

Quinsigamond Community College

Internal Program Review

2002 - 2003

Liberal Arts
Program

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Introduction

Unlike the other seven programs that have thus far undergone review, the Liberal Arts Program at QCC:

- Does not, traditionally, have an immediate postgraduate market
- Does not currently have an external agency or review board to oversee its curricular content
- Includes a large number of the full and part time faculty under its umbrella, unlike the other programs reviewed in the past which have 2 – 5 faculty involved with the program
- Has long-standing traditions, with a large amount of inertia or “past practices” to get past
- Has no coordinator and no advisory body; and
- In the past, has not had any cohesive format.

Consequently, the program does not conform as neatly to the format outlined in Section One of the workbook. In reality, there has never been a formal liberal arts program. What exists is a series of “liberal arts courses” with no coherent theme or set of program goals. Students get a degree in Liberal Arts by simply taking a designated series of courses. In the early years of the College’s existence, most students used the College as an “open door”, inexpensive entrance into college. The majority sought to develop their college skills and then transfer to a public or private 4-year-college. In effect, all students who sought to transfer were “liberal arts” students. When the College began to increase its “career” programs, particularly the health care programs, the Liberal Arts program was used as a “holding bin” for students whose skills would not allow them to enter directly into one of the programs. The General Studies program was developed to remove the “holding bin” status from the Liberal Arts program. However, no defining status was provided for Liberal Arts at that time. In 1993 a strong language requirement was added to the Liberal Arts program. Intermediate proficiency in a language was required. This, along with the milder science and math requirements in the General Studies program (and no language requirement) made General Studies the program of choice for students not enrolled in other programs. As a result, the numbers of students graduating with a degree in Liberal Arts has steadily declined since 1992. According to Paul Connell’s sabbatical report (Appendix B) and statistics provided by the registrar’s office, there were 140 graduates in 1992. This declined to a total of 23 graduates in 2000. This despite the fact that the enrollments in liberal arts have remained rather consistent ranging from 275 – 350 students. From 1996 through 2000 the enrollments in General Studies have steadily increased from 1107 in the fall of 1996 to 1335 in the fall of 2000. The completion rate for the General Studies Program during that time has averaged about 40 with a high of 55 in 1998 and a low of 34 in 1996. The decline in graduations in Liberal Arts may be due to a number of influences. Some students may transfer to four-year institutions before they complete an Associates Degree. Some students may opt out of Liberal Arts because of its requirements versus those of General Studies. Others may feel that they will be unemployable without a “technical” degree. The college does not have a mechanism to track these statistics. It is clear that students are choosing the General Studies Program over the Liberal Arts Program in increasing numbers, however.

The outcome of this program review will be to establish a coherent foundation for the development of a viable and vibrant Liberal Arts program. The full establishment of this program may require time beyond the review period and should involve a Program Coordinator and Advisory Committee.

Section I: Competitive Analysis and Regional Labor Market Demand

1. Market Influences

A. Provide a broad definition of this employment sector. List specific knowledge and skill requirements for employment in this field.

Response:

Traditionally, Liberal Arts majors have continued their education at a four-year college or university. The employment sector for Liberal Arts graduates from four-year institutions is potentially limitless. According to the career web site for the College of Liberal Arts for the University of Central Arkansas –

“When business leaders and other employers identify what academic skills and training they most want in potential employees, they invariably list those that are the product of a broad, liberal arts education, where critical thinking and language and communication skills are central. The Fortune 500 chief executive officers, for example, were asked, “What academic skills should our schools teach to prepare students for the 21st century?”

They answered:

- Proficiency in writing and reading
- Effective communication skills (both individual and group)
- Analytical, logical, conceptual, higher-order, and problem-solving skills.

The Education Commission of the States, consisting of both government and business leaders, likewise agreed that the most desirable student outcomes for undergraduate education should be:

Analytic skills (higher-order and problem-solving activities)

Interpersonal communication skills, especially oral communication

Ability to bridge cultural and linguistic barriers and respect for ethnic and national differences (global awareness, multiculturalism).

Clearly, a broad, liberal education involving analytic and communication skills, such as those taught in the fine arts, humanities, and social and natural sciences, provides students with those basic skills and abilities employers most seek. In addition, there are a number of up-and -coming careers that require training in one of the liberal arts disciplines.

- Environmental Careers: Computer mapper; training in geographic information systems
- Information Services: WebMaster; training in English, writing skills
- Media: Online Content Developer; training in communication or journalism
- Law: Employment Lawyer; training in critical thinking and law
- Telecommunications: Computer Security Expert; training in telecommunications

More generally, there is a projected increase in a number of occupations over the next decade that require a strong liberal arts education: human services workers/social workers, teachers/college faculty, paralegal positions, writers/artists/entertainers, librarians, architects, law enforcement officers, clergy.

In sum, the disciplines that comprise the liberal arts help prepare UCA students for many important careers, including several that have been identified as high growth areas over the next decade”.

In a publication of the Employment Center of Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, the following statement outlines the potential for Liberal Arts graduates.

“Each new generation of liberally educated graduates is increasingly adept as end users of new technology. However, many also retain 'ancestral memories' of technophobia, which makes them particularly empathetic as trainers on new software products. This ability to explain, combined with written communication skills honed throughout the course of an Arts degree, enables grads to produce well-written technical documentation. Journalistic writing skills can be readily adapted to on-line intranet communications. Presentation skills, gained and practiced in seminars, are well-used in customer service, marketing and sales.”

- B. Using relevant labor statistics, indicate whether employment opportunities in this field are expected to increase or decrease over the next 3-5 years. Please cite the sources that you have used to make these predictions. (Note: It is easier for Admissions and Marketing Departments to refer to these predictions if they can quote the source.)**

Response:

As mentioned previously, the opportunities for Liberal Arts graduates is unlimited. Most of these opportunities will be realized after a student graduates from a four-year college. However, it is the responsibility of the community college to prepare students for the four-year institution of their choice. Also, the skills mentioned above may be marketed to some degree for Liberal Arts students graduating from two-year institutions. Following upon the quotes in the previous section, several recently published books indicate the need for the skills commonly associated with a Liberal Arts graduate. In Thomas L. Friedman's book, "The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization", the author argues that social and communication skills will be needed to prevent the globalization process from proceeding in an atmosphere of dehumanization. Likewise, anthropologist, Helen Fisher cites the need for communication and social skills in the emerging global economy in her breakthrough book, *The First Sex: The Natural Talents of Women and How They Are Changing the World*.

- C. Review and analyze the most recent five years of institutional data to determine whether graduates of this program have found employment in their field and/or transferred to related four-year programs in their field within one year of graduation.**

Response:

Since no discreet LA program has existed, this information is not available at the program level.

Traditionally, most students who graduate with a degree in Liberal Arts plan to transfer to a public or private four-year college. They rarely go directly into the market place. This information is primarily anecdotal, however, because the college does not have a formal graduate tracking system in place. The last report on student transfers is for the 1997-1998 school year and that is sketchy at best. The information was gathered based on transcript requests and follow-up letters to receiving colleges. The statistics quoted in the report were for total transfers and were not broken out into programs such as liberal arts. 66% of the receiving colleges responded. They reported that 91% of the applicants were accepted and that 74% enrolled. The acceptance rate at four-year institutions indicates that our transfer programs are meeting the requirements and expectations of the four-year schools to which our graduates transfer. This combined with the fact that the admissions officer at The Mass College of Liberal Arts endorsed our Liberal Arts program in conversations with Paul Connell during the preparation of his sabbatical report. (Appendix B)

- D. Please identify the specific occupations (and job titles, if possible) for which program graduates are prepared. Identify the types of employers that have hired graduates of this program within the last 5 years.**

Response:

No tracking data for the Liberal Arts Program exists.

- E. Identify the institutions to which the students transferred in the last three years.**

Response:

The public accepting colleges included the Massachusetts State Colleges (9 campuses), the University of Massachusetts (4 campuses), the Universities of Maine, Connecticut, & New Hampshire, the State University of New York (4 campuses). The private accepting colleges included Boston University, Bryant College, Clark University, Howard University, Mass. College of Pharmacy, Northeastern University, Providence College, and WPI.

Under the terms of the Commonwealth Transfer Compact, after graduation students can transfer a minimum of sixty credits to a public college with the appropriate grade point average. Quinsigamond also maintains joint admissions agreements with all four University of Massachusetts campuses and seven

Massachusetts state colleges including Worcester State College, Fitchburg State College, and Framingham State College.

F. Summarize and Analyze: Market influences

Response:

Students with a degree in liberal arts bring a variety of skills to the workplace. These skills match nicely with those required by employers according to the U.S. Department of Commerce report, *21st Century Skills for 21st Century Jobs*. According to the report employers seek: basic skills in reading, writing, & computation; technical skills like information, telecommunication, and manufacturing technologies; organizational skills; and multi/cross skilled employees.

Since our liberal arts students usually do not go directly into the workplace, we will need to establish marketing strategies that emphasize the ladder effect of beginning with a liberal arts degree at QCC, transferring to a four-year school as liberal arts major, and then utilizing their multi-skills in the workplace.

2. Programmatic Currency

A. Describe how the program maintains curricular currency.

Response.

Since liberal arts is a “traditional” program, maintaining curricular currency has meant remaining current in your area of teaching expertise and current with the latest educational methodologies. However, it will be in the best interests of future liberal arts students to have faculty familiar with the local employment environment. To this end, we prepared a survey for liberal arts faculty to assess such currency and to provide an opportunity for faculty suggestions on how the college could aid in the maintenance of program currency. Most of the responses list means by which individual faculty maintained currency in their field, as expected.

