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

- Liberal Education is important but the U approaches it in a disjoint way. We should consider ways to make all LE courses fit together, string them like a pathway. Right now the students take these courses just to fulfill the requirements. How can we show them that learning from one course will help them or challenge them in another?
- It is important to integrate teamwork and collaborative learning into all the courses. Teamwork is beneficial for students who are coping with trauma and stress, as well as useful for succeeding in today’s society.
- Faculty need better training on how to teach sensitive material to students. Lacking training and, consequently, skill, can be disrupting to the process of learning in the classroom.
- Currently LE does not go far enough to teach students to understand equity and diversity and to understand their privilege. Students are often required to take one course on equity and diversity, which is not sufficient to develop empathy and learn to see others’ point of view.
- LE does not teach cultural competency. Especially in the sciences, cultural competency is not common in both teacher and students.
- Many students do not know what LE means or understand why they should take LE courses. LE should be rebranded. Students need to understand why they should take LE courses.
- Students are not prepared for college writing when they start college. Throughout their programs they are not required to take enough writing courses.

Summary of discussion (300 to 500 words):

Cohesiveness of LE:
We want students to see how things come/fit/relate to each other. Learning from course A might challenge you in course B. Not just answer questions but questions answer. We teach in chunks but live in integrative whole. How do we approach it through teaching?

Learning outcomes and LE:
We should teach teamwork. It’s important for survival in today’s society. We have been pushing on collaborative learning. Data are showing that trauma or stress environment for student can be helped through teamwork. More training for faculty is needed on how to teach sensitive material.
Lack of knowledge can interrupt the class and hurt students. Diversity and equity: understanding privilege. It doesn’t go far enough. One course is not enough to develop empathy, understanding, see other person’s perspective. Our domestic students do not have skills on how to facilitate,struggle, especially in another language. Cultural competency. Scientists do not have enough needed cultural competence. Students do not know what liberal education means. Educating them before they even come in and take classes would help. Why they should take LE classes would be helpful. Rebrand LE. People might be more willing to accept rather than push back.

Students and Writing:
We need to make sure that students take enough writing intensive courses early on. Also, faculty do not want to teach mechanics of writing. Smaller class sizes with TA, lots of revisions. Can we do something like that for our incoming freshmen? It’s very important. Could we string together courses so that they make sense. Also, string writing throughout the whole LE curriculum? Writing in a reflective way? There are some programs that help students and faculty with basic grammar in their writing. New program is coming out for e-mails. Are we aware of updated technology? Students need to be taught basic writing skills: full sentences, how to write a formal e-mail, evaluate information for accuracy. So, two problems: basic writing skills, style on one side, critical thinking skills, such as generating hypothesis on the other spectrum.

Many CSE programs have very few choices. Is there any forms for LE structures that might be expanded or are we stuck in 5 courses in Mechanical Engineering and that’s it? We could liberate a few more classes to give to teaching writing. Our faculty can make some classes writing-intensive.

Other important skills:
Another important skill is source evaluation: Where to look for things, how to make adjustment, students google everything. They don’t have a good facility. They need to be information literate. Leadership is another area that we need to focus on. Tolerance for ambiguity is knowing how to be critical. How do you function where there is not a clear answer. Innovation, creativity, putting pieces together, taking a risk.

Advising becomes important. Advisers are not trained to advise. They should do a deeper advising on a host of issue. We should teach our students to self-regulate and modulate. We should argue forcefully to prepare responsible citizens. We are expected to take charge of educating the whole human being.