

College Studies At Philadelphia University

General Education Reform: The Background and Development of Liberal Education and Liberal/Profession Education at Philadelphia University

Marion Roydhouse, October 2009

Ernest Boyer, one of the most influential scholars in higher education, drove a wave of reform in colleges and universities in 1987 with *College: The Undergraduate Experience in America*.¹ Part of his argument summarized growing concern with loose distributive general education requirements. Students who experienced the “cafeteria” general education choices of most large universities, and many small colleges, emerged with a little knowledge of a widely scattered set of topics and disciplines, but with no coherent or integrated experience. Calling for more coherent curricula and for increased faculty attention to the undergraduate experience, Boyer, as the head of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, argued for change to address the failure of distributive programs, for more focused work on research and communication skills, and for curricula that provided students to integrate knowledge across the undergraduate experience.

Philadelphia University was one of the institutions influenced by this national discussion of general education. The challenge was clear in 1986 when the Middle States accreditation report noted weaknesses in the general education program at Philadelphia University (then Philadelphia College of Textiles and Sciences). The core curriculum varied widely across the majors, and consisted of a set of generic introductory courses. There was nothing about this list that would identify the institution as a professionally oriented one and little that showed a

¹ This draft needs to be supplemented with more information on the development of math and science courses in College Studies. This will be forthcoming. Ernest L. Boyer, *College: The Undergraduate Experience in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987) Note also Boyer’s analysis of architectural education in Ernest Boyer & Lee D. Mitgang, *Building Community: A New Future for Architecture Education and Practice* (Palo Alto, CA: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1996).

common set of goals for general education. Instead, the courses offered tended to be replicas of the faculty's own undergraduate courses and reflections of their specialized academic interests. In its report, Middle States recommended that 40% of credits for all programs at the university should be devoted to general education rather than the existing widely varying credit requirements.²

The university responded with a major task force whose charge was to lead reform. The group surveyed general education across the country, noting that as disparate institutions as Harvard, Alverno and Brooklyn College had revised requirements, but that little agreement could be seen.

We found that even the paragon of technical education, MIT, could provide no ready model for the general education program most appropriate to a professional curriculum. MIT, renowned for its preparation of technical and business professionals, has only recently (1989) joined more traditionally liberal arts-oriented institutions in challenging the adequacy of its general education program.³

MIT and the Philadelphia task force concluded separately, interestingly enough, that the educational approach must be broadened in all areas. The MIT commission urged that all students must have “an ability to operate effectively beyond the confines of a single discipline.”⁴ Both universities wished to dispense with what they saw as false dichotomies between the professions and the liberal arts and sciences.⁵ This false dichotomy has been the object of discussion in creating wider outcomes for Philadelphia University graduates, as well as for College Studies. The task force decided that the edge we could give our students was a strong grounding in the liberal arts traditions while recognizing their career aspirations.

Philadelphia University decided to be an institution where our intellectual commitment to the liberal arts disciplines and our intellectual rigor would mirror those of small liberal arts colleges,

² The journal *New Directions in Higher Education* in the Spring issue of 2004 is devoted to an analysis of trends in general education and is titled “Changing General Education Curriculum.” Jerry Gaff, James Ratcliff and Kent Johnson present the results of recent national surveys on change in general education. The authors point out that 47 hours of general education in the national mean and that this figure is not really affected by institutional type or whether the institution is public or private. Our program at Philadelphia University is within these national norms for a B.S. degree.

³ “Blue Book” report of the Task Force on General Education, 1989.

⁴ M.L. Dertouzos, R.K. Lester, R. M. Solow & the MIT Commission on Industrial Productivity, *Made in America: Regaining the Productive Edge* (Cambridge,MA:MIT Press, 1989) 157.

⁵ Task Force on General Education, Philadelphia College of Textiles and Sciences, *General Education Proposal* (the “Blue Book”), January 1990

but in a professionally oriented context. The task force also believed that liberal arts and sciences faculty could not simply deliver generic “service” courses, largely undervalued by students and professional faculty alike. Philadelphia University instituted a comprehensive reform of general education in which courses in the liberal arts and sciences now made explicit connections with the concerns of career-oriented professional studies, providing a societal context for them as well as a set of critical perspectives toward them. In 1991, the new “connected” general education program was implemented and named the “College Studies” program.⁶

Intended as a framework that could accommodate continuing evolution, the program has changed markedly from its initial implementation, with the support of outside grants, internal funding and administrative support for continuing faculty development. The mission statement calling for liberal professional education was heeded.

This coherent and structured program, sequenced over four years in recognition of the fact that intellectual development takes place throughout the undergraduate years, with interdisciplinary courses specifically designed for our majors and our students, continued to experiment with new approaches to achieve better results. We have presented papers on our results at national conferences, gained some national reputation and took notice of new best practices and national models for general education.⁷ We intend to graduate students with clear professional skills and technical knowledge, but also with communication skills, and an understanding of the context in which a graduating student will work: a global economy, a shifting political climate, a multicultural work force at home, and an international context for all economic and political

⁶ Even so, the connections between general education and the majors required constant attention. In the first ten years of the program the struggle was to define clearly the nature of what was meant by a liberal-professional education. Too often faculty outside the program were confused by the term “liberal” connecting the term with current political issues rather than its long history in education or its roots in 19th century liberalism. Others felt that the term was back-to-front; that professional education should come first and be foremost at the university. There was resentment that the new program increased the number of credits allotted to general education. There was also confusion as to what was meant by the 1991 report’s effort to encourage “general education in the majors.” Common general education outcomes goals for the whole university were never clearly separated from the goals of the College Studies program alone. Many faculty resented what they took to be the implication that the majors were responsible for teaching writing or, in subsequent years, information literacy or international issues. At the same time, in an inherent contradiction, other faculty felt that many general education goals were met by the content covered within the majors and that as a consequence there was no need for particular parts of the College Studies core.

