

Philosophy Department Recommendation for the Critical Thinking Component of the Liberal Education Program Proposal

After a lengthy discussion of the Liberal Education Program proposal, the Philosophy department reached a consensus regarding the Critical Thinking component of the “Tier 1: Foundations” aspect of the plan.

“Tier 1: Foundations” under “24 Goals and 3 Tiers” on page 7 reads: “To ensure uniformity and rigor, in this tier Written Communication, Quantitative Reasoning, and Multilingual Communication will be taught by the English, Mathematics, and Foreign Language departments respectively.”

We believe that in order to ensure “uniformity and rigor” to the Critical Thinking competency, Critical Thinking should be taught by the Philosophy department. Given the fact that the Critical Thinking course must include one of the embedded competencies (Creative Thinking, Information Literacy, Interpersonal Effectiveness and Oral Communication) **and** “briefly introduce the *Areas of Knowledge and Experience* and *Discussions of Values*,” **we believe that the best way for this course to effectively meet its curricular goals is by having it offered by the Philosophy department.** This does not mean that Philosophy department faculty would be the only ones who teach critical thinking courses but it would mean that we have the responsibility for approving the curriculum, scheduling classes and assessing learning outcomes for these courses. Critical thinking is what we currently do in all our philosophy courses. Logical argumentation, evaluating assumptions, identifying types of inferences (inductive and deductive), and analyzing and synthesizing concepts are what we do best. These are the key elements of the curricular goals for this competency as set out in the Liberal Education Program proposal.

We propose the following change in language to this line in the document:

“To ensure uniformity and rigor in this tier, Written Communication, Quantitative Reasoning, Multilingual Communication and Critical Thinking will be taught by the English, Mathematics, Foreign Language and Philosophy departments respectively” (*Liberal Education Program*, p. 7).

It should be understood that the implementation of the Liberal Education Program and the creation and staffing of these competency courses, including Critical Thinking, will require substantial resources. The Philosophy Department is willing to take on its share of the burden of implementing this proposal only if the necessary resources are provided. Let me add that the department has not taken a position on the proposal as a whole, only on this aspect of it.

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