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The New Program in Liberal Arts

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INTRODUCTION

One of the reasons so many of us today do not know where we are going is that so few of us know where we have been. We, as a nation and as heirs of a great civilization, need to know where we have been. But education is more than a nostalgic communion with the past. It is a preparation for the living present. It must bring an acquaintance with the great forces that are at work in the world today. And finally it must equip young men and women with the discipline, the courage, and the power to convert knowledge and thought into action for the creation of a better world.

For these reasons the State University of Iowa believes in the liberal and the liberating arts. For these reasons we appointed committees, more than two years ago when our campus was in large part given over to preparing young men for war, to review and if necessary to revise our liberal arts curriculum. As these committees considered the special challenges which the post war years seem likely to offer liberal education, they drew practically the entire faculty into their discussions.

Slowly — because it was a cooperative and democratic process — this planning began to take shape around certain principles. For one thing students are not alike, and some need different things from the University than do others. The liberal arts curriculum, then, should be revised not backward toward tradition, but forward toward needs. It should be designed so that every student will have a chance to acquire both the basic skills and the fundamental understandings he needs to live in the modern world and to meet the social and ethical responsibilities which he must face as a good citizen in a democratic nation. These, we felt, he would acquire more readily from a dynamic and active process of learning than from passive receptivity to teaching.

The curricular pattern which the planning committees evolved was adopted by vote of the faculty of the College of Liberal Arts on April 5, 1944. This bulletin is designed to show how the program built from that pattern is now operating on the campus.

Virgil M. Hancher,
President, State University of Iowa.
THE NEW PROGRAM IN LIBERAL ARTS

On April 5, 1944, the faculty of the College of Liberal Arts at the State University of Iowa approved a new curricular program for the College. This action was preceded by more than two years of study and thinking carried on officially through numerous committees and sub-committees, and informally among practically all members of the staff. It was followed by the appointment of working committees to put the provisions of the new program into effect. After reviewing the progress of these groups, the Committee on Curricula and Instruction on July 13, 1944 recommended that the new program be made effective for entering freshmen beginning with the fall of 1944, and for all students transferring to the University after the close of the second semester, 1945-46. The purpose of this statement is to describe that program as it is now operating on the campus. In order to do that it will be helpful to review some of the thinking which preceded formulation of the plan.

QUALITIES OF LIBERAL EDUCATION

The first questions we had to face were the fundamental ones of educational ends and means: "What is the function of a Liberal Arts College in a State University?" and "How can this function best be achieved?" The second was impossible of solution without an answer to the first. The first would be useless without a practicable answer to the second. We set to work, therefore, to define the goals of liberal education in a manner which seemed most meaningful to the State University of Iowa at this time.

Gradually certain general qualities were identified which seemed to characterize liberal education in general. To begin with, liberal education is concerned with men and women as human beings rather than as workers, voters or homemakers. We are interested in Joe Smith as a potential doctor, teacher, or newspaper man, of course — but our primary interest is in Joe Smith as a person. The test of liberal education is the total personal growth of the individual — the richness and the effectiveness of his life in all its aspects.

1 Listed elsewhere in this bulletin.
2 Necessary adjustments will be made for those students transferring to the College of Liberal Arts after this date who had begun their college work prior to the publication of the Catalogue issue 1944-45.
Because liberal education is highly personal and individual in its achievement, it cannot be given to anyone but must be sought in an active manner. We used to think that students were like flower pots in which we planted seeds of our own selection and thereby grew lovely plants. We realize now that such is not the case. The good student must be stimulated to seek after education in an active, purposeful manner if he is to achieve true liberal learning.

It is difficult to demonstrate just when or at what point one becomes liberally educated. Because it is primarily qualitative in nature, such achievement cannot be measured in terms of number of years of schooling or number of hours of course work. A single-schooled Lincoln is an illustration of what can be achieved by one who has the will and the ability to learn.