⁷ See appendix

decisions. Philadelphia University provides the opportunity for students to study abroad and focus on international as well as local issues within the general education program. The program means our graduates compete and rise in their professions and are also life long learners constantly acquiring new skills. As a professionally-oriented university, we were not satisfied with just training our graduates for entry-level positions in their career fields; we aimed to provide each of them with the intellectual skills and global vision necessary for them to become leaders in their professions.

These were, and are still, the driving forces of the general education program designed specifically for the needs of our undergraduates. The resulting College Studies program can be divided into three main areas: a strong liberal education, integrative learning, and effective research and communication skills. It is a rigorous and carefully-structured program that builds skills and knowledge progressively as students advance towards graduation. This step-by-step approach allows students to master foundational skills in writing, research, and critical thinking before moving to more advanced work in these areas. The perspective of the program also expands geographically in a thoughtful way, beginning with courses that examine the history and culture of the United States, then proceeding with the study of specific world regions and foreign languages, and culminating with the senior capstone course, Contemporary Perspectives, which focuses on issues of global significance.

As the College Studies program was introduced, the institution was undergoing change at all levels. Philadelphia University had a long tradition of excellence in professional education, notable initially for the textile engineering and textile design fields, but had recently broadened out into the wider architecture and design disciplines and into some applied health professions. Between the mid-1980s and mid-1990s, the school evolved itself into one where architecture and design students predominate and where a number of graduate programs and applied health programs flourish. The mission of the institution remains clear: professional majors for career oriented students. Our high placement rate for graduating students was and still is a major draw. But we are also maturing as an institution and are seeking ways to define ourselves not just in terms of our programs, but also as an institution with a clearly defined approach to education and a unique identity.

Philadelphia University must provide the opportunity for students to study abroad and focus on international as well as local issues within the general education program. Only by doing so will our graduates be able to compete in their professions and only by doing so will they be able to undertake life long learning and to acquire new skills.

College Studies makes up 40% of the undergraduate curriculum, some 48 to 50 credits. The program is sequenced over four years to allow for intellectual maturity in both professional studies and in the liberal arts and sciences. Students begin professional studies as freshmen to allow them to experiment immediately in their chosen professional orientation. The program includes math and science requirements as well as liberal arts courses. If possible, the needs of the majors for specific skills or specific content are to be met within the major course of study. The general education core is intended to be a limited core and distribution that meets the needs of all students and not address the needs of single majors. A “cafeteria” approach was rejected in favor of a coherent and carefully sequenced set of courses building both content and skills over four years.⁸

It is important to emphasize that liberal professional education did not mean Business English, Textile Sociology, and Philosophy for Designers, and indeed it did not mean that Accounting One would become the history of accounting. The members of the task force reminded themselves that Tolstoy and Austen did not write for college literature majors. Weber did not write for sociology graduate students and Kant did not write primarily for the discussion of fellow philosophers. These thinkers and writers meant their work to have impact in the world in which people live and work. Studies in the liberal arts and sciences are eminently relevant and useful in the lives of people with professional careers and the College Studies program was designed to make this amply clear. The program was created to help students be analytical about the future and the past of their chosen careers, and to understand its “embeddedness” in the world.

⁸ Jerry Gaff, James Ratcliff and Kent Johnson point out that 47 hours of general education in the national mean. Gaff et al also list the most common curricular innovations, eg interdisciplinary courses, first year seminars, common learning experiences, advanced courses, honors courses, capstone courses, paired or linked courses, remedial or supporting courses, and experiential/service learning. Philadelphia University’s program includes these elements in College Studies .

The Freshmen Year and Interdisciplinary Teaching: 1998/99

In the 1988/89 academic year, an NEH grant for \$75,000 supported a pilot program for a year-long humanities centered integrative core course for all freshmen, taught by interdisciplinary faculty especially trained for the purpose. This pilot evolved into a freshmen course called "The City," which was a first year seminar built especially to the needs of our undergraduates, and focused on using the city of Philadelphia as a cultural resource.⁹ In 1993 an American Council on Education (ACE) grant paired us with Tarrant County Junior College as mentors to develop a language program appropriate to a professionally oriented school.

