

University Senate

EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY UNIVERSITY SENATE BILL COVER SHEET

SB: 21/22: 06 Creating a New Structure for the Liberal Arts Curriculum

Sponsoring Parties Committee on the Liberal Arts Core

Submitted By Senate Executive Committee

Semester in which proposed changes would become effective: Fall 2024

Text of Bill: See Attached

Introduced in Senate on March 22, 2022

Returned to Committee on _____ Resubmitted to Senate on _____

Amended by Senate on _____ Tabled by Senate on _____

Approved By Senate on 4/5/22 Disapproved by Senate on _____

Sent to University President on 4/6/22 University President Deadline _____

Presidential action reported to Senate on _____.

Referred to _____ for implementation on _____.

Official Signatures

SAF on 4/6/22

Stephen Ferruci
University Senate President

E Nunez
Elsa Nunez
University President

Approved On
Date

Disapproved
Date

4/7/22
Reasons for Disapproval (below)

Preamble

Eastern's mission states, "*Eastern Connecticut State University engages students from diverse backgrounds in a transformative, liberal arts learning experience that provides knowledge and skills to lead enriching, purposeful lives.*" Our mission promises that Eastern and its faculty will deliver a meaningful liberal arts education to our students. The AAC&U defines a liberal arts education as: "*...an approach to undergraduate education that promotes integration of learning across the curriculum and co-curriculum, and between academic and experiential learning, in order to develop specific learning outcomes that are essential for work, citizenship, and life.*"

In Spring 2020, the new LAC Learning Outcomes were adopted, which led to a re-examination of our LAC structure. Eastern's current Liberal Arts Curriculum (LAC) was developed over 15 years ago. At the time it was developed, it introduced innovations in liberal arts education. However, over the past 15 years, scholarship on liberal arts pedagogy has advanced significantly. In addition to allowing us to orient our Liberal Arts Core curriculum around our new learning outcomes, redeveloping the LAC gives Eastern an opportunity to draw on these innovations. The LAC revision process is an opportunity to structure our liberal arts curriculum to help students: make sense of their liberal arts education; understand and integrate liberal arts skills and disciplinary perspectives; and capitalize on the skills they have developed in their lives after Eastern. The revision process also gives us an opportunity to create a more inclusive, equitable curriculum through repeated access to high-impact practices in our LAC.

Senate Bill

The liberal arts curriculum will total 40 credits and be comprised of three distinct parts:

- LAC Seminars (10 credits)
- Foundational Concepts (minimum 6 credits)
- Disciplinary Perspectives (24 credits)

In addition to the structural revisions to the LAC, there is also an **emphasis on the liberal arts learning outcomes and on the use of high impact practices in all LAC courses.**

LAC Core (10 credits)

The LAC Core will consist of 3 seminar classes (LAC 100, LAC 200, and LAC 400) and a 1-credit first-year course (LAC 101) for a total of 10 credits. Courses approved for the Liberal Arts Core Seminars will be housed in the LAC and will have an LAC designation. LAC Core Seminars foreground connections among disciplines and integrate multiple high-impact practices to target at least two LAC Learning Outcomes. These courses will be offered in sequence, with LAC 100 and LAC 101 designed as a first-year experience that introduces students to the LAC program and LAC 400 offered to upper-level students as a Liberal Arts culminating experience. Each LAC seminar will implement at least two high impact practices (HIP) and assess two LAC Learning Outcomes (LOs).

To provide opportunities for cross-disciplinary collaboration, faculty may design and propose a series of LAC Core Seminar courses organized around a theme that students could pursue in successive years as they advance from LAC 100 to LAC 200 and finally 400 (vertical themes).

Foundational Concepts (minimum 6 credits)

Every student must take two foundational courses, one in math and one in writing.

A Math Requirement of one course (minimum of 3 credits) will ensure all students appreciate the importance of basic quantitative skills and gain mathematical skills necessary for completion of their degree and throughout their lives.

A Writing Requirement of one course (minimum of 3 credits) that will provide students with the basic skills in writing that they need for completion of their degree and throughout their lives. This course will serve as the first course in the university writing program.

