Recorder’s Summary

Forum date: January 30, 2017
Table number: 13

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

1. Restructure to allow the study of empathy and disadvantaged peoples in first person narratives. Important because the development of empathy because it is not easily taught. Maybe this isn’t necessarily a class, but an overarching orientation throughout the department addressed in many classes.

2. Restructure to mandate classes during freshman and junior year. They questioned whether discussing something in one semester is teaching it. Reinforce the ideals a second time further along in their studies.
   a. Transfer students don’t take liberal education classes at the U because they may not be able to afford, so they miss the ideas we would want them to learn about their freshman year, hence, a junior year class would connect these students to our ideas.

3. Not allowing AP credits for Liberal Education requirements.
   a. Many incoming students may never take a Liberal Education class at the U. This defeats the purpose of having them, because the students we want to target for equity and diversity (point #1) would be those that are privileged.

4. Our distribution model is there for ease of administration, not for growth of students. This model is easy to account for and easier to be broad across a number of disciplines, but unless a student seeks out opportunities they won’t delve deep into the Liberal Education.
   a. Many majors are already extremely packed as it is. Do disciplines need to par back to allow students to learn more about these ideals?

5. Students need to learn the importance of critical thinking and presentation. This is not taught in classes because the outcomes are focused on what is needed to get a job in their discipline. Students need to learn how to filter through the noise of media (critical thinking) to find what is real or sponsored.
   a. Making a course about being a critical thinker and responding as a citizen. At the moment the writing that students do in class is discipline specific and very academic.
   b. Students want better integrated technology. They see it being used in class, but need to use it first hand to understand ways it can enhance their jobs and be more effective.
      i. CLA has currently offers online modules regarding subjects like Power Point. This helps develop their presentation skills.

6. The training one receives in their department/ major prepares them for their first job, but people don’t always stick with the first job. Liberal education prepares one for the rest/ what’s after.
a. Example: Language is used to understand and analyze cultural similarities and differences. It practices perspective of connections to other disciplines about how to use language to access information.

b. Creative courses – Arts and Humanities – are important. It is important to not only absorb information, but important to learn to produce something.

7. The Grand Challenges Courses have a positive teaching style. Students have said they like having professors from different backgrounds perspectives. Students find it interesting to see how other disciplines are taught to think.
   a. Some of the members of the group didn’t think this would work because of finances. While another offered an idea of having a split section class, two professors have their own classes, but come together one class a week, effectively stating there are ways to incorporate different perspectives into students’ classes.

8. A question that arose: if the distribution system were to change, would some courses developed specifically for the cores end? Are there classes that are only relevant within the distribution system?
   a. There are no connections between the cores, they are just buckets that need to be filled.

9. The CLE process for approving courses is not useful, it’s too arduous, and it’s over regulation because the administration does not trust professors. They plug in language for the administration and not for the students, students don’t even read the syllabus. CLE doesn’t follow-up with the class, so what they write is only to satisfy. The back and forth emails when trying to approve a course is not an effective way of communicating.

**Summary of discussion (300 to 500 words):** The discussion at table 13 was productive. The discussion mainly focused on ideas to incorporate Liberal Education into the students already busy schedule, as well as, what is important about Lib Ed requirements that students need to learn. The first discussion topic was to incorporate empathy and alternative perspectives into a student’s curriculum – this was believed to be important due to, in part, recent happenings in the world. There were ideas to incorporate classes throughout their college experience to widen the audience to transfer students and those coming in with AP credits. The discussion touched on skills students should receive from Liberal Education courses, specifically critical thinking and presentation skills. Different teaching styles were brought up to broaden the way students learn, and to learn how other disciplines are taught to think. The group focused on how incorporating the Lib Ed classes could help the students develop, rather than take random classes in each of the cores. The group had a strong consensus that students needed some form of Liberal Education to not be stuck in their field’s bubble. The discussion ended on the CLE process. They believe it isn’t useful in gauging what students will learn from the class. What they give to the CLE committee is just there to please. There is no follow-up to the process and therefore they plug in words to satisfy. They don’t feel the committee trusts them to produce an effective course. Although the group did not feel as strongly as the first open conversation speaker, they were displeased with the CLE process.
Additional context (characterize level of consensus/lack of consensus, tone and tenor of conversation, other notable aspects of the discussion): Table 13 were all very open minded about each other’s ideas and built off of them. The atmosphere was relaxed while the group shared their thoughts. There was tension around how important the arts are to all students, but this topic was not further discussed, i.e. if a student chooses to take a class like ceramics instead of a different Arts and Humanities core class.

*Additional comments from group is that some students have thought of the Lib Ed requirements as “dabbling in other arts,” and just a list that needs to be checked off to graduate.