Creating Liberal Professional Education: 1992-1995

A three year grant from FIPSE (1992-95) brought in two national leaders, Peter Marsh and Joan Stark, as consultants, and the university began the process of bringing the liberal arts and sciences general education program and the professional majors closer together, in a series of January and summer workshops. The central conviction was that intellectual and ethical growth of students in professional majors would be strengthened by collaboration of liberal and professional faculty in course development. Faculty from across the university developed interdisciplinary courses, writing courses connected to the professional disciplines, and a culminating general education capstone course which integrated professional education with liberal education. Not surprisingly, this radical reform was not implemented without a great deal of effort and the recognition that change brought anxiety.¹⁰

The College Studies program by now had changed what was taught and how it was taught. The FIPSE program accomplished a degree of communication between faculty in the professional

⁹ An NEH grant (EH-20916-88) funded "'If All the World Were Philadelphia:' and "The City and the American Experience" which were two semester, writing intensive, freshmen seminars.

¹⁰ Philadelphia University won FIPSE (P116B20268) entitled "Making Liberal Professional Education a Reality: A Faculty and Course Development Project" (\$233,547) primarily because we were one of a few professional schools working on this aspect of general education.

and liberal arts and sciences disciplines that was not present before 1990. The College Studies program led to more interactive teaching, more students writing, an international and intercultural focus, and a capstone course bringing together liberal and professional studies to analyze issues in the professions in a global context. The struggle to create a new program fostered discourse on teaching, which has continued into the present.

The three year FIPSE grant began with an attempt to define what we meant by liberal professional education, but our work floundered in disciplinary arguments and discussions over what is “essential” knowledge. As a result, the second year focus was on a concrete issue which could be more easily implemented: writing across the curriculum. The last year of the grant was devoted to the creation of interdisciplinary upper level courses in College Studies by faculty from the professional schools and School of General Studies (SGS) faculty, as well as several joint projects on general education in the majors where SGS (now SLA) faculty worked with professional faculty in classes in the majors. For example a literature faculty and an historian worked with a design studio focused on Philadelphia housing.

Many national studies note the constant tendency of faculty to drift back into their own disciplinary cupboards and to see the world through the disciplinary keyhole shaped by graduate education, whether they are architects or sociologists. Interdisciplinary ventures are hard. Communication of our specific and particular general education goals is a constant challenge with each group of new faculty. There is also a tendency for the Schools to separate and to focus upon new programs or graduate programs and this can erode efforts to provide a common experience and create community across the university in the general education core. Faculty from the majors complain about a lack of flexibility or too many credits for general education, but few dispute the right of the program to exist or the importance of a strong liberal education or of “liberal professional” goals. In 2003, during a university wide faculty retreat, many of these issues were raised again by some faculty and the turf battles relating to credit hours and the needs of the majors for expanded credits (or fewer credits to graduate) became again a topic of wider concern. Often new faculty did not have sufficient knowledge of the program to understand its difference from generic general education programs or had difficulty shifting from

the conviction that their own undergraduate experience should be replicated at Philadelphia University. It was time for the College Studies Program to undergo external review.

Pressure to reduce the number of credits devoted to general education has been consistent, and increases generally at the time when outside accreditation agencies come on campus for program review. As professional programs grew and became successful, as the college became a university, and as the professional schools established strong individual identities, the tendency to retreat into a “silo” mentality has worked against the idea of common community which drives the general education program.

Assessment and an External Review: 1998-2004

In 1998 the AAC&U leadership, President Carol Schneider and Senior Scholar Robert Shoenberg, gathered together the best thinking on liberal learning, laying out what they found as the transformative changes taking place and the key learning goals implicit in contemporary education. The primary learning goals identified were these: acquiring intellectual skills or capacities, understanding multiple modes of inquiry and approaches to knowledge, developing societal, civic and global knowledge, gaining self-knowledge and grounded values, and the concentration and integration of learning.

Developing appropriate learning goals for each institution also meant the recognition of the ways that teaching and learning have changed. “Presentational” teaching has lessened its hold, even as the “professor’s ability to induce student commitment to the intellectual content of the course and his or her skill as an explicator and motivator still governs our practice” (9). New technologies, and new access to information, have transformed our experiences and our approach to research, teaching and the acquisition of knowledge. These developments have meant the increased focus on new pedagogies, particularly methods that involve students more immediately in their own learning: hands-on learning and problem-based or case-based learning, where technology facilitates more one-to-one interaction and more collaborative work. Collaborative inquiry, experiential and service learning, international study and foreign language learning,

research and inquiry-based learning and integrative learning were singled out by Schneider and Shoenberg.

Philadelphia University's College Studies program paid attention to all these issues. The School of General Studies and the School of Science and Health conducted an in-depth process of academic planning and self study. We read widely: from the AAC&U's "Greater Expectations" report to changes in engineering programs to articles on the finances of higher education. In this time faculty from the school attended and presented at conferences held by the AAC&U on assessment, learning communities, and general education as well as conferences held by AAHE on higher education. Faculty attended workshops and conferences on information literacy and the integration of effective technologies in teaching. We had an active Teaching, Learning and Technology Roundtable with SGS/SLA faculty and the Dean as founding members. Between 1998 and 2003, an intensive process of assessment resulting in a self study was followed by an external review, conducted by members of the AAC&U "SAGE" group, which provided experienced consultants on general education.

