

4.18.12 Update from Strategic Planning Working Group #4 Subgroup: Paul Powers, Rachel Cole, Janet Davidson, Amelia Wilcox, John Parry

On 4.16 Rachel Cole and I (Paul) met with Becko Copenhaver, Director of E&D, for about one hour. Below is a summary of that discussion and a set of possible recommendations to consider in light of it. This is followed by a more detailed summary of the discussion (more detailed notes, including the questions submitted to Becko and used as a template for the discussion, are available if needed).

**Main Points and Tentative Recommendations:**

LC should confidently continue with E&D while reviewing Core and Gen Ed and while considering changes to one, the other, or both.

Responsibility for staffing E&D should be shifted to the office of the Associate Dean.

The Dean and Assoc. Dean should consider options for incentivizing FTE teaching in E&D.

The external Review and E&D Response documents should both be seen as significantly compromised and should be largely ignored. The Dean and SPWG4 should consider instituting a new review of E&D, either external or internal. (We are doing this in part already.)

E&D staffing should not be considered a means of solving the problem of lack of diversity in the LC faculty.

The contents of E&D sections are often diverse. Only the fall faculty can decide what will be the common works for the fall; issues of diversity among these common works are regularly discussed but have lead to disagreements.

The option of changing to a single-semester Core or other form of first-year courses should be seriously considered, but also subject to careful scrutiny.

E&D is effectively a humanities and social-science course. Barring relevant changes to Core or Gen Ed, we should either involve more MNS faculty and materials, or admit that E&D is a H/SS course and adjust Gen Ed accordingly.

**SPWG4 should consider recommending to the faculty (pending consultation with the CC and the members of the Gen Ed task force) that implementation of the revised gen ed curriculum be suspended indefinitely until the strategic planning process can make more headway.**

General Education and Core should be considered as a unit, or at least simultaneously, so that they work together without redundancies or contradictions.

The incoming Director of E&D, in conversation with CC, SPWG4, and others as appropriate, should report on the state of E&D, the state of administrative considerations of E&D, and prospects and implications for changes to E&D. This report should take place in Fa12.

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## Summary of Discussion:

**E&D is well-liked by many students.** Fa11: 6.08 in “overall evaluation of course.”

**Students report (though we do not assess) that they develop the skills** we treat as goals of E&D.

Fall receives better reviews from students than spring.

Adjunct faculty receive better evaluations from students than do FTEs.

Thus sticking with E&D as we weigh options is a responsible choice.

### **Staffing of E&D is problematic in several ways.**

Currently roughly 2/3 adjunct staffing.

Mostly social science and humanities faculty.

Responsibility for staffing should be shifted fully to Assoc. Dean.

Increasing FTE staffing of E&D will likely only shift adjunct instructors to other areas (departmental courses), though the number might be reduced slightly.

FTEs could be incentivized to teach in Core (course releases, promotion consideration, money, department quotas, etc.) and such options should be considered.

### **The external Review and E&D Response documents should both be seen as significantly compromised.**

A new review of E&D may be needed, either external or internal (including what SPWG4 is doing?).

**E&D staffing cannot solve the problem of lack of diversity in the LC faculty**—the reliance on adjuncts makes this untenable.

The **contents of individual sections** in either semester can and often does include works by underrepresented minorities, and/or works dealing with aspects of underrepresented minorities’ experiences, or with issues of social justice more generally.

The **fall common works** are determined only by the faculty teaching in a given fall, and they have perpetually disagreed about how and whether to include works by underrepresented minorities, and/or works dealing with aspects of underrepresented minorities’ experiences, or with issues of social justice more generally.

The option of changing to a **single-semester Core** should be seriously considered, but also subject to careful scrutiny.

Options include: Shared syllabus (like E&D fall), first-year interdisciplinary seminars (like Spring E&D), departmental courses (with or without potential for major credit), etc.

The potential effects of such a move should be studied, though we will be left with some guesswork.

Moving to departmental courses should not be considered a “Core,” though it may be a responsible way to approach first-year/pre-major education.

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**E&D is effectively a humanities and social-science course.**

This was not the original intent, nor is it required by the charter.

If no other changes are made that affect this issue, we should either involve more MNS faculty and materials, or admit that it is a H/SS course and adjust Gen Ed accordingly.

There are currently a **confusing array of administrative bodies** (CC, SPWG4, department chairs, etc.) and **other factors** (impending gen ed revisions, the compromised external review and response, e.g.) **weighing in on both General Education and Core.**

**General Education and Core should be considered as a unit**, or at least simultaneously, so that they work together without redundancies or contradictions. It is not clear we are moving in this direction.

**SPWG4 should consider recommending to the faculty (with special consideration given to CC and to the members of the Gen Ed task force) that implementation of the revised gen ed curriculum be suspended indefinitely until the strategic planning process can make more headway.**

**Any changes to Core or Gen Ed must be vetted and approved by the faculty.**

The incoming Director of E&D, in conversation with CC, SPWG4, and others as appropriate, should report on the state of E&D, the state of administrative considerations of E&D, and prospects and implications for changes to E&D. This report should take place in Fa12.

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