Likewise, it must not be assumed that such education begins with entrance to college and ceases at graduation. Liberal education experiences can be obtained in many environments — in and out of school — and it is possible to improve one's liberal education wherever such experiences are available. Certain environments such as those provided by the liberal arts college are more conducive to the development of liberally educated persons since they can provide systematically organized experiences and that may direct and accelerate such growth. Even in such favorable settings, however, much attention must be directed toward stimulating the learner to the point where he is able and eager to continue his education informally after leaving school.

Objectives for the College

It was clear also that since liberal education is concerned with general growth and development of the individual, the uses of its effectiveness must be stated in terms of changes in individual behavior rather than in terms of subjects to be studied or courses to be completed. The question is not how many semester hours of French or philosophy Jim Jones has on his record, but how has Jim Jones' work in French or philosophy contributed to his development as a person? The faculty accepted this viewpoint when they agreed that:

"The primary function of the College of Liberal Arts is to provide a liberal education, that is, to encourage the student in the fullest possible development of his capacities as a person and as a member of society. The fundamental goal is the well-rounded development of the individual — intellectual, spiritual, physical, emotional, and aesthetic."

Because the objectives are thus identified with general growth and development, it is difficult to state them in a detailed manner. However, in recognition of the need to be more specific if such statements were to serve as guides to curriculum planning, the faculty suggested that the general function could best be achieved through the realization of certain less general goals.

First, to select the individual as the central focus of certain abilities such as:

a. the ability to speak, write, and read;

b. the ability to solve problems involving counting and calculating;
c. the ability to access and maintain physical stores;

Second, to guide the student toward a mastery of the rudiments of the field, the significant facts, the basic principles and the methods of work in several fields such as the sciences, the social sciences, language and literature, the fine arts, history, and philosophy in such a way:

a. better understand the world and the society in which he lives;
b. appreciate more fully the basic values upon which civilization and culture are built and through which they may be improved;
c. possess and accept his responsibilities and his active participation in social groups — the family, the community, the country, and the world;

Third, to aid the student in the development of a coherent and independent mind, the ability to see as well as to accept unaided knowledge, and the awareness of his moral strengths and weaknesses and

Fourth, to provide the student with experiences which will be conducive to the development of strength of character and a sense of personal responsibility — including such personal qualities as self-discipline, foresight, integrity, responsibility, and reverence.

This Design of the Program

When we entered upon the actual work of curriculum planning, our job was to determine the means by which these selected goals were to be achieved. John Dewey 1 once defined education as "the reorganization

and reconstruction of experience." Our task, therefore, was to develop an organized pattern of experiences to aid the individual in achieving the goals of liberal education — in other words, to determine what courses were to be offered, which were to be required, and how they could best be organized for teaching purposes.

There is, of course, no single path to a liberal education. Since the objectives are general and related to human behavior, they may be realized by different persons through the means of different sets of subject-matter varying with the general interests, the background, the ability, and the educational goals of the individual. Joe Smith may receive his most meaningful liberal experience through geology, Jim Jones through work in Greek, and Mary Smith through the study of art. This fact must be recognized in planning a liberal program designed for all students.

It is not to say that there are no imperatives in liberal education. On the contrary, any wisely planned program will include requirements which must be met by all who are to receive the degree. The program to be described seeks to provide an intelligent balance between those elements which are required of all — the minimum essentials of a liberal education — and those which vary in terms of the special needs of the individual. Wherever possible the requirements are stated in terms of performances rather than in terms of courses to be completed. The result is a design which possesses considerable flexibility, but insists upon the completion of basic requirements in order to ensure the accumulation of a minimum set of liberal experiences for all graduates.

1. Basic Skills Requirement. Since it is believed that every graduate should be able to read, write and speak effectively, each student is required to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the staff that he is sufficiently competent in these areas. The great majority will be unable to meet the required standard of performance at entrance, and consequently will be required to register in a four-semester hour course called "Communication Skills," where they will receive instruction according to their needs as revealed by their performance on objective examinations, in speaking and in written composition. Such registration will continue until the student demonstrates that he has reached the desired level of competency. In some cases this will mean one semester, in others two, and in some cases three or four

semesters of such work. It is possible that a few may never achieve an adequate level of competency in writing, speaking, and reading and thus will be unable to graduate.