Karen Schilling of Miami of Ohio, and Richard Vaz from Worcester Polytechnic Institute reported notable strengths and some weaknesses: They noted that the program was a "very ambitious general education program with many of the features that one would look for in the best general education programs today. Included were: writing across the curriculum, significant integrative capstones, international and intercultural foci, an emphasis across four years, etc. Most of the best practices identified in major national documents on general education today have already been implemented at Philadelphia University." Most satisfactory was the comment that "we experienced a very enthusiastic, well-informed, committed, hard-working, dedicated faculty and administrative staff, who are also very optimistic. We encountered none of the feelings of oppression or resentment about not being fully appreciated that we often encounter among faculty and staff of general education programs at other institutions ... Faculty know each other well and collaborate freely, enabling the program to be highly interdisciplinary." Moreover, as early as 2004, "Program leaders appear to have

embraced the very progressive notion of signature pedagogies for general education.”¹¹ Other comments noted a culture of assessment, clear outcomes goals, faculty development programming, small class sizes which students identified as the feature that attracted them to the university, cooperation with student life staff, and support of study abroad.

Naturally enough, the reviewers also pointed to weaknesses. Most notable was a long comment on adjunct faculty.

For the number of students enrolled at Philadelphia University, the number of full time faculty is quite small. As a result, there is extensive reliance on adjunct faculty. The use of adjuncts in professional programs may bring an immediacy of real world examples from professional practice into the classroom. So, curricula in professional schools may, in fact, be stronger for their use of adjunct faculty. However, heavy reliance on adjuncts in the College Studies Program puts at risk many of the most central elements of this important program. Insofar as College Studies has moved beyond offering simply a palette of introductory courses in the disciplines, to educating for a set of objectives that complement professional studies with a coherent, integrated, critical, liberal arts perspective, the typical adjunct will have difficulty offering high quality instruction that is consistent with program expectations. Reliance on adjuncts puts at risk continuity and uniformity of expectations across the program. This problem is exacerbated by the heavy burden of coordination and administration that is put on the small number of full-time faculty when there is such heavy reliance on adjuncts. We are concerned about the risk of burn out among the small, core group of full time faculty in College Studies, given their heavy load. Extensive reliance on adjuncts is clearly a resource issue for Philadelphia University. Decisions to use adjuncts must be informed by a clear understanding of the real cost to the institution of this choice.¹²

Other comments focused on rigor across all four years, and the absence of clear goals or a philosophical rationale for the quantitative reasoning requirement.

The Integrative Learning Project : 2004-2007

In response to the external review, a grant proposal was written to address the question of increased intentional integrative learning opportunities, and an enhanced coherence to the program overall. Again, Philadelphia University responded to national concerns this time by

¹¹ External Review, Final Report, December 2004.

¹² External Review, December 2004.

becoming one of ten broadly differing institutions involved in the highly competitive Carnegie Integrative Learning Project, co-sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Association of American Colleges and Universities.¹³

The Integrative Learning Project resulted in four major initiatives. First, professional faculty became involved in creating and teaching “Integrative Professional Seminars,” where professional/majors faculty focus on specific topics from their own disciplines in writing-intensive courses that are open to students from any major. Faculty and students alike work at integration of knowledge and students widen their knowledge of other disciplines beyond their major and the liberal arts and sciences included in College Studies.

Secondly, closer ties were created between student life programming and the first year courses in College Studies. The First Year Experience planning now included student life staff, and faculty who teach writing, history, science and some design foundations. A common reading, student life support for special projects, a common theme (“Finding Philadelphia”), and other projects have brought student curricular and co-curricular experiences closer for a more integrated undergraduate experience.

The third initiative was the improvement of integrative learning in the College Studies capstone. The inherent confusion created by each profession’s “signature pedagogy,” as discussed in the work of Lee Shulman, Bill Sullivan and others at the Carnegie Foundation, was explored. Our students were expected to move seamlessly between various ways of teaching, from studio to laboratory, from lecture to seminar, from problem based learning to experiential learning. And yet the faculty, trained to be specialists in particular disciplines, could not, or did not, help the students understand this process, often leaving the integrative process to the student alone. This work began discussions of the nature and significance of each profession’s different approaches to teaching and learning, as well as the strength of Philadelphia University in supporting effective learning strategies across disciplines. The university's strategic plan now reflects its awareness of “signature pedagogies,” or the more easily used term, “signature learning.”

¹³ “Integrative Learning: Opportunities to Connect.” AAC&U/Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. 2004-2006. The team members were Marion Roydhouse, Thomas Schrand, Susan Frosten.

The fourth initiative resulted in the re-organization/reconstitution of a university-wide College Studies committee with representation from all schools and with oversight of the curriculum.

In 2007, Lee Shulman, Ernest Boyer's successor, wrote an introduction to the final report of the Integrative Learning Project. He noted,

A college education (so the story goes) once prepared someone to be a learned generalist, an educated citizen in the broadest sense whose understandings were richly integrated for application to matters both worldly and divine. As fields of scholarship grew and scholars narrowed, the college curriculum followed suit. Student's majors and professional preparations came to dominate college education, and the general was forced out by the particular and the special. Both faculty members and students became academic "soloists," learning comfortably within ever more circumscribed domains. One response to the dangers of the academic silo has been a resurgence of interest in combating the dis-integration of the undergraduate experience with intentional efforts at integration,"¹⁴

As President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Shulman presided over the examination of professional education, and supported the integration of liberal education and professional education, questioning the unnatural separation of the two elements of effective higher education. Philadelphia University was one of the national models which Shulman urged others to investigate in his introduction to the web-based final report on the Integrative Learning Project.¹⁵ Members of the project have kept in touch and continue to present their findings, as we have.

