

The Liberal Education Program: Proposed Modifications

**David Levine, Art
David Pettigrew, Philosophy
October 21, 2008**

Objectives of the proposed modifications

A. Program Content:

1. Increase the flexibility of the program for incoming students.
2. Improve the interface between the LEP and academic major programs.
3. Ensure equitable distribution of courses among academic divisions.
4. Ensure that courses in Tier 2 foster competencies and study interests in relevant subject areas.
5. Actively promote coordination of course content across the program.

B. Feasibility and Implementation:

1. Speed provisional approval of courses for the program during initial transition period.
2. Ensure the stability of academic departments.
3. Promote the involvement of full-time faculty members in the program.
4. Reduce dollar cost of program implementation.

C. General

1. Maintain the goals of General Education at SCSU expressed in the 2005 “Goal Statement.”
2. Retain the structure of the current LEP proposal as far as practicable.
3. Enable broad consensus in support of the proposal.
4. Make the scope of the program fully transparent.

N.B.: The following plan modifies elements of the LEP proposal put forth in the most recent GETF document. It makes no recommendations for changing the language of the GETF document beyond those indicated below.

The Program (42-57 credits)

Tier 1: Foundations (9-24 credits)

FYE/Critical-Thinking Seminar	3 cr
Written Communication (ENG111, 112)	3-6 cr
Quantitative Reasoning (MAT100, 103...)	3-6 cr
Foreign Language sequence (through 201 level)	0-9cr

Provisos:

- The FYE *Seminar* focuses upon developing competency in critical thinking as well as in reading and writing.
- The FYE *Program* continues to include Links and Honors.
- FYE Seminars shall be offered by the faculty of all three academic divisions: Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences.
- Students must complete the First-Year Experience Seminar before beginning their second year.
- Students must complete Written Communication sequence before beginning their second year.
- Students must complete Quantitative Reasoning before beginning their third year.
- Full-time faculty teaching in the program will be awarded teaching credit (amount to be determined) each semester for attending monthly coordination sessions with peers from other disciplines also teaching in the program.

Differences from LEP:

- Merges the dedicated Critical Thinking course with the First-Year Experience Seminar and, in addition, proposes embedding this required competency in each and every course in the Liberal Education program.
- Removes “Technological Fluency” as a stand-alone course and proposes embedding this required competency in each and every course in the Liberal Education Program.
- Keys FYE Seminars to academic divisions.
- Reveals hidden requirements.
- Provides incentives to full-time faculty members to teach in the program.

Anticipated Specific Outcomes of Tier 1 Modifications:

- Focuses the role of FYE while protecting the two-semester writing sequence in the first year;
- Provides students increased exposure to possible academic majors in the first year;
- Doubles available elective credits in first year, permitting a more engaging initial program;
- Permits a more imaginative and engaging first year than the current LEP proposal;
- Provides students with increased opportunities to interact with full-time faculty members in their first two semesters;
- Allows more students seeking BS degrees to complete their programs within four years;
- Gives the University greater flexibility in course scheduling;
- Makes the number of Gen Ed requirements more transparent to students and faculty alike;
- Increases the likelihood that courses required in the program will be taught by full-time faculty members;
- Reduces the cost of implementation by making use of faculty assets that we already possess.

Tier 2: Explorations (30 credits)

Students take one course that satisfies each of the following categories:

Cultural Expressions	3 cr
Time and Place	3 cr
Intellectual Foundations	3 cr
The Physical Realm	3 cr
Life and the Environment	3 cr
Social Structure	3 cr
Global Awareness	3 cr
American Experience	3 cr
Mind and Body	3 cr
Creative Drive	3 cr

Provisos:

- All courses in Tier 2 provide a foundation to the applicable Area of Knowledge, *provide a broad and balanced overview of their subject* while treating some matters in depth, and introduce the analytical tools of one or more than one discipline.

- The categories The Physical Realm and Life and the Environment will be met by courses in the Natural Sciences.
- The categories Social Structure and Global Awareness will be met by courses in the Social Sciences.
- The categories Cultural Expressions, Time and Place, Creative Drive, and Intellectual Foundations will be met by courses in the Humanities.
- The category American Experience will be met by courses in either the Social Sciences or Humanities.
- The category Mind and Body will be met by courses in either the Natural Sciences or Social Sciences.
- The definition of the category Creative Drive will be expanded to include courses investigating literary and dramatic texts, musical compositions, and works of visual art.
- Existing courses on the 100 level properly adapted, as well as new courses on the 200 and 300 levels, may be offered in Tier 2.
- Courses currently offered in the existing General Education program may migrate into appropriate sectors of Tier 2; within two years of program implementation such courses must undergo review and satisfy the requirements of the revised LEP to remain in the program.
- Students may enroll in Tier 2 courses immediately upon meeting any prerequisites stipulated for entry into those classes.
- Courses in Tier 2 may Link with each other *and* with courses in Tier 1, so that Links can become integrated in each student's program; for example, a course in Cultural Expressions could Link with courses in Intellectual Foundations (Tier 2) and Written Communications (Tier 1).
- Full-time faculty teaching in the program will be awarded teaching credit per semester (amount to be determined) for attending monthly coordination sessions with peers from other disciplines also teaching in the program.
- Faculty teaching in the program will be awarded additional teaching credit (amount to be determined) per semester for teaching a Links section.

Differences from LEP:

- Sharpens the definition of Tier 2 courses as those providing broad and balanced overviews while treating some matters in depth.
- Stipulates the general academic division or divisions suitable to each category.
- Permits students to move ahead with Tier 2 courses as soon as they meet any special prerequisites for those courses.
- Restores Intellectual Foundations as a discrete category within Tier 2.
- Substantially expands and redirects the category Creative Drive.
- Encourages Links courses among categories and across Tiers.

- Encourages full-time faculty members to teach in the program.

Anticipated Specific Outcomes of Tier 2 Modifications:

- Provides new program with a full complement of courses during first years of implementation;
- Relieves pressure on faculty and faculty committees to write and to approve vast numbers of new courses in haste;
- Distributes responsibilities for staffing the program more equitably among departments;
- Frees many departments from having to revise their major programs to accommodate the changed curriculum;
- Assures a balance of requirements by division, as required by NEASC;
- Provides greater intellectual coherency through enhanced course linkage (“Links”);
- Permits students to advance in their majors while fulfilling requirements of General Education;
- Increases the likelihood that required courses will be taught by full-time faculty members;
- Reduces costs of implementation.

Tier 3: Connections (3 cr)

A writing-intensive interdisciplinary class, providing opportunities for broadly synthetic creative and critical thinking and expression.