B. Explain the existing mechanisms that allow for regular input from local employers or other relevant sources

Response:

At the present time, these do not exist. Since the program has not had a firm identity in the past, and it does not place graduates directly into the marketplace, (or does not track such placements) there are no mechanisms in place to allow for regular input from local employers.

C. Describe how this input affects the program. (Note: It is helpful with our accreditation process if you can include some specific examples of input that have led to recent changes in the program.)

Response:

N/A

D. Describe ways that the College could support program faculty’s incorporating more area industry input.

Response:

Since direct placement of Liberal Arts graduates into industry has not been a priority in the past, we must first establish connections/dialogue with local businesses to explore ideas of mutual benefit to the college’s students and local (potential) employers.

E. Summary and Analysis: Currency

Response:

Since there has not been a true Liberal Arts Program at QCC as discussed in the Introduction, the concept of “programmatic currency” has not been addressed in the past.

The present lack of industry input does not mean that such input could not be valuable in the future. Part of the duties of the Program Coordinator and Advisory Committee will be to seek to establish connections with the type of area businesses that might be expected to employ people with degrees in liberal arts. These students might not seek employment until after receiving a bachelor’s degree, but employer input at this level would be valuable none-the-less. In addition, if local employers become more familiar with the liberal arts program and its graduates, they may offer these graduates part time jobs and help them to pay for further education.

3. The Pipeline: QCC Feeders

- A. **Identify all feeders, both actual and potential, to the program. Identify any potential “customized “ feeders the College might be able to develop.**

Response:

The primary sources of students for the Liberal Arts program are high schools and returning adult learners. There are no articulation agreements, Tech. Prep. articulations, or other educational collaborations that feed students into the program. Although Doherty high school has a “Pathway to Liberal Arts” on paper, this program does not appear to be active, presently. This is an area that needs to be pursued.

- B. **List all articulation agreements currently in place in this program (i.e., agreements with local secondary schools, community-based organizations, proprietary schools. etc.).**

Response:

N/A

- C. **Do program faculty regularly collaborate with their peers in local high schools, four-year colleges and universities, business and industry, or community-based organizations on such activities as curriculum development, work-based learning, or professional development? Please cite examples from most recent three-year period. If no active collaboration at this time, please comment on how this type of collaboration might enhance the program. In what ways could the College provide faculty support in this area?**

Response:

Since the number of professors who teach liberal arts courses is so large and diverse, we decided to survey the LA faculty concerning individual collaborations and other connections with agencies outside the college. Based on the survey results, collaborations with area schools and businesses are very limited. Prof. Mel Shemluck has a number of connections including collaborating with chemistry professors at Mass Bay C.C. and Merrimack College on organic chemistry courses; teaching basic chemistry at Waters Corp: and teaching Botany at Tower Hill Botanical Center which is affiliated with Clark U. As part of the Service Learning Program, Maggie Crowell-Murray has been working with the Greatbrooke Valley Association and other community organizations.

- D. **Explain the mechanisms in place within the program to insure that students who have been granted credit through articulation agreements transition smoothly into the QCC program. In what ways could the College increase its support in this area?**

Response:

N/A

- E. **Explain the program’s involvement with the Tech Prep consortia or other educational collaboratives, if relevant.**

Response:

N/A

F. **Summary and Analysis: The Pipeline: QCC Feeders**

Response:

Making connections with the local community is an area in need of development for the liberal arts program. Some suggestions from the survey for increasing connections between the college and the local community are:

- continue to fund and encourage faculty externships
- released time /reassigned time for community building

- provide resources for community members (high school faculty/business people) to visit campus – possibly breakfasts or luncheons
- arranging bus trips to local sites for both faculty and students
- establish an advisory board made up of educators from local high schools, and four-year public and private colleges and community leaders
- develop collaborations with area high schools that will feed students into the liberal arts program
- encourage (Fund, provide released time, etc) QCC faculty to make visits to local high schools on recruitment missions
- develop a lecture/demonstration program in which faculty make presentations at local high schools
- bringing local high school students to the college to observe “college life”
- work with WPS to establish/revitalize career pathways

4. Role of the Program Advisory Committee

A. Is there an Active (meets at least once a year) advisory committee for this program?

Response:

No

B. If yes, what is the composition of the advisory committee? How are appointments made to the committee?

Response:

N/A

C. Explain the roles and responsibilities of this committee

Response:

N/A

D. If possible, cite examples of how committee input has had an impact on the program over the last 3-5 years.

Response:

N/A

E. Summary and Analysis: Role of the Program Advisory Committee

Response:

As mentioned in the introduction, there has never been an advisory committee for the Liberal Arts program.

As a result, the program has lacked direction and oversight. In order for it to function like a true program there needs to be a Program Coordinator and an Advisory Committee.

The suggested role of the Liberal Arts Program coordinator listed below is based on Paul Connell's sabbatical report. The duties of the coordinator would include:

- coordinate the entire program from recruitment to placement/transfer
- coordinate program goals/curricular outcomes promoting program coherence
- develop and implement a marketing strategy
- maintain contact with external agencies (feeders, transfer institutions, and potential employers)
- coordinate program advisement
- encourage curriculum development and alternative instructional methodologies
- encourage and facilitate the involvement of program faculty in collaborative efforts in the community
- act as liaison between the Advisory Committee and program faculty

The Advisory Committee should have the following form and purpose:

The Liberal Arts Advisory Committee will assist the Instructional Deans and the Program Coordinator to make the Liberal Arts program an effective, current and flexible program that meets the needs of students, feeder institutions, receiving institutions and employers. The members of the Committee will assist in the following ways:

- Offer input on the currency of the curriculum.
- Support and enhance the credibility of the Program in the community and with other academic institutions.
- Employ and recruit Program students and graduates.
- Provide advice on new technology.

- Provide feedback regarding changes in the curriculum of the feeder or receiving schools and in the skill requirements of the workplace.
- Gather input or data regarding transfer opportunities to specific colleges.
- Act as an independent, unbiased sounding board.

The Advisory Committee shall consist of a maximum of ten voting members with the Deans and Program Coordinator acting *ex officio*. Members shall be drawn from the following: high school guidance counselors, QCC transfer specialist (*ex officio*), receiving college transfer specialists, Liberal Arts faculty from area four-year institutions, and local employers (who could act as *ex officio* members, if a conflict of interest is perceived).

During the initial year, members will be selected by the Dean and Program Coordinator and thereafter with input from the Advisory Committee.

An Advisory Committee member will serve a three-year term. To enable new people to join, a member can be appointed to a maximum of two consecutive three-year terms, but then must be off the Committee for at least one year before being eligible for an additional one or two terms. To ensure continuity in the Committee's work, terms will be staggered, requiring that on the initial Committee, one-third of the members will serve one-year terms, one-third will serve two-year terms, and one-third will serve three-year terms. One and two-year terms will not be counted in limiting consecutive committee service to two three year terms.

Each Committee member is expected to:

Attend a minimum of two meetings per year.

Actively participate in the functioning of the Committee.

Be available for individual consultation to the Program Coordinator and/or Instructional Deans.

A chairperson and vice chairperson shall be elected by the members of the Advisory Committee. The chairperson shall preside over all meetings of the Advisory committee. The Program Coordinator shall act as secretary to the Committee.

5. Competition, Market, Strategies, and Enrollment Projections

- A. Identify the program's primary competitors. Describe the process utilized and/or the rationale to determine the list of competitors.**

Response:

There are 25 public, private or two-year colleges within a 25-mile radius of the college that offer programs or courses in liberal arts. Although these can be looked upon as competition for freshmen students, the four-year colleges are actually potential receiving colleges for our transfers. At present we have a number of joint admissions agreements for the liberal arts program with the University (four campuses) and most of the State Colleges. The Joint Admissions Program guarantees admission from a specific QCC program to a similar program at a participating Massachusetts state university or college providing the student meet certain requirements. In addition, the college participates in the Commonwealth Transfer Compact that guarantees that at least 60 credits will transfer from QCC to any public state college or university.

- B. Identify QCC's program strengths and market niche with respect to these competitors. In other words, what makes QCC's program the first choice?**

Response:

Affordability and location are primary strengths. Students seeking a Liberal Arts education without relocating to a resident college can begin their education locally. In addition, QCC's participation in the local educational consortium provides opportunities for students to "sample" other colleges in the area, and to ultimately transfer to any number of local four-year institutions.

- C. Explain the specific marketing strategies the College has employed with respect to this program over the last three to five years. Please do NOT list general marketing strategies here. Identify marketing efforts relevant to your program specifically.**

Response:

Because the liberal arts program had no formal structure in the past, there have not been any specific marketing strategies designed to bring students into the program. Once a program coordinator has been established, the marketing of the program will become a priority.

