

Faculty of Arts

Final Report of the Working Group on Teaching

July 2013

Co-chairs: Doug Kirton (Fine Arts and former member of the Faculty of Arts Strategic Planning Task Force) and Linda Warley (AD Graduate Studies, Faculty of Arts)

Members: Mike Dixon (Psychology), Donna Ellis (CTE), Rocco Fondacaro (Co-op), Dorothy Hadfield (English EL Co-ordinator), Renishaki Kamalanathan (ASU), Brian Orend (Philosophy), Gord Pennycook (Graduate student), Anindya Sen (Economics)

Ex-officio: Emanuel Carvahlo (AD Co-op and Arts Special Programs, Faculty of Arts), Lynne Jelokhani-Niaraki (Executive Officer, Faculty of Arts)

Mandate:

The strategic planning working group on **Teaching** was tasked with investigating three priority areas that were distilled from topics raised at the Arts Faculty Retreat in August of 2012. These were:

- Interdisciplinary learning
- Student professionalization and career planning
- Student/Faculty Ratio

The group met as a whole four times during Fall 2012 and Winter 2013 terms. The larger group was also divided into sub groups to work on one of the priority areas. Finally, Doug Kirton and Linda Warley synthesized findings and made recommendations.

The working group decided that the first two of the priority areas could be turned into “action items,” whereas the third - student/faculty ratio - cannot adequately be addressed at the current time. Anindya Sen analyzed data obtained from Robert Park concerning ratio of full time faculty members and enrolled students in Arts programs; however, the data were not sufficiently granular to reach definitive conclusions. In particular, we would need data on numbers of students per faculty member by year of program. We have included Anindya Sen’s graphs as an appendix.

The strategic planning working group on teaching looks forward to the time when Arts hires a “data person.”

The working group focused its recommendations on **student professionalization and career planning** and **interdisciplinary learning**.

Goal 1: Enhance student (undergraduate and graduate) professionalization and career readiness.

a) Undergraduate students

While we do not want university education to become the kind of “job ready” education associated with community college programs, we do recognize that Arts students need to be mentored with respect to preparing for their future success once they have their degrees in hand. The degree itself, regardless of discipline, is not in itself likely going to land a newly graduated BA student a job; rather, new graduates should be able to articulate how their education in Arts has shaped them to become valuable employees and, indeed, citizens. The specific skills that Arts majors acquire include (among others): the ability to conduct research; the ability to synthesize and critically evaluate a lot of information drawn from multiple (and multimodal) sources; the ability to design, execute and manage a project; creative thinking; problem solving; ability to work independently and as part of a team; excellent oral, written, and, increasingly, web-based and visual communication skills.

While all of these skills and attributes might be well understood by faculty and even the students themselves, we recommend leveraging more effectively existing resources at the University of Waterloo so that students are able to articulate those skills to future employers and *use* those skills to enhance their jobs.

Steps:

1. Co-op.

Co-op is a recognized “added value” for Arts students at uW; however only about 25% of Arts students are in co-op programs. Co-op would be more attractive to more undergraduate students if the jobs were particularly well suited to them, including in communications, research, government or community service, social and cultural industries, human resources etc.

Resources: work with Rocco Fondacaro to widen options for Arts students. It might also be desirable to more fully engage uW Arts alumni in securing co-op placements for Arts students.

2. Co-op plus.

Explore opportunities for students to complete paid or unpaid internships, practica, field work, etc. in Canada and abroad. This will bolster the university’s commitment to “experiential learning.”

Resources: departments need to think about building practica, internships, field work – whatever is most appropriate – into curricula. There are existing models, such as

Fine Arts undergraduate courses¹ where students are responsible for finding internship placements in cultural institutions and with professional artists; they earn a .25 credit for 36 hours or .5 credit for 72 hours of their internship work (depending on the course) and write a report about their experience at the end of the term. The contacts and experience made in these courses have on several occasions led to part-time or full-time employment for the student at the internship site after graduation. We recognize that care must be taken to ensure that students' labour is not exploited, particularly if there is no financial compensation for their work.

