

Three Draft Plans for Revising General Education (Short Version) (October 2017)

Introduction

This document presents three draft plans for updating IU South Bend's General Education program. These are intended for discussion, with the full expectation that they will be revised after input from various campus constituencies.

Each of the three draft plans follows a distinctive idea:

1. The "Conservative" plan keeps the current structure, but with some additions/deletions.
2. The "Direct LEAP" plan is generated directly from the LEAP essential learning outcomes, but keeps the interdisciplinary nature of the basic knowledge courses.
3. The "Flexible Choice" plan also uses the LEAP structure, but has a larger number of choices; in the basic knowledge courses, it returns to the standard introductory courses in the disciplines.

The general principles that guided the formulation of these plans, as well as the problems addressed by each, are detailed in the full version. Here are some notable commonalities to all three draft plans worth mentioning in brief:

Two requirements were reduced, since they were judged to be no longer necessary, were given low priority by faculty, were deemed not useful by upperclassmen surveyed, and/or are not LEAP essential learning outcomes.

- Computer literacy, except for a new 1-credit course taken by students who did not receive the instruction in using computer technology now expected of all high school graduates entering college.
- Visual literacy, though it appears in modified form as an option in Draft Plan 3

Other notable changes are as follows:

- Q110 was the most frequent target of student complaints; however, information literacy is a LEAP essential learning outcome, and so it is retained in some form in all three draft plans.
- Health & Wellness also received a number of different assessments from students and faculty; the three draft plans deal with this requirement in very different ways, to reflect this. Draft Plan 3 does not include it.

One addition that is common to all three plans is the **upper-level integrative course**. This fulfills two needs: (1) to ensure students have their fundamental skills reinforced and applied at higher levels, and (2) to insure that this is done in the manner that each major or program will find most useful. Here are the requirements for this course:

Upper-Level Integrative Course. All students will take in their junior or senior year a 300- or 400-level course designated as an "upper-level integrative course." The purpose of this course is to integrate and reinforce skills learned in fundamental literacy classes taken earlier. A unit may designate an upper-level course for this purpose, preferably in their students' majors, but possibly in another, related unit. In either case, the key elements of an upper-level integrative course are as follows:

- The course must explicitly include learning outcomes from at least two of the fundamental literacies; thus, the course will be subject to General Education assessment based on the specified literacies chosen.
- Since they are not fundamental literacy courses per se, the general VALUE rubrics, intended for cross-disciplinary use, will be used to evaluate them. (So, e.g., the AAC&U's writing rubric will be used, if writing is a reinforced literacy, even if this VALUE rubric is not used for assessing Eng-W 131.)
- Instructors should strive to inculcate higher-level performance on these fundamental literacies, as specified in the rubrics, and should explicitly build on what students have learned earlier in their fundamental literacy courses.
- Given the above, the course will have as prerequisites that students have completed the relevant fundamental literacy courses before taking the upper-level integrative course.
- The course must involve teamwork and group projects.
- The course should focus on problem-solving at key points, where students have to generate their own solutions and strategies, rather than following a pre-set procedure learned by rote.

Two high-impact practices are also included as requirements, the **first-year seminar** (all three draft plans) and **community engagement** (the first two).

Draft Plan 1 – The "Conservative" Plan (33 credit hours total) (Short Version)

Overall Rationale:

This sample plan keeps our current structure for the most part, with some additions/deletions to update it.

1. The Fundamental Literacies (12 cr.)

(This is a reduced version of what we presently have. A new requirement is that these courses must all be completed before the junior year.)

Writing (3 cr.) – one course

(primarily Eng-W 131)

Critical Thinking (3 cr.) – one course

(list omitted; similar to what we have currently)

Oral Communication (3 cr.) – one course

(primarily Spch-S 121)

Quantitative Reasoning (3 cr.) – one course

(list omitted; similar to what we have currently)

Additional Requirements for Students with Special Needs or Status

- Csci-A 101 Basic Computer Literacy** (a new 1-credit-hour course, covering basic computer skills for those lacking the skills currently expected of all high school students entering college.)
- Students who are not qualified for Eng-W 131 must take **Eng-W 130 Principles of Composition**.
- Students who are admitted conditionally as new students must take **Educ-U 100 Threshold Seminar: The Craft and Culture of Higher Education** in their freshman year.

2. The Common Core (12 cr.)

This is the same structure as at present, with at least one course at the 300-level:

Literary and Intellectual Traditions (3 cr.) – one course

(same as now)

Art, Aesthetics, and Creativity (3 cr.) – one course

(same as now)

The Natural World (3 cr.) – one course

(same as now)

Human Behavior and Social Institutions (3 cr.) – one course

(same as now)

3. Contemporary Social Values (9 cr.)

Contemporary Global Cultures (3 cr.) – one course

(This replaces "non-Western cultures" with "contemporary global cultures.")

Diversity in US Society (3 cr.) – one course

(This is essentially the same as at present, focusing on non-dominant, minority cultures in the US.)

