

Program Review Year 2005 – 2006

Name of Program:

Liberal Arts

Liberal Arts Program Review Committee: Jill Becker, Amy Callahan, Judith Ciampi, Tom Fallon, Faith Flythe, Meredith Gunning, Allan Hislop, Patricia Kidney, Steve Mathis, Catherine Pirri, Paulette Redmond, Susan Sanders, Cathy Sanderson, Jorge Santiago, Suzanne Van Wert, Elizabeth Wilcoxson, Ruth Young, Bill Heineman

DATE: May 2006

SECTION SIX: SUMMARY

I. CONCLUSIONS: PROGRAM STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

A. List and describe the program's major strengths, based on information obtained in the Program Review. Cite evidence for each identified strength.

AREA OF STRENGTH	EVIDENCE
Student performance	Rates of retention, graduation, and positive college outcome are higher for students in the Liberal Arts Program than in the college as a whole. Large numbers of these students transfer.
Faculty	The Liberal Arts faculty have more doctoral and master's degrees than the national average, and publish, give professional presentations and have received awards in large numbers.
Pedagogy	Liberal Arts students have the opportunity to experience an array of innovative approaches to teaching and learning, including online classes and learning communities.
Liberal Arts extracurricular activities {However, these would be even stronger with a course adjustment for the Liberal Arts Revitalization Committee (LARC) Chair}	Theater, Dance, and Music clubs, award winning NECC Observer, Contemporary Affairs Club and many others enrich campus life. The LARC Committee was only able to put on a limited number of events this year, however, and had to cancel its popular renaissance person contest for students. The amount of time required to organize such events has discouraged faculty members from taking on the LARC leadership role without some kind of course adjustment.
Library	The Liberal Arts faculty report that library facilities and, with a few exceptions, collections support the program well.

B. List and describe the program's weaknesses or areas in which improvement is desirable, based on information obtained in the Program Review. Cite evidence for each identified weakness or area for improvement.

WEAKNESS OR AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT	EVIDENCE
Mission/Identity/Definition of Liberal Arts and its relationship to the Liberal Arts Options	Almost 40% of full time Liberal Arts professors think mission is outdated or unclear; almost a quarter were confused about the curricular requirements and the participating faculty/ disciplines. There is concern about how the program's role relates to that of the Options. Some feel current definition of Liberal Arts courses is wrongly keeping out computer classes.
Enrollment decline in general and among minority students in particular/not enough student outreach	Program has lost 45% of its enrollment in last five years. Hispanic enrollment dropped almost 50% between academic years 2002/2003 and 2004/2005. No brochures about program now.
Over reliance on adjunct instructors	The percentage of full time professors in the program is 22%--adjunct faculty now teach two thirds of Liberal Arts credit hours—compared to a 26% average at community colleges statewide.
Facilities	Science labs are over twice as old as nearest community colleges. Complaints about Spurr building furniture, acoustics, shades, theater lights, scarcity of smart rooms and TV/DVDs. The dance studio is too cold and dirty and computers for the Graphics instructors are older than those the students use.
Outcomes and curriculum review process	Unfinished process of developing outcomes and assessments. Apparent gaps in curriculum to meet oral communications and computer fluency outcomes. Program has no established definition or measures of student success. No regular curriculum review process exists.
Relations with academic advising and external content experts	Academic advising wants better communications with program faculty. Beyond the liaison role provided by academic advising, only personal, informal relations exist with faculty at four year schools. No current process for communicating with employers of our graduates.
Finances and faculty role in determining budget	Reliance on adjuncts, state of facilities and requests for more instructional technology all indicate a need for more financial resources. Faculty play no role in budget determination.

Problem	Improvement Activity	Person Responsible	Date of Activity	Findings
<p>Enrollment decline in general and among minority students in particular/not enough student outreach</p>	<p>More aggressive promotion through development of program brochures and other materials, attendance at career fairs, sponsoring events, and display case</p>	<p>Liberal Arts Coordinator</p>		
	<p>Draw on research conducted by Jorge Santiago to tailor promotional, advising, and teaching and learning efforts to Hispanic students to improve retention</p>	<p>Liberal Arts Coordinator</p>		
	<p>Work with Liberal Arts faculty in Lawrence to establish a stronger presence for the program there</p>	<p>Liberal Arts Coordinator</p>		
	<p>Work more closely with Developmental faculty to assure students transition successfully to credit courses</p>	<p>Liberal Arts Coordinator</p>		
		<p>Liberal Arts Coordinator</p>		
<p>Analysis:</p>				

III. RESOURCES REQUESTED

Complete the following chart, including quotes from vendors, diagrams for requested space, and draft postings as appropriate. (Note: Add rows, increase row height, etc., as needed.)

1. EQUIPMENT				
Item	Justification	Vendor (include contact information)	Cost	Date Needed
24 Biology, 24 Microbiology, and 12 Anatomy and Physiology II Microscopes	Would bring general biology and microbiology labs into a state of usefulness and provide enough good microscopes in A+P II lab. All this would make us at least competitive with North Shore and Middlesex Community College labs.		\$96,000	As soon as possible
12 Physiology lab setups	Current labs are not really equipped to do physiology without this. Would make NECC more competitive with other colleges.		\$39,540	As soon as possible
12 Dell laptop computers	Along with setups listed above, this would update Anatomy and Physiology I and II labs on both campuses.		\$7,800	As soon as possible
One G5 Macintosh Computer	Graphic design faculty—that teach mostly computer related courses—have a computer that is one version older than the ones students currently use making class preparation difficult		\$1,500	As soon as possible
2. PERSONNEL				
Position (identify as faculty, staff, etc.)	Justification	Credentials/area of content expertise related to curriculum	Salary	Date Needed
Five new full-time faculty in Liberal Arts	Would bring NECC into line with the statewide community college average full-time/adjunct ratio. Would provide more help to develop outcomes assessment and other important academic efforts.	To be determined by Academic Vice President and Liberal Arts administrators and faculty	At least \$250,000	As soon as possible

2. PERSONNEL (cont.)

One course adjustment for a full-time faculty member to chair LARC Committee	The action plans above illustrate that the Liberal Arts Coordinator will have little time to commit to community building among the Liberal Arts faculty or to coordinating extracurricular events for students. This is really LARC's role. It is difficult to attract an active chair to this committee without a course adjustment, which has been provided in the past.		About \$6000 to fund a DCE instructor to teach one course in the fall and one in the spring.	Fall 2006 and Spring 2007

3. SPACE

Type of space requested	Justification	Description (include square feet, construction requirements, e.g., plumbing, electricity, data ports)	Cost	Date Needed