**General Education Committee**

**End of Year Report 2013-14**

**2013-14 Committee Membership**

*Faculty*:

Dan Black (Winter/May), William Earl, Charlie Figura (Fall), Melanie Harms (Winter/May), Amy Nolan (Fall), Jennifer Pothast, Todd Reiher; Kit Kleinhans, Chair.

*Students:*

Nicole Person (Fall Term), Christina Thompson (Winter/May Term)

*Ex officio:* Dean Mark Biermann

*By standing invitation:* Dyanna Pooley

**2013-14 Committee Business**

The General Education Committee:

* reviewed proposals for new courses and existing courses submitted to satisfy Essential Education requirements.
* formed a subcommittee to work with assessment director Dyanna Pooley and institutional research director Fred Ribich to determine what assessments are currently being implemented at Wartburg that could be used to assess the institutional learning outcomes associated with the Wartburg Plan of Essential Education. Work suspended in light of the work by the Higher Learning Commission Assessment Academy Team to revise the institutional learning outcomes.
* met with representatives of the Student Development Task Force to discuss the status of the student development plan.
* offered feedback on revised Common Learning Outcomes to the HLC Assessment Academy Team.
* had an extensive discussion about the efficacy of Interconnected (IC) courses in achieving stated outcomes; examined comparable curricular components of Wartburg’s benchmark institutions; and fostered a conversation about the requirement within faculty groups. Despite a consensus for replacing the IC courses with a distribution requirement, GEC decided not to forward a specific proposal to the faculty this year. (See addendum.)

**Recommendations to Next Year’s Committee**

1. Discern the will of the faculty to revise the Essential Education program, in whole or in part.
2. Copy registrar Sheree Covert on notification of courses approved to meet Essential Education requirements.
3. Restore regular (monthly?) meetings of GEC chair and EPC chair with Dean of Faculty and Registrar.

Addendum

Date: October 3, 2013

To: Faculty Groups

From: General Education Committee

Kit Kleinhans, chair; William Earl, Charlie Figura, Amy Nolan, Jennifer Pothast, Todd Reiher

Re: Interconnected (IC) Component of Essential Education: REQUEST FOR INPUT

A faculty survey conducted by the General Education Committee in March 2012 and reported at the Fall Faculty Workshop in August 2012 revealed significant dissatisfaction with the IC requirement. Concerns expressed include the coherence of the requirement, the effectiveness of “internal links” in introducing students to cross-disciplinary perspectives, the ability to justify almost any course as “interconnected,” and double-dipping of IC courses within majors weakening the breadth component of the plan. The Gen Ed Committee shares these concerns **and requests your input in determining a course of action.**

Please review the current guidelines for Interconnected courses, which are provided at the end of this document.

Please discuss the following questions at the upcoming group meeting. If you wish to provide additional input as an individual, please feel free to contact any of the members of the General Education Committee directly.

1. Do you think the IC goals and outcomes are still appropriate?
2. Do you think that the current Interconnected courses/requirement are accomplishing these goals and outcomes?
3. If you believe that the IC component of the plan is not effective, would you more likely be in favor of:
   1. Clarifying and strengthening the existing requirement by raising the level of interconnection and requiring faculty teaching IC courses to demonstrate that their students meet the second goal
   2. Providing additional support for team-teaching, so that interconnected courses involve two faculty from different disciplines
   3. Replacing the current IC requirement with something more like a traditional distribution requirement
   4. Replacing the current IC requirement with the requirement that all students complete an interdisciplinary minor (current offerings are environmental studies, intercultural studies, leadership, social entrepreneurship, women’s studies, worship studies; this requirement could be waived for a student whose major is interdisciplinary, e.g. environmental science and studies, international relations, peace and justice studies)
   5. Eliminating the IC requirement and requiring students to take more than one ID course
   6. Something else

***Interconnected Courses (4 cc)***

*Interconnected Courses (IC's) are designed to follow the Inquiry Studies (IS) courses and to continue the development of students' understanding of the fundamental assumptions and methods used by scholars throughout the curriculum. IC courses emphasize the connections and contrasts among disciplines and within the liberal arts. Requirements include:*

*1 cc Natural Science with lab*

*1 cc Social Science*

*1 cc Humanities/Fine Arts*

*1 cc Humanities/Fine Arts or Social Science*

*A course approved as satisfying the IC requirement cannot be used to meet another Essential Education requirement, except for the “Across the Curriculum” components.*

# *Goals*

# *Students will broaden their education by sampling courses from diverse disciplines.*

1. *Students will develop an appreciation for the disciplines of the liberal arts through a greater understanding of their interdependence.*

## *Outcomes*

* *Students will analyze common concepts, content, processes, and resources in two or three disciplines.*
* *Students will demonstrate understanding of the connections and contrasts between two or more disciplines.*
* *Students will analyze underlying assumptions in the disciplines being studied.*

***Course Criteria***

1. *Courses will contain common concepts, content, processes, and resources in two or three disciplines.*
2. *At least 1/14 or at least one week of the course time will be spent on the link.*
3. *Links from one IC course are limited to no more than 3 other courses.*
4. *Course structure options*

*Courses taught by two individuals in which students are concurrently enrolled, include common literature, text*

*Courses taught by two individuals and taken in sequence by students*

*Course taught by two people*

*Course with guest lecturer(s) from a different discipline*

*Course taught by one person*