E-Portfolios, Co-Curricular Programming and the Capstone: 2008-2009

In the summer of 2008 an interdisciplinary group attended the AAC&U Greater Expectations Institute to further develop integrative projects. The team consisted of Aurelio Valente (Student

¹⁴ Lee Shulman, Introduction to *Carnegie Perspectives* newsletter, "A different way to think about...liberal education" *Carnegie Perspectives*, February 2007. www.carnegiefoundation.org/perspectives. Retrieved 3/1/2007. The Philadelphia University project can be found at <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/sites/default/files/elibrary/HTML/integrativelearning/index.htm>

¹⁵ <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/sites/default/files/elibrary/HTML/integrativelearning/Philadelphia-main.htm>

Life), Carol Hermann (SA) Tom Schrand and Marion Roydhouse (SLA) and Gina Synder, President of the East Falls Development Corporation. The results of this institute were the e-portfolio project, the SERVE 101 initiative, a plan for developing service learning over the four years, and more discussion of the capstone.

Conclusions: 2009

In 2007, the AAC&U produced a report as a part of the LEAP project where employers were surveyed. The report, *How Should Colleges Prepare Students for Today's Global Economy?* focused on what the best graduates at our colleges and universities had in their toolbox of essential skills. Philadelphia University's College Studies program meets all the goals of the LEAP initiative, as the program outcomes show. As David Kearns, former CEO of Xerox Corporation said, "the only education that prepares for change is a liberal education. In periods of change, narrow specialization condemns us to inflexibility – precisely what we do not need. We need the flexible intellectual tools to be problem solvers, to be able to continue learning over time."¹⁶

The 2008 strategic plan lays out new initiatives; these will shape the general education program and the process of experimentation and focus on teaching and learning will continue. . College Studies has grown and changed with the university. We can see that experimentation and continued attention to national models and best practices in general education is key to the success of Philadelphia University's College Studies program. Our liberal professional education is part of our signature learning experience.

¹⁶ Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP). Peter D. Hart Research Associates and AAC&U, *How Should Colleges Assess and Improve Student Learning?* (Washington, DC: AAC&U, 2008).

A Summary of Core Values of the College Studies Program

1/ A Common Experience

The College Studies program provides a common experience for all students from all majors. It contributes to the university's mission to graduate students who have experienced interdisciplinary and collaborative learning by bringing together in the classroom students from all majors. College Studies is both liberal education and general education. Liberal education is the more appropriate terms for a program with an integrative learning goal. However, as a general education program College Studies provides the common forum where students from all disciplines come together to study and learn from each other's perspectives. This is central to the structure and outcomes of the program. ¹⁷

2/ Planned and Outcomes Driven General Education

College Studies is a general education foundation in the liberal arts and sciences that is planned, coherent, structured through the whole intellectual development of the student, and broadly connected to professional education. We believe that there is no conflict between liberal education and professional education, but that the two should work together. This is a truly liberal professional education.

¹⁷ Definitions for these terms are provided in AAC&U's *Greater Expectations* survey of the state of undergraduate education. **Liberal Education**: A philosophy of education that empowers individuals, liberates the mind from ignorance, and cultivates social responsibility. Characterized by challenging encounters with important issues, and more a way of studying than specific content, liberal education can occur at all types of colleges and universities. **General Education**: The part of liberal education curriculum shared by all students. It provides broad exposure to multiple disciplines and forms the basis for developing important intellectual and civic capacities. source *Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College* Washington,DC: AAC&U, 2002

Where many liberal arts colleges are now creating “professional” courses such as programs in business, our experience has been unusual in that we approached the changes over the last decade and a half from the other perspective. We created a strong liberal education in the liberal arts and sciences to serve as a foundation for effective professional education. Studies in the liberal arts and sciences, we believe, are eminently relevant and useful in the lives of people with professional careers and the College Studies program is designed to make this amply clear. The program was created to help students be analytical about the future and the past of their chosen careers, and to understand its “embeddedness” in the world.

Our program is driven by a set of outcomes, rather than distribution credits. The program outcomes are outcomes for all students, therefore courses, and groups of courses, in the College Studies program, are not driven by one major. The program has striven to accommodate the needs of majors broadly interpreted, or the needs of several majors where possible. For example, math offerings meet the accreditation requirements of several programs. The upper level writing course is offered in three versions to meet the needs of commerce, design, and science and technology programs. Outcomes driven learning implies also strong outcomes assessment built into the program.

3/ Intentional Connections

Our courses are not generic, but created for the needs of our students. Therefore we do not have generic “introduction to” courses, which are structured as introductions to a particular discipline or major. For example, we do not have “Introduction to Psychology,” or ‘Introduction to Political Science.” Instead, we have, for example, an interdisciplinary course entitled “Personality and Culture” which is both psychology and anthropology based, and globally focused. In contrast, introductory psychology courses were focused on American or western European issues and are intended for those majoring in psychology. The general education core consists of a controlled set of core courses and choices within groups of offerings which meet the needs of all students and intentionally cannot address unique needs of any single major. If majors require specific skills or specific content these must be met within the major course of study.