3. Promote uW Arts student international exchanges.

Study abroad for one term is an excellent way of enhancing students' maturity, expanding their worldview, and creating cross-cultural relationships. International exchange programs are also one way of building on one of uW's strategic pillars: internationalization. However, uW students tend to be shy of exchange programs in non-English speaking countries, even if English is a language in which the host university (at least partly) functions. We recommend more aggressive advertisement and promotion of existing uW Arts international exchange programs. This could include more web-based stories about students who have been on exchanges.

Resources: Robert Ryan probably needs an assistant. Certainly Arts must plan ahead for when Robert Ryan finally retires. Other champions could be the Arts Undergraduate Office, Wendy Philpott, and Megan Scarborough

4. VeloCity and VeloCity garage

The think tank approach to living and learning is an excellent way of encouraging Arts undergraduate students to translate their classroom learning into real world outcomes. In particular, VeloCity workshops and other events teach students how to be entrepreneurial, another of uW's strategic pillars. Are there barriers to Arts students' participation in VeloCity? If so, remove them. Are Arts students aware of VeloCity opportunities? If not, inform them. Please see the Working Group on Programs and Advancement for more about VeloCity.

5. E-portfolio.

The working group viewed a demonstration by Katherine Lithgow from the Centre for Teaching Excellence and was impressed by how useful the e-portfolio can be for students in identifying their skills and challenges; track their learning and skill building; be reflective about who they are and what their talents are, as well as reflect on how their various experiences – work, volunteer, internship, etc. – have helped them develop both personally and professionally. The e-portfolio tool also provides an opportunity for instructors and employers (or internship partners) to provide constructive feedback to students.

¹ FINE 243 (.25cr); FINE 343 (.25cr); FINE 344 (.5 cr)

The Working Group on Teaching recommends building the e-portfolio tool into existing courses, at 3 and 4th year levels (model after arts and business courses), for students in both co-op and non co-op programs.

The e-portfolio tool could be a replacement for co-op work term reports.

Resources: CTE, especially Katherine Lithgow.

b) Graduate students

The working group has given most thought to the professionalization of Arts doctoral students, assuming that many Masters' students are already much more career-oriented. Given that only 20 - 30% of PhD candidates will secure what they almost all want – a tenure track academic job – it is crucial that we do a better job of preparing doctoral students for a variety of careers. We recognize that professors might not be the best sources of non-academic career advice for doctoral students since we ourselves became academics. Therefore, it is important to leverage existing campus resources in designing a program for doctoral student career preparation. Some steps towards this goal have already been undertaken. These include the following:

- Linda Warley has prepared a presentation that she has delivered to several departments that have PhD programs. The presentation is designed to reach all faculty members (not just department chairs and graduate officers) and so is delivered at a department meeting. Supervisors are the most important mentors of doctoral students, but most supervisors still believe that an academic career is the only good outcome of a doctoral degree. This message has to change. The presentation also demonstrates how students (and faculty) can use various online and social media resources (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google Plus, Modern Language Commons, Virtual PhD, academia.edu) to build networks and gain access to information.
- Linda Warley gives a presentation about career planning at Arts graduate student orientation. The message is that students, regardless of their hopes and dreams, should be preparing for a variety of career outcomes at the end of their programs and they should be thinking about those possibilities and taking advantage of opportunities on campus and off campus from day one.
- CCA planned a careers workshop and a “living library” event this past June. The workshops (on skills transfer and network building) were relatively well attended, with 30 - 40 Arts graduate students signing up. The living library involved Arts graduate alumni making themselves available for 15 minute one-on-one interviews with current graduate students. Unfortunately, only 8 of the almost 600 Arts graduate students signed up and the event had to be cancelled. This poor participation rate might partly have been down to the timing of it – June was Congress month and also some students work off campus during the summer. However, we expect that there is still some denial among graduate students that they need this kind of professional mentorship and training. It will take some time,

but the culture of doctoral education must change to be more open to alternative careers. We will not give up.

