



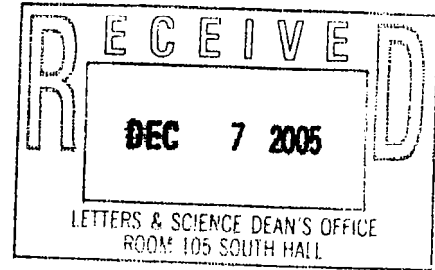
INTEGRATED LIBERAL STUDIES PROGRAM

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

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MADISON, WI 53715-1145

December 2, 2005



Dean Gary Sandefur
c/o Letters and Science Academic Planning
307E South Hall
1055 Bascom Mall
CAMPUS

→ EK

Dear Dean Sandefur,

Integrated Liberal Studies is pleased to submit its assessment report and assessment plan for evaluating the effectiveness of our undergraduate program, as stipulated in your recent charge to all Letters and Science department and program chairs. Both the report and the plan have been approved by our program's executive committee. Please let me know if you have any questions about either document.

Thank you so much for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Laura McClure

Laura McClure
Chair, Integrated Liberal Studies
Jane Ellen Harrison Professor of Classics

December 2, 2005

Report on Assessment Activities in the Integrated Liberal Studies Program

The Integrated Liberal Studies Program does not currently have an assessment plan on file. In response to Dean Sandefur's request for such a document from all departments and programs, ILS convened a committee on assessment in October, 2005. The committee consisted of four faculty members representing three academic disciplines—humanities, social science, and physical science. The members were Laura McClure (Chair of ILS, Classics), Craig Werner (ILS, AAS), Kathi Sell (ILS) and Cathy Middlecamp (Chemistry).

The committee observed first that ILS already has one important form of assessment in place: semester course evaluations distributed to each student enrolled in an ILS course during the last two weeks of the semester. These evaluations provide important information about the extent to which students are meeting the course goals and the requirements of the program as a whole. Similarly, all ILS faculty members establish curricular goals and means of assessment on their course syllabuses, which are collected and kept on file in the ILS program office at the beginning of each semester.

Because we have a terminal or capstone seminar (ILS 400) required of all of our certificate students, it seemed logical, and respectful of our limited human resources, to link any additional assessment to that course. Such a structure would allow the capstone teachers—currently Kathi Sell and Craig Werner—to oversee the assessment process and report back on an annual basis to the executive committee during a regularly scheduled departmental meeting. Assessment tools in the capstone, such as an interdisciplinary student project, a minimum final GPA and a paper assessment survey at the end of the semester, will help us gauge the success of our program. Last but not least, we plan to survey recent alumni about their experience in the ILS program and its importance for their lives beyond the University of Wisconsin on a bi-annual basis.

Assessment Plan for the Integrated Liberal Studies Program

The primary academic goals of the Integrated Liberal Studies Program include:

- Ability to integrate different types of knowledge and disciplinary approaches;
- A knowledge of the past and its relevance to the present;
- Ability to handle complex ideas;
- Intellectual curiosity;
- Ability to relate academic learning to the experience of citizenship.

ILS 400: Capstone Seminar provides the ideal venue for assessing the extent to which our students have met these academic goals. The course is required of all of our certificate students before they graduate. Because of the high number of certificate earners in recent years, students can normally only take this course in their senior year.

Four aspects of student participation in the capstone provide excellent opportunities for assessment:

- Quality and quantity of contributions to class discussions;
- Performance on a final interdisciplinary paper or project;
- Achievement of a final course grade of "B" or higher;
- Participation in an exit interview or assessment survey.

Since in-class discussion is where much of ILS learning takes place, it is the best venue for tracking the intellectual development of our students. The interdisciplinary paper or project provides another perspective on this progress, allowing us to gauge written as well as oral output skills. It also affords an opportunity to measure the comfort level of our students with crossing disciplinary boundaries, a major emphasis in all of our courses. Since grades provide another form of student assessment, the program now requires that all students in the capstone receive a grade of "B" or higher. Finally, all capstone students are required to complete an in-class exit survey, consisting of a set of questions targeted at assessing whether they have acquired the types of skills or breadth of knowledge emphasized in ILS, along the lines of the attached document.

One final means to assess our effectiveness as a program is to solicit input from recent alumni. To that end, the ILS program proposes to distribute electronically, and with the help of WAA, a bi-annual questionnaire to young alumni about the impact their ILS experience has had on their post-graduate lives.

Data gleaned from these assessments will be reported annually to all ILS faculty at our final departmental meeting of the year. It is also desired that the assessment process itself undergo periodic review by ILS faculty to determine its usefulness.

Possible Questions for Student Assessment in the Integrated Liberal Studies Program

Q1: How have your ILS classes helped you integrated knowledge from different disciplines?

Q2: How has your ILS experience contributed to your overall understanding of the past?

Q3: To what extent has ILS given you a higher degree of comfort with complex and abstract ideas?

Q4: To what degree has ILS given you a greater interest in the topics studied?

Q5: How has ILS made you more aware of the relation of academic learning to citizenship and contemporary issues?

Q6: Add comments below