

NORTHERN ESSEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Program Review Year 2012 – 2013

Name of Program:

Liberal Arts

Program Review Team Members/Contributors/Reviewers

Name

Title

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Patricia Machado | Associate Professor of Economics & Liberal Arts Coordinator |
| Stephen Mathis | Professor of English |
| Stephen Russell | Professor of History |
| Thomas Greene | Associate Professor of English |
| Marcy Yeager | Professor of Science |
| Grace Young | Dean of Academic Advising, Articulation, Testing, Transfer, & TRIO |
| Ann Rancourt | Associate Provost, Keene State College |

DATE: _____ 9-15-2013 _____

Summary Overview

The Liberal Arts Program Review was performed simultaneously with the General Studies Program Review as many of the pressing questions and concerns overlapped the two programs. In the spring of 2012, Professor Stephen Russell queried the faculty and staff regarding overall program effectiveness, strengths, weaknesses, areas of concern, and areas for improvement. His report was submitted and used as a starting point for Professor Patricia Machado to coordinate the Liberal Arts Program Review and for Professor Stephen Mathis to coordinate the General Studies Program Review. During the course of the year, meetings were convened jointly by the two programs and the program review was also performed in a non-traditional format utilizing the expertise of all faculty members at division meetings instead of focusing primarily on the work of smaller-sized committees. It proved to be an effective approach as all division members were able to contribute input during the review process.

The Liberal Arts and General Studies programs are both very large programs at Northern Essex Community College serving similar populations of students who study a broad array of courses across many disciplines. Some of the pressing questions faced during the program review were as follows:

- Is General Studies really “stealing away” the Liberal Arts students?
- What does the Liberal Arts degree contribute to employability?
- How do we promote the value of the Liberal Arts degree?
- What is the future of the Liberal Arts Degree at NECC?
- Is it a degree program, a transfer program, or both?

The answers to these questions, along with the overall findings of the program review, set the foundation for next-steps in program improvement and planning for the Liberal Arts program. One important finding from the program review process was the need for greater collegiality among the Liberal Arts students. Additionally, it became evident that there is a glaring need to provide clear career pathways for students earning an Associate Degree in Liberal Arts along with providing clear pathways to future matriculation at four-year colleges and universities. As a result, plans are in place to begin addressing these areas during the 2013-14 academic year.

Lastly, and in many ways most importantly, Dr. Ann Rancourt, the external evaluator for the Liberal Arts Program Review, provided us with a comprehensive report that not only assisted in the program review but will be used as a framework for moving forward over the next few years. The report is included in appendices of this document. It highlights the need for collegiality and pathways, but it also articulates the need for greater coherence and intentionality of the Liberal Arts Program curriculum and outcomes. This particular feedback will be further investigated as we move forward over the next few years. Please see Appendix 7 for the report.

INTRODUCTION - BACKGROUND

REGIONAL ACCREDITATION CONTEXT FOR PROGRAM REVIEW

NEASC Standard 2.5: The institution has a system of periodic review of academic and other programs that includes the use of external perspectives.

NEASC Standard 4.8: The institution ... on a regular cycle reviews its degree programs under effective institutional policies that are implemented by designated bodies with established channels of communication and control. Faculty have a substantive voice in these matters.

SCHEDULING OF PROGRAM REVIEWS

The Associate Dean of Academic and Institutional Effectiveness shall maintain a copy of the current schedule for programs to be reviewed, including the names of the person(s) designated as program review team leader(s). The schedule shall be developed by the Deans/ Assistant Deans, and shall be posted on the College's website.

FORMATION OF PROGRAM REVIEW TEAM

The team leader will identify at least five program review team members as follows:

- A. Faculty
 - i. If there are full-time faculty members in the program in addition to the designated team leader, then at least one should be included on the team.
 - ii. If there are no full-time faculty members in the program in addition to the team leader, then the leader can consider including on the team:
 - a. At least one part-time faculty member in such cases where it is believed that the part-time faculty member has sufficient experience and investment in the program to make an informed and solid contribution to the program review, OR
 - b. If no such part-time member can be identified, at least one person who is not a faculty member but who can serve the intended purpose. This may include an outside professional, a faculty member from a related program (e.g., where there is overlap of courses), or some such other individual.
 - iii. At least one faculty member shall be from outside the department/program.
 - iv. At least one faculty member shall be from outside the division.
- B. External Representative
 - i. At least one Advisory Committee member, or a member of an effective approved alternative, should be included on the team. Alternative representatives include an individual from a four-year institution to which students from the program transfer. This individual would be knowledgeable concerning the program and its graduates. Another possible alternative is a representative of an area high school which is an important feeder source for the program.
 - ii.

SUGGESTED TIMELINE FOR PROGRAM REVIEW PREPARATION

The program review calls for insertion of the program’s outcomes and assessment plan. This plan is very helpful in addressing many sections of the program review report. *The following timeline is based on the assumption that the outcomes and assessment plan has not been developed prior to the program review year.*

| Date | Activity |
|-----------------------|---|
| January/ February | Inform/ Orient: Associate Dean of Academic and Institutional Effectiveness informs Dean and/or Assistant Dean and individual(s) who have been designated as program review team leaders of their programs scheduled for program review, which is due by February 1 of the next year. Associate Dean schedules meeting with Dean and/or Assistant Dean, and the designated team leader to orient them to the review materials and process. Deans and/or Assistant Deans inform team leader concerning any specific requirements related to the process. |
| February | Assemble team/ Begin meeting: Team leader identifies members of the team that will be involved in the program review. Team begins meeting, and develops a schedule of and process for meetings. First task is to orient team members to the work ahead. |
| February/ March | Develop program mission statement and program outcomes: Team members begin developing the program mission statement, objectives and student learning outcomes. Begin to develop the outcomes and curriculum map. |
| March | Complete curriculum and outcomes assessment maps. |
| March/ April | Complete the outcomes and assessment plan. Complete SECTION IX of the program review. |
| September | Complete SECTIONS I, II, AND III of the program review. NOTE: IN LATE SEPTEMBER, THE ASSOCIATE DEAN WILL PROVIDE THE TABLE NEEDED TO ADDRESS “D” IN SECTION III. Distribute Chart 6 to each faculty member involved in the program: Ask for returns by mid-October. |
| October | Complete SECTION IV, V, AND VI of the program review. IN OCTOBER, THE ASSOCIATE DEAN WILL PROVIDE THE CHARTS NEEDED TO ADDRESS SECTION V. |
| November | Complete SECTIONS VII, VIII, X AND XI. NOTE: IN EARLY NOVEMBER, THE ASSOCIATE DEAN WILL PROVIDE THE CHARTS NEEDED TO ADDRESS SECTIONS VII AND “C” IN SECTION XI. |
| November/ December | Complete SECTIONS XII THROUGH XV. Review and edit as needed. |
| By February 1 | Submit final draft: Dean and/or Assistant Dean receives final copy of program review document. |
| April | Annual program review summit meeting: Attended by the President, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Deans, Assistant Deans, Associate Dean of Academic and Institutional Effectiveness, faculty involved in program reviews, and any other interested faculty and staff. |

PROGRAM REVIEW

SECTION I: ACCREDITATION/ APPROVAL/ CERTIFICATION

A. Does the program have external (specialized) programmatic accreditation?

Yes _____ No X

IF NO, skip to I (B).

IF YES, please complete items 1 through 8 below.

1. What is the name of the programmatic accreditation agency?
2. What is the current accreditation status of the program?
3. What date was the last accreditation status awarded?
4. What is the anticipated date of the next accreditation action?
5. How often does the program file an official report with the accrediting agency?
6. Where is the program currently in the review schedule (e.g., year 3 of a 7 year cycle)?
7. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the program, as identified by the accreditation agency during the last accreditation activity? (*Base your response in this area to the citation of Standards.*)
8. How has the program been revised to address the citations or recommendations?

B. Does the program have external (specialized) programmatic approval or certification?

Yes _____ No X

IF NO, skip to I (C).

IF YES, please complete items 1 through 8 below.

1. What is the name of the programmatic approval or certification agency?

2. What is the current approval or certification status of the program?

3. What date was the last approval or certification status awarded?

4. What is the anticipated date of the next approval or certification action?

5. How often does the program file an official report with the approving or certifying agency?

6. Where is the program currently in the review schedule (e.g., year 3 of a 7 year cycle)?

7. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the program, as identified by the approval or certification agency during the last approval or certification activity? (*Base your response in this area to the citation of Standards.*)

8. How has the program been revised to address the citations or recommendations?

C. Is there an external accrediting, certifying, or approval organization relevant to your program from which you are not currently receiving accreditation, approval or certification?