- Working with Marta Bailey and Tasha Glover in the GSO, Linda Warley organized the Three Minute Thesis competition at uW. Student involvement was high – approximately 240 students from across campus participated. Arts student participation was also relatively strong with about 30 students competing. Students seem to recognize that the competition hones their oral presentation skills and prepares them to articulate the topic and impact of their research to a lay audience. We will participate in the 3MT competition again next year. In the future (possibly 2016) we would like to host the provincial finals at uWaterloo.
- Mike Dixon is preparing a web site of online resources related to graduate student professionalization and career preparation. This website, once completed, will be linked to from the Arts Home Page. It will function as a “clearing house” of information, including a “living calendar” on which departments, offices, and individuals can post upcoming careers workshops, panel discussions, etc. that are of interest to Arts graduate students.
- Recently, Linda Warley met with her counterpart at WLU and the director and faculty associated with the Global Governance program. The Global Governance programs are due for periodic review, and the faculty members are aware that building professional skills training into their programs is important. This is a model for other Arts doctoral programs to follow and Linda will continue to work with GG and WLU (it’s a joint PhD) on creating and sharing resources and best practices.
- The long-term goal is to develop a graduate student professionalization program, modeled on the Skills program at Concordia University <http://graduatestudies.concordia.ca/gradproskills/>.
- Experiential learning can also be of added value to Arts Graduate students. While a few departments have successful co-op options at the graduate level (English and Economics are committed to co-op while Sociology has a co-op option but few students take it) there are other opportunities that might be pursued. Experiential learning in terms of an internship (funded) would be of particular value to students who do not wish to pursue an academic career. Again, Fine Arts has a model. At the graduate level, Fine Arts has the *Keith and Win Shantz Summer Internship Program* in which 2nd year MFA students travel to work with an internationally recognized artist of their choosing, and one relevant to their own research.² Shantz interns give a public presentation in the Fine Arts Department on their internship and travel experience in the Fall term. Fine Arts faculty has consistently seen profound maturity of artistic practice when Shantz interns return to uW and resume their studio activities. The value of such experiential learning is undeniable from this perspective. We recognize that faculty members would also have to be involved in mobilizing their networks in order to create work opportunities for students.

² <http://finearts.uwaterloo.ca/graduate.html>

Resources: Linda Warley, Kim Bardwell, CCA, GSO, members of GAG, colleague at WLU, allies and informants at CAGS

Goal 2: Enhance interdisciplinary learning

The final report of the Arts Faculty Strategic Planning Task Force, “Arts Strategic Priorities” (May 4, 2012) identifies the implementation of interdisciplinary programs as a means of enhancing the already excellent quality of education in Arts at uWaterloo . The *Guiding Principles* in that document state, in part: “Facilitate organic growth in interdisciplinary research and teaching.”³

Steps:

1) Remove existing barriers

The majority of departments and units surveyed expressed support for the development and sustenance of interdisciplinary programs across the Faculty - and in fact 6 already considered their discipline to be interdisciplinary by nature. Furthermore, uW Arts currently has 25 department/school/college affiliated and non-affiliated interdisciplinary programs (fn appendix N?), numerous courses and faculty members that are cross-listed, and some interdisciplinary research institutes. However, there were multiple concerns about existing barriers to future interdisciplinary initiatives. At the top of this list (fn Appendix N?) was the conviction that the institution of interdisciplinary courses and programs should be a natural and organic process initiated by the department/unit – and not imposed or prescribed from “outside”. Among the top concerns were perceptions of other institutional and organizational barriers: how to equitably credit departments for their participation in interdisciplinary programs; how to ensure that interdisciplinary programs will not drain resources from existing programs; how to ensure that faculty members will get credit for interdisciplinary work in their own field; how to dispel the perception that interdisciplinary research and teaching is an opportunity for faculty members to disengage from responsibilities in their home departments; how program oversight and performance evaluations will be managed across units.

In his reflections on the matter, Prof. Brian Orend (Philosophy) draws on his own interdisciplinary research practice and in his capacity as Director of International Studies, prioritizing barriers specific to his personal experience at Waterloo:

- Commitments to interdisciplinary programs by University administrators and faculty are not backed up by adequate resources
- Resistance from established disciplines and home department
- Lack of credit from the home department for teaching and service provided in the interdisciplinary dimension
- The perception of some that the interdisciplinary effort is “empire-building”

³ uW Faculty of Arts Strategic Planning Task Force, “Mission, Vision, Values and Guiding Principles”, May 4, pg.2

- The perception that the introduction of interdisciplinary programs will compete with traditional disciplines for funding and resources

Actions

In the short term, more thorough and equitable evaluation of faculty performance is a “must-do”⁴. Ideally, this would involve the co-operation of each of the Chairs of the contributing units. Institutional commitments to interdisciplinary programs must also be supported with adequate resources to sustain the program.