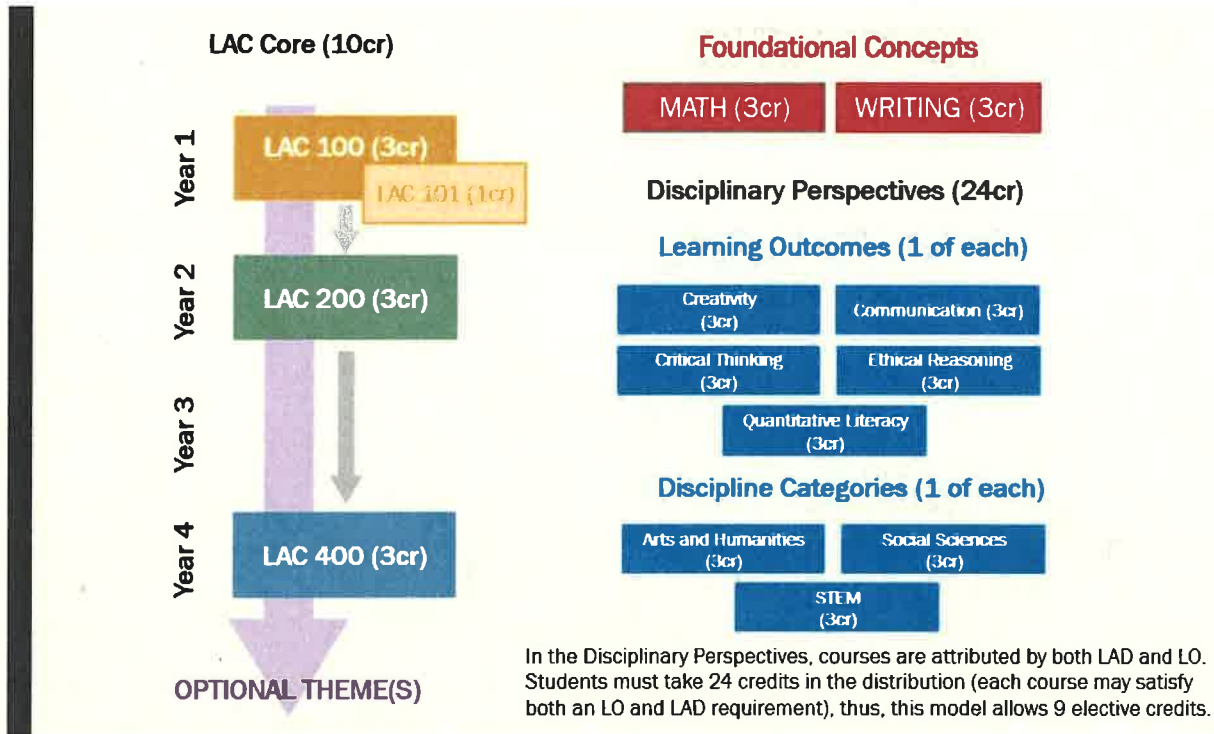
LAC Disciplinary Perspectives (24 credits)

In addition to the LAC Seminars (10 credits) and Foundational Concepts (minimum 6 credits) courses, the remainder (24 credits) of the 40 credits of the LAC consist of disciplinary perspectives courses. These courses will be housed within departments and will retain departmental prefixes. The disciplinary perspectives courses will be distributed across both the five liberal arts learning outcomes (LO) and across the three liberal arts disciplinary (LAD) categories identified by NECHE: 1) Arts and Humanities, 2) Social Sciences, and 3) Science and Math.

Courses in the distribution will be attributed by both their primary LO and by their LAD category. To meet the disciplinary perspectives requirements, students will need to take at least one course from each learning outcome category, and at least one course from each LAD category.

Each course must include at least two of the five Senate-approved LOs (Creativity, Communication, Critical Thinking, Ethical Reasoning, Quantitative Literacy). Courses will be attributed by one primary LO. A secondary LO will also be addressed in the course. Faculty will be expected to create assessable assignments for those learning outcomes and must be willing to submit assignments and assessable artifacts for those two learning outcomes when requested. These artifacts will be used to assess LAC-level outcomes and will not be used to assess individual courses or instructors. Each course will also implement at least one high-impact practice.