- D. Describe how program faculty work with the admissions officers to recruit students into the program. If unknown, outline a recruitment plan with specific activities.**

Response:

Some components of a recruitment plan could be:

- Program faculty visitations to local high schools
- Program faculty establishing collaborations with area high school faculty in specific disciplines
- Program coordinator and faculty attending recruiting breakfasts given by our admissions office
- Recruiting program graduates that have "made it" in the community to speak to area high school students (e.g., Nancy Sheehan, staff reporter for the Worcester Telegram)
- Determine if selected concentrations will provide prospective students with attractive "hooks"
- Target specific marketing "sites" (magazines, newspapers, clubs, Malls, offices, etc.) for college-bound students

- E. Is the need for this program expected to grow or decline over the next five years? Please base your response on specific data.**

Response:

With the proper marketing and "image change", the Liberal Arts Program should blossom in future years. Once the program has an identity, a coordinator, and an advisory committee its full potential as outlined in Part I of this report should be realized. Traditionally, a direct-to-market path is not obvious for Liberal Arts majors. But, the hidden skills of these graduates make them employable in most all sectors of the work

force. In National Employment Bulletin – Current Jobs for Liberal Arts Graduates – the following quotes occur:

“We receive and list openings in the Liberal Arts at the entry-level, early-career-level, and for re-careering candidates. Approximately 70% of the openings are for B.A. or M.A. graduates with no experience. Each twice-monthly (24 issues per year) Bulletin contains over 200 new openings. Positions are listed in all parts of the country, including large cities and small towns”.

“Median entry-level salaries for candidates with a B.A. and no job experience are \$18,000-\$25,000. For a candidate with experience, or with a M.A., the salary range is \$25,000-\$40,000 annually. Most jobs include health and other benefits”.

F. Based on analysis of information presented in this section, prepare enrollment projections for the next five years. Please describe what you believe is the optimum program size.

Response:

Enrollment projections are difficult to make until the program has been established and the proper marketing strategies are in place. For the past five years, Liberal Arts enrollment has averaged about 300 students. Given the indicators discussed in Part I and the development of a firm identity for the Program, an annual enrollment of 500 students would appear to be an optimal program size. This is a difficult number to arrive at because the use of a Liberal Arts degree is potentially limitless with the proper marketing and image building.

G. Summary and Analysis: Marketing Strategies, and Enrollment Projections

Response:

The primary competitor of the liberal arts program is our own general studies program, as outlined in the introduction and Paul Connell’s sabbatical report. With its slightly relaxed requirements, students found it to be the path of least resistance. It appears that many students have been able to transfer to four-year colleges with a general studies degree further diminishing the quality of our liberal arts degree. The graduate survey mentioned in the Market Influences section was sent to both liberal arts graduates and general studies graduates. Returns from that survey show that 78% of liberal arts graduates responding have earned 6 or more credits since graduation, while 67% of general studies graduates responding have earned 6 or more credits since graduation. 48% of liberal arts graduates responding are presently attending colleges other than QCC, while 62% of general studies graduates responding are presently attending colleges other than QCC. So, an equal or greater number of General Studies graduates than Liberal Arts students are seeking further education. This may indicate that students are taking “the path of least resistance” through QCC and still being accepted at four-year institutions. This may be fine for the students, but it indicates a “disconnect” between our Liberal Arts Program and our four-year accepting institutions. This needs further study. Traditionally, a primary benefit of a Liberal Arts degree at QCC was its transferability to four year Liberal Arts Programs. If this is no longer the case, it will have a major impact on the future direction of the Liberal Arts Program. In any event, there needs to be a clear distinction between the two with the liberal arts degree being the primary degree for transfer. Establishing the opportunity for concentrations (see below) in the liberal arts program would be a step in the right direction.

6. Opportunities for Program Expansion

A. Are there other directions this program might evolve in order to sustain currency and quality? Consider the following categories, but feel free to include other categories in your response:

- **New certificate options within the program**
- **New concentrations within the program**
- **Different career ladder options within the program**
- **New Associate degree program possibilities**
- **Development of modularized courses**
- **Continuing/professional education in the field (i.e., CEU's, prep for recertification, etc.)**
- **Distance education course development**
- **More proactive job placement/support post-graduation**
- **Other.....**

Response:

Please see "B" below for response

B. Summary and Analysis: Opportunities for Program Expansion

Response:

The first step in the process is to define and establish a coherent liberal arts program, to give it a unique identity that will attract students to QCC. Program expansion would grow once the program itself is in place. However, there are some exciting possibilities for expansion to contemplate.

As part of the establishment of a viable program, we will be suggesting that concentrations be set up in certain disciplines. A model that we are looking at is the Associate in Arts program at Valencia Community College. Although Valencia has 45 Pre-majors, as they call their concentrations, we suggest a modest beginning at QCC. And since there are some philosophical differences as to the concept and value of concentrations at the college, we propose exploring concentrations in the following areas:

- Psychology
- Pre-education – this could be established with little variation in our present curriculum since most four-year institutions have a liberal arts format for the first two years. Also, the BHE is pushing for discipline-based education majors.
- American Studies based on potential articulations with Lesley College and WSC
- Communication – This suggestions is based on the feedback received from our recruitment officers concerning "majors" that potential students request. This would require the development and/or modification of existing courses.

In the future, we would like to see concentrations established as a guide and inducement to students to begin to think of their areas of interest as they prepare to transfer to a four-year institution with a Liberal Arts degree from Quinsigamond. This application of the concept of "concentrations" would follow upon a necessary dialogue and discussion among program faculty, administrators, and students.

We envision these future concentrations to be chosen by students in consultation with their liberal arts advisors. Concentrations would not be hard and fast prescriptions to be followed, but rather guidelines for students who have some idea of their future interests. The appropriate work area faculty would provide a list of courses that would satisfy concentrations.

Liberal arts faculty were pioneers in the application of On-Line education at QCC, teaching all five online courses initially offered by QCC. Continued expansion in this area should be encouraged. The presence of clearly identified QCC liberal arts courses on the web would enhance our presence in the community.

The college is in the initial stages of an experiment with service learning. Two of the first courses to incorporate a service learning component were liberal arts courses: IDS 200 Honors Colloquium and Introduction to Ecology, both of which were offered in the Spring 2001 semester. A service learning

component in a variety of liberal arts courses would help bridge the gap between the traditional intellectual life of liberal arts and the application of knowledge in the community and workplace. The benefits would accrue to both sides. Students would experience application of knowledge in “real world” situations and the community would learn to value the type of knowledge that can be gained in a college classroom. In addition, a proposed Liberal Arts Capstone course should have a service learning component.

Although we feel that the focus of the Liberal Arts Program should be on transferability, since the workplace demands the skills provided by a liberal arts education, then we ought to be ready to deliver those skills or provide for an upgrade of those skills. We could offer certificates in specific areas such as writing, communication, organizational thinking, computation, computer skills for communication, etc. We could bring courses or modules to the workplace to upgrade employee skills. For example, Prof. Mel Shemluck teaches a basic chemistry course at Waters Corporation so that employees can upgrade their knowledge in chemistry.

Section II: Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, Program Credentials and Faculty

1. Foundations of the Program

A. Describe the rationale for offering the degree with respect to environmental scan information (job outlook) and its unique niche in its particular Employment sector.

Response:

Liberal Arts is the premier transfer program at QCC. According to the QCC Transfer Guide, no other program transfers to as many other colleges or to as many other programs (see appendix). The College Transfer Guide lists the colleges where our Liberal Arts degree graduates transfer and what other programs our Liberal arts graduates will transfer into at these schools other than Liberal Arts. Note that LA graduates are not limited to LA programs at the receiving schools. A recent article in *The Boston Globe* discusses a new engineering program at Smith College (a Liberal Arts college), which emphasizes the Liberal Arts. The goal of that program is to help students make the connection between their work and society (see appendix). Students in that program are first given a theoretical background and eventually will master the same rigorous technical material as students in traditional engineering programs but from the theoretical base. With that approach in mind, it was our intent to strengthen the Liberal Arts Program so that our graduates will receive that theoretical base upon which they can build their future careers. The essence of Liberal Arts programs is to provide the context within which students learn how to learn.

We know that our Liberal Arts graduates are welcomed through joint admissions programs into programs of study as diverse as food and Natural Resources (UMASS Amherst), Economics (Framingham State), and Movement Science (Westfield State). Receiving institutions already view our Liberal arts program as highly transferable. With the changes in the structure of the Program (coordinator, mission, goals, advisory board) as well as the proposed curriculum and advising changes, our graduates will be even more marketable than they already are since we propose further refining our requirements to coordinate with the Commonwealth Transfer Compact. In addition, we would like to see our Liberal Arts program participants assigned a Liberal Arts Advisor who will be trained in the program requirements and the intricacies of transfer. These specially trained Liberal Arts academic advisors will assist their advisees to select courses and possibly concentrations which will most benefit the student.

B. List degree or certificate objectives in measurable terms

Response:

The IPR Team proposes that the goals of the Liberal Arts Program should provide students with the study of the traditional liberal arts which include language, philosophy, history, literature and abstract science and are intended to provide students with broad-based knowledge and to develop their intellectual capacities such as reason and judgment.

As a result, the proposed Liberal Arts Program objectives strive to teach students to:

Think and problem solve in a creative, risk-taking manner

Use logical, coherent structure to express ideas in descriptive, rich language—verbally and in writing

Analyze, organize, and use data for meaningful solutions

Set goals based on information and research, and then achieve these goals

Define and develop a personal value and ethical system

Work in a cooperative, collaborative manner with diverse individuals in one's professional and community life

Develop a broad range of skills for interpreting and evaluating human experience

Develop scientific, mathematical, and computer competencies

Identify the psychological, social, and historical influences on individuals and groups

Appreciate the history of human cultural experience and develop perspectives for interpreting and evaluating it.

Synthesize knowledge across the broad range of the liberal arts experience.