The work is taught by staff members of the English, Speech and Psychology Departments selected because of their interest and background in the fields. Speech is emphasized in some sections and writing in others, but wherever possible reading, writing, and speaking are treated as different aspects of the same basic process — communications. For purposes of motivation, functional writing and speaking experiences are provided through the student newspaper, The Daily Iowan, over the radio station WSSU, in public discussion and debate, and in writing for a special freshman magazine. In this way the wastebasket no longer serves as the final resting place of the theme — the student writes and speaks for a live audience.

This fall semester 12 out of 871 students enrolled in Communication Skills or required to enroll in other courses. In addition, approximately 180 are sufficiently advanced that they may complete the requirement after one semester of registration. The 785 students enrolled in Communication Skills are grouped as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One-Semester Integrated Program</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Semester Integrated Program</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Specialized Instruction

Specialized instruction is offered in:

- Speech
- Individualized
- Writing
- Group
- Individualized
- Teaching (Group and Individualized)

Total: 785

In the basic program, class size is held to approximately 20 students. Somewhat less than 200 of those receiving specialized instruction are enrolled in the reading, writing or speech clinics where they are given individual or small group instruction in terms of their needs. Many of
those persons will be transferred to other units of the program after a semester or less of clinical work. A special instructional program is being developed to care for foreign speaking students.

It is expected that mathematics and physical education can be added to the program in the near future and that all students may be required to achieve minimum standards of performance in these fields as well as in the Communication Skills. A maximum of 12 semester hours of credit in the Basic Skills may be submitted toward graduation, although because of weakness in these skills or entrance some students will find it necessary to complete much more than this amount of study to satisfy the require. The new requirement, therefore, is one of ability to perform and is not thought of in terms of courses to be completed or time to be spent.

2. FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS. Since it is believed that every graduate should be able to read or speak one language in addition to his own with some degree of competency, all students regardless of credit earned in high school or college, are required before graduation to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the staff that they possess this minimum achievement. The standard of performance is set at a level which can be attained by most college students after completing satisfactorily a semester

innovative 3-hour course directed at either the speaking or the reading adaptation. The requirement, however, is one of performance and not one of course completion. Some students either because of previous study or activity will pass the examination in foreign language at entrance but many will need to enroll for courses in foreign language to prepare for the test.

The local foreign language offering has been revived to contribute directly to the new program. Such changes also reflect in some measure our experience with the Area and Language units assigned by the Army to the local campus. An article carried recently by Fortune included the following statement about this intensive language work:

"Students who completed the nine-week Army course at the University of Iowa could understand, speak, argue, debate, and act in Italian plays, babbling in Italian when they forgot lines. —Lauer, Iowa's men, speaking standard Italian, were assigned to replace U. S.-

*Science Citation Index, Vol. 31, No. 8, Aug., 1969, p. 550.

burnt sons of Italian immigrants who had failed as interpreters in prison camps because the Italian captives could not understand the provincial dialects that had been learned in Mulberry Street homes—quite apart from the admixture of Mulberry Street English. Iowa's men had a sensational success."

The elementary courses are offered on an eight-hour basis and in the modern languages the student may elect work in reading or speaking. The class must meet three times weekly, three hours for recitation and two for drill. In the sections devoted to spoken language, the drill includes conversational activities directed by a native-speaking drillmaster. Since the drill sections are small (six students), much progress can be expected. Some students will find it necessary to complete more than one year of study before the requirement can be passed off, and all will be encouraged to continue with language study in order that they may develop a real mastery of the foreign tongue.