Illustration of the Proposed LAC Model



Distinctiveness of the LAC

The LAC is a 40-credit general education program that is distinct from a student's major program of study, and that provides a broader intellectual context for that major program. While departments may accept courses approved for LAC Disciplinary Perspectives in fulfillment of major requirements, students must choose whether to apply such courses to the LAC or to their major: the same course cannot be used by the student to fulfill both a LAC requirement and a major requirement.

Exceptions to this rule may be granted on a case-by-case basis with the approval of the Advising Center and the relevant department chair. As a rule, exceptions should be confined to cases in which a student requires additional flexibility to complete their degree requirements in four years (as may be the case for double majors, students pursuing teaching certification, etc.).

Appendix A: Background and Committee Process

In their 2010 and 2015 Accreditation Letters, NEASC (now NECHE) encouraged Eastern to develop a systematic approach to assessment of its LAC, as well as for other programs. After some assessment attempts by the University Assessment Committee, it became apparent that it was not feasible to assess the 100+ Learning Outcomes listed for the current LAC in any meaningful way. Thus, Eastern does not have an LAC that could demonstrate through assessment that it was successful in delivering the promises of its mission.

In 2019, to meet these challenges, the Liberal Arts Curriculum Learning Outcomes Revision Ad-hoc Committee (LACLOR) was established to investigate and recommend a reasonable number of Learning Outcomes that would be incorporated into Eastern's LAC. The committee was composed of 10 members of the teaching faculty. Five members of the committee were elected by the University Senate, and five were appointed to represent committees with relevant work (First Year Program, Committee on the Future of Eastern, Assessment, etc.) and to represent a wide range of disciplinary perspectives. The committee's activities culminated in the Spring of 2020 with the passing of Senate Bill 19/20-07 *Policy on Liberal Arts Learning Outcomes* which adopted the following five Learning Outcomes: Creativity, Critical Thinking, Communication, Ethical Reasoning, and Quantitative Literacy.

The NECHE Standards for General Education state the following: *"The general education program... reflects the institution's mission and values and embodies the institution's definition of an educated person and prepares students for the world in which they will live. The requirement informs the design of all general education courses, and provides criteria for its evaluation, including the assessment of what students learn."* In the process of defining the learning outcomes of Eastern's LAC, it became clear that a revised curriculum was needed to better align Eastern's curriculum with its mission and to explicitly embed the new learning outcomes. Thus, LACLOR was reconstituted in the summer of 2020 into The Committee on the Liberal Arts Curriculum (COLAC) and was tasked with investigating and proposing a redesigned LAC that would meet the University Mission, incorporate the new learning outcomes, and deliver a meaningful liberal arts experience to all Eastern students.

The charge of COLAC was as follows: *"After an examination of models of common core curricula at other liberal arts institutions and with substantial consultation with faculty, the Committee on the Liberal Arts Core will recommend a new structure for the Liberal Arts Core. The new LAC structure will ensure the new Student Learning Outcomes will be systematically embedded within the curriculum and those outcomes can be effectively assessed to ensure ongoing improvements."*

Over the course of the Summer and Fall 2020 semester, COLAC investigated programs at peer and aspirational institutions. The committee also carefully considered whether the current LAC could be made effectively assessable by embedding the new learning outcomes in Eastern's existing model. As part of this process, COLAC consulted with recognized experts on curriculum revision, and solicited feedback from faculty through multiple forums and focus groups. In addition, a survey of instructional faculty was conducted in Spring 2021, and the concerns and opinions expressed in response to that survey were considered and incorporated in the Summer and early Fall 2021.

During the Fall 2021 semester, an initial draft of this proposal was distributed to teaching faculty and presented to the University Senate. Over the remainder of the Fall 2021 semester, COLAC conducted over 40

small group meetings with academic departments, stakeholder committees, interdisciplinary faculty groups, and students, to solicit additional feedback and further revise this proposal. COLAC held open office hours and online forums for faculty and conducted a follow up survey to solicit additional feedback on the structure of the proposed curriculum. The proposal was revised again in the Winter and early Spring 2022 to incorporate this feedback, and another round of meetings (online and in-person forums, office hours, etc.) were held in Spring 2022 to collect additional feedback.