Yes _____ No X

IF NO, skip to question II.

IF YES, please complete items 1 through 3 below.

1. What is the name of this external organization?

2. What status can your program receive from this organization?

Accreditation ____ Certification____ Approval _____

3. Are you intending to apply for accreditation, certification, or approval from this organization?

Yes _____ No _____

IF NO, please explain, then go to question II.

IF YES, please complete items 4 through 7 below, then go to question II

4. Why are you intending to apply for accreditation, certification, or approval?

5. When are you intending to apply and why?

6. Are there any specific resources you will need when you go through the accreditation, certification, or approval process that you do not currently have? If yes, please describe.

7. Please provide information about any additional questions, concerns, etc. you may have with respect to your intention to apply for accreditation, certification, or approval.

SECTION II: MISSION AND PURPOSES

NEASC Standard 1.4: The mission and purposes of the institution are accepted and widely understood by its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students. They provide direction to the curricula and other activities and form the basis on which expectations for student learning are developed. Specific objectives, reflective of the institution's overall mission and purposes are developed by the institution's individual units.

NEASC Standard 4.1: The institution's programs are consistent with and serve to fulfill its mission and purposes...

NOTE: IF YOUR PROGRAM HAS EXTERNAL ACCREDITATION, APPROVAL, OR CERTIFICATION, please respond below only to those areas not addressed in the external report.

A. The program's mission statement is as follows:

The Associate Degree in Liberal Arts prepares students for future matriculation at the Bachelor Degree level or for career pathways at the Associate Degree level. It provides students with an education whereby they are informed, knowledgeable, and responsible members of society who can develop the ability to think critically and actively participate in an ever-changing world. Taking a multi-discipline approach, students learn to become effective communicators who can analyze information from a broad array of subjects in the liberal arts. Students in the Liberal Arts Associates Degree program have the opportunity to become well-rounded, civic minded, socially responsible, and service oriented graduates.

B. Describe the process through which faculty developed the program mission.

At the Liberal Arts meeting held in October 2012, the 2005-06 Liberal Arts mission statement was reviewed by all in attendance. Suggested changes were recommended. Based on those suggestions, research was performed by the Liberal Arts Program Coordinator and a sampling of mission statements from other institutions was presented at the January 2013 Foundational Studies, Liberal Arts, and Sciences (FSLAS) Division meeting. Further feedback was collected from the division meeting participants and a draft mission statement was presented at the March 2013 FSLAS division meeting. Based on that feedback, the final version of the Liberal Arts Mission Statement was developed. Additionally, it is important to note that after each meeting, opportunities for email correspondence were also offered as a venue for providing feedback. The overall process was highly participatory in nature as all division members were provided ample opportunity to make suggestions and provide feedback.

C. Describe how the program's mission statement is consistent with, or aligns with, the mission of the College, which is as follows:

The mission of Northern Essex Community College is to serve the people of the Greater Merrimack Valley as a caring and comprehensive center of educational excellence that offers high quality, affordable adult and post-secondary education through the Associate Degree level, as well as a broad range of occupational programs and community services which enhance the social, cultural and economic life of the region.

The Liberal Arts mission statement aligns with the NECC mission in its ability to provide educational excellence at the Associate Degree level. It serves the people of the Greater Merrimack Valley by providing students the opportunity to become well-rounded, civic minded, socially responsible, and service oriented graduates who can pursue further education at the Bachelor Degree level or pursue a wide array of career pathways for employment. The Liberal Arts degree provides the opportunity for students to develop the skills necessary to think critically and actively participate in an ever changing world thus making them qualified candidates for future academic endeavors and/or providing them with the “soft skills” necessary for success in the workplace.

D. Describe how this program facilitates the accomplishment of the College’s Core Values.

- **Student Engagement**
- **Collaboration**
- **Personal and Professional Growth**
- **Respect**
- **Diversity**
- **Access and Opportunity**
- **Excellence**

The Liberal Arts degree provides significant support to the accomplishment of NECC’s Core Values. The Liberal Arts course requirements expose students to a broad array of study encompassing a multi-discipline approach. This multi-discipline approach, as exhibited in the course requirements, teaches students to value diversity, provides opportunity for excellence in education, creates an atmosphere of respect through greater understanding of the world in which we live, and provides opportunity for personal and professional growth. Through exposure to many disciplines and courses of study, collaboration is an innate occurrence. For example, the Liberal Arts program is piloting models of civic engagement in the classroom thus enhancing the overall exposure to the core values for more and more students. Additionally, NECC offers many cross-discipline learning opportunities via learning communities. Through faculty engagement and discourse in the learning community classroom, clear collaboration is modeled in the daily interactions of the faculty. Lastly, the opportunity for service learning is wide-spread in the Liberal Arts program affording students the opportunity for engagement and collaboration, along with addressing the remaining core values.

(For more information, go to: <http://www.necc.mass.edu/about/values/>)

E. Describe how this program satisfies or is consistent with one or more of the College’s Strategic Goals:

- Goal 1: Develop a comprehensive urban campus in downtown Lawrence.**
- Goal 2: Improve Student Learning, and Retention and Graduation Rates.**
- Goal 3: Improve Academic support Services.**
- Goal 4: Improve Student Career Preparation.**
- Goal 5: Expand a “culture of Learning” across the college.**

The mission of the Liberal Arts program is clearly consistent with Goals 2, 4, and 5. In addressing Goal 2, significant effort is underway in the Foundational Studies Liberal Arts and Sciences (FSLAS) division to improve student learning, retention, and graduation rates. The Achieving The Dream initiative supports NECC students with preparation and support to pursue the

Liberal Arts degree. Additionally, Foundational Studies is a vital part of the division providing developmental support and preparation to the Liberal Arts students.

It is important to note, however, that a major portion of this program review was to simultaneously evaluate the role of the General Studies degree and its impact on Liberal Arts retention and graduation. There was a sentiment, and it can be argued based on the program review findings that it is a false sentiment, that the General Studies degree was “stealing away” potential Liberal Arts majors because of the less rigorous requirements. This program review determined that the Liberal Arts versus General Studies sentiment should be set aside. First, program completion for Liberal Arts has increased over the last three years at 35 students in 2009-10, 45 in 2010-11, and 53 in 2011-12 while the General Studies rate has remained fairly consistent in numbers at 102 graduates in 2009-10, 110 in 2010-11, and 110 in 2011-12. Second, the General Studies program review determined that the General Studies program is a valuable and necessary vehicle for providing NECC students with access to an Associate Degree, particularly in light of recent changes to federal financial aid, the requirements of worker retraining programs, and the need for flexible programs which can transfer to majors not included in the traditional Liberal Arts program transfer agreements. Third, it became evident through the review process that there was a need for greater collegiality among all students enrolled in Liberal Arts courses regardless of whether or not they were an officially declared Liberal Arts or General Studies major. This need for greater collegiality stems from the Liberal Arts and General Studies desire for a programmatic identity. This is particularly the case for General Studies as their program review articulates the need for a program needing a home, an owner, and a budget, etc... The overall program review process identifies a need for a collective identity within the Liberal Arts and programs for creating a greater sense of collegiality will be addressed in subsequent sections of this document and in the planned program activities in Liberal Arts beginning in the fall of 2013.

Goals 4 and 5 are addressed in the Liberal Arts mission as it seeks to provide pathways to careers and the curriculum is multi-disciplinary addressing a broad array of courses. Providing pathways to careers will be a major focus of the program’s goals in 2013-14 and activities are currently being proposed to make greater connections with the Greater Merrimack Valley workforce community as well as providing greater opportunity for Liberal Arts majors to see clear pathways to employment with their degree. Expanding a “culture of learning” is also a major focus of the Liberal Arts in 2013-14 as programs are being piloted in civic engagement and the proposal of a Liberal Arts Institute. These two initiatives are part of the Liberal Arts mission and degree, and they are supported at the FSLAS division level.

(For more information, go to: <http://facstaff.necc.mass.edu/vision-and-planning-initiatives/strategic-planning/strategic-goals-2012-2015/>)

SECTION II SUMMARY:

Strengths related to Mission and Purposes:

The Liberal Arts program provides students with a broad array of skills and educational opportunities thus affording students the opportunity to pursue further education in various disciplines at the Bachelor Degree level or to pursue a variety of career opportunities requiring an Associate Degree.

