Memorandum:

To: Charles Strain, AVP for Academic Affairs

From: Caryn Chaden, Chair, Liberal Studies Council

Date: May 26, 2006

Re: MOA Progress Report

Please see responses to each of the items below, in bold.

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.)

   The EVP for Academic Affairs did not provide additional resources. Instead, the Dean of LAS supplied additional resources to cover an administrative assistant devoted entirely to Liberal Studies and $3000 annual stipends for advisory committee chairs. See attached job description for advisory committee chairs.

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.)

   To my knowledge, this didn’t happen.

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.)
TLA worked on this, and Faculty Council passed language for university-wide questions in May 2006.

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.)

   It took a year longer than planned, but this item is now complete. See the various home pages for each component of the Liberal Studies Program on the LSP website: http://las.depaul.edu/lsp/public_html/index.html

   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.)

   Ditto. In addition, Liberal Studies Council approved “Guidelines for Writing in Liberal Studies Courses” (attached) in April 2006, and Faculty Council endorsed them.

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

     Did not happen.

   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.

     Did not happen.

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.
All of this was accomplished. In fact, a new two-course Mathematical and Technological Literacy sequence has been approved by Faculty Council and will go into effect in Fall 2006.

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.)

   A Quality Enhancement Committee was established and met only a few times, but accomplished some important work. In particular, it drafted a plan (subsequently revised and approved by Liberal Studies Council) for a five-cycle for reviewing courses approved for LSP credit. See attached.

   b. The Liberal Studies Council will set up a process to examine the relationships among class size, student performance/outcomes, and various pedagogical methods. Didn’t happen.

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.

   The LSC chair, interim chair, and members of the Quality Committee (mentioned below) met with Bruno Tabul from Communication to discuss a Communication plan. We’ve made some progress but have not completed the task. In Fall 2005, the LSC Chair began sending a quarterly “Message from Liberal Studies” to the all faculty in the university. In addition, the LSP Web site has been enhanced with a separate page devoted to each component of the program. Finally, the LSC Chair has been in communication with LASAC and the Associate Deans’ Council for help in and advice on disseminating information.

   b. The Liberal Studies Council will seek ways to facilitate conversation and the exchange of ideas/best practices, etc. among the various Advisory Committees.
The LSC Chair brought the advisory committee chairs together several times to discuss drafts of learning outcomes, writing expectations, etc. Most recently, money became available through TLA to sponsor summer workshops for representatives from the advisory committees to participate in workshops over the summer in an effort to generate materials to help faculty implement the new writing expectations.

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.

Didn't happen in any specific way, but the LSC chair is in regular communication with associate deans in Music and Theater. In particular, the LSC quickly and efficiently addressed their concerns about adding any additional requirements for their students regarding the new Mathematical and Technological Literacy requirement.

**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.

This has all been accomplished, as explained above.

**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.

Provided by the Dean of LAS.

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.

Provided by the Dean of LAS.

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.