These two requirements should have a beneficial effect upon secondary school instruction. Where formerly the student could meet the foreign language requirement by submitting evidence that he had completed four years of study at the high school level or the equivalent in college, he must now demonstrate that he has some basic understanding of the language to master how much or little he has studied it at one time or another. This fact in itself does much to motivate fundamental language study in the lower schools, and to raise the level of such instruction. In the case of the Communication Skills, it is also possible to satisfy the requirements at the time of entrance if the individual has developed satisfactory ability to read, write, and speak. This fact should encourage the able student to put forth his best efforts in the elementary and secondary schools. The names of those who meet the above requirements at entrance will be reported to the secondary school authorities so that they may know how effective their programs in reading, speaking, writing and foreign language instruction are growing from our point of view.

3. COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS. Since it is believed that all students prior to graduation should possess reasonable understanding of the leading ideas, the significant facts, the methods of work and the important intellectual tools characteristic of several major areas of learning.
each student is required to complete a minimum of 32 semester hours of courses directed specifically at "general education." This requirement is met through the satisfactory completion of four 8 semester-hour courses selected as follows:

a. A course called "Literature" designed to give the student a sympathetic understanding of the major cultural traditions of western civilization as they have been forwarded to the modern world in literature. This course is taught by staff members in the English Department and is available only to those who have satisfied the Communication Skills requirement.

b. Social Sciences. The student may select either "Introduction to Social Science" designed to provide a working knowledge of the economic, social, and political features of modern life; or "Government," designed to present the fundamental ideas and methods of government and their application in a democratic society.

c. Natural Sciences. The student may elect either "Biology of Man," an interdepartmental course designed to present a well integrated study of man and his relations to his changing environment; or one of the elementary courses offered by the departments of botany, chemistry, geology, mathematics, physics, or zoology.

d. Historical and Cultural Studies. The student may select from "Western Civilization in Modern Times" designed to provide some understanding of the evolution of western civilization beginning with the fourteenth century; "Introduction to the History of Ideas" designed to clarify certain key concepts and principles basic to contemporary thought beginning with the Renaissance period; "Introduction to Religion" designed to review the eleven basic religions of contemporary mankind and to examine critically the fundamental concepts of world religion; and courses in art, music and the theatre covering significant historical achievements and designed to provide the student with aesthetic experiences as a basis for understanding and enjoying the fine arts in daily life.

Since the undergraduate program is conceived of as continuous in nature, the College is not divided into junior and senior divisions, and the student is not required to complete all of his core courses in the first two years of registration. On the other hand, the tendency will be to encourage the completion of all specific requirements at the earliest possible time consonant with his total four year plan. At least one of the core courses must be completed in the freshman year, and ordinarily three of the four will be finished by the end of the sophomore year. The sequence will vary from student to student and will be determined by him in consultation with his adviser. No core course is offered solely on a lecture basis, and none is conceived of as a survey in the sense that it attempts to cover the entire field. Neither is it assumed that all the general education experiences will be provided through the core courses.

4. Area of Concentration Requirement. Since it is believed that both depth and breadth of learning are essential to a liberal education, each student is required to complete a carefully designed and approved area of concentration. His area major is built around his field of special interest and includes (a) courses selected from his major department, (b) courses selected from other departments related to or supporting the field of major interest, and (c) courses selected primarily to round out his liberal education. The area program is planned to unify and integrate the student's total educational experience so that he may become educated in the real sense of the term. If such planning is well done it is impossible to pile up a conglomerate of courses selected without regard to their contribution to a unique educational design.

Area work may be started in the freshman year, since it is believed that the motivation accompanying such an action is fundamental to optimum progress. By identifying the student with his department of major interest at the earliest possible moment and placing him under the guidance of the staff in his major area, a well-integrated four-year plan can be developed. The maximum number of hours permitted in a single department is 10, although ordinarily considerably less than this amount will be submitted toward graduation.