Challenges or Areas for Improvement related to Mission and Purpose:

The Liberal Arts mission, as it has been revised, requires the program to better celebrate the value of a Liberal Arts degree by providing students with clear pathways to employment and/or a Bachelor Degree program.

Recommendations for actions needed to be taken to address Challenges or Areas for Improvement:

The proposed goals for 2013-14 recommend that the Liberal Arts program initiate collaboration with the various NECC and community programs to establish clear pathways to employment and to work with the Dean of Academic Advising, Articulation, Testing, Transfer, and TRIO to establish/promote articulation agreements for the Liberal Arts. (note: an agreement is currently being investigated/proposed with UMASS Lowell Bachelor of Arts program) Additionally, the proposed goals for 2013-14 recommend that the Liberal Arts program also institute opportunities for creating collegiality among students in the Liberal Arts. A first phase attempt to address this will be a proposed student forum/meeting/speaker session for Liberal Arts and General Studies majors in the fall semester of 2013.

SECTION III: PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

NEASC Standard 4.3 Each educational program demonstrates coherence through its ...policies and procedures for admission and retention...

NOTE: IF YOUR PROGRAM HAS EXTERNAL ACCREDITATION, APPROVAL, OR CERTIFICATION, please respond below only to those areas not addressed in the external report.

A. List any specific program policies and procedures, and comment on the rationale for any differences from institutional policies and procedures.

(Programs may need to develop specific policies and procedures related to the day-to-day operation of the specific program [e.g., to meet accreditation standards, to establish the parameters for clinical education experiences]. When there are specific program policies and procedures, these policies and procedures should be consistent with those of the institution. Differences between program-specific policies and institutional policies should be described within the context of the program.)

N/A There are no specific policies and procedure in place for the Liberal Arts program. All policies and procedures are in accordance with NECC general policies and procedures.

B. Describe the mechanism used to assure that all students in the program receive copies of current program-specific policies and procedures, relevant information about the program, and information about the institutional policies and procedures.

In the Liberal Arts Degree program, all policies and procedures are presented via the academic advising process and presented to students at orientation. All information regarding policies and procedures are published on the NECC website. Any course specific information is presented during class time via each professor and the course syllabus. All syllabi are reviewed by department chairs and deans to insure all institutional policies and procedures are satisfied.

C. Describe how the program defines “student success.” (For example, if the program facilitates student transfer, and students do indeed transfer, does this meet the program’s definition of success?) Describe the program’s policies, procedures and practices related to student success.

The program review process has been an “eye-opening” experience in defining student success. If the primary measures of success are retention, transfer, and graduation rates for the Liberal Arts, then the program is placing too much emphasis on one component of overall success. This became evident through the research done during the program review process and the preliminary research done by Professor of History Stephen Russell in the spring of 2012. Over the last three years, Liberal Arts has graduated 35, 45, and 53 students respectively. With an average of 502 students enrolled over the last three years, these numbers represent an increase in percentages of graduation

rates for Liberal Arts with the final year of 2011-12 at approximately a 10% graduation rate. Thus, based on the program review process and the rewriting of the Liberal Arts mission as well as the proposed Liberal Arts goals for 2013-14, in addition to retention and graduation rates, the Liberal Mission and attainment of Core Academic Skills will also provide measures of overall success.

Examples of success measures are as follows:

1. Effectively articulating career pathways for Liberal Associates degree majors
2. Effectively developing smooth transitions to Bachelor degree programs via articulation agreement.
3. Liberal Arts degree providing an expanded array of courses satisfying NECC's Core Academic Skills. Student success will be measured through the core skill assessment process. (See Outcomes and Curriculum Map)
4. Creating a collaborative and welcoming environment for all Liberal Arts students whether enrolled in General Studies or Liberal Arts. (see 2013-14 goals for proposal to offer student sessions with LA and GS majors)

In summary, traditional statistics like enrollment and graduation rates will continue to be measured, but they will be enhanced by thoroughly utilizing the mission statement and the program review as "live" documents that guide and measure program success in the coming years. Descriptive statistics in isolation, do not effectively describe the success and essence of the Liberal Arts degree program at NECC.

D. Describe how significant modification of this program would impact other programs at NECC. (Reference Table 1 in Appendix 1.)

N/A

SECTION III SUMMARY:

Strengths related to Program Policies and Procedures:

Current NECC overall policies and procedures provide all of the necessary supports to the Liberal Arts degree.

Challenges or Areas for Improvement related to Program Policies and Procedures:

Through the program review process, it has become glaringly evident that a sense of collegiality, connectedness, and belonging needs to be developed for all Liberal Arts students. Additionally, clear pathways to careers and four year institutions need to be provided to NECC Liberal Arts students.

Recommendations for actions needed to be taken to deal with Challenges or Areas for Improvement:

The Liberal Arts Mission Statement and Program Review will become "live" documents that drive the Liberal Arts program. For example, as described in the Liberal Arts 2013-14 goals and proposed in the budget, there will be opportunities offered to engage Liberal Arts students collegially. Pathways to careers and four year institutions will be developed for these students.

SECTION IV: CURRICULUM

NEASC Standard 4.3 Each educational program demonstrates coherence through its goals, structure and content...

NEASC Standard 4.5: Degree programs have a coherent design and are characterized by appropriate breadth, depth, continuity, sequential progression, and synthesis of learning.

NOTE: IF YOUR PROGRAM HAS EXTERNAL ACCREDITATION, APPROVAL, OR CERTIFICATION, please respond below only to those areas not addressed in the external report.

A. Describe the curriculum. *(You may use the same format used in the NECC Academic Catalog.)*

| COURSE | | Proficiency | Prerequisite |
|---------------|---|--------------------|---|
| Number | Name | | |
| ENG101 | English Composition 1 | | |
| ENG102 | English Composition 2 | | ENG 101 |
| | | | |
| | 6 credits of Behavioral Science Electives | | |
| | 6 credits of History & Government Electives | | |
| | 6 credits of Fine & Performing Arts/Foreign Lang./Philosophy & Religion Electives | | |
| | 6 credits of Literature Electives | | |
| | 6/8 credits of Math Electives | | MAT 111 or higher |
| | 8 credits of Science Electives | | Must be 2 lab science courses |
| | 12 credits of Liberal Arts Electives | | 3 credits PED may be substituted. SEE NOTE |
| | 6 free electives | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

NOTE: 3 credits PED may be substituted for 1 Liberal Arts elective. However, it may not be transferrable to all colleges/universities.

B. Discuss how the curriculum is an organized, sequential series of courses that progress from simple to complex learning.

After ENG101 and ENG102, the Liberal Arts degree requirements have a large degree of flexibility in course sequencing.

C. Describe the curriculum development, review and revision processes used by the program to assure that the curriculum meets the needs of students and graduates. Include discussion of the mechanisms that allow input into these processes from (1) employers of program graduates and (2) schools to which students transfer (if applicable).

The Liberal Arts Associates Degree requires only ENG101 and ENG102. All other requirements are either designated by discipline or free electives. The curriculum development, review, and revision process is specific to each course's primary departmental location; for example, a psychology course revision would first be presented through the Behavioral Sciences department. After that, all course changes follow the NECC path as designated by NECC Academic Affairs guidelines. Additionally, the curriculum meets the needs of students and graduates through the Mass Transfer as articulated by NECC as a Mass Transfer institution. See the following link for more information regarding Mass Transfer. <http://www.necc.mass.edu/academics/support-services/transfer/transfer-programs/>

D. How does the curriculum contribute to the student accomplishing the six institutional learning outcomes - Written and Oral Communication Skills, Information Literacy, Quantitative Reasoning, Global awareness, and Science and Technology?

The curriculum contributes to the student accomplishing all of the above listed outcomes through the successful completion of core academic skills designated electives. See Curriculum Map in Appendix 5 for details specific to course flexibility and students' ability to accomplish the six institutional learning outcomes.

E. How does the curriculum contribute to the student accomplishing program specific learning outcomes, as detailed in the program's Curriculum Map in Appendix 5?

The Liberal Arts curriculum is designed in such a way that students have the flexibility to take courses which address all of the program specific learning outcomes. Liberal Arts learning outcomes were designed to meet the requirements of the six institutional learning outcomes. The uniqueness of the program provides a natural venue for this, thus creating a "win-win" situation for the NECC Liberal Arts student. For further clarification, see Curriculum Map in Appendix 5.

