Key points and ideas that emerged from table discussion (bulleted list of 5-10 points with a couple sentences of description for each):

- **Defining liberal education**
  - What is liberal education? Developing a broad foundation of academic and practical skills associated with critical thinking, global citizenship, and lifelong learning. Components include: Collaborative skills, conflict resolution, writing and communication skills, research skills, media literacy, information literacy, and financial literacy.
  - Faculty should create courses that include the aforementioned components, i.e.: not every biological science course should fulfill a biological science LE requirement if it does not include LE modes of instruction. However, there are limitations for faculty in creating curriculum: sometimes a course should interrogate a specific topic, and as a result spark a student’s interest in exploring additional LE topics themselves.
  - Liberal education is the process of students becoming comfortable with complexity and ambiguity. As a result they should be able to question themselves, recognize their own biases, be open to engaging in conversation, and be reflective and critical leaders, consumers, and educators. Ideally LE requirements should align with UMN learning and development outcomes. Having exposure to academic thinking that is not in your discipline is important.

- **Writing**
  - Can we reframe a writing LE requirement to encompass communication more broadly? Yes: articulating ideas verbally and through other media is important in this era. No: writing is critical thinking. Once a student has written something they are prepared to speak about it because writing is gathering and organizing information, not just putting it down on paper.
  - Writing for different audiences and understanding writing are both important components of ‘learning to write.’ Students should learn to systematically critique all communications. Teaching writing is teaching critical thinking; it is means and a ways to address politics in the classrooms.

- **Research**
  - Research allows students to compete at a global level and be involved in solving contemporary problems. Students are involved in school at a higher level when they participate in research projects.

- **Information literacy**
  - Students don’t understand how the library works. Requiring an online one credit course about information literacy could be a useful LE tool to prepare students to engage in future classes. Information literacy allows for many types of practical skills beyond the classroom, including financial literacy. Knowing how the world
of information is structured can help students in countless ways, from buying a house to budgeting. Should a goal of undergraduate LE be to prepare students for adulthood?

- Classroom and non-classroom experiences as LE learning:
  - Experiences and classes in many UMN areas seem to address components of LE previously discussed, but only certain students have access to these courses and many of them are not considered LE options.
    - Information literacy course from the School of Journalism
    - Philosophy of Teaching and Learning workshop
    - Leadership minor (Should all students be exposed to leadership training?)
    - UROP
    - HECUA
    - OED Diversity training workshop
    - Participation in student groups
  - There is a vast amount of learning that happens outside of the classroom. Can experiences get credit or LE status, not just courses? Or can they be incentivized in some way (ie: students work for ‘points’ that reduce tuition, …)?
  - There are LE possibilities in the Grand Challenges curriculum; the courses look at a problem through a variety of disciplinary lenses. However, GC courses are inaccessible to new students. Interdisciplinary GC courses at the 1xxx and 3xxx levels, as well as in the form of freshman seminars could be useful.

- Barriers:
  - One credit courses and courses for professional schools cannot currently meet any LE requirements. This limits student’s experiences at the University.
  - How do we engage students in classroom and extracurricular experiences (a liberal education) without adding to the pressures of fitting many credits, requirements and external concerns into four years at the University? Mental health statistics are daunting; we don’t want to overburden students.

- Reflection component, or LE capstone:
  - How do we encourage students to integrate and synthesize the information received from all their LE requirements? Could a capstone course or paper allow students to reflect upon their education, and tie their LE experiences into their ‘purpose’ in the field of their choice? Both writing and research should be emphasized in such a project.

Summary of discussion (300 to 500 words):

Table twelve worked to define liberal education in order to address the question of what LE requirements should provide students upon graduation. A major focus of our conversation was broadening LE requirements to encompass the student experience overall rather than focusing on upper-division courses alone. Two of our group members spend time in the classroom as professors of Journalism and Geography, while the rest serve as directors or advisors for MCAE, Wilson library, the Rothenberger Institute, Student Unions & Activities, and the Inter-college program. During the discussion, the participants did not come to a conclusion about what future LE requirements should look like, but rather focused on the skills they hope all undergraduates will acquire during their time at the University.
Throughout the course of our conversation, the following questions came up: Do we believe the current LE requirements are working? Do undergraduates go through the motions to ‘check them off’ or are they invested and engaged in the learning process? Is there an agreed upon purpose for LE requirements? If so is it being met? How can we integrate all of the LE requirements? Does group work really teach collaborative skill? Specific conclusions for most of these inquiries are included in the notes above. Overall, our group seemed to find that current LE courses may not address a broad understanding of liberal education. Most contributors had examples of work their departments already do to promote student engagement leading to active citizenship, which is in line with their vision of a liberal education.

The discussion briefly touched on the framework necessary to transmit ideas of a liberal education to students, ie: should there be more of less flexibility for faculty in creating curriculum or for students in choosing LE experiences? There was no consensus on these topics, but everyone agreed that a liberal education should provide wide-reaching critical thinking mechanisms that span disciplines; the University should embrace a collaborative, integrated, and interdisciplinary approach to LE. It was noted that all the current LE themes seem to be just as important as the core LE requirements, yet students can choose four out of the five. It was important to many members of our group that non-classroom works informed by University resources are considered an LE experiences. Participants were eager to broaden the definition of liberal education, and acknowledge that LE experiences exist both in methods of instruction and in topics presented. For example, any University experience that addresses collaborative skills, conflict resolution, writing and communication skills, research skills, media literacy, information literacy, or financial literacy, regardless of topic, could be considered LE if there is an appropriate reflection component. Overall, the group hoped to assess whether or not the current LE requirements teach the skills necessary to critically navigate the world outside the UMN personally, politically, and professionally.

Additional context (characterize level of consensus/lack of consensus, tone and tenor of conversation, other notable aspects of the discussion):

Everyone had a chance to speak at our table, though one person spoke more than others and thereby informally ‘led’ the discussion. There was no outright disagreement, rather, participants expanded upon and reframed each other’s ideas. Group-members were quick to apply work in their areas of expertise to the concept of a liberal education and vise versa. The conversation flowed from topic to topic, and while specific conclusions about means and methodology for an ideal liberal education were not made, there was relative consensus that the current LE requirements are limiting to students and faculty and could be broadened.