Based on this extensive process, COLAC proposes the revisions described in the foregoing Senate bill to Eastern's Liberal Arts Curriculum. These revisions are centered on the new Learning Outcomes, strengthen the Liberal Arts Core, and emphasize best practices for delivering Liberal Arts experiences to our students. The revisions strengthen our pursuit of the university mission and further distinguish Eastern from institutions such as UConn and the other CSUs.

Improvements to the Curriculum

The proposed LAC makes pedagogical, practical, and methodological improvements to Eastern's general education curriculum, including:

- The revised LAC better aligns Eastern's general education program with its mission.
- The newly revised LAC will align better with the 5 Learning Outcomes adopted in Spring 2020, allowing Eastern to assess and improve our program incrementally and continuously.
- The revised LAC is designed specifically to support Eastern's diverse student population, addressing equitable access to high-impact practices by making these practices central to the liberal arts curriculum that every student completes. High impact practices benefit all students but are particularly beneficial for first-generation and underserved students. Unfortunately, those students are too often least likely to get access to these experiences ⁽¹⁾. By embedding high impact practices in our proposed LAC, we are ensuring that all students receive equitable access to quality, evidence-based pedagogy.
- Elements of the proposed revisions to the LAC are designed to specifically address students' understanding of the meaning and value of the liberal arts, and their ability to articulate and integrate the liberal arts skills they have gained with their major programs and overall Eastern education.
- The proposed LAC revisions will further distinguish Eastern from the other CSUs and from UConn as the state of Connecticut's public liberal arts university, which will aid in recruiting students to Eastern.
- Employers place a high value on liberal arts education, and a stronger LAC will help Eastern meet its employability goals.
 - A 2019 Harvard Business Review study⁽²⁾ of 1001 business executives and hiring managers found "80% of employers agreeing that all students need a strong foundation in the liberal arts and sciences" and that contrary to public opinion "employer demand for graduates with a liberal education is growing".
 - A survey of 500 senior executives by the national recruiting company Adecco⁽³⁾ found that that 44% of students entering the workforce are deficient in the soft skills of communication, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration, most of which are Learning Outcomes of the proposed Liberal Arts Curriculum.

- A comprehensive report by the Association of American Colleges and Universities and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems⁽⁴⁾ found that “4 out of 5 employers agree that all students should acquire broad knowledge in the liberal arts and sciences”, and that “93% of employers agree that candidates’ demonstrated capacity to think critically, communicate clearly, and solve complex problems is more important than their undergraduate major”.

Sources:

- (1) <https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/high-impact-practices-promoting-participation-all-students>
- (2) <https://hbr.org/2019/09/yes-employers-do-value-liberal-arts-degrees>
- (3) <https://www.adecousa.com/employers/resources/skills-gap-in-the-american-workforce/>
- (4) <https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/nchems.pdf>

Appendix B: Relevant NECHE Standards

The NECHE standards for accreditation were utilized in designing the LAC. The box below highlights the main sections of Standard Four that have guided the development of this curriculum.

NECHE's Standards for General Education

4.16 The general education program is coherent and substantive. It reflects the institution's mission and values and embodies the institution's definition of an educated person and prepares students for the world in which they will live. The requirement informs the design of all general education courses, and provides criteria for its evaluation, including the assessment of what students learn.

4.17 The general education requirement in each undergraduate program ensures adequate breadth for all degree-seeking students by showing a balanced regard for what are traditionally referred to as the arts and humanities, the sciences including mathematics, and the social sciences. General education requirements include offerings that focus on the subject matter and methodologies of these three primary domains of knowledge as well as on their relationships to one another.

4.18 The institution ensures that all undergraduate students complete at least the equivalent of 40 semester credits in a bachelor's degree program, or the equivalent of 20 semester credits in an associate's degree program in general education.