SECTION IV SUMMARY:

Strengths related to Curriculum:

The greatest strengths related to the Liberal Arts curriculum are as follows:

1. Transferability to four year institutions and the Mass Transfer.
2. Flexibility of curriculum through electives.
3. Natural alignment with the six institutional learning outcomes.

Challenges or Areas for Improvement related to Curriculum:

At the moment, no major challenges or areas for improvement related to the curriculum have been identified through the program review process.

Recommendations for actions needed to be taken to deal with Challenges or Areas for Improvement:

N/A – see answer above

SECTION V: PROGRAM RESOURCES - FACULTY

NEASC Standard 5.2: The preparation and qualifications of all faculty are appropriate to the field and level of their assignments. Qualifications are measured by advanced degrees held, evidence of scholarship, advanced study, creative activities, teaching abilities, and relevant professional experience, training, and credentials.

NOTE: IF YOUR PROGRAM HAS EXTERNAL ACCREDITATION, APPROVAL, OR CERTIFICATION, please respond below only to those areas not addressed in the external report.

A. Discuss the number of faculty assigned to the program with respect to its adequacy to complete all activities associated with maintaining a high-quality educational program. (See completed Chart 5(A), Chart 5(B), and Chart 5(C) in Appendix 3.)

N/A – The Liberal Arts program is multidisciplinary. Given its scope, it was predetermined not to address these questions. All faculty members who teach courses that could be taken as part of the flexible curriculum are held accountable to meet the standards incumbent upon all NECC full-time and part-time faculty members.

B. Indicate the percentage of faculty that are full-time, as well as the percentage of credit hours taught by full-time faculty. (See Chart 5 (D) in Appendix 3.)

N/A

C. Discuss how the percentage of full-time faculty, both in terms of numbers and credit hours taught, impacts the program.

N/A

D. For each faculty member, document their credentials and professional activities. (See the copies of Chart 6 in Appendix 3 completed for each faculty member (full, part-time, or DCE). (Note: Each individual faculty member should complete his/her own chart and submit it to the Program Coordinator or designee.) Describe and summarize the credentials and the activities of program faculty with respect to maintaining their status as content experts and remaining current in their field of expertise.

N/A – However, please note that all faculty members report activities and professional development to their division deans. This information is on record with each division dean as per NECC requirements.

SECTION V SUMMARY:

Strengths related to Program Resources - Faculty:

N/A

Challenges or Areas for Improvement related to Program Resources - Faculty:

N/A

Recommendations for actions needed to be taken to deal with Challenges or Areas for Improvement:

N/A

SECTION VI: PROGRAM RESOURCES – CLASSROOMS AND LABORATORIES, INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY, LIBRARY/ LEARNING, AND FINANCIAL

NEASC Standard 4.3...The institution provides sufficient resources to sustain and improve its academic programs.

NEASC Standard 4.6: The institution ensures that students use information resources and information technology as an integral part of their education. The institution provides appropriate orientation and training for use of these resources, as well as instruction and support in information literacy and information technology appropriate to the degree level and field of study.

NEASC Standard 7.7: Through ownership or guaranteed access, the institution makes available the library and information resources necessary for the fulfillment of its mission and purposes. These resources are sufficient in quality, level, diversity, quantity, and currency to support and enrich the institution's academic offerings...

NEASC Standard 8.2: Classrooms and other facilities are appropriately equipped and adequate in capacity. Classrooms and other teaching spaces support teaching methods appropriate to the discipline. Students and faculty have access to appropriate physical, technological, and educational resources to support teaching and learning.

NOTE: IF YOUR PROGRAM HAS EXTERNAL ACCREDITATION, APPROVAL, OR CERTIFICATION, please respond below only to those areas not addressed in the external report.

A. Discuss whether the program has classrooms and laboratories of sufficient quality and quantity to provide an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning.

N/A – this is handled at the division level. There is currently a working team headed by Dean of FSLAS to address the facility issues in the Spurk Building which is where most Liberal Arts courses are offered. Elective courses offered by other divisions address the issues specific to their facilities.

B. Describe the instructional technology required to support the program's curriculum plan. Discuss whether the current instructional technology is of sufficient quality and quantity to provide an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning.

N/A – However, please note that the majority of courses are offered in smart classrooms. Any additional needs in this area are addressed by the specific divisions.

C. Discuss whether the program has access to library and related learning resources adequate to support the curriculum plan and to provide an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning.

Based on faculty response, the Liberal Arts program has access to adequate library and related learning resources. When an issue does arise, there are established NECC venues for addressing issues; for example, the Student Affairs Committee recently addressed the issue of blackboard tutoring for

students taking online, hybrid, and web-enhanced courses. The NECC community responded and tutoring is now available for blackboard. Other issues that could impact the Liberal Arts curriculum in this area are addressed via the specific division/department housing the elective course(s) that Liberal Arts students are taking.

D. Discuss whether the program's financial resources are adequate for the program to achieve its stated mission.

The answer to this is multi-faceted. First, through the lens of program review for the Liberal Arts Associates Degree mission, the funds are only slightly inadequate (funds are being requested to support building collegiality for Liberal Arts students). However, and this is a major however, when looking at this through a different lens at the division and institution level, the answer is a resounding NO. As previously stated, these issues are being addressed at the division level and clearly among the most pressing issues are those associated with the aging Spurr Building.

SECTION VI SUMMARY:

Strengths related to Program Resources – Classrooms and Laboratories, Instructional Technology, Library/ Learning, Financial

N/A – being addressed at the division level

Challenges or Areas for Improvement related to Program Resources - Classrooms and Laboratories, Instructional Technology, Library/ Learning, Financial

N/A – being addressed at the division level

Recommendations for actions needed to be taken to deal with Challenges or Areas for Improvement:

N/A – being addressed at the division level

SECTION VII: STUDENTS

NOTE: IF YOUR PROGRAM HAS EXTERNAL ACCREDITATION, APPROVAL, OR CERTIFICATION, please respond below only to those areas not addressed in the external report.

IF THE PROGRAM HAS DATA FROM A PREVIOUS REVIEW OR REPORT, COMPARE WITH CURRENT DATA, AND DISCUSS ANY CHANGES.

A. Analyze and discuss the data in Chart 1, included in Appendix 2, which relates to student demand for the program.

Along with the General Studies program, the Liberal Arts degree is one of the largest programs of study at NECC with a three year average of 502 students enrolled per year. For the past three years, total applications to the Liberal Arts Associate Degree program have averaged 264 applicants with an average of 122 incoming freshmen, an average of 40 external transfers, and an average of 43 readmitted students for a total average of 205 new matriculating students per year. The data in Chart 1 do show a downturn in total enrollment for Liberal Arts majors with a total enrollment of 472 students in 2011/12 down from 500 students in the previous year and down from 533 the year before that. This downturn could be indicative of the economy with more students opting for career specific majors. It could also be a result of a general advising practice to place students in General Studies if they are unsure of declaring a major. This reinforces the need for NECC to provide **clear pathways** for students in the Liberal Arts program.

B. Analyze and discuss student program completion and transfer, referring to Chart 2 in Appendix 2.

The graduation rates for the Liberal Arts degree were 35 students in 2009-10, 45 in 2010-11, and 53 in 2011-12 with this most recent academic year holding an approximately 10% graduation rate which is right in line with overall graduation rates for NECC. A 2011 NECC prepared Transfer Study shows that UMASS Lowell is the institution with the highest transfer rate for NECC students. In 2011, 15 Liberal Arts students transferred to UMASS Lowell. This supports the need for a Liberal Arts Articulation Agreement with UMASS Lowell to their Bachelor Degree in Liberal Arts. This is included in the Liberal Arts Program Goals for 2013/14

C. Analyze and describe the demographic characteristics of students enrolled in program, referring to Chart 3 in Appendix 2.

Chart 3 details the demographic characteristics of students in the Liberal Arts program. Over the last three years, minority students have comprised 28%, 27%, and 29% of the enrolled population. The highest ethnicity represented within the minority category is Hispanic. In 2011/12, of the 472 students enrolled, 32 were Hispanic males and 72 were Hispanic females. In general, white students represent 70% of the Liberal Arts student population, with the male to female population being 43% male and 57% female. Within the Hispanic ethnicity category, in 2011/12, 30% of the population was male and 70% of the population was female. This difference in male/female data for the Hispanic population as compared to the overall Liberal Arts student population is culturally characteristic of this ethnic group.