4/ Sequenced over four years:

The program is sequenced over four years to allow for intellectual maturity in both professional studies and in the liberal arts and sciences. Students begin professional studies as freshmen to allow them to experiment immediately in their chosen professional orientation.

5/ Specific pedagogies:

The program is committed to a set of pedagogies appropriate to the needs of our students and to the mission of the university. College Studies courses are student centered, focus upon student learning, and help students take responsibility for their own learning to enable them to become life-long learners.

- i. Active learning so that students take responsibility for their own learning and understand their own learning styles.
- ii. Intentional learning and self reflective learning strategies
- iii. The ability of students to work effectively in teams
- iv. Using writing as a tool to learning across the curriculum
- v. Teaching effective oral communication strategies
- vi. The integration of information literacy across the general education curriculum
- vii. The belief that content and active learning pedagogies are not in conflict with each other.

6/ Integrative Learning and an Interdisciplinary focus

A joint statement from the AAC&U and the Carnegie Foundation outlines the issue thus: “Fostering students’ abilities to integrate learning – across courses, over time, and between campus and community life -- is one of the most important goals and challenges of higher education. The undergraduate experience can be a fragmented landscape of general education courses, preparation for the major, co-curricular activities, and “the real world” beyond the campus. But an emphasis upon integrative learning can help undergraduates put the pieces together and develop habits of mind that prepare them to make informed judgments in the conduct of personal, professional, and civic life.” (March 2004)

Understanding the ways in which boundaries between disciplines are dissolving and knowing that change is rapid in a global economy are key to the success of our graduates.

7/ Information Literacy and effective research skills

Recognizing the need for students to become analytical information consumers, as mandated in our university wide initiative, the program is committed to developing the ability of students to find, evaluate and apply information effectively. The School of Liberal Arts has played a leading role in supporting the information literacy initiative.

8/ Collaborative partnerships, particularly the Freshmen Year Experience.

The program is committed to cross campus partnerships and initiatives, particularly to increase retention. Freshmen at Philadelphia University are spending substantial amounts of their course work within the College Studies program, generally taking freshmen writing seminar, freshmen history courses, math and sciences. The NSSE data reflect these successful efforts in that our students, compared to those at peer institutions, report spending more hours preparing for class work, are more likely to have made a class presentation, prepared two or more drafts of papers or assignments, to have worked on a paper or project requiring integrating of ideas and information from various sources, to have been asked to include diverse perspectives in class discussion or writing assignments and to have participated in a community based project. Conversely they report less memorizing of facts and more analyzing of ideas than their peers.

9/ College Studies has University and School Ownership.

A pitfall for good general education is the ownership of the program and the apportioning of responsibility and accountability for the delivery of courses. Programs where the faculty are “borrowed” from a variety of departments or schools and have no strong central leadership are weaker than those with identifiable structures and responsibilities.

Initially oversight of the program was from a Program Director and a university wide committee. This committee structure was dissolved by VPAA Nigro in 1997. The university committee was revived after the external review and as a part of the Integrative Learning Project. The development and oversight of the curriculum is through the faculty

governance structure and the elected College Studies committee. This committee oversees curriculum and outcomes assessment. All faculty have ownership of the program.

Accountability for the administration of the program lies in the School of Science and Health and the School of Liberal Arts whose Deans oversee the recruitment, hiring, and faculty development of College Studies faculty, and scheduling and assessment for the program. Faculty who teach in the program participate in outcomes assessment. The Dean of Liberal Arts also works with faculty from other schools teaching in the program in the Arts and Cultures courses, and in the Integrative Professional Seminars. Curriculum committees in S+H and SLA participate in course development, although any faculty in the university can bring courses to the College Studies Committee.

The College Studies curriculum sequencing¹⁸

Freshmen Year

Connected Learning: First Year Experience (FYE) --common theme, connection with summer reading and first year course theme organized closely with student life and advising center. Theme currently “Finding Philadelphia” so students learn to use the city as a cultural and research resource.

Courses: Focus on American experience so as to build from what students know. Initial information literacy, communication and research skills.

- Writing Seminar I and History 1 created to link sequentially and in parallel and to connect with FYE.
- Math and Science requirements for majors completed, some taken in the sophomore year.

Sophomore Year

Connected Learning: Writing connected to disciplines and majors. Career services begins connections with students via resume writing. Study Abroad support.

Courses: Move to global focus and increased research and information literacy and communication skills.

- Humanities, Language/Area Studies, Social Science courses which can be taken in both sophomore and junior years.
Upper level writing focused upon disciplinary connections with the majors.

Junior Year

Connected Learning: Integrative courses with courses developed and taught by faculty in the majors. Study Abroad support.

Courses: Upper level, writing intensive, in depth seminars with strong research components.

(JSLA/JSINT) Liberal Arts and Integrative Professional Seminar options. Integrative Professional Seminars taught by faculty in the majors and open to all students.