Source: https://www.neche.org/resources/standards-for-accreditation#standard_four

The underlined portions in the standards above provide some concrete guidance for developing the new Liberal Arts Curriculum:

- 1. The LAC must reflect the university's mission, learning outcomes, and core values** – As a Public Liberal Arts University, the new LAC must reflect liberal arts values and the five approved Liberal Arts Learning Outcomes of Creativity, Critical Thinking, Communication, Ethical Reasoning, and Quantitative Literacy. In addition, it will reflect the core values of the university, including:
 - Academic Excellence - Eastern embraces rigorous academic standards and intellectual inquiry as a benchmark for all of its students, faculty and staff. This expectation informs every mode of learning on campus, from individual courses and degree programs to University presentations and cultural events.
 - Engagement - Members of the University community develop intellectually, creatively and socially through active and reflective learning in and outside the classroom, interdisciplinary studies, and individual and collaborative research.
 - Inclusion - Eastern is committed to providing educational access while building a campus community that embraces diversity and differences, enriched by a global perspective.
 - Integrity - Members of the University community are expected to behave ethically and honorably. Learning encompasses both intellectual and character development.

- Empowerment - Eastern fosters a safe, nurturing environment that promotes intellectual curiosity, student achievement and lifelong learning. Through rigorous inquiry and personal interaction, members of the community grow confident as independent, critical thinkers.
 - Social Responsibility - Social responsibility is promoted and encouraged as Eastern through serving those in need; being active in the community; protecting our natural resources; and engaging in the democratic political process and other socially responsible actions. Social responsibility includes an ethical commitment to oneself and the community at large.
2. **The LAC must be assessable** – The curriculum must be designed to make it possible to demonstrate that all students are repeatedly exposed to and master the five Learning Outcomes.
 3. **The LAC must ensure a breadth of disciplines** – The LAC needs to be able to demonstrate that students take courses in Arts and Humanities, the Sciences and Math, and Social Sciences.
 4. **The size of the LAC is guided by the NECHE standard of 40 credits of general education outside the major** – The proposed LAC in this document is 40 credits total (10 credits housed in the LAC with LAC prefixes; 6 credits in the Foundational Concepts of Writing and Mathematics; and 24 credits housed in departments in the Disciplinary Perspectives portion of the curriculum).

Appendix C: Recommendations for Implementation

COLAC's guidance for implementation of the LAC structure described in this bill follows. We anticipate that additional Senate bills will be needed to fully articulate implementation policies, including policies regarding course application and approval processes, scheduling, transfer articulation, etc.

First-year Experience (LAC 100 and LAC 101) (19 student cap; Phase 1)

LAC 100 – First Year Liberal Arts Seminar (3 credits, 19 student cap)

LAC 100 is a seminar-style class requiring the foregrounding of connections among disciplines that serves as the first comprehensive experience students have in their liberal arts education. This class can be offered with any content the faculty member proposes, but must adopt at least two of the LAC Learning Outcomes of the instructor's choice. Each Learning Outcome will be demonstrated through an assessable artifact. At least two high-impact practices will be part of this course. The goal is for students to begin to understand a liberal education and its benefits. Ideally students will be enrolled in LAC 101 concurrently. Students must complete LAC 100 in their first year.

LAC 101 – Introduction to the Liberal Arts (LAC 101, 1 credit, 19 student cap)

LAC 101 is a one-credit course that serves as a broad introduction to the skills of and rationale for a liberal arts education. The five liberal arts Learning Outcomes will be introduced, defined, and applied in a series of short assignments. By the end of the course, students will be able to articulate the value of a liberal arts education and an understanding of the skills and practices involved in the liberal arts. Introducing the five LAC Learning Outcomes will be the primary responsibility of the instructor, who will have access to resources such as the adopted learning outcome rubrics, study guides, model assignments, slide decks, and web-links that they may use at their discretion. Faculty and staff with expertise in each of the learning outcomes will develop these resources.

Acquisition of the LAC learning outcomes is tied to students' successful integration into campus culture. In LAC 101, students will be provided with information and resources for academic success, integration into campus life, and the development of select life-skills. A peer mentor will be assigned to each LAC 101 section, and will introduce skills development resources and lead efforts at students' integration into campus life.

LAC 101 will be a requirement for all entering students in their first semester. Ideally, LAC 101 will be taught by the same instructor of LAC 100 in order to strengthen the student's understanding and applications of the learning outcomes more comprehensively and to foster the growth of learning communities. However, LAC 100 and 101 may be offered as standalone sections.