Our proposed Program goals are very similar to the Board of Higher Education proposed exit standards.

The Board of Higher Education's proposed standards include:

Critically read, think, and communicate:

- read college level text and demonstrate an understanding of its content
- evaluate and interpret textual material

Use the English language effectively in a variety of circumstances:

- express ideas using the spelling, punctuation, and grammar of standard American English
- develop an assertion or thesis
- support the thesis with evidence appropriate to position and audience
- organize and connect ideas
- express oneself in clear and effective language

Critical thinking:

- evaluate source materials for credibility and relevance to a given case
- draw inferences, suppositions and conclusions from source materials
- analyze evidence and determine whether it tends to confirm or refute a given theory
- postulate a number of solutions to a problem and present these solutions in a logical, coherent manner
- differentiate between fact and fiction, concrete and abstract, theory and practice.

Our associate's degree graduates will have mastered these standards which are being set for the bachelor degree.

C. Define expected graduation competencies or student outcomes. Your response should include reference to general education outcomes, employability or “umbrella competencies”, and career-related competencies or technical skills.

Response:

The proposed Liberal Arts Program objectives are designed to address the major categories in the cognitive and affective domain of the taxonomy of educational objectives. *How to Write and use Instructional Objectives*, by Norman Gronlund, describes these two domains and discusses ways to state specific learning outcomes (111). We developed program goals and student outcomes so that our graduates will receive a strong foundation upon which they can launch their further exploration into the career or transfer program of their choice. The numbers after each objective indicate which proposed Liberal Arts Program goal (see previous response) is being addressed with that objective. Upon completion of the Liberal Arts Program, students will be able to:

- Write critical analyses of various scientific and non-fiction articles noting the validity of the thought processes involved in generating the information. (1,2,8,11)
- Write and present speeches designed to persuade an audience on a given topic. (2, 3, 6, 7,9,11)
- Write an analysis of a contemporary, historical, or ethical issue, and defend that analysis. (1,2,5,7,10,11)
- Design a project in cooperation with others, based on objectives and research, carry the project to completion, and write a report analyzing the results. (2,3,4,6,8,11)
- Compose an original piece of writing (essay, newspaper/magazine article, etc.) using standard English sentence structure, following the rules of composition on a topic of their choice. (2,5,7,8,9,11)
- Demonstrate the ability to distinguish aesthetic concepts in literature, art, music, and science." (2,7,8,9,11)
- Assess the validity of basic scientific information presented to the public. (1,3,7,8)
- Use productivity software such as word processing, spreadsheet manipulation, and data presentation. (2,3,8)
- Utilize basic mathematical computations in the analysis and presentation of data. (3,8)
- Interpret and analyze human behavioral responses both orally and in writing. (1,6,7,9,11)
- Infuse historical perspective where appropriate in essays and oral presentations. (1, 2, 7, 10, 11)

D. Describe how the program supports the College’s mission and purpose.

Response:

The Liberal Arts Program proposed mission statement supports the mission of the College in a variety of ways. Look at both mission statements:

<p>The QCC Mission Quinsigamond Community College serves the diverse educational needs of Central Massachusetts by providing affordable, accessible, and high quality programming leading to transfer, career, and lifelong learning.</p>	<p>Proposed QCC Liberal Arts Program Mission The Liberal Arts Program will further Quinsigamond Community College’s mission by providing quality courses and other learning experiences that help students become self-motivated critical thinkers and learners who possess a broad perspective on the human experience. In addition, the program helps to prepare students for lifelong learning, academic and career success, and articulate, literate living.</p>
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The Liberal Arts Program fully supports the mission and goals of the College. When the College mission states “programming leading to transfer, career, and lifelong learning,” it is describing the goals and mission of the Liberal Arts program.

First, the mission of the College is to offer programming to help students transfer. Students who graduate with an associate’s degree in liberal arts, usually plan to transfer to a public or private four-year college. According to the Liberal Arts graduate survey, our LA graduates rate their transfer experience as a positive one (see appendix). They feel prepared academically, and they achieve success at the four-year schools. They credit QCC faculty and the Liberal Arts Program with preparing them.

Second, the mission of the College is to offer programming to help students find careers. Students with a degree in liberal arts bring a variety of skills to the workplace. These skills match those required by employers according to the U.S. Department of Commerce report, “21st Century Skills for 21st Century Jobs.” According to the report, employers seek basic skills in reading, writing, & computation; technical skills; telecommunication and manufacturing technologies; organizational skills; and multi/cross skilled employees. In the Liberal Arts graduate survey, our graduates tell us they acquired many of the skills they need for their current employment in the Liberal Arts Program.

Finally, the mission of the College is to offer programming leading to lifelong learning. The Liberal Arts program nurtures intellectual curiosity and love of learning which will reward our graduates through out their lives.

E. Summary and Analysis: Foundations of the Program

Response:

The Liberal Arts Program is designed to assist students to broaden their intellectual experience and to explore their personal and career goals. The Program facilitates student transfer to four years schools in a variety of programs. The IPR Team has found that transferability is a strength of the existing Liberal Arts Program. Its weaknesses include the lack of leadership, coordination, and purpose. We propose the following structural changes be addressed:

- Mission
- Goals
- Objectives
- Coordinator
- Liberal Arts Advisors

2. Curriculum Strengths and Areas Needing Enhancement

A. Based on the analysis of regional labor market needs, evaluate the current curriculum strengths and identify those areas that you believe require enhancement.

Response:

We know that the current Liberal Arts curriculum already does some things well. Our survey of the Liberal Arts Program graduates tells us that the graduates succeed in four-year schools (see appendix). However, a closer look at the curriculum of those receiving schools indicates that the following will enhance the preparation of our students for transfer:

- Increase the options to satisfy the language requirement.

The IPR Team surveyed the Liberal Arts faculty at QCC. They believe that the purpose of the language requirement is to improve students' communication skills and to broaden students' cultural awareness. To achieve those goals, the Liberal Arts Program must expand the ways students can fulfill those goals while keeping each student's ultimate transfer goal in mind. Advisors must help students to assess the extremely varied language requirements of the school to which they hope to transfer.

Credits to fulfill the Foreign Language Requirement may be earned in the following ways:

- completion of six college level credits in one foreign language;
- completion of six credits of college level culture courses;
- successful completion of Advanced Placement Exam, CLEP or Challenge Exam in a foreign language.

If a student satisfies the Foreign Language Requirement in one of the following ways, he/she must take six liberal arts electives to earn six credits:

- completion of two years of sequential high school instruction in one foreign language with a grade of "C" or better;
- demonstration of a foreign language proficiency through course work on a high school transcript from a non-English speaking country where the language of instruction was not English.

Name Introductory Psychology as the psychology elective.

- The Psychology Department believes that Introductory Psychology is important to further students' understanding of individuals, to prepare them for their own participation in society and to provide them with the basic language needed for further study of Psychology.

Offer a capstone course where students will have a final opportunity to refine their learning in all of the areas covered by the goals of the program.

- Because of the diversity of the content of the Liberal Arts Program, it was the feeling of the IPR Team that a course that provides students with a vehicle for demonstrating their mastery of the goals and objectives of the Program would assist both students and faculty in knowing that the student had indeed mastered them.

Strengthen the math requirement.

- QCC considers MAT 100 College Algebra to be college level, as do some four-year schools such as Worcester State College and Framingham State College. However, other schools such as Clark University and Assumption College will not accept MAT 100 for transfer. Similarly, some schools such as Worcester State College will not accept our MAT 121 Topics in Math for transfer. To add to the confusion, Umass Amherst will accept MAT 100 as proof the student has met their Basic Math Skills requirement but will not accept the credit. All schools accept MAT 122 Statistics for transfer. There are very few problems transferring MAT 122 or higher anywhere.

Offer suggestions for concentrations to allow students to focus on their areas of interest.

- Content area faculty may choose to select courses from which students may choose to focus their electives. A Liberal Arts advisor who will monitor the student's transfer and career goals will closely supervise the student's elective selection.

B. Include the proposed curriculum for each of the current or proposed options in the program.

Response:

**The Proposed Curriculum
LIBERAL ARTS (LA)**

First Semester		Credits
ENG 101	English Composition & Literature 1	3 cr
MAT	*Math Requirement (MAT 100 or MAT 121 recommended)	3 cr
HST	History Elective	3 cr
_____	***Foreign Language Requirement	3 cr
_____	Laboratory Science Requirement	4 cr
Total		<u>16 cr</u>

Second Semester		Credits
ENG 102	English Composition & Literature II	3 cr
MAT 122	Statistics	3 cr
PSY 101	Introduction to Psychology	3 cr
_____	***Foreign Language Requirement	3 cr
_____	Laboratory Science Requirement	4 cr
Total		<u>16 cr</u>

*The six credits of mathematics must be MAT 100 or higher. MAT 100 OR MAT 121 are recommended for the first semester. **The student should check with the institution to which they hope to transfer for guidance.**

***Credits to fulfill the Foreign Language Requirement may be earned in the following ways:

1. completion of six college level credits in one foreign language;
2. completion of six credits of college level culture courses; (to be developed)
3. successful completion of Advanced Placement Exam, CLEP or Challenge Exam (see p. 35 in the College catalog);

***If a student satisfies the Foreign Language Requirement in one of the following ways, he/she must take liberal arts electives to earn six credits

1. completion of two years of sequential high school instruction in one foreign language with a grade of "C" or better;
2. demonstration of a foreign language proficiency through course work on a high school transcript from a non-English speaking country where the language of instruction was not English.