It should be noted, however, that NECC initiatives such as Achieving the Dream do begin to address the needs of NECC's culturally diverse and/or marginalized student.

D. Analyze and discuss student retention and positive college outcomes by student demographics, referring to Chart 4 in Appendix 2. *Note: Only address if number of students in each category represented in Chart 4 is at least 10.*

N/A – Chart 4 is not used in this program review

E. Describe the program policies, procedures, and practices that are in place related to student retention. Discuss how are they implemented? Comment on their effectiveness.

N/A – Chart 4 is not used in this program review.

F. Referring to Chart 4, is there evidence that any segment of the student population has a higher attrition rate from this program? *Note: Only address if number of students in each category represented in Chart 4 is at least 10. If so, what action has the program taken to address this phenomenon?*

N/A – Chart 4 is not used in this program review

SECTION VII SUMMARY:

Strengths related to Students:

The greatest strength related to the Liberal Arts students is its magnitude and transferability, specifically within the Mass Transfer system. Additionally, the diversity of demographic characteristics exemplifies the program's strength as serving students from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Challenges or Areas for Improvement related to Students:

The areas for improvement are building upon the magnitude of the program and creating a greater sense of collegiality among the Liberal Arts majors.

Recommendations for actions needed to be taken to deal with Challenges or Areas for Improvement:

The first recommendation is for NECC to support the projects detailed in the Liberal Arts 2013/14 Program Goals, especially in promoting programs designed to build collegiality among Liberal Arts students and creating an articulation agreement in the Liberal Arts with UMASS Lowell. The second recommendation is for NECC to support the development of clear pathways for Liberal Arts majors.

SECTION VIII: CONTENT EXPERTS

NEASC Standard 4.9: ...The evaluation of existing programs includes an external perspective and assessment of their effectiveness...

NOTE: IF YOUR PROGRAM HAS EXTERNAL ACCREDITATION, APPROVAL, OR CERTIFICATION, please respond below only to those areas not addressed in the external report.

A. Does the program have an Advisory Committee?

Yes _____ No X

IF NO, skip to B.

IF YES, please complete items 1 through 5 below.

1. Insert the roster of Advisory Committee members.

2. Report the schedule of meetings for the past three years, or as many as available if the Advisory Committee has been meeting for less than three years.

3. Insert copies of the Advisory Committee minutes for the past three years. **(See Appendix 4.)**

4. Describe the input of the Advisory Committee experts on program outcomes.

5. Describe the usefulness of the Advisory Committee relative to anticipating changes and challenges that need to be met by the program.

NOW GO TO QUESTION C.

B. Does the program have any plans to develop an Advisory Committee?

Yes _____ No X

IF NO, what is the program's rationale for this decision?

The rationale for this decision is based upon the multi-discipline nature of the Liberal Arts Associates Degree and the flexibility it provides for students to pursue a broad array of courses, career pathways, and possible Bachelor Degree majors at four year institutions.

IF YES, please detail below.

NOW GO TO C.

C. Does the program use content experts other than those represented in an Advisory Committee?

Yes X No _____

IF NO, skip to Section IX.

IF YES, please discuss below and then go to Section IX.

In the case of Liberal Arts, the content experts are the faculty who teach within each division/department/area of expertise. For example, if a content issue were to arise regarding a history course, the history professors in the Global Studies department would advise and provide expertise.

SECTION VIII SUMMARY:

Strengths related to Content Experts:

Each division/department has content expertise faculty members available to provide support to the Liberal Arts program.

Challenges or Areas for Improvement related to Content Experts:

N/A

Recommendations for actions needed to be taken to deal with Challenges or Areas for Improvement:

N/A

SECTION IX: PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT

NEASC Standard 4.4: The institution publishes the learning goals and requirements for each program. Such goals include the knowledge, intellectual and academic skills, and methods of inquiry to be acquired. In addition, if relevant to the program, goals include creative abilities and values to be developed and specific career-preparation practices to be mastered.

NEASC Standard 4.44: The institution implements and supports a systematic and broad-based approach to the assessment of student learning focused on educational improvement through understanding what and how students are learning through their academic program... this approach is based on a clear statement of what students are expected to gain, achieve, demonstrate, or know by the time they complete their academic program.

NEASC Standard 4.48: The institution's system of periodic review of academic programs includes a focus on understanding what and how students learn as a result of the program.

NOTE: IF YOUR PROGRAM HAS EXTERNAL ACCREDITATION, APPROVAL, OR CERTIFICATION, please respond below only to those areas not addressed in the external report.

A. Develop, or review if previously developed, the program's learning outcomes. Display in a Curriculum Map to be included in Appendix 5.

It has been determined through the program review process that the Liberal Arts Program Learning Outcomes and Assessment will naturally fit with and follow the six NECC institutional learning outcomes, also known as the core academic skills, and the assessment will follow the same schedule as determined by the institution. One additional item for learning outcomes and assessment is also included in order to measure the outcomes which are unique to the Liberal Arts degree as it relates to the NECC Liberal Arts Mission Statement. See Curriculum Map in Appendix 5 for details.

Note: a plan for outcomes and assessment was in place in 2005-2006 based upon the program review at that time. It was determined during this current program review to start “fresh” with a new plan that better aligned with the current NECC core academic skills. Starting fresh comes with a caveat. We are exploring new territory with this approach. In many ways, we are piloting the plan for outcomes and assessment by aligning it with the Core Academic Skills as no other program does this. Furthermore, through this process, clearer and more coherent objectives will be identified which will be used for future program initiatives. The Outcomes and Curriculum Map will be utilized in a coordinated effort with the overall assessment of NECC's Liberal Arts Program and NECC's Core Academic Skills Assessment initiatives. In other words, this program review acknowledges that this section is a work-in-progress. The evidence to support course selection in each category is based upon approved courses for core academic skills as published on the NECC website.

B. If the program outcomes are newly developed, discuss plan to assess these outcomes in the coming year in an Assessment Map, to be included in Appendix 5.

Assessment plan will follow NECC's Core Academic Skills Assessment Plan with one additional year dedicated to assessing outcomes specific to Liberal Arts. See Appendix 5 for more details.

If program outcomes had previously been developed, discuss plans for assessment going forward. Include information in a new or revised Assessment Map, to be included in Appendix 5.

N/A

C. If assessment activities related to the learning outcomes have already taken place, summarize what was learned from these activities, what action plans were developed as a result of the assessment findings, what actions have been implemented, and what the results of these implementations have been.

N/A

SECTION IX SUMMARY:

Strengths related to Program Learning Outcomes and Assessment:

The greatest strength is that the proposed Liberal Arts Program Learning Outcomes will align with NECC's Institutional Learning Outcomes and Assessment.

Challenges or Areas for Improvement related to Program Learning Outcomes and Assessment:

Initially it will be a challenge to move forward in concert with NECC's schedule/plan for learning outcomes and assessment, but in the end, it is a natural fit for the Liberal Arts program to operate simultaneously with NECC's overall plan.

Recommendations for actions needed to be taken to deal with Challenges or Areas for Improvement:

Guarantee NECC's support for Liberal Arts "piggy-backing" on NECC's overall learning outcomes and assessment schedule/plan.

SECTION X: PROGRAM LINKAGES, EXTERNAL AGREEMENTS, AND AFFILIATIONS

NOTE: IF YOUR PROGRAM HAS EXTERNAL ACCREDITATION, APPROVAL, OR CERTIFICATION, please respond below only to those areas not addressed in the external report.

A. Describe any linkages, activities or agreements with area high schools.

N/A – the Liberal Arts Associates Degree Program does not have any specific linkages, activities, or agreements with area high schools. However, the Liberal Arts Associates Degree Program does support all NECC programs in this area; for example, College For A Day, Dual Enrollment, partnerships with local high schools to offer college courses on site, NECC service learning activities, etc....

B. Describe any linkages, activities, or agreements with four-year colleges.

N/A – see above. Also, all transfer/articulation agreements are instituted at the overall college level under the direction of Dean Academic Advising, Articulation, Testing, Transfer, and TRIO and not specific to the program at this point in time. Pursuit of specific agreements is part of the next fiscal year plan.

C. Describe any linkages, activities or agreements with business and industry, including clinical sites, internships, practicums, service learning, and volunteer work.