Health and Wellness (3 cr.) – one 3-credit course or two courses, one 2-credit + one 1-credit

(Students will take either a comprehensive 3-credit class providing information about managing their physical and mental health, or a 2-credit class focused on information about managing one's health, plus a 1-credit activity course.)

Additional Requirements for All Students:

First-Year Seminar: All students admitted with <30 credit hours, whether new students or transfer students, must take at least one core course with the designation "First-Year Seminar" (FYS).

Information Literacy: All students must take at least one course tagged as an "Information Literacy" course.

Community Engagement: Students must take at least one course tagged as having a "Community Engagement" component. This may occur as a common core course or as a contemporary social values course.

Upper-level integrative Course: All students will take in their junior or senior year a 300- or 400-level course designated as an "upper-level integrative course." Normally this will be a course in their major. (See page 1 for a full description.)

Draft Plan 2 – The "Direct LEAP" Plan (33 credit hours total) (Short Version)

Overall Rationale:

This sample plan directly uses the LEAP essential learning outcomes as its basic structure. This is reflected in the organization and statement of the plan's goals, as well as the language used throughout. The LEAP essential learning outcomes are appended to this document for reference.

Basic Categories: (taken from LEAP)

I. Knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world

- Through study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts

II. Intellectual and practical skills

- Inquiry and analysis, critical and creative thinking, written and oral communication, quantitative literacy, information literacy, and teamwork and problem solving

III. Personal and social responsibility

- Civic knowledge and engagement (local and global), intercultural knowledge and competence, ethical reasoning and action, and foundational skills for life

IV. Integrative learning

- Synthesis and advanced accomplishment in advancing knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems

These are implemented as follows:

1. Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World (12 cr.)

Students will take one course in each of the following areas. These courses will not be solely within one discipline, but will be **interdisciplinary** in nature, similar to our current core courses (but organized differently). (The full version has a list of which disciplines fall into each category.)

The Social Sciences (3 cr.) – one course

The Arts (3 cr.) – one course

The Humanities (3 cr.) – one course

The Natural Sciences and Mathematics (3 cr.) – one course

2. Intellectual and Practical Skills (13 cr.)

These courses are intended to be **foundational**. Accordingly, students are required to take the following courses before the junior year. Some of these are very similar to what we presently have. Comments are given for those that are modified in some way.

Critical Thinking (3 cr.) – one course

Written Communication (3 cr.) – one course

Oral and Interpersonal Communication (3 cr.) – one course

Students will normally take Spch-S 121 to fulfill this requirement, though students who take Spch-S 122 Interpersonal Communication will also count as fulfilling this requirement.

Quantitative Literacy (3 cr.) – one course.

Information Literacy (1 cr.) – one course;

This course must be taken in freshman year (<30 credit hours); transfer students coming in with >30 credit hours are exempt. It should be linked with other courses in this category, e.g., courses in critical thinking or written or oral communication.

Additional Requirements for Students with Special Needs or Status

- a) **Csci-A 101 Basic Computer Literacy** (a new 1-credit-hour course, covering basic computer skills for those lacking the skills currently expected of all high school students entering college.)
- b) Students who are not qualified for Eng-W 131 must take **Eng-W 130 Principles of Composition**.
- c) Students who are admitted conditionally as new students must take **Educ-U 100 Threshold Seminar: The Craft and Culture of Higher Education** in their freshman year.

Additional Requirements for All Students:

First-Year Seminar: All students admitted with <30 credit hours, whether new students or transfer students, must take at least one core course with the designation "First-Year Seminar" (FYS).

Community Engagement: Students must take at least one course tagged as having a "Community Engagement" component.

3. Personal and Social Responsibility (8 cr.)

Intercultural Knowledge (3 cr.) – one course

This course will concentrate on some substantive aspect of human or cultural diversity, either of global cultures or cultural diversity in the US.

Ethical Reasoning (3 cr.) – one course

This course will focus on how to reason about ethical issues, to understand the nuances of ethical issues and debates, to articulate an ethical point of view and to defend it, to understand general approaches to ethical questions and controversies, and to reflect on the ethical implications of one's decisions and actions. It may be either a general course in ethics, or a course dealing with ethical issues faced by a particular discipline.

Nutrition and Health (1 cr.) – one course

This course will focus on basic information about nutrition and managing both physical and mental health. Students will learn to take responsibility for their own health and learn how to manage it intentionally and effectively.

Financial Literacy (1 cr.) – one course

This course will focus on effectively managing savings, debt, planning and budgeting, getting and paying off loans, and investing for the future, in a manner that is applicable to students' current and future needs.

4. Integrative Learning

All students will take in their junior or senior year a 300- or 400-level course designated as an "**upper-level integrative course**." Normally this will be a course in their major. (See page 1 for a full description.)

Draft Plan 3 – The "Flexible Choice" Plan (34 credit hours total) (Short Version)

Overall Rationale:

This plan is generated from the LEAP framework, like Draft Plan 2; however, it focuses on a traditional distribution requirements model at the lower level with respect to areas of knowledge, and also builds in broader student choice for a number of other categories.