LIBERAL ARTS (LA)

Third Semester		Credits
_____	Liberal Arts Elective#	3 cr
HST	History Elective	3 cr
_____	Humanities Elective	3 cr
_____	Liberal Arts Elective#	3 cr
ENG	English Literature Requirement (200 Level)	3 cr
Total		<u>15 cr</u>

Fourth Semester		Credits
SPH	Speech Communication Skills	3 cr
_____	Liberal Arts Elective#	3 cr
_____	Liberal Arts Elective#	3 cr
SOC	Sociology Elective	3 cr
IDS	Capstone Course	3 cr
Total		<u>15 cr</u>

Total credits required for degree	62 cr
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Choose from Liberal Arts courses in the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences. You may wish to choose a “concentration” in a specific area. In this case, you would choose a minimum of 3 courses in a particular area such as psychology, literature, biology, American studies, etc. You should choose your concentration in consultation with your Liberal Arts advisor.

Multiple Perspectives Courses

A minimum of one course should be chosen from the list below in order to satisfy a commitment to multiple perspectives within the Liberal Arts Program.

Anthropology	ANT 111	Philosophy	PHI 121, 123
English	ENG 216, 217, 257, 259	Psychology	PSY 143, 241
Art	ART 260	Sociology	SOC 211
History	HST 213, 215, 241, 251	Humanities	HUM 212

We propose that all students follow basically the same program for the first two semesters. Then, in the third and fourth semesters, while some program requirements are still being fulfilled, the students could choose to begin to focus on an area of concentration. Some students may not be ready to select an area of concentration, in which case they may choose the “generalist” option which allows them to choose electives from the liberal arts courses. However, students who do choose a concentration may select from the ones we have developed, or they may devise their own. It is crucial that they are always working closely with their advisor and, when possible, with a close eye to the school to which they hope to transfer.

C. For each course in the revised curriculum, provide a description, statement of goals, major topics covered, primary tests or materials, and instructional technology used.

Response:

COURSE PROPOSAL

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

IDS Capstone Seminar: Special Topics

The Capstone Course in Liberal Arts is a team-taught, interdisciplinary effort in which students will have an opportunity to synthesize the competencies that they have developed in the Liberal Arts program and focus them on a topic or theme chosen by the faculty team. Students will be able to explore an aspect of the human experience from the perspective of a number of disciplines and to demonstrate their ability to think creatively, communicate effectively, work cooperatively, set goals, and utilize information and research appropriate to the chosen topic. Students will write opinion papers and make oral presentations based on the seminar topic. In addition, each student will participate in the design, implementation, and reporting of results of a special project related to the seminar topic. This project may include a “service learning” component, if the student so chooses.

Although each student will be guided through this experience under the close supervision of at least one faculty mentor, the responsibility for active engagement will fall upon the student.

Prerequisites: Enrollment in Liberal Arts Program, Completion of 45 college credits

Credit hours: 3

Contact hours: 45

Purpose and Goals of the Course:

- To serve as a capstone course for the Liberal Arts program
- To provide students with an opportunity to explore a variety of topics in the field of liberal arts through such activities as reading, discussion, research, writing, and debating.
- To provide a service learning option for those Liberal Arts students who desire to connect their academic experiences to their communities.
- To provide an academic project option that will showcase, validate, and reaffirm the outcomes of the program.

Course Requirements:

Each student will be required to:

- Complete a collaborative project that may include a “service learning” component.

- Prepare opinion papers and short oral presentations based on readings and discussion of the seminar topic.
- Complete a 10-12 page project research paper.
- Actively participate in class discussions.
- Summarize and defend the research assignment with a ten-minute oral presentation.
- Consult weekly with one of the professors on the team to assess progress.
- Meet with one of the professors on the team final, longer conference.

Upon successful completion of the course, each student will have demonstrated the ability to:

- think and problem solve in a creative, risk-taking manner
- use logical, coherent structure to express ideas in descriptive, rich language—orally and in writing
- analyze, organize, and use data for meaningful solutions
- set goals based on information and research, and then achieve these goals
- define and develop a personal value and ethical system
- work in a cooperative, collaborative manner with diverse individuals in the workplace and in the community
- develop a broad range of skills for interpreting and evaluating human experience
- develop scientific, mathematical, and computer competencies
- identify the psychological, social, and historical influences on individuals and groups
- appreciate the history of human cultural experience and develop perspectives for interpreting and evaluating it.
- synthesize knowledge across the broad range of the liberal arts experience

D. Describe the rationale for the course sequence in the revised program. A rationale of course sequence should be provided for the specific program related courses, the general education courses, electives, etc.

Response:

N/A

E. Explain how the general education components are integrated with the department specific courses.

Response:

The proposed goals of the Liberal Arts Program and the general education competencies are in alignment.

- | | |
|--|--|
| • QCC General Education Competencies | • The Liberal Arts Program Goals |
| • Written Communication | • Use logical, coherent structure to express ideas in descriptive, rich language—verbally and in writing. |
| • Quantitative Skills | • Analyze, organize, and use data for meaningful solutions. |
| • Oral Communication / Teamwork | • Set goals based on information and research, and then achieve these goals. |
| • Technology: Applications and Resources | • Develop scientific, mathematical, and computer competencies. |
| • Critical Thinking Skills | • Think and problem solve in a creative, risk-taking manner. |
| • Multiple Perspectives | • Work in a cooperative, collaborative manner with diverse individuals in one's professional and community life. |
| | • Identify the psychological, social, and historical influences on individuals and groups. |
| | • Appreciate the history of human cultural experience and develop perspectives for interpreting and evaluating it. |

- Experiential Education / Service Learning
- Personal Development
- Synthesize knowledge across the broad range of the liberal arts experience.
- Develop a broad range of skills for interpreting and evaluating human experience.
- Define and develop a personal value and ethical system.

F. Does the curriculum incorporate “writing across the curriculum”? Provide an illustration, if applicable.

Response:

Each year the Liberal Arts Program could concentrate on a particular across the curriculum initiative such as “Writing Across the Curriculum” or “Ethics Across the Curriculum.” The goal of these initiatives would be to help students gain a multi-disciplinary perspective on a particular theme so that they would examine a question, issue, or topic from many viewpoints and learn to examine the topic critically. Eventually, the entire College could choose to become involved in this approach because of its currency and high level of interest for both students and faculty.

G. Describe how the program meets the QCC philosophy of “high tech, high touch, high quality”.

Response:

Liberal Arts faculty are very much involved in the use of technology to advance academic goals. All five of the initial Distance Education offerings were in the Liberal Arts (English, history, psychology, humanities, and mathematics). In addition, the next courses to be put on-line include more Liberal Arts (English and humanities). Each semester, several sections of a variety of English courses are offered on computers. Many Liberal Arts faculty teach their students to effectively conduct research on the Internet. The faculty use technology in a variety of ways to facilitate student learning and enhance the classroom experience.

H. Does the program structure provide students with at least one elective choice? Please explain your response:

Response:

The current and the proposed Liberal Arts Program allow students several elective choices.

I. Summary and Analysis: Description of Curriculum

Response:

The Liberal Arts curriculum will be strengthened by enhancing the supports and strategies students need in order to transfer to a four year school, to choose a career and for personal enrichment and by developing a curriculum that is flexible, encourages exploration, and lets people see liberal arts as a potential gateway to rewarding employment.

3. Relevance of Instructional Methodologies, Assessment Strategies and Program Credentials

A. Summarize the INSTRUCTION METHODOLOGIES utilized in the program. What are the strengths and challenges of these methodologies?

Response:

Since the Liberal Arts Program encompasses many courses and instructors, there are a variety of instructional methodologies. Individual instructors determine the methodologies in their courses. Existing methodologies include: traditional lectures, small and large discussion sessions, in class group activities, group projects outside of class, case study analysis, the use of “research teams” in biology laboratories, laboratory simulations and collaborations on the Internet, math and English courses taught with computers, distance learning courses, computer tutorials in science classes, “writing across the curriculum” in many courses, textbook-related web sites, Web Board and E-mail communication, service learning projects in Honors and Ecology, and off campus practicum’s.

The overall strength of such a diverse series of methodologies is that students in the program experience the variety of learning environments offered in liberal arts. In an art appreciation course, students could visit art museums around the world via the Internet. Students can experience sophisticated and expensive biotechnology experiments through simulations that eliminate any questions of biohazard. Students can experience the pleasures of a well-crafted and presented lecture. Group projects and laboratory research teams provide opportunities for collaborations and experience in group dynamics.

B. Provide recommendations for additional methodologies that would enhance students’ learning. More specifically, are there additional ways in which instructional technology could enhance students’ learning? Options for distance learning? Please explain your answer and include how the College might support these efforts.

Response:

Nowhere is bringing the world into the classroom more relevant than in the area of the liberal arts. Increased access to computer projection systems that are tied into the Internet will help students to access and appreciate the wealth of information available to them. The campus is about to launch a “wireless network” system that would make connection to the Internet possible in every classroom. This will require a major increase in the number of computer projection systems available to classrooms. The result will be that our Liberal Arts Program graduates will be better prepared to access their academic and career goals and to continue lifelong learning.

The challenges are to remain current in the technologies and methodologies available and to properly assess the effectiveness of these methodologies for students. Careful assessment will allow for the development of the proper mix of methodologies throughout the program. This type of coordination and assessment has not existed in the past since the Liberal Arts Program lacked a coordinator, a mission, and goals.