The purpose of this course is to specifically address student understanding of the Liberal Arts Curriculum (LAC) and to allow them to enter the curriculum with the language and framework for the skill development they will encounter. Surveyed faculty saw this course as highly aligned with the university mission.

Liberal Arts Enrichment (LAC 200 to 400)

LAC 200 to 400 Liberal Arts Seminars (19 student cap; Phase 1 will include LAC 200 and LAC 400 – 6 credits; Phase 2 will include LAC 200, LAC 300, and LAC 400 – 9 credits)

LAC 200 through 400 will provide students with the opportunity to grow in their understanding of the benefits of a liberal arts education as they progress as students, and to recognize connections between their discipline, the liberal arts, and their everyday lives. Each course will have as a prerequisite student standing and the preceding LAC course (for example, LAC 100 and sophomore standing will be the prerequisite for LAC 200, and LAC 200 and junior standing will be the prerequisite for LAC 400). LAC 400 will be a culminating LAC experience and should be taken in the junior or senior year (this seminar would ideally be taken as a senior, but flexibility is needed to ensure progression to graduation for at least some students).

These 3-credit seminar-style courses will implement at least two high impact practices (HIP) and assess two LAC Learning Outcomes (LOs) that are the choice of the instructor. LAC policy will eventually define options for HIPs and LOs by level (i.e., 200, 400, etc.). LAC seminars will be capped at 19 students. These courses are an opportunity for students to encounter rigorous and engaging material that crosses disciplinary boundaries and high impact practices in a small class environment. They will help students connect the course material with their lived experience and strengthen their liberal arts skillset.

LAC 300 Liberal Arts Seminar (Phase 2)

The addition of a fourth LAC course (LAC 300) will be possible during Phase 2 of the LAC implementation if there is enough support and faculty interest.

Optional LAC Themes

Faculty expressed strong enthusiasm for the incorporation of themes into the Liberal Arts curriculums in the Spring 2020 survey; optional themes allow faculty to develop themes in a flexible manner that reduces the potential feasibility challenges of a required theme model.

To provide opportunities for cross-disciplinary collaboration, faculty may design and propose vertical themes for LAC seminars. Theme applications should be offered as a package, with multiple faculty members proposing LAC 100, 200, 400 (and, in phase 2, 300) level seminars all incorporating that theme. Seats in the LAC theme will be limited (depending on the number of faculty proposing the theme) and students adopting the optional theme will be provided with first access to those seats.

Foundational Concepts (minimum 6 credits)

Based on the Spring 2021 survey, faculty placed high importance on stand-alone writing and math requirements to ensure that all students are adequately prepared for the other courses they encounter in the rest of the program. To this end, every student must take the foundational courses, one in math and one in writing. Each course is a minimum of 3 credits but may be more depending on student placement in these disciplines. These two courses account for a minimum of 6 credits.

A Math Requirement of one course (minimum of 3 credits) will ensure all students appreciate the importance of basic quantitative skills and gain mathematical skills necessary for completion of their degree and throughout their lives. Some courses may include additional meeting times that will increase the credit load of the course. Students will be recommended for courses that meet the math requirement based on placement scores and major. A Writing Requirement of one course (minimum of 3 credits) that will provide

students with the basic skills in writing that they need for completion of their degree and throughout their lives. This course will serve as the first course in the university writing program. Some courses may include additional meeting times that will increase the credit load of the course. Learning Outcomes will include: (1) Communication and (2) choice of instructor.

LAC Disciplinary Perspectives (24 credits)

Courses approved for the LAC Disciplinary Perspectives will provide learning opportunities and skills from the discipline that are relevant for student lives and serve the development of the Learning Outcomes utilizing at least one high impact practice. While they will include discipline-focused content, these courses are intended for non-majors in order to provide a breadth of exposure for all students.

Although the courses in this model have departmental prefixes and content related to the discipline, the focus of disciplinary perspectives courses centers on the liberal arts learning outcomes and are designed for non-majors. Courses can be offered at the 100 through 400 level, but students will be required to take at least 12 of the 24 credits at the 300 or 400-level.