In the long term, the culture must understand the intrinsic value of interdisciplinary studies, and its place in Waterloo’s plan for “Building on Success in Teaching”. Most certainly, this would involve ensuring that funding structures are in place such that traditional disciplines will not be in competition with interdisciplinary programs for finances and resources. Finally, department / school Chairs and faculty members should be encouraged to propose and implement interdisciplinary courses where appropriate, but such initiatives should not be institutionally prescribed.

Reactivate Interdisciplinary Programs Board?

Resources

Mario Coniglio, Associate Vice-President, Academic, Provost on Interdisciplinary Programs; Donna Ellis, Director, Centre for Teaching Excellence (CTE); William Chesney, Associate Dean of Arts, Undergraduate Studies

- 2) Develop a 3 year Liberal Studies ~~major~~ **area of focus? concentration?** Program. Liberal Studies was established in the Faculty of Arts as a Non-major Three-Year General BA program in 1970-71. Over the years, and up to the present, Liberal Studies program requirements have undergone a number of important iterations involving the numbers of required term courses and Breadth Requirements. *The Liberal Studies Programs (BA) Self-study Report* (2011), Office of the Associate Dean of Arts, Undergraduate chronicles these events in detail, and describes a liberal education in the arts as “...broadly defined, i.e., humanities, social sciences, languages, and fine and performing arts.”⁵, enabling “an opportunity for the student with a commitment to comprehensive learning, the true ‘renaissance’ individual.”⁶ The report makes the point that currently Liberal Studies students are not able to benefit from UW’s Six Decade Plan goal of Relevance and Connectedness by “Recognizing that experiential learning through its co-op programs contributes to providing students with the best overall academic experience” and “Working with partners in the public and private sectors to promote co-op education and knowledge transfer” because Liberal Studies are General programs, whereas co-op programs are Honours.⁷ Liberal Studies students are therefore ineligible to

⁴ Orend, Brian, in a document “Orend On Interdisciplinarity” emailed to the authors on December 10, 2012

⁵ Office of the Associate Dean of Arts, Undergraduate, University of Waterloo, “Liberal Studies Programs (BA) Self-study Report”, June 2011, pg. 4

⁶ Ibid, pg. 10

⁷ Ibid, pg. 7

participate in co-op education. The Liberal Studies program was reviewed in 2004 and the review team recommended “the need to create co-operative (co-op) education opportunities” in the Non-major program”⁸ Consultations with Co-op Education and Career Services (CECS) determined “...that this is not a viable initiative for several reasons: first, by long-standing and firm precedent, co-op is only available to students in Honours programs; in addition, the economic climate since 2008, in conjunction with unprecedented growth in the numbers of students seeking co-op placements, has necessitated additional constraint and scrutiny for any new program seeking the co-op designation.”

Liberal Studies is comprised of a varied demographic. A significant number of students choose the program precisely for its comprehensive nature. Many students – described as the “default cohort” in the LS Self-study⁹ – find themselves in the program as a result of their substandard performance in their major discipline. These students then have the opportunity to raise their average in LS to re-enter their major.

The apparent prevailing perception across the Faculty is that Liberal Studies is – in the vernacular – “Arts Lite”, a holding tank for those who don’t know what they want to do – or don’t know how to do what they want. Liberal Studies, of course has much more potential than that: it can be a very credible and appropriate program for mature students, for professionals who require a university degree (but depending on their occupation, not one with a narrow disciplinary focus), for individuals with entrepreneurial interests, and for those “renaissance” types mentioned above.

The Working Group on Teaching would therefore address the perception that Liberal Studies is “an academic plan lacking both rigour and direction”¹⁰ by recommending a program to which depth is added to breadth – in the form of a Liberal Arts “area of focus” or “concentration”.

Actions

The concept of a 3 year Liberal Studies major is a misnomer because once a Liberal Studies student declares a major, s/he is no longer a Liberal Studies student, but rather a 3 year General major. A more realistic model would be a 3 year Liberal Studies **area of focus? concentration?** program, wherein a student would choose a thematic focus of subjects chosen from the 5 disciplines in the current breadth requirements: Fine, Performing and Communication Arts; Humanities; Languages and Cultures; Social Sciences; Transdisciplinary Studies. This model, then, departs from the department-based major program. (Because this is not an Honours proposal, students in this program will still not be able to participate in co-op; however, a Liberal Studies Honours program has been previously proposed in the LS Self-study¹¹ and is beyond the scope of this report).