C. Provide a detailed assessment plan outlining the methodologies used for ongoing student assessment and final outcome assessment.

Response:

No detailed assessment plan currently exists for the Liberal Arts Program. Instructors will determine individual course assessment and then a coordinated program assessment must be developed.

D. Describe the strengths and challenges of each of the assessment methodologies listed above.

Response:

No programmatic assessment methodology currently exists. Individual instructors assess students within courses but this is not tied to Program outcomes.

E. Provide recommendations for additional methodologies to evaluate student achievement.

Response:

Liberal Arts Program faculty must participate in the process of devising the assessment methodology to evaluate student achievement.

F. Has the program been evaluated by an EXTERNAL ACCREDITATION organization within the last five years?

Response:

The Liberal Arts Program was last evaluated as part of the last NEASC accreditation.

G. If yes, please provide name of the organization and date of last accreditation review. Did the program meet all of the accreditation requirements? If no, please explain. Attach the summary of the accrediting team's recommendations.

Response:

Late 1980's

H. If the program has not been evaluated externally, list any appropriate professional accreditation or licensure for the program that the College should pursue. (E.g., Industry certifications, professional associations, etc.)

Responses:

NO

I. What changes, if any, might need to be considered to foster enhanced program quality?

Consider the following, but you need not limit your response.

- **Change in admission requirements**
- **Inclusion of an internship or other work-based learning experiences**
- **Introduction of 1 or 2 electives to allow students to self-select learning experiences**
- **Development of a capstone course to synthesize the learning experience**
- **Varied instructional methodologies**
- **Enhanced assessment of student competencies**
- **Better integration of technology application**
- **Specific instructional aides/software etc.**
- **More coordination of faculty efforts, including the possibility of more full-time faculty**
- **Attainment of program accreditation. Certification, or licensure**

Response:

The Liberal Arts Program would benefit from the following:

- development of a capstone course to synthesize the learning experience
- enhanced assessment of student competencies
- more coordination of faculty efforts, including the possibility of more full-time faculty

J. Summary and Analysis:

Response:

The breadth of the Liberal Arts Program encourages variety in instructional methodologies in the many content areas. Liberal Arts faculty are very involved in many areas of innovation and discovery. Unfortunately, the lack of coordination and identity for the Program and the lack of full time faculty who support the Program goals result in a weakness in Program and student assessment.

4. Program Growth Opportunities

- A. In your opinion, would it be beneficial to develop a common core curriculum along related career programs? E.g., computer education, business, administrative support, electronics, etc.) Please explain your answer.**

Response:

The IPR Team explored many possible areas for concentrations for students. Concentrations can benefit students in at least two ways:

Concentrations allow a student to explore an area of interest while still choosing courses regarded by the content area department as being suitable for transfer and appropriate as possible pre-majors

- Concentrations can function as foundation courses for students who know the area in which they hope they hope to major after transfer.

- B. Describe, in detail, all potential areas for program growth. Include, but do not limit your response to the following:**

- **Career Ladder Potential**
- **New Degree or Certificate Options**
- **Professional/continuing Education Opportunities**
- **Professional Recertification Preparation/Test**
- **Flexible Delivery Options**
- **Enhanced Instructional Methodologies**
- **Improving Assessment for Student Competencies**
- **Distance Learning Course Development**

Response:

Some potential areas of concentration suggested by the Admissions department based on their interactions with potential students include: Communication, English, and Psychology. Each work area would designate certain courses from which students may choose to fulfill their liberal arts electives. By doing so, students may begin the course work for their major and receive guidance regarding transferability. We also explored American Studies, Women's Studies, Deaf Studies, and biology to name a few.

This team explored in detail the possibility of offering an education concentration. Our Liberal Arts curriculum will allow ample opportunity for students to work with their advisors to tailor their program to most schools of education. It is virtually a pre-education degree already for many schools of education such as Framingham State College.

- C. Summary and Analysis: Program Growth Opportunities**

Response:

The Liberal Arts Program offers a core of courses designed to provide the first two years of a liberal education while guiding students to focus on transfer or career goals and make elective selections accordingly.

5. Students and Program Assessment (Review relevant data over the last five year period.)

A. What have been the incoming students' average scores on QCC placement tests each year for the last five years?

Response:

This information is not available.

B. What is the graduation students' average college GPAs over the last five years? GPAs in major courses? Please describe the additional measures of central tendencies: i.e. median, mode, etc.

Response:

The Liberal Arts Program graduates had GPAs as follows:

Year	GPA	Number
2000	3.05	23
1999	3.20	17
1998	2.89	14
1997	2.99	34
1996	3.22	38

C. If relevant, how have students performed during their field placements or related work based learning experiences?

Response:

N/A

D. Indicate the number of students who have transferred to four-year programs, if applicable.

Response:

The number of graduates who transfer to a four school would be a significant piece of information; unfortunately, the College does not currently have the ability to track graduates. However, respondents to our graduate survey indicate that 78% have earned six or more college credits since graduating from QCC. In addition, 25% reported attending school full time since graduation. 23% reported attending school part time since graduation (see appendix).

E. Track the average earnings of program graduates each year for the three years immediately following graduation.

Response:

Information unavailable.

F. Provide a summary of the program's enrollment patterns over the last five years.

Response:

Semester	Number Enrolled	Graduated
F 1997	344	
S 1998	289	22
F 1998	311	
S 1999	246	17
F 1999	272	
S 2000	274	23
F 2000	302	

G. Indicate the program retention rate over the same period. Note: Consider two cohorts: fall to spring (same year); fall to Following Fall (one year).

Response:

The College Registrar estimates the College-wide retention rate to be approximately 50%. According to our new Director of Retention, that is a typical rate for a community college nationwide. Due to the lack of an institutional researcher, there is no systematic approach available to look at those numbers. Only anecdotal information is available from advisors, the Director of Transfer, counseling, etc. Some of the students who are no longer enrolled in the Liberal Arts program from one fall semester to another successfully transfer. Some enroll in other programs at QCC. Some drop out for a semester. Some change their plans. We should not consider the Liberal Arts Program or any of these students “failures.” We can look at some weaknesses in the old program such as a lack of direction from a coordinator, the changing language requirement, the lack of Liberal Arts Advisors, but the lack of hard data makes the exercise moot. Once the Liberal Arts Program has a coordinator, that person will track students’ movement in and out of the program. The Liberal Arts Program must define success for its students (transfer, employment, graduation, pausing, etc.) and then take its measure.

H. Determine the average number of semesters it takes for students to complete the program.

Response:

This information is not available.

I. Define indicators of program quality. Describe strategies used to assess the success of the program in achieving its stated objects.

Response:

Liberal Arts program quality can be assessed when students achieve the learning outcomes for the program as measured in the capstone course, when students transfer to and then are sufficiently prepared to succeed in the four year school of their choice, and finally, when students attain and succeed in their chosen careers. The latter two are difficult to track because the student data system does not currently have the capability to do so.

J. Summary and Analysis: Program Assessment

Response:

Due to the lack of institutional research data, concrete assessment based on data is unavailable. We must rely on student reporting to assess program effectiveness.

6. Faculty

A. Is the current faculty able to adequately address the instructional needs of all courses, both general and specialty, in the program?

Response:

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) sets the standards for institutional quality. Standard Five covers faculty:

5.1 The faculty's qualifications, numbers, and performance are sufficient to accomplish the institution's mission and purposes. It competently offers the institution's academic programs and fulfills those tasks appropriately assigned it.

In most Liberal Arts program areas, the number of full time faculty is far below what is needed to effectively support the Liberal Arts Program, the General Studies Program and provide all the humanities and social science courses for the other programs in the College.

5.3 The faculty is sufficiently numerous to carry out such functions in addition to instruction as student advising and academic planning and to participate appropriately in policy-making, course and curricular development, and institutional governance.

Many of the Liberal Arts students are advised in the Advising Center by part time faculty since there are far too few full time faculty for this task.

5.9 Faculty categories (e.g. full-time, part-time, adjunct) are clearly defined by the institution, as is the role of each category in fulfilling the institutions mission and purposes. Should part-time or adjunct faculty be utilized, the institution has in place policies governing their role compatible with its mission and purposes and the Standards of the Commission. The faculty includes adequate numbers of individuals whose time commitment to the institution is sufficient to assure the accomplishment of classroom and out-of-classroom responsibilities essential for the fulfillment of institutional mission and purposes. It avoids undue dependence on part-time faculty, adjuncts, and graduate assistants to conduct classroom instruction.

Many College committees are represented by part time faculty from the Humanities and Social Sciences Division because of the lack of full time faculty in that Division.

The College does not meet the letter or the spirit of the NEASC Standards.

B. Is institutional support for upgrading faculty credentials required? If yes, please explain the kind of upgrade required and approximate cost associated with the upgrade?

