officially adopt oral communication as a learning goal. Rather, it acknowledged that the “rhetorical skills” identified in the revised learning goals covers oral communication. It did, however, include oral communication in the learning outcome that relates directly to the rhetorical skills learning goal as follows: “Students will demonstrate competent oral and/or written rhetorical skills (e.g. clearly identified thesis and/or main point, development of ideas, standard grammatical usage, clear organization).”

   c. The Advisory Committee will collaborate with the Office of Teaching, Learning, and Assessment to determine ways to quantify data concerning the achievement of the Chicago Quarter’s learning goals; particularly, those of the Common Hour.
   
   Actions Taken: The last two annual assessments focused on evaluating one learning goal (2005) and one learning outcome (2006). A committee used quantitative ratings to assess the quality of student work.

2) 3. Pedagogy:
   a. The Advisory Committee will determine ways to increase the percentage of classes whose service site/work is closely related to the subject matter of the course.
   
   Actions Taken: The University Ministries office is contacting Chicago Quarter faculty this summer in an effort to establish a stronger connection between the service site/work and the subject matter of the course.
b. The Chicago Quarter Advisory Committee will encourage group-based learning. The Committee will consider mandating this form of learning in course proposals and/or making group-based learning a learning goal, with assessable outcomes, as the ability of the Chicago Quarter to engage students in this type of learning is one of its distinctive features.

3) Actions Taken: The Chicago Quarter committee made created a separate learning goal for group-based learning which is identified as follows: "Introduce students to group-based learning, what it means to be a life-long learner, and the enjoyment of learning."