All those majoring in a given area are required to complete a sequence of basic courses, but beyond this point the area of concentration varies from student to student in terms of background, goals, and needs. In each area several combinations of subjects will be available, some demanding much more specialization than others, in order that students
may secure a general education type of concentration or something semi-professional or pre-professional in nature. In political science, for example, in addition to the general education major, special programs are available for the pre-law student, for those who are interested in public administration, teaching or foreign service.

5. Physical Education and Military Requirement. All students are required to complete two years of work in physical education and all male students two years of military science and tactics.

6. Elective Program. In some cases, especially those where the foreign language and basic skills requirements are completed at entrance, the student will have considerable opportunity to elect courses beyond the requirements outlined above, in accordance with his interests and needs. As much as thirty semester hours of such elective credit may be selected from approved courses available on the campus. This makes it possible for the superior student who has completed the specified requirements in liberal arts and who is admitted to one of the professional schools to complete a year of work in such a college and to use this credit to satisfy the elective portion of his liberal arts program. Obviously, many students will find it impossible to avail themselves of this opportunity because of their inability to complete all the arts requirements in a three-year period.

7. Semester Hours Required. Each graduate must present a total of 126 semester hours of credit acceptable toward graduation, and must have the recommendation of the department which is his major study.

8. The Advisory Program. Since the new program is quite flexible in nature it places a maximum of responsibility on intelligent personal judgment and a minimum of reliance on rules and regulations. This characteristic is an asset only if the responsibility for intelligent planning is accepted fully by faculty and students alike. Naturally, as the opportunity for choice is increased, so is the chance to make unwise and unintelligent decisions.

For this reason and others, the advisory program is extremely important to the success of the new plan. In reality, it becomes the adviser's responsibility to assure himself that the fundamental principles of the plan are brought to fruition in the individual program of each advisee. He is the one who must insist that the student have a plan—that the courses selected in each case be such as to give promise of a unified educational experience. His efforts largely will determine whether the inherent flexibility of the program will result in intelligently planned programs or chaos.

Each student is assigned to an adviser at the time of his first enrollment in the College. When he indicates a well-defined academic interest, the adviser is selected from this field. All others are assigned to advisers prepared to work with those who are uncertain of their major interests.

The student retains the same adviser throughout his undergraduate years unless his major interest changes. The adviser is responsible for all recommendations relating to the academic status of his advisees and aids them in the development of their total educational plan. This fall semester a total of 209 students are assigned to 84 advisers.

The faculty advisor ordinarily is not prepared to provide professional personnel services to his advisees. In recognition of this fact, a Liberal Arts Advisory Office has been established to serve as a liaison unit between the adviser and his advisee on the one hand, and on the other such personnel services as the reading, speech and psychological clinics, the office of student affairs, the vocational counselor, student health, and the examinations office. At the request of the adviser, students are referred to the proper agency, and the reports and recommendations from these services are organized and interpreted for the adviser by the Advisory Office. In short, this office furnishes the adviser with such technical and other assistance as he needs in order to give good advice to his advisees.

The Future of the Program

This overview of the new program is of necessity somewhat sketchy in nature. Clearly, much is yet to be done. This year, for example, we are developing new and more broadly conceived areas of concentration, studying the problem of the transfer student, working out plans to encourage the more able student to take greater personal responsibility for his educational development, and improving our methods of evalua-
tion. Areas such as the communication skills, the core courses, the foreign languages, and the advisory program are being treated experimentally and modifications will be made regularly as experience demonstrates the need.

The plan was designed to operate in a state university which accepts broadly its responsibility to educate all those who are graduated from the high schools of the state. It may not be appropriate for privately endowed colleges with selective admission policies and with relatively narrow social responsibilities. In fact, it is not suggested as something which should be adopted by other state universities. Rather, it is presented as the result of the serious efforts of many minds dedicated to the provision of a rich and stimulating intellectual environment for the undergraduate who is sincerely interested in securing a liberal education for life in our modern society.