⁸ Ibid, pg. 13

⁹ Ibid, pg. 10

¹⁰ Ibid, pg. 57

¹¹ Ibid, pg. 49; pp 56-59

Given the general misunderstanding across the faculty of Arts about what Liberal Studies is, there was also a suggestion to rename Liberal Studies to something that more specifically states its essential academic nature – for example, Interdisciplinary Studies.

Resources

Mario Coniglio, Associate Vice-President, Academic, Provost on Interdisciplinary Programs; Willian Chesney, Associate dean of Arts, Undergraduate Studies; Emanuel Carvalho, Associate Dean of Arts, Special Programs; Eric Breugst, Manager – Academic Advising; Dana Sheldrake, Senior Academic Advisor

- 3) Develop an Extended Learning (EL) version of the 3 year Liberal Studies ~~major~~ **area of focus? concentration?**

The “Arts Strategic Priorities” (May 4, 2012) report recommends that the faculty “Invest in technology, staff and faculty support for the development and expansion of on-line teaching, both in extended learning and blended learning models, where appropriate.”¹² An EL version of the proposed 3 year **Liberal Studies Concentration** program would be congruent with this objective and make use of the excellent and expanding resources on offer at the Centre for Extended Learning (CEL). The LS Self-study states that “The Centre for Extended Learning has been working to increase the number of online courses available, especially in the third and fourth year level. While the number of BA majors available purely online or at a distance has continued to decline, the number of courses available has increased substantially.”¹³ And furthermore: “The stated goal of the province [sic] of Ontario is to further increase and enhance online offerings – to make Ontario a global leader in online learning and to reach [sic] goal of 70% Ontarians with post-secondary education.¹⁴ The report points out some poignant statistics: “[uW]Arts students account for over half of all online enrolments and 70% of all online enrolments are in Arts courses.”¹⁵

As mentioned previously, the LS demographics are diverse. An EL **Liberal Studies Concentration** would strengthen the University’s relationship with the community and serve learners with specific needs: seniors, parents, working professionals, entrepreneurs, etc.

Actions

The institution of an EL **Liberal Studies Concentration** is obviously a medium-to-long range initiative, which would be undertaken after the resident program has been well established. Given that it generally takes at least two years for a new program to be approved by UGAG, and an estimation of a year of combined faculty and CEL staff efforts at curriculum planning and online delivery, the EL **Liberal Studies Concentration** would be about 5 years down the road.

¹² uW Faculty of Arts Strategic Planning Task Force, “Arts Strategic Planning”, pg. 9

¹³ Office of the Associate Dean of Arts, Undergraduate, University of Waterloo, “Liberal Studies Programs (BA) Self-study Report”, June 2011, pg. 8

¹⁴ Ibid, pg. 49

¹⁵ Ibid, pg. 50

Resources

William Chesney, Associate Dean of Arts, Undergraduate Studies; Eric Breugst, Manager – Academic Advising; Cathy Newell Kelly, Director of the Centre for Extended Learning.

4) Re-examine existing program requirements

The Working Group on Teaching also looked at ways in which existing major programs could be better configured to allow students a greater breadth of subject choices toward a more interdisciplinary learning experience. Overall, the general consensus was that major program requirements are cumbersome and difficult to navigate and understand. Currently, there is considerable asymmetry in Arts major programs; for example, some programs require ten major course units (20 courses – e.g., Fine Arts; History), whereas others require nine major course units (18 courses – e.g., Medieval Studies; Psychology). A long term goal should be to simplify and standardize major programs across the Faculty of Arts, while at the same time, encouraging interdisciplinary study. Evidently, these options have been already considered by the Regulatory Sub-committee of UGAG.

Actions

In the shorter term, the Working Group on Teaching makes two recommendations:

- a) Reduce the number of requirements in major programs by one academic major unit (2 courses) to allow students more flexibility to select electives toward an interdisciplinary learning experience
- b) Increase the number of joint programs. While the Faculty of Arts has many joint Honours programs, could we consider implementing joint General programs?

Resources

William Chesney, Associate Dean of Arts, Undergraduate Studies; Eric Breugst, Manager – Academic Advising