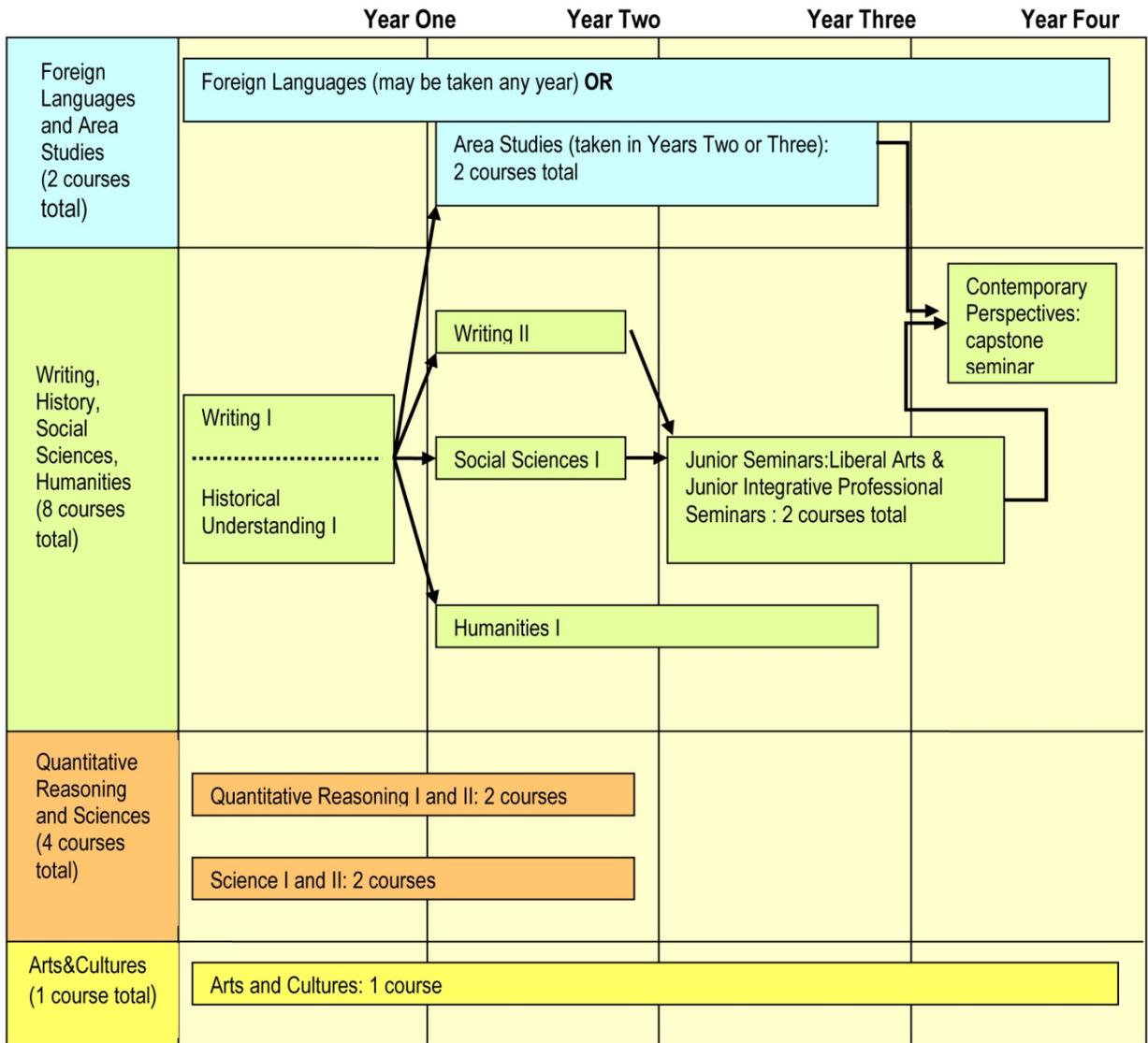
Senior Year

Connected Learning: Capstone brings together profession and liberal education. Regularly assessed by faculty from the majors and liberal arts faculty in common session.

Course: Capstone Course “Contemporary Perspectives”– 4 credit course. Professional education and liberal arts integrative course, students connect issues in their major with international trends in a research paper.

¹⁸ Flexibility of sequencing over second, third and fourth years to accommodate needs of the majors.

College Studies Program sequences- arrows show prerequisites



**Learning Outcomes for the College Studies Program
at Philadelphia University**

Outcome 1: Understanding the Liberal Arts and Sciences

Students will understand the methodologies and concepts central to the humanities, social sciences, and natural and physical sciences, to enrich their understanding and aesthetic appreciation of the world.

Outcome 2: Engaging in Interdisciplinary and Integrative Learning

Students will connect learning across disciplines and between liberal education and professional studies as a means of making effective contributions to their professions and their communities.

Outcome 3: Understanding Cultural Differences

Students will develop the cross-cultural understanding and communication skills necessary to live and work in a multi-cultural society and in an interconnected world.

Outcome 4: Understanding American Society

Students will understand the cultural, political and economic development of the United States and the challenges of citizenship in a diverse, pluralist society and in the global community.

Outcome 5: Understanding Global Societies

Students will understand the interdependence of the world, including its history, societies, cultures, and environments.

Outcome 6: Mastering Research and Communication Skills

Students will develop effective critical thinking, written and other forms of communication, quantitative, research, and information literacy skills.

Outcomes 7: Developing Ethical and Moral Perspectives

Students will learn to engage in ethical and moral reasoning in their personal and professional lives.

Outcome 8: Becoming Responsible and Life-long Learners

Students will become successful collaborative, reflective, intentional and life-long learners.

