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

- Cores are currently incredibly United States focused.
  - A lot of the research that is done at the U of M is research about varying countries, or research that applies to different countries. The sole focus should not be just on the United States (i.e. the civics of the United States), but incorporate the diverse environment that we live in.

- Students should be able to use sources that are appropriate and weed through irrelevant, inaccurate sources. Students should be able to apply the course outcomes to their lives. They need communication skills, navigation skills, etc. Overall, there is modification of the classes needed.
  - Students should be learning how to accurately utilize sources in the modern technological age that we live in.

- Learning outcomes could be more forcefully placed.
  - There was large discussion of the intertwining of learning outcomes and the developmental outcomes. The communication and critical evaluation of information should be looked at in conjunction with these core classes. Students currently struggle with being able to critically think on how to apply this to their lives and future careers. It should not be narrowly defined in a specific discipline.

- Graduates should come out with a sense of agency.
  - They should be able to think ‘how can I apply this?’

- The creation of a thematic, liberal education minor was one of the biggest topics of discussion.
  - Is there something where there could be a balance between the two? This struck a lot of agreement. An idea was to do three courses in an area. Because you want some broader perspectives on certain areas. That’s pretty close to a minor, then. Which currently it’s not feasible given the structure of the requirements to create this minor, unless you take it a bit longer, say five or more years to graduate.
  - Your liberal education requirements automatically give you a minor. Students love the checkboxes; they’re never going to be stopped from doing that. Give them some guidance, three of one thing gives you two of another. If you only require five out of the seven cores, rather than giving them leeway to do that they would come out with a larger understanding of a topic rather than just barely brushing the surface. It has to be different than your major, however, was a point of discussion.

- There is a disconnect between making these courses interdisciplinary.
Summary of discussion (300 to 500 words):

The consensus in the group was that there needs to be a plethora of changes to the current liberal education requirements. Some of the overarching themes in the discussion were the following: students need to be able to critically evaluate their sources and arguments, students need to be taught the learning and developmental outcomes, students need to learn how to communicate clearly, tolerate ambiguity, adapt to their surroundings, and put perspective on what they’re doing. They are currently unable to do this.

They should also come out of university with a sense of agency; a desire to take action and the knowledge that they can do it. Students are currently getting the themes met, but they tend to have it spread over a lot of different disciplines. It’s such a surface touch on anything of the eight cores. One introductory course, and they don’t really understand the discipline yet. They don’t get a feel for it. Is there a way to balance this?

Yes, there is. One of the ideas sparked here was an interest in a minor. Would there be a way to create some type of thematic minors that aren’t actually departments? Some kind of liberal education minor – potentially connected with grand challenge courses – a grand challenge minor. Having this interdisciplinary is important, too. At the end of the minor, the students should have a capstone project that they work on with students from other backgrounds. This project should be something that can help the local or national community in some type. There should be some substance to this, something that they can come away with and tell employers and graduate schools that there was an applicable lesson that came away from this experience. Students should be able to say that they have experience working with diverse students, and communication with the community. They shouldn’t just be writing a paper, but they should be able to be creative with their liberal education and come away with a sense of self and how they work with others.

Some of the key questions that should be asked upon graduation would be can you do the report? Can you give an elevator speech about it? Can you do a presentation on it? Can you also share that on an online platform that the person who is not highly versed in this can understand?

The last idea, was to implement a university wide requirement of a foreign language. Students should be taught that they should have those experiences and ideas. They should do as much as they can, take on a second major, all of those things.

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

The tone of the conversation was very positive. However, it definitely took into account the fact that there are a lot of changes that need to take place. There are many different ways of going about these changes, whether it’s implementing new courses, making the course petitioning process easier, or changing the requirements altogether. The overall consensus was that there are too many requirements, that do not dive deep enough into a specific subject.