Basic Categories: (taken from LEAP)

This plan has the same basic categories as Draft Plan 2. These are implemented in this draft plan as follows:

1. Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World (12 cr.)

This will be fulfilled by the student taking one course in each of the following four areas. These courses are chosen from among the standard introductory courses in the disciplines. They are thus not interdisciplinary and unique, like our current core courses. There will be a list of approved introductory-level courses. (Examples are given in the full version, as well as a list of which disciplines fall into each category.)

NOTE: It will be assumed in this draft plan that a student who majors in a discipline in one of these areas automatically fulfills the distribution requirements for that area, even if they do not take an introductory-level course on the approved list, but do take other, more advanced courses in that area, that meet requirements for their major.

The Social Sciences (3 cr.) – one course

(chosen from an approved list of standard introductory-level courses in a discipline in this area)

The Arts (3 cr.) – one course

(chosen from an approved list of standard introductory-level courses in a discipline in this area)

The Humanities (3 cr.) – one course

(chosen from an approved list of standard introductory-level courses in a discipline in this area)

The Natural Sciences and Mathematics (3 cr.) – one course

(chosen from an approved list of standard introductory-level courses in a discipline in this area)

2. Intellectual and Practical Skills (13 cr.)

These courses are intended to be **foundational**. Accordingly, students are required to take the following courses before the junior year.

Critical Thinking (3 cr.) – one course

(This is similar to our current requirement, but somewhat broader in focus.)

Communication (6 cr.) – two courses

Students will take Eng-W 131 and choose one communications course from the following list:

Spch-S 121 Public Speaking

Spch-S 122 Interpersonal Communication

Comm-V 100 Communicating through Visual Media (*)

Quantitative Literacy (3 cr.) – one course

(This is similar to our current requirement.)

Information Literacy (1 cr.) – one course;

This course must be taken in freshman year (<30 credit hours); transfer students coming in with >30 credit hours are exempt. It should be linked with other courses in this category, e.g., courses in critical thinking or written or oral communication.

Additional Requirements for Students with Special Needs or Status

- Csci-A 101 Basic Computer Literacy** (a new 1-credit-hour course, covering basic computer skills for those lacking the skills currently expected of all high school students entering college.)
- Students who are not qualified for Eng-W 131 must take **Eng-W 130 Principles of Composition**.
- Students who are admitted conditionally as new students must take **Educ-U 100 Threshold Seminar: The Craft and Culture of Higher Education** in their freshman year.

Additional Requirements for All Students:

First-Year Seminar: All students admitted with <30 credit hours, whether new students or transfer students, must take at least one core course with the designation "First-Year Seminar" (FYS).

3. Social Responsibility (9 cr.)

Intercultural Knowledge (6 cr.) – two courses, one in each of the following:

- Contemporary Global Cultures (3 cr.)

(This replaces "non-Western cultures" with "contemporary global cultures, as in Draft Plan 1.)

- Diversity in US Society (3 cr.)

(This is essentially the same as at present, focusing on non-dominant, minority cultures in the US.)

Ethical Reasoning (3 cr.) – one course

This may be either a general introductory course in ethics, or a course focusing on ethical issues in particular fields or programs, in the student's major.

For example: "Ethical reasoning classes" at Harvard University include courses on Human Rights, Political Justice and Political Trials, Race and Social Justice, a course called "Ethics, Biotechnology, and the Future of Human Nature," Equality and Liberty, and many others. Other courses that could count would include Medical Ethics or Bioethics courses, courses in Business Ethics, and many other such classes.

4. Integrative Learning

All students will take in their junior or senior year a 300- or 400-level course designated as an "**upper-level integrative course**." Normally this will be a course in their major. (See page 1 for a full description.)

The Essential Learning Outcomes



Beginning in school, and continuing at successively higher levels across their college studies, students should prepare for twenty-first-century challenges by gaining:

★ Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World

- Through study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts

Focused by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring

★ Intellectual and Practical Skills, including

- Inquiry and analysis
- Critical and creative thinking
- Written and oral communication
- Quantitative literacy
- Information literacy
- Teamwork and problem solving

Practiced extensively, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance

★ Personal and Social Responsibility, including

- Civic knowledge and engagement—local and global
- Intercultural knowledge and competence
- Ethical reasoning and action
- Foundations and skills for lifelong learning

Anchored through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges

★ Integrative Learning, including

- Synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies

Demonstrated through the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems

Note: This listing was developed through a multiyear dialogue with hundreds of colleges and universities about needed goals for student learning; analysis of a long series of recommendations and reports from the business community; and analysis of the accreditation requirements for engineering, business, nursing, and teacher education. The findings are documented in previous publications of the Association of American Colleges and Universities: *Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College* (2002), *Taking Responsibility for the Quality of the Baccalaureate Degree* (2004), and *Liberal Education Outcomes: A Preliminary Report on Achievement in College* (2005). *Liberal Education Outcomes* is available online at www.aacu.org/leap.