What Characterizes a Philadelphia University Graduate?

Learning Outcomes for the Philadelphia University Graduate

January 2004

1. Philadelphia University graduates possess a breadth and depth of professional skills informed by the liberal arts and sciences.
2. Philadelphia University graduates are self-directed learners. They understand and apply multi-disciplinary approaches to problem solving as a means of succeeding in the dynamic, complex career environments they will encounter.
3. Philadelphia University graduates demonstrate creativity and intellectual curiosity. They employ these characteristics to effectively integrate theory and practice in their professions.
4. Philadelphia University graduates use technology effectively, responsibly and creatively in their professional and personal lives. They adapt to changes in technology, while assessing the economic and social consequences of such changes.
5. Philadelphia University graduates understand the value of cultural and ethnic diversity both at home and in the global environment.
6. Philadelphia University graduates are ethically responsible citizens in their personal, professional and civic communities.
7. Philadelphia University graduates anticipate future directions in their professions and bring innovation to their fields.

College Studies and Integrative Learning

- Selected Presentations and Publications -

Marion Roydhouse. "The AAC&U and Carnegie Foundation Integrative Learning Project: Charting and Sustaining Progress." Plenary Luncheon panel. Conference on Integrative Learning: Addressing the Complexities, AAC&U, Atlanta, October 22, 2009.

Thomas Schrand. "Tapping into active learning and multiple intelligences with interactive multimedia: a low-threshold classroom approach," *College Teaching* (forthcoming).

Marion Roydhouse and Thomas Schrand. Consultants. Workshop on "Liberal Learning and Professional Preparation," 2007 Summer Bush Faculty Development Mini-Grant Workshop University of Mary, Bismarck, North Dakota, July 31 to August 2, 2007.

Thomas Schrand. "Active Classroom Learning with Beginner-Level Multimedia Animation," Teaching; Professor Conference, Atlanta, GA, May 19, 2007.

Thomas Schrand, Susan Frosten, Bret Eynon, Paula Martasian, Mary Montminy-Danna. "How The Capstone Captures Learning: Three Institutions, Integrative Learning, and the Evolution of Education," 2007 Annual Meeting, Association of American Colleges and Universities, New Orleans, LA, January 14th, 2007.

Marion Roydhouse. "Inquiry, Innovation, and Integration: Building a Culture of Evidence Around Integrative Teaching and Learning," International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, Washington, DC, November 10, 2006.

Thomas Schrand, Marion Roydhouse, Susan Frosten. "Integrating the core curriculum with professional majors: liberal-professional connections at Philadelphia University," Integrative Learning Project workshop, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Palo Alto, CA, July 22, 2006.

Marion Roydhouse, Valerie Hanson, Carol Hermann. "From Integrative Structures to Integrative Learning in the First Year Experience," Integrative Learning: Creating Opportunities to Connect, AAC&U Conference, Denver, Colorado, October 20 - 22, 2005.

Thomas Schrand, Marion Roydhouse, Susan Frosten. "Integrating Student Learning and Pedagogies Across the Professional Studies/General Education Divide: Re-engineering a Liberal Education Capstone Course," International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: Commitment, Community and Collaboration, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, October 16th, 2005.

Marion Roydhouse, Workshop Leader. "Crossing Boundaries: Globalisation, Integrative Learning and Connecting Liberal Education with Professional Studies." Third International Conference on New Directions in the Humanities, Cambridge, UK, August 2 - 5, 2005.

Thomas Schrand. "Integrating General Education, the Major, and the Co-curriculum," Achieving Greater Expectations conference, American Association of Colleges and Universities, Washington, DC, November 15, 2003.

Thomas Schrand, John Eliason, Jordana Shane. "Leveraging Your Information Literacy Initiative: A Collaborative Model for Technology Integration, Faculty Development and Curricular Change," Technology and Learning Conference, American Association of Colleges and Universities, Washington, DC, November 1, 2003.

Thomas Schrand. "Keeping It Real: Problem-Based Learning in the Social Sciences," 3rd Learning, Teaching and Technology Conference, Lancaster Campus, Harrisburg Area Community College, April 12, 2003.

Marion Roydhouse. "A Small University Information Literacy Model: The Role of Assessment in Moving from Pilot to Campus-Wide Implementation," AAHE Conference on Assessment. Boston, June 23, 2002.

Thomas Schrand. "Evaluating Their Blackboard Semester: Results and Some Initial Conclusions from a Student Survey," at Blackboard: Creating a Community of Learners, St. Lawrence University, April 6th, 2002.

Thomas Schrand. "Using Blackboard to Enhance Social Sciences Courses," 17th Annual Technology Conference, Montgomery County Community College, October 19, 2001.

Marion Roydhouse. "What Should be Integrated?: The Solutions at Philadelphia University," Panel entitled, "Ways of Integrating Liberal and Professional Studies and Assessing Student Outcomes: Three Case Studies," Integrating Liberal and Professional Studies: From Aspiration to Improved Practice, conference sponsored by the AACU with ANAC: Network for Academic Renewal, Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, Washington, April 6 - 8, 2000.

Marion Roydhouse. "The Hole in the Doughnut: General Education in the Professional Curriculum," panel at the American Association of Higher Education National Conference on Higher Education, Washington, D.C., March, 1995.

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