Response:

N/A

C. Over the last five years, what has been the ration between full-time and part time faculty within this program?

Response:

The overall full time / part time ratio in the Humanities and Social Sciences Division has decreased. The number of part-time faculty has steadily increased while the number of full-time faculty has decreased:

		Full Time Faculty	Part Time Faculty
Fall	1999	33 %	67%
Spring	2000	33%	67%
Fall	2000	33 %	67%
Spring	2001	37%	63%
Fall	2001	30 %	70%

D. Describe how adjunct faculty are integrated into the existing program.

Response:

Adjuncts are invited to department and division meetings. They also qualify for some professional development funds. However, the logistics of bringing in people who work evenings and off hours can be overwhelming, especially in light of the large numbers of part-time faculty we have. Additionally, other than evaluation by a dean, part-time faculty are not contractually required to participate in any integrative process, and because many of them are teaching lots of courses in many places, they are often (justifiably) not inclined to come in for meetings. Many of them feel they have been reduced to the level of academic migrant workers. Day part-time faculty often are more fully included in the mainstream, simply because of proximity, but again, their involvement is mostly “voluntary.” Quality control and integration has always been a serious issue, in spite of past efforts. The best way to integrate adjuncts might be to make more of them full-time?

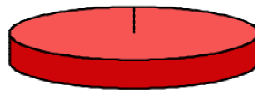
E. Should the College employ additional full or part-time faculty in this discipline? Provide a detailed rationale.

Response:

A closer look at the individual content areas shows the full time / part time ratio in specific areas:

Full-time / Part-time Teaching Ratios. Dav Classes. 2001

**American Sign Language,
Anthropology, Art, Music,
French, German, Political
Science, Social Science**



0% Full-time

English



54% Full-time

ESL



35% Full-time

History



43% Full-time

Humanities



55% Full-time

Philosophy



100% Full-time

Psychology



76% Full-time

Sociology



11% Full-time

Spanish



50% Full-time

Speech



40% Full-time

These are the areas where we see a drastic weakness in full time faculty for the Fall semester 2001:

English -----	54% full time
English as a Second Language -----	35% full time
History -----	43% full time
Humanities -----	55% full time
Sociology -----	11% full time
Art-----	0% full time
French/German -----	0% full time
Spanish -----	50% full time
Speech -----	40% full time
Political Science-----	0% full time

We recommend that sufficient numbers of faculty be hired to bring the ratio up to 70% full time faculty.

F. Describe how all faculty members contribute to curriculum development and over all program cohesiveness. Do ALL faculty members, both full and part-time have an opportunity to contribute to curriculum development?

Response:

The College must employ more full time faculty in the area of Liberal Arts. Currently, the approximately 30:70 ratio (30% = full time; 70% = part time) in Humanities and Social Sciences is unacceptable for a variety of reasons.

First, the goal of the College to maintain “High Quality” is furthered by full time Liberal Arts faculty who service not only Liberal Arts students, but all QCC students. Full time liberal arts faculty are needed to develop new courses, to research new trends and practices, and to set curricular and program requirements and outcomes. The majority of curriculum work, the development and renewal of courses and programs, is done by full time faculty. Also, the quality of instruction is more readily maintained with full time faculty members. Full time faculty explore creative and stimulating pedagogical approaches such as team teaching. The Liberal Arts Program needs permanent full time faculty to maintain, review, and renew curricula to offer a high quality liberal arts education.

Second, the goal of the College to maintain “High Touch” is also furthered by full time Liberal Arts faculty. It is necessary for the Liberal Arts Program to take a more structured approach to its advising. This will require full time Liberal Arts faculty be available for Liberal Arts students both as advisors and during their office hours to meet with students. In addition, a strategic enrollment plan would allow the College to assess programmatic needs and hire faculty in a more systematic approach. A three to five year plan for the effective utilization of full and part time faculty based on projected enrollments and strategic marketing plans would be an effective means to meet the needs of the College.

Additional full time faculty are also needed to support the College’s goal of “High Tech.” This will allow faculty to develop projects which support and maintain cutting edge technology.

**G. Does the current level of support staff meet the needs of the program faculty?
Please explain your answer.**

Response:

See Section III

H. Summary and Analysis: Faculty

Response:

The serious shortage of full-time faculty in several content areas in Humanities and Social Science is serious and must be addressed. Many of our Liberal Arts full-time faculty have already retired or are

planning to retire in the next few years. For the strength of the Liberal Arts Program in particular and the college as a whole, the number of full time faculty in these areas must be raised to at least come close to the preferred ratio of 70% full time. This will allow the needs of the students and therefore the goals of the institution to be addressed.

SECTION III: Institutional Support and Other Program Resources

1. **Program Support (Please note: Use this section to reflect upon what institutional supports would useful and why).**

A. **List targeted program marketing and recruitment strategies employed over the last two years? In your opinion, are they appropriate to sustain strong enrollment?**

Response:

In a word, no. As demonstrated here and elsewhere in this report, and in Paul Connell's *Sabbatical Report* (see index):

- Nationally, the public is confused about the role of liberal arts. In some cases this is aggravated by the often vituperative deconstruction of the traditional curriculum and by academia's dogmatic swing to a monolithic leftist orthodoxy.
- Locally, students and parents seem unaware of the quality, cost, and the transfer opportunities afforded by a QCC Liberal Arts education.

B. **Provide recommendations for new or additional marketing or recruitment strategies.**

Response:

We recommend that QCC develop a pro-active enrollment management strategy, including a marketing campaign, to put the following messages foremost in our public's consciousness:

You can do anything with a Liberal Arts degree.

Liberal Arts can open doors to jobs.

QCC has a vital, new Liberal Arts program that allows, for students who complete it, a seamless transfer to a state college or university, and costs less than any of the competing area colleges.

The Marketing Department at QCC, because of budget constraints and other issues, has been historically reticent about marketing individual programs. However, the Marketing Director, Victor Somma, has lately begun exploring the possibilities of working with program coordinators to develop marketing strategies. Because Liberal Arts is currently being recreated, we did not have the opportunity to seize the initiative this time around. However, when this process is completed, an enrollment management strategy ought to become a high priority. Additionally, few programs need the benefits of marketing so desperately as the Liberal Arts Program at QCC. Our Liberal Arts Degree's advantages in the areas of costs, quality of instruction, individual attention, and virtually guaranteed transferability seem to be among Worcester County's best kept secrets.

According to many articles in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Liberal Arts, nationwide, has been undergoing an ever-deepening, quarter-century identity crisis. "What, exactly, is a liberal arts education good for," says the puzzled tuition payer. You don't have to be a *Chronicle* subscriber to be aware of the lack of identity or perceived educational value of a Liberal Arts education.

The shrillness of the defense is usually a good barometer for the depth of the chaos in which an academic pursuit finds itself. And, lately, among Liberal Arts traditionalists, the jeremiad gear has been stuck in overdrive—perhaps with some justification.

Leo I. Higdon, Jr., the President of Babson College, wrote in *The Providence Journal* of June 9, 2001:

The Liberal arts education, once the Gold Standard, is falling into disrepute. Only 30 years ago, almost every college student trained under this regimen. Yet now the liberal arts are in retreat on many campuses across the country, both large universities and even some traditional liberal arts colleges.

Yet Higdon also, contrarily asserts:

*Time and again in surveys, CEO's of major corporations identify the qualities cultivated through liberal arts and humanities as some of the **most essential for success**. [Italics ours] They report that the people who rise in organizations are those who show a well-rounded ability to think, be creative, and remain flexible in trying and uncertain situations.*

This mantra, which is seemingly contradictory, is repeated with resounding frequency throughout the popular media, as well as in the academic press. Almost everyone bemoans the alarming national decline in higher level literacy, information literacy, and critical thinking, yet increasing numbers of people still ask the question, “What’s a liberal arts degree good for?” It’s a total disconnect that leaves liberal arts faculty scrambling to explain, yet again, what ought to be self-evident, and scratching their heads. *Liberal Arts develops the individual.*

Luigi Salvaneschi is the former CEO of Blockbuster Video, Senior Vice President of Kentucky Fried Chicken, and member of the Advisory Board to the Board of Directors of McDonald’s. His book, *Renaissance 2000—Liberal Arts Essentials for Tomorrow’s Leaders*, gives us a good example of this kind of blanket validation of Liberal Arts:

...the qualifications of business people will change. They will have to be thinkers, philosophers, creators, innovators, and strategists. The world markets demand not only the latest technological advancements, but the most agile intellectual fitness. It will be the battle of the minds, like never before

The liberal arts provide a firm foundation and mental formation by which openness to new situations and new ideas and new solutions are provided to new kinds of problems. Tomorrow’s leaders should be formed by the liberal arts... (19)

Denise Richardello, the transfer officer at MCLA reports that, when North Adams State became MCLA, her college had to work very hard at trying to convince people that they had not become an “art school.”

Liberal Arts, which is partly interdisciplinary, but focuses mostly on the humanities, (as discussed elsewhere in this report) does not have the sort of cohesive structure that more discreet programs possess. This also contributes to its lack of identity.

In the 1970’s and 1980’s, Liberal Arts, nationwide, was starting to pay the fare for the free ride of radical 1960’s. Additionally, at QCC, it had gradually become a catch-all category, a “dumping ground” for students who were marking time to get into other programs, students who had no particular program in mind, and just about anyone who seemed difficult to place.

The damage this did to Liberal Arts at QCC was incalculable. To get a visceral sense of the devastation that accrued, just imagine for instance, “discreet programs,” such as nursing, dutifully accepting students who were marking time to get into hairdressing school?

The effect was like academic carpet bombing.

There were few admission requirements and, after a quarter-century of either radical destructive tinkering or entropy, there was little singularity left. What had started as a noble experiment in “open-door policy” had eventually eviscerated Liberal Arts of both identity and quality control.