Enrollment caps for Disciplinary Perspectives courses may vary depending on pedagogical need. While most Disciplinary Perspectives courses will be three credits, four-credit courses are also permissible where pedagogically appropriate (as, for example, in the case of Science courses with labs).

It is anticipated that the LAC will have a coordinator that will work with departments and be responsible for ensuring that there is a balance in LADs and Learning Outcomes through course scheduling. Faculty may apply to teach in any disciplinary category that is relevant for their course (that is, departments will not be assigned to LAD categories).

Because courses are attributed by both LO and LAD, students can fulfill both the LO and LAD requirements with just five courses (since five courses addressing each of the liberal arts learning outcomes can readily be spread across the three disciplinary perspectives categories). Students who select their Disciplinary Perspectives courses carefully, therefore, will have flexibility to choose three courses (9 credits) irrespective of learning outcome or disciplinary category. This flexibility ensures that students have latitude to select courses of interest, while also ensuring repeated exposure to the learning outcomes and breadth of exposure to disciplines.

Foreign Languages

Foreign Language requirements are currently university requirements and remain unchanged.

Emphasis on High Impact Practices across the LAC

An area of clear consensus in the faculty survey was support for the use of high impact practices in the LAC. Of faculty indicating that they teach in the current LAC, 97% reported that they already use high impact practices in their LAC courses. The new LAC strengthens and explicitly embeds evidence-based high impact practices. Equitable access to high impact practices is a key feature of this curriculum; these practices will allow us to best support Eastern's student population and will particularly benefit underserved students.

The Liberal Arts Program Committee will develop and maintain a list of effective high impact practices (see possible high impact practices in the table below). As part of the process for entry into the LAC, a course must adopt at least one high-impact practice (LAC seminars must adopt two or more high-impact practices). In addition, a program of faculty development related to the implementation of high impact practices, including workshop offerings that assist faculty in incorporating these practices into LAC classes, will be provided to facilitate adoption of these practices.

Emphasis on Learning Outcomes across the LAC

Courses offered as part of the LAC will include assignments that are designed to assess Eastern’s Learning Outcomes. For each course, two learning outcomes will be embedded. Artifacts from these assignments will be submitted to the University Assessment Committee, which will use the artifacts for the purpose of evaluating University-level outcomes (outcomes will not be examined at the section, course, or faculty-level). Instructors will not be tasked with evaluating these artifacts; they may choose to evaluate assignments and projects in their class as they see fit.

Learning Outcomes	Examples of High Impact Practices
Communication Creativity Critical Thinking Ethical Reasoning Quantitative Literacy	First-Year Experiences Common Intellectual Experiences Learning Communities Writing-Intensive Courses Collaborative Assignments and Projects Undergraduate Research Diversity/Global Learning ePortfolios Service or Community-based Learning Internships Capstone Courses and Projects

Use of LAC Courses in the Major

In some cases, courses that are developed for the disciplinary perspectives portion of the new LAC can also be appropriate to fulfill certain major requirements. If this is the case, it will be possible to have a course approved that can fulfill either a LAC or a major requirement but cannot fulfill both for a student. The course will have to be approved as a LAC course, with all its requirements and standards, and cannot have separate departmental prerequisites. The department can then choose to allow the course to fulfill a requirement for its majors instead of fulfilling an LAC requirement. The department will work with the appropriate LAC director to ensure the proper scheduling of these courses.

For example, if BIS 326 is approved as an LAC course, non-majors who take this course can apply it towards their LAC requirement. On the other hand, BIS majors may be allowed to take this course to meet their BIS major requirement but cannot apply this course towards meeting their LAC requirements.

No courses can be used to satisfy both a major requirement and a LAC requirement, and no majors course can substitute for a LAC course.

Some students may require additional flexibility to complete their degree programs in four years. In these cases (for example, double majors, education students) LAC classes may be re-used on a case-by-case basis to allow for timely graduation.

Phased Implementation

COLAC recommends a multi-step implementation process, allowing for a smoother transition to the new curriculum, permitting time for faculty and course development, and ensuring that adequate resources are in place to support the revised LAC.