N/A – see above

SECTION X SUMMARY:

Strengths related to Program Linkages, External Agreements, and Affiliations:

N/A

Challenges or Areas for Improvement related to Program Linkages, External Agreements, and Affiliations:

N/A

Recommendations for actions needed to be taken to deal with Challenges or Areas for Improvement:

N/A

SECTION XI: GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

NOTE: IF YOUR PROGRAM HAS EXTERNAL ACCREDITATION, APPROVAL, OR CERTIFICATION, please respond below only to those areas not addressed in the external report.

IF PRIMARILY A TRANSFER PROGRAM, SKIP TO SECTION XII. COMPLETE THIS SECTION ONLY IF THE PROGRAM IS A CERTIFICATE PROGRAM, OR AN ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE CAREER PROGRAM.

TO ADDRESS THIS SECTION, USE THE INFORMATION IN THE OCCUPATION PROFILE REPORT PROVIDED TO YOU, AS WELL AS FROM ANY OTHER EMPLOYMENT PROJECTION REPORTS OR SOURCES AVAILABLE TO YOU.

A. Provide information with respect to the job placements of recent program graduates. Indicate the source(s) of this information.

N/A – this program has historically been treated as a transfer program. Therefore, it was predetermined that this section will not be completed. However, the program review process has indicated that there is a need for clear pathways for Liberal Arts students. These pathways are at the Bachelor Degree level and future careers in Liberal Arts. Thus, future initiatives will have an occupation focus. For now, NECC has collected and published data for 2011 Liberal Arts graduates showing that 45 students graduated with Liberal Arts degrees, 36 students responded to a post-grad survey, and 11 of those students indicated employment via a response to the salary section. More data needs to be collected in the future regarding Liberal Arts and pathways. More work needs to be done to provide clear career pathways for Liberal Arts majors.

B. Provide information with respect to employer satisfaction with program graduates. Indicate the source(s) of this information.

N/A

C. Referring to the *Occupation Profile Report* provided to you (see Appendix 6), and any other sources of employment projections which you may have, discuss future employment prospects for graduates of your program.

N/A

SECTION XI SUMMARY:

Strengths related to Graduate Employment:

N/A

Challenges or Areas for Improvement related to Graduate Employment:

Need for collection of more relevant data regarding Liberal Arts degree and career pathways after graduation.

Recommendations for actions needed to be taken to deal with Challenges or Areas for Improvement:

Need for NECC support in collecting more data regarding Liberal Arts degree and career pathways after graduation.

SECTION XII: PROGRAM DASHBOARD

TO COMPLETE THIS TABLE, USE THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS REVIEW OR THE PROGRAM'S EXTERNAL REPORT (ACCREDITATION, APPROVAL, OR CERTIFICATION).

| ITEM | TOPIC | SOURCE | TIME PERIODS | | |
|------|---|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | | | YR 1 (AY 09-10) | YR 2 (AY 10-11) | YR 3 (AY 11-12) |
| A | Number of program majors | Chart 1 | 533 | 500 | 472 |
| | | | | | |
| B | Number of program graduates | Chart 2 | 35 | 45 | 53 |
| C | Percentage of females enrolled <i>(Only if at least 10 enrollees)</i> | Chart 3 | 29% | 29% | 34% |
| D | Percentage of minority enrollees <i>(Only if at least 10 enrollees)</i> | Chart 4 | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| E | Number of FTE faculty | Chart 5a | Spring 2012 | Fall 2011 | Spring 2011 |
| | | | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| F | Number of program-specific courses | Table 1 | YR 1 (AY 11-12) | | |
| | | | N/A | | |
| G | Enrollment in program-specific courses – Majors (M)/ Non-majors (N) | Table 1 | YR 1 (AY 11-12) | | |
| | 1 | N/A – note that only ENG101 and ENG102 are required courses for Liberal Arts majors and these courses are for all NECC students; not program specific to only Liberal Arts. | | | |
| | 2 | | | | |
| | 3 | | | | |
| | 4 | | | | |
| | 5 | | | | |
| | 6 | | | | |
| | 7 | | | | |
| | 8 | | | | |
| | 9 | | | | |
| | 10 | | | | |
| H | Linkages, activities or agreements with area high schools (Y or N). (Section X) | | | | N/A |
| I | Linkages, activities or agreements with four-year colleges? area high schools (Y or N). (Section X) | | | | N/A |
| J | Linkages, activities or agreements with business and industry (Y or N). (Section X) | | | | N/A |

SECTION XIII: SUMMARY – PROGRAM STRENGTHS

A. List and describe the program’s major strengths, as detailed at the end of each section of this review, or in the program’s external report (accreditation, approval, or certification).

| SECTION | AREA OF STRENGTH |
|---------|--|
| I | The Liberal Arts program provides students with a broad array of skills and educational opportunities thus affording students the opportunity to pursue further education in various disciplines at the Bachelor Degree level or to pursue a variety of career opportunities requiring an Associate Degree. |
| II | Current NECC overall policies and procedures provide all of the necessary supports to the Liberal Arts degree. |
| III | The greatest strengths related to the Liberal Arts curriculum are as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transferability to four year institutions and the Mass Transfer. 2. Flexibility of curriculum through electives. 3. Natural alignment to the six institutional learning outcomes. |
| IV | The greatest strength related to the Liberal Arts students is its magnitude and transferability, specifically within the Mass Transfer system. Additionally, the diversity of demographic characteristics exemplifies the program’s strength as serving many students from culturally diverse backgrounds. |
| V | Each division/department has content expertise faculty members available to provide support to the Liberal Arts program. |
| VI | The greatest strength is that the Liberal Arts Program Learning Outcomes and Assessment completely align with NECC’s Program Learning Outcomes and Assessment. |

SECTION XIV: SUMMARY – PROGRAM CHALLENGES AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT – ACTION PLANS

A. List and describe the program’s major challenges and areas for improvement detailed at the end of each section of this review, or. For each challenge, describe the action recommendation, as well as the individuals responsible for implementation.

| SECTION | CHALLENGE – AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT | ACTION RECOMMENDATION – INDIVIDUAL(S) RESPONSIBLE |
|---------|---|---|
| I | The Liberal Arts mission, as it has been revised, requires the program to better celebrate the value of a Liberal Arts degree by providing students with <u>clear pathways</u> to employment and/or a Bachelor Degree program. | The Liberal Arts Program Coordinator with the direction of the Dean of FSLAS. This will be addressed as part of the Liberal Arts program plan to work with career initiatives at the college along with utilizing recent graduate student report on Liberal Arts careers for NECC students. Additional work with the Dean of Academic Advising, Articulation, Testing, Transfer, and TRIO to establish an articulation agreement with UMASS Lowell for Bachelor of Liberal Arts Degree. |
| II | Through the program review process, it has become glaringly evident that a sense of collegiality, connectedness, and belonging needs to be developed for all Liberal Arts students. Additionally, clear pathways to careers and four year institutions need to be provided to NECC Liberal Arts students. | The Liberal Arts Program Coordinator with the direction of the Dean of FSLAS. The program goals for 2013-14 recommend the development of a general meeting inviting all students studying in the Liberal Arts to build a sense of collegiality and connectedness. This meeting will also serve as a forum to provide students with current information about the program requirements, etc... Guest speakers will be invited, etc... |
| III | The areas for improvement are building upon the magnitude of the program and creating a greater sense of collegiality among the Liberal Arts majors. | See above. |
| IV | Initially it will be a challenge to move forward in concert with NECC’s schedule/plan for learning outcomes and assessment, but in the end, it is a natural fit for the Liberal Arts program to operate simultaneously with NECC overall plan. | The Liberal Arts Program Coordinator with the direction of the Dean of FSLAS will work the Dean of Assessment to coordinate the assessment plan. |
| V | Need for NECC support in collecting more data regarding Liberal Arts degree and career pathways after graduation. | The Liberal Arts Program Coordinator with the direction of the Dean of FSLAS will work with NECC to request greater support from the college for data collection. |

SECTION XV: RESOURCES REQUESTED

If any specific resource needs were identified in this program review, and included in SECTION XIV Action Plan(s), please list these resources below, indicating for each whether the type of resource needed is Equipment, Personnel, space, or Other. If applicable and known, provide vendor and estimated cost information.