It is not a radical plan in that it insists upon a rigidly defined program with the majority of the courses required. Neither is it extreme in the sense that it gives the student complete freedom to elect only such courses as appeal to his immediate interests or needs. Rather, it demands of the student his continuous growth as a person, and gives him the opportunity to choose rather broadly the avenues he will follow in achieving the discipline of a truly liberal education. It insists that the results of his efforts and ours be measured in terms of his own personal growth as demonstrated from day to day in what he does, how he thinks, and what he believes, as well as in what he knows and understands.

No curricular program or plan of instruction can be successful unless it brings the student into meaningful association with great teachers. The curricular pattern can be so designed, however, as to encourage such relationships and consequently may make them more profitable to the learner. The program just described is much more dependent upon the conscientious and intelligent efforts of competent teachers than ordinarily is the case. Only to the degree that we are able to maintain a staff of outstanding teachers enthusiastically interested in guiding youth in their search for liberal learning will we succeed in the task which we have established for ourselves. For our program, like all others, will rise or fall in direct proportion to the quality of the men who operate it.

H. K. Newburn, Dean, College of Liberal Arts

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SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

SEMESTER HOURS: Total of 116 with a satisfactory scholarship average.

BASIC SKILLS: All students are required to demonstrate that they can read, write and speak the English language with a degree of competency established by the staff.

Those who cannot meet the requirement at entrance will enroll in Communication Skills until they have reached the required level of competency.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE: All students are required to demonstrate that they can read or speak a foreign language with a degree of competency established by the staff.

Those who cannot meet the requirement at entrance will enroll for a foreign language and continue such instruction until the required level of competency is reached.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION: Four semesters required during freshman and sophomore years.

MILITARY SCIENCE: Four semesters required of all men during freshman and sophomore years.

CORE COURSES: Minimum of 32 s. h. required, 8 each from approved core courses in (1) science, (2) social science, (3) literature, and (4) historical and cultural studies.

AREA OF CONCENTRATION: All students must present as approved area of concentration including (1) courses in their major department, (2) courses related to and supporting the major studies, and (3) courses selected primarily for liberalizing values. No more than 10 s. h. may be from one department. The four year program is planned with and approved by the student's faculty adviser.

ELECTIVE CREDIT: Beyond the requirements indicated above, work may be elected as desired subject to college and departmental regulations and the advisor's approval. As much as 30 s. h. may be elected from approved courses available in other colleges on the campus. This will permit some students to combine work in Dentistry, Education, Engineering, Law, Medicine or Nursing with Liberal Arts and thus reduce somewhat the total time required to complete general, liberal and professional education.

For further details, write the Office of the Registrar, State University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa.
PERSONNEL OF COMMITTEES RESPONSIBLE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF PROGRAM


Steering Committee on Curriculum (Sub-Committee of Committee on Curricula and Instruction in Charge of Planning and Presenting a Curriculum Report), organized Feb. 13, 1942: Dean H. K. Newburn, Chairman; Professors Joseph H. Bodine, Howard R. Bowen (to Jan., 1943), Allen Craig (to April, 1942), Norman Forster (resigned Mar. 17, 1944), E. C. Mabie, A. R. Miller (from Apr., 1942), Paul Olson (from Sept., 1943), Kirk Porter.

Sub-Committees of the Steering Committee on Curriculum to work on Special Projects


Skills and Abilities: Bartholow V. Crawford, Chairman; Professors Joseph E. Baker, Grant Fairbanks, Franklin H. Kowzer, Carrie E. Stanley, Dewey B. Stuit, Jacob Van der Zee.

Sub-Committees on Implementation

Basic Skills: E. C. Mabie, Chairman; Professors C. E. Cousins, B. V. Crawford, Grant Fairbanks, Lloyd Knowler, Carrie Stanley, J. B. Stroud.


Common Core: Kirk H. Porter, Chairman; Professors A. Craig Baird, Joseph H. Bodine, Everett W. Hall, Seymour Pitcher, Laverne A. Van Dyke, Sybil Woodruff.