The suggested size and phased implementation of the LAC was based directly on feedback from faculty. In the Spring 2021 survey, faculty expressed the most support for a larger liberal arts core that was implemented over time. A smaller model (e.g., a 2-course seminar core) was viewed as the least effective in supporting our mission, while the 4-course core model was preferred by faculty if introduced over time. Further, Fall 2021 feedback from faculty expressed concerns about implementing the new LAC too quickly and undermining the quality of the new program. Thus, we are proposing the following timeline:

In AY 2022-2023, a limited number of 100-level pilot seminar courses will be introduced into the LAC under its current structure (as FYI 100 courses) to serve as potential models for the future development of LAC 100. This will include the infusion of social justice, diversity, inclusion, and equity as a foundational theme for future development of the LAC.

In AY 2023-2024, piloting will continue, expanding to additional 100-level LAC seminar courses as well as some disciplinary perspectives courses. A limited number of students may elect to take new LAC courses that will count toward the current LAC if they are entering in the Fall 2023.

In AY 2024-2025, full implementation will commence, with all students entering Eastern in the Fall 2024 catalog under the new LAC. This will require that enough 100 and 200-level LAC seminars and disciplinary perspectives courses will have been developed to serve all first-year students entering in Fall 2024. Over the course of the next three years, additional courses will be added at each level to accommodate students as they progress through the LAC program.

The LAC is meant to strengthen the development of long-term, mentorship relationships between Eastern faculty and students and thus high participation of full-time faculty is a central goal of program implementation. We propose that, once the LAC has been fully implemented and at least 75% of the courses in the LAC are being taught by full-time instructional faculty members, the following expansions to the LAC be considered:

- 1) The addition of an LAC 300-level seminar (to ensure that students can engage in seminar classes in each of their years at Eastern). The inclusion of this additional seminar would require adjusting the disciplinary perspectives distribution requirement to 21 credits.
- 2) The addition of a one-credit 400-level LAC course (LAC 401) focused on professional development and the application of the LAC learning outcomes in students' professional lives.

Emphasis on Rigorous Implementation and Recommended Resources Directed Toward the LAC Program

Discussions of the revisions proposed by COLAC in this document have acknowledged that the success of a revised LAC will depend on attention to implementation and maintenance of program standards. Thus, as Eastern moves forward with the curriculum revision process over the next several months, increasing emphasis on implementation planning will be required. The following are steps that will support implementation.

1. Stakeholder outreach. COLAC has been in conversation with several important University stakeholders to help us to anticipate the needs and challenges of implementation. This outreach will continue to ensure collaboration in the phased implementation plan.
2. Support for faculty development and assessment. Transition to the new LAC will require significant work: tools will need to be developed to guide the application process for courses; faculty will need to be recruited and provided with curricular development opportunities centered on integrating learning objectives, assessment, and high impact practices. Furthermore, logistical challenges regarding advising, transfer articulation agreements, and scheduling will need to be addressed. In addition, once implemented, the program will require sustained attention to maintain programmatic standards and ensure continuous and ongoing improvement based on assessment data.
3. Coordination and administrative support to ensure program management. COLAC is proposing that additional resources be directed towards the implementation and maintenance of the LAC, including the creation of two coordinator positions (one for the LAC core seminars and one for the LAC disciplinary perspectives classes), as well as an administrative support position for the LAC program. These positions will work in tandem with relevant Senate committees and faculty groups, and other units to ensure the successful launch and maintenance of the LAC. In addition, we recommend that resources be identified to support faculty development, and to provide incentives for co-teaching.

Transfer Students and Transfer Articulation

When a new LAC is adopted, LAPC should work with admissions and advising to establish transfer equivalencies. COLAC is recommending that these policies be as flexible as possible to facilitate transfer to Eastern. While the curriculum being proposed centers the liberal arts experience for students who are in residence at Eastern for their entire undergraduate career, we believe in the value of the liberal arts experience for transfer students and support the easiest possible transfer into our programs.

Implementation Planning and Policies

COLAC is recommending that COLAC and the Liberal Arts Program Committee (LAPC) will continue to work on articulation of implementation plans and policies. In addition, COLAC will work with stakeholder committees such as the First Year Program Committee, the Instructional Faculty Development Committee, the Assessment Task Force, the Academic Advising Committee. Responsibility for the next stages of implementation planning should be shared between COLAC and these stakeholder committees.