| SECTION | RESOURCE NEED | TYPE OF RESOURCE | VENDOR/ ESTIMATED COST |
|---------|-------------------------------|---|---|
| | Liberal Arts student meetings | Meeting supplies including food, paper products, meeting room, guest speakers, etc... | \$500 has been requested in the LA program plan for 2013-14 |

REVIEW SUBMISSION

| | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| PROGRAM: | Liberal Arts |
|-----------------|--------------|

Submits this Program Review document in fulfillment of the NECC requirements for a comprehensive and systemic review of each academic program.

| Individual Responsible for Completing the Program Review | |
|---|---|
| Name: Dr. Patricia Machado | Title: Liberal Arts Program Coordinator |
| Signature: | Date: |
| Program Coordinator | |
| Name: same as above | |
| Signature: | Date: |
| Department Chair (if appropriate) | |
| Name: N/A | Title: |
| Signature: | Date: |
| Assistant Dean/Director | |
| Name: N/A | Title: |
| Signature: | Date: |
| Dean of Division | |
| Name: Dr. Judy Zubrow | Title: Dean of Foundational Studies, Liberal Arts, and Sciences |
| Signature: | Date: |

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

TABLE 1: ENROLLMENT IN PROGRAM-SPECIFIC COURSES – MAJORS (M) / NON-MAJORS (N)

(not required for LA program review)

APPENDIX 2

CHARTS 1 – 4

(chart 4 not required for LA program review)

0100 Liberal Arts

Chart 1. Student Demand

| | AY 2009- 2010 | AY 2010- 2011 | AY 2011- 2012 | 3 Year Average |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Total Applications | 263 | 250 | 278 | 264 |
| First Time Freshmen who registered | 116 | 125 | 124 | 122 |
| External Transfers who registered | 44 | 33 | 42 | 40 |
| Internal Transfers who registered | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Readmitted Students who registered | 40 | 24 | 66 | 43 |
| Total Students new to program | 200 | 182 | 232 | 205 |
| Total Unduplicated Enrollment | 533 | 500 | 472 | 502 |

Chart 2. Program Completion/Student Transfer

| | AY 2009- 2010 | AY 2010- 2011 | AY 2011- 2012 | 3 Year Average |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Program Graduates | 35 | 45 | 53 | 44 |
| Students who transfer prior to graduation from program (multiple years out) | 171 | NA | NA | NA |

Chart 3. Student Demographics

| | | Asian | Black | Cape Verdean | Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander | Hispanic | Native American/ Native Alaskan | White | Non- Resident Alien | Multi- Racial | Unknown | Total | Minority Percentage (unprorated) |
|--------------|--------|-------|-------|-----------------|----------------------------------|----------|--|-------|---------------------------|------------------|---------|-------|--|
| AY 2009-2010 | Male | 3 | 10 | 0 | 1 | 48 | 0 | 142 | 0 | 0 | 19 | 223 | 28% |
| | Female | 9 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 71 | 1 | 199 | 0 | 1 | 22 | 310 | 29% |
| | Total | 12 | 16 | 0 | 2 | 119 | 1 | 341 | 0 | 1 | 41 | 533 | 28% |
| AY 2010-2011 | Male | 1 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 40 | 0 | 157 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 211 | 23% |
| | Female | 5 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 72 | 1 | 198 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 289 | 29% |
| | Total | 6 | 11 | 0 | 3 | 112 | 1 | 355 | 1 | 1 | 10 | 500 | 27% |
| AY 2011-2012 | Male | 1 | 9 | 0 | 3 | 32 | 0 | 154 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 205 | 23% |
| | Female | 3 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 72 | 2 | 176 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 267 | 34% |
| | Total | 4 | 17 | 0 | 3 | 104 | 2 | 330 | 0 | 7 | 5 | 472 | 29% |

APPENDIX 3

CHART 5 (A, B, C, & D)

CHART 6

(not required for LA program review)

APPENDIX 4

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

(not required for LA program review)

APPENDIX 5
OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT PLAN

APPENDIX 6

OCCUPATION PROFILE REPORT

(not required for LA program review)

APPENDIX 7
EXTERNAL EVALUATOR REPORT

TO: Patricia Machado
FM: Ann Rancourt
RE: Initial Reactions to Northern Essex Community College's Liberal Arts program Review
DA: July 1, 2013

Patricia, first let me acknowledge the hard work you have done in drafting your program review report. I know how time consuming it is. I have read the report a couple of times and have the following observations. I am assuming this is not to be taken as my final report as I assume you and I may have a couple of exchanges prior to my drafting a final report for your files.

Section II: Mission and Purpose

- A. The program's mission statement: There is a lot in there to be held accountable for. How is the program being held accountable for all that is stated?
- B. Great job involving people in developing the program's mission. Very inclusive and transparent.
- C. Same comment regarding the program's mission – much to be held accountable for and I am not sure I see how that is being done.
- D. This section needs a greater level of specificity. I would suggest addressing each of the values and describing what is being done in the program to facilitate students' meeting them. It is not clear that the program has the coherence to deliver on all of these, but I may just be missing what you know to be the case. I am not sure how being exposed to many disciplines and courses results in collaboration.
- E. Not sure where articulated, but hope that somewhere it is clear what the difference is between the General Studies and Liberal Arts degrees. More information is needed about the coherence of this multi-disciplinary program with an array of courses and how this focus helps the program meet its goals. Plans for making greater connections with the Greater Merrimack Valley workforce community are commendable and, I think, necessary. I would strongly suggest that an internship be a requirement of the program as it would play a huge role in the program's meeting its 'pathways to careers/employment' goal. The pilot program in civic engagement and the Liberal Arts Institute as ways to expand a "culture of learning" should be applauded.

Strengths and Challenges:

The program contributes to the part of the institutional mission focused on access.

While there is no doubt that the mission lays out an ambitious agenda, more information as to how the mission statement is being operationalized would be helpful.

Need more information as to how the program would "celebrate" or communicate its value in providing students clear pathways to employment or a baccalaureate degree.

The goal of establishing community partnerships which would improve student's opportunities for internships, co-ops and service learning opportunities is commendable and necessary. Plans to establish and promote articulation agreements with four year colleges is a great step. In addition to the student forum/meeting/speaker session, might want to consider increasing student collegiality and connection to the program with some of the following: a fall and spring reception for students in the program; a peer mentoring program, especially providing guidance with career options and choices; a one time a semester presentation by a panel of employers who could frame employment opportunities and expectations; and brining alumni back to interact with students or establishing an alumni mentoring program.

Section III: Program Policies and Procedures

- A. Given the need to deliver a coherent program, if not in place, might want to consider policies regarding the delivery of program outcomes (common core outcomes [all sections of a course] for all liberal arts courses) and approval policies and procedures for a course being approved as a liberal arts course.
- B. Seems like a sound process is in place to assure students receive information regarding program policies and procedures.
- C. Wholeheartedly agree that retention, transfer and graduation rates are measures of student success, but if we are retaining, transferring and graduating students who have not demonstrated the competencies we have articulated, I am not sure of the value of those data.

In your first example, I would suggest rather than just “*articulating*” career pathways, you describe what the program is doing to ensure students have had opportunities to engage in potential careers (internships, co-ops, service-learning,...).

I am not clear how core academic skills are being assessed.

- D. The issues of program coherence and intentionality are raised here for me. Because I am not clear about the level of coherence and intentionality I am not sure what the impact to other programs would be if the program had specific expectations that needed to be met.

Strengths and Challenges:

Do NECC policies and procedures reflect the need for common core outcomes for all sections of a course?

The work on articulation agreements will seemingly help students who want to further their education. Will you be looking at not only course to course articulations but competency articulations as well?

Section IV: Curriculum

- A. The areas and courses in the curriculum provide disciplinary grounding in the liberal arts. Beyond course offerings I am assuming, in addition to the common core skills, content outcomes have been identified and are being assessed.
- B. It seems that other than ENG 101 and 102, there is no sequencing of courses. If I am interpreting the program correctly, I wonder how coherence and intentionality are impacted by the degree of flexibility.
- C. It does not seem that the program has its own review and revision process. If the program is a program and not a curriculum of course offerings, program expectations need to be identified in collaboration with the various disciplines. Ownership of the program is a collaborative ownership between the liberal arts program and the disciplines delivering courses for it.
- D. I am not clear about how the institutional learning outcomes are met through electives.
- E. What are the liberal arts program outcomes (content and skills)?

Strengths and Challenges

While transferability of courses is strength, what do we know about the articulation of competencies?

While flexibility is a strength, it seems from the report that the program lacks coherence and intentionality. Not sure what the relationship is between those responsible for coordinating the program and those delivering it.

Because I am confused by the statement in E that outcomes are met through electives, it is not clear what the alignment is. And why are required courses referred to as electives?

It seems a challenge is the coherence and intentionality of the program.

Another challenge is the lack of a required internship or co-op experience as “career path and employability” is a major goal of the program.

In looking at the curriculum map, I am curious about why some outcomes are not expected to be addressed in more courses across the program.

Section V: Program Resources-Faculty

- A. How do the standards incumbent upon all NECC full-time and part-time faculty align with the Liberal Arts Program standards?

How often do the faculty teaching **in each area** of the program meet to discuss courses, outcomes, and student work? Do they assess outcomes as a group?

How often do faculty teaching **in the program** meet as a group to discuss courses, outcomes, student work?

B & C. Wonder why it wasn't necessary to respond to these two questions as I would assume both have some impact on the program.

D. Wouldn't that be important information to the coordinator of the Liberal Arts program?

Strengths and Challenges

If the faculty in the program come together as a faculty responsible for delivering the liberal arts program, that would be a strength, if they do not, it is a challenge.

Knowing what percentage of faculty are full-time and which part-time and how those numbers correlate with other programs would be interesting.

Section VI: Program Resources – Classroom and Laboratories, Instructional Technology, Library/Learning and Financial

A, B, C – No comment

D. Are there financial resources for assessment activities (paying faculty a stipend to assess student work since faculty teaching in the program have dual responsibilities for this major and another major) and for faculty instructional development associated with the program?

Strengths and Challenges

The program seems to have the facilities and technical support it needs, but would like to know about resources allocated for program specific activities.

Section VII: Students

- A. Likely that unless there are opportunities for students to engage in career interests and if the benefits of a liberal arts degree are not clearly communicated (AAC&U employer surveys) and delivered, participation in the program will be impacted.
- B. Though graduation rates correlate with the institution's rates, what would it take to increase the graduation rate and the number of students transferring to 4-year schools if that an option of choice?
- C. No comment.
- D.-F. No comment

Strengths and Challenges

I am not sure what "its magnitude" refers to.

Strengths seem to include the efforts underway to increase opportunities with employers in the Merrimack Valley region to create greater connectedness to the program, and with four-year colleges to create articulation agreements that facilitate easy transfer opportunities for students.

Challenges seem to be to engage students early in the program with "real work" opportunities including project based course work, internships, co-ops and service learning opportunities. Given the student diversity at the college and in the program, wonderful opportunities seem to exist for students to work collaboratively on real work questions and challenges, with students bringing diverse perspectives to this work.

Another challenge is to communicate the value of a liberal arts degree and the promise to deliver that which is valued about the degree.

Section VIII: Content Experts

- A & B. Might be helpful to have an advisory committee consisting of faculty representatives from each of the disciplinary areas that are part of the program and some employers from the region.
- C. Not seeing the integration that is necessary for delivering such a program. Who is responsible for ensuring program coherence?

Strengths and Challenges

The report indicates that content experts "support" the program – what about leadership? What kind of leadership role do they provide in shaping disciplinary offerings aligned to program intent?

The major challenge I see is that there does not seem to be a faculty dedicated to delivering this program. Content experts offering courses does not equate to content experts delivering a program that has its own goals and objectives.

Another challenge is a decision not to have an advisory board. At the very least I would suggest reconsidering this and would recommend moving beyond an advisory board to a council or board responsible for all aspects of the program.

Section IX: Program learning outcomes and Assessment

- A. It seems from this description that courses are approved to be included as part of the program if they are addressing core academic skills. If so, this is good. Beyond core academic skills, what are the content (knowledge) outcomes for the program?
- B. It seems the assessment plan is being developed which is great.
- C. No comment.

Strengths and Challenges

I concur that the alignment of program outcomes with institutional outcomes is FABULOUS!!

Not being familiar with the college's plan, it seems to make sense that the liberal arts program would align with that plan.

It seems much needs to be done in this area: though the academic skills outcomes have been identified, not sure if criteria have been developed; what kind of conversations faculty representing disciplinary areas are having about their responsibility in meeting program outcomes; how outcomes will be assessed, by whom and how often; and who is responsible for responding to assessment findings. As interpreted as a result of reading this program review report, it seems much needs to be done to bring coherence and intentionality to the program, with faculty in disciplinary areas moving beyond **offering** disciplinary courses to focusing on delivering a program with its own goals and objectives. If the program moves in this direction it will take much coordinated discussion and collaboration.

Section X: Program Linkages, External Agreements, and Affiliations

- A. Linkages currently in place seem appropriate.
- B. Agree that **program specific** articulations should be developed showing students what the entire four year path would look like.
- C. Linkages with businesses etc. would seem to be a priority. Establishing these partnerships is critical to delivering the goal of paths to careers/employability.

Strengths and Challenges

It seems paramount to the success of this program to establish program articulation agreements and partnerships with employers in the Merrimack Valley region.

Section XI: Graduate Employment

- A. I concur with what is stated.
- B. Might need to find a way to get this information particularly as it relates to the outcomes associated with a liberal arts major.
- C. No comment.

Strengths and Challenges

Since many students would not see the benefit of a liberal arts major as it applies to employability, it may be very helpful to have employers speak about the graduates they have employed and the strengths they brought to their work having developed the kind of knowledge and skills liberal arts majors are supposed to develop. Would seem to be beneficial also to have employers and alumni on campus reinforcing that liberal arts outcomes are outcomes they value in people they hire, and that alumni find valuable in the work they are doing.

Section XII: Program Dashboard

No comment.

Section XV: Resources Requested

I would suggest the program needs more than \$500. Resources should be made available for student meetings and gatherings; employer presentations and receptions; development of an alumni and employer survey; funds for assessment work and for faculty instructional development.

Recommendations

Program Coherence and Intentionality

1. The Coordinator should meet with discipline faculty about the need for greater program coherence and intentionality associated with program outcomes and project based assignments. While flexibility is a strength, it seems from the report that the program lacks coherence and intentionality. Not sure what the relationship is between those responsible for coordinating the program and those delivering it. Faculty responsible for delivering outcomes based programs must come together as a faculty to discuss courses, outcomes, assignments and assessment results. Articulate how program coherence and intentionality is coordinated and ensured.
2. Given the need to deliver a coherent program, if not in place, might want to consider policies regarding the delivery of program outcomes (common core outcomes [all sections of a course] for all liberal arts courses) and approval policies and procedures for a course being approved as a liberal arts course.

Competencies and Assessment

3. Student learning and assessment - It seems much needs to be done in this area: though the academic skills outcomes have been identified, not sure if criteria have been developed; what kind of conversations faculty representing disciplinary areas are having about their responsibility in meeting program outcomes; how outcomes will be assessed, by whom and how often; and who is responsible for responding to assessment findings. As interpreted, as a result of reading this program review report, it seems much needs to be done to bring coherence and intentionality to the program, with faculty in disciplinary areas moving beyond offering disciplinary courses to focusing on the delivery of a program that will take much coordinated discussion and collaboration.
4. If content outcomes have not been identified, they need to be.
5. Program goals and student learning outcomes need to be operationalized.
6. Students in the major should keep a portfolio of their coursework that reflects specific outcomes expected to be demonstrated. Random samples of portfolios should be done and faculty should review work to determine if program (Liberal Arts) outcomes are being met, and faculty should be paid a stipend for this work.

Oversight

7. It does not seem that the program has its own review and revision process. If the program is a program and not a curriculum of course offerings, program expectations need to be identified in collaboration with the various disciplines. Ownership of the program is a collaborative ownership between the liberal arts program and the disciplines delivering courses for it.
8. Create a Liberal Arts Council or Board led by the coordinator and consisting of students, faculty and employers responsible for all aspects of delivering the program.
9. Identify program specific policies and procedures.

Connectedness

10. Hold a once a semester reception for majors to have an opportunity to meet with the Coordinator, faculty, and advising staff. Focus discussions on the extent to which their academic experiences are aligned with program outcomes.

Partnerships

11. Continue work in developing program articulations with four-year schools.
12. Partnerships should be established with area employers and at least one internship or internship like experience should be a requirement of the program.

Resources

13. More resources will be needed to do the work associated with delivering this program.