In 1992, responding to external (accreditation) and internal pressures, QCC’s Liberal Arts Program attempted to reclaim some of this identity by reshaping the curriculum into two areas: General Studies and Liberal Arts. General Studies was considered a holding area for people waiting to get into other programs or those students who were “exploring” and would like to take a lot of electives. It was never intended as a transfer degree. The expectation here was that once those students who took General Studies eventually discovered the object of their exploration, they would transfer into Liberal Arts and finish their degree here at QCC.

It didn't happen. Students simply left Liberal Arts in droves to graduate in General Studies (partly because GS had fewer requirements), and the public's perceptions about the roles of Liberal Arts here became even less clear.

Dan Daly, QCC's Transfer Officer, reports a perception among our feeder institutions—and in the community in general—that QCC is “a good place to go for technical programs” but that the feeling is either lukewarm or non-existent about liberal arts at community colleges in general.

According to Paul Connell's *Sabbatical Report* of April 25, 2000, Daly noted that:

...community colleges in our area are not traditionally identified as places to take liberal arts, especially among high-school-age students. Daly reports that QCC has a sterling reputation among older students and among Central Massachusetts' increasing immigrant population, but younger students aren't getting the message. (4-5)

So, a consistent picture emerges of a program without coherence, without an identity, and without a publicly understood mission. It has become invisible, despite its quality.

Daly also confesses to being somewhat mystified by this invisibility. As the person who oversees a guaranteed seamless admission program to the state colleges and universities (the Joint Admissions Program), plus the obvious cost-to-value benefits, he is puzzled that students are not taking more advantage of it. He often cites Liberal Arts as “our most transferable degree.”

How do we address this shortcoming? “How do we convince an eighteen-year-old that this is the Liberal Arts Program for him or her?”

Part of the solution would seem to lie in “presence.” A coordinator needs to build up links with local area feeder institutions as well as links with institutions that our students transfer to. If they don't know your face, they aren't going to remember you when it comes time to do something. How many high-school counselors know that QCC has a quality Liberal Arts Program? How many know any faculty by name? Coordinators by name? Building presence improves visibility, and we need visibility.

Middlesex Community College, reported similar challenges in its *Academic Program Review of 1997-1999*. The report cites a lack of a coordinator to establish focus and cohesion, a lack of a sense of community, a lack of an effective recruitment [and by implication, *marketing*] strategy, and a “placement policy that puts students into liberal arts by default.” (27)

Ironically, QCC had already attempted to deal with the issue of “LA-by-default” over a decade ago, but we mistakenly treated only one symptom, not the entire problem.

Paul Connell's *Sabbatical Report* also indicates that problems with public perceptions are not limited to community colleges. Connell states that Denise Richardello, the Dean of Enrollment Management at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts told him that:

...when North Adams State College changed its name to Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, enrollment dropped 20% because of the inclusion of “Liberal Arts” in its name. “Students didn't think that we still offer business, or education,” said Denise, “which we do.”

However, Connell also states that MCLA, and other colleges, are working hard on correcting public perceptions. According to Connell, Richardello asserts:

The message we're trying to send is “You can do anything with liberal arts,” she said. “We actually have a tag-line: Mass College of Liberal Arts, Liberal Arts at Work. We're doing lots of marketing, but it's difficult to overcome the views of students—and sometimes parents of students—who think we're an art school. I've been asked, ‘Are you like Hampshire College?’ A lot of people

still think that it's [liberal arts] an elitist pursuit. You know, if you have a lot of money, and maybe want to go to graduate school—or you don't know what to do, you take liberal arts. (7)

Themes like, You Can Do Anything with Liberal Arts or Liberal Arts, Our Most Transferable Degree, or Liberal Arts Opens Doors to Opportunities just don't seem to be getting through to the very people we need to reach.

Connell reports that other colleges such as Purdue and Rice are attempting to counter the predominant pejorative spin with web-site information. Purdue posted the following:

Liberal arts majors are finding liberal opportunities in the job market, both in the variety and number of employers seeking them. "Already this year, 75 employers have been on campus looking for liberal arts majors," says Sylvia Howell, coordinator for placement in the School of Liberal Arts at Purdue University. "That's an increase of about 35 percent over two years ago." Companies looking to hire liberal arts majors include Andersen Consulting, IBM and Cargill. ...Howell says it's always been a myth that liberal arts students can't get jobs. Even so, more employers are interested in these students today, even for jobs of a technical nature.... "Employers find that liberal arts students have an ability to learn, they communicate well, they have decision-making skills and do well in many areas," Howell says. "They often find they can get better results hiring a liberal arts major than someone with only a technical background." She says there is no specific area of liberal arts study that is attracting all the attention. "There is no magic major," she says. "You don't get a job just because of the major you have. In every major, there are students who get jobs and those who don't." ...Because many liberal arts graduates work in social service fields, average starting salaries for Purdue liberal arts majors are in the low- to mid-\$20,000s. However, Howell says that results from what the students choose: "We have salaries all over the map. What you earn depends on what you do, for whom, where." (9)

And Rice University Posted the following:

THE MYTH...If you're a liberal arts major you've no doubt been reminded that your liberal arts degree is worthless. Friends kindly ask you not to come looking for loans from them after you graduate. Parents tell you stories of a forklift operator with a Ph.D. in history. At Christmas your uncle pulls you aside, pats you on the back and swears to you that the future of America is in a real major like engineering, computer science, or business. After so many indictments, the academic can only begin to question the marketability of his or her major. ...Well, enough of the lies—here's the truth. The value of a liberal arts degree depends on how much its holder is willing to work to make it marketable. A liberal arts graduate must learn to choose a field of work through personal investigation rather than being recruited for his or her major. It's true, there just is no widely marketable "professional managerial studier." Just for this very reason and the wide applicability of the skills acquired in liberal arts study, there are actually more jobs available to liberal arts majors than to technical majors, especially in the business world. Liberal arts recruiters don't visit campuses as much as technical recruiters because most liberal arts jobs are in small companies [italics mine] that don't have the resources for campus recruiting. The jobs, however, are still very available and are often the most satisfying. The pessimism towards liberal arts majors is unfounded. The jobs are out there, but liberal arts graduates must work a little harder than technical majors to find them. (9)

C. Does the program have sufficient linkages with business, community-based organizations, other colleges and universities, or K-12 public schools? Please explain and cite specific examples. Present in chart form as explained in the guidelines for C & D, opposite page.

Response:

No.

D. Provide suggestions for improved program linkages. What, if any, assistance do the program faculty need in order to facilitate these linkages effectively?

Response:

Community Ties—Bridges

We recommend that QCC build bridges within the scholarly community to make high schools and other colleges aware of the QCC Liberal Arts program.

QCC cannot idly wait, as in *Field of Dreams*, for the players to come to us. Nor can we depend on the Marketing Department or the Admissions Office to bear the entire burden of developing an identifiable presence.

QCC's *Title III Grant Application* cites the efforts of President Kurtinitis to build bridges to the community: "Relationships with area business, industry, and cultural sectors, which had languished for many years, are now strong and vibrant, and prospects for the future are promising." (19)

The Liberal Arts Coordinator and the members of the Liberal Arts Department would do well to emulate this process. Admittedly, we don't wish to interfere with what the Admissions people do in recruiting, but we have years of virtual invisibility to overcome. We need to develop a presence and a visibility among our colleagues both in the area High Schools and also in the area colleges that receive our students.

For instance, it certainly would be effective to have the Liberal Arts Coordinator—or a delegate—maintain a significant presence at special events:

- A QCC Liberal Arts Coordinator could have, as part of the job description, a mandate to build personable relationships with area guidance counselors—for instance, how many QCC Liberal Arts faculty have attended Guidance Counselor Breakfasts? We currently have little presence in this crucial area. Ditto for transfer people at the institutions we feed. (Connell 5)

Additionally, LA faculty could participate in Education Nights, College Fairs, Career Fairs (hopefully answering the question about "*what do you DO with a Liberal Arts education*"), as well as many of the other activities mentioned in the Admissions Office's *Recruitment Plan*, of 2001. Additionally, the recruitment strategy does not ignore the adult population, and neither should we.

The figure of "17% of our students coming from high school" seems to support a low priority for high-school recruitment, but, on closer examination, it does not hold up. It also opens up some other issues that suggest other remedies to other problems.

First, the "statistic." According to the Admissions Office, 95% of our students *do not apply for formal admission* to a program until they've taken courses here, often until they are well into their third or fourth semester. Is the "17%" figure then based upon the admissions documents of the five percent of students who do apply and fill out the "proper" paperwork? There is no *other* way to input this statistic that we know of. The math indicates that this is not a reliable statistic, if it's based on a mere 5%.

Second, a little digression here: there are some serious ancillary issues that correlate with the investigation of this statistic. According to the Transfer Office, students often put off math and English composition until late in their careers here, often deferring these courses until the last possible moment. They can take courses here for years without ever having taken a composition course—and maybe wonder why they flunk essays in psychology or sociology or history, or perhaps more insidiously, merely get *average* grades in their classes. This is a disservice to students. We ought to have a requirement that students must take English composition at a fixed deadline in their careers here—it ought to be at least by the second semester after they are placed in it.

Third, there is no hard data to back this up, but with the increase in admission standards in the state colleges and universities, we will be receiving a younger, less prepared population. "Community colleges" are specifically mentioned as remedies in the rejection letters sent out by state colleges and UMass. Should

we not be trying to retain some of these people, rather than doing all the hard work and then sending them on to other colleges who will reap the rewards of our labors?

Middlesex Community College, in its *Liberal Arts and Science Program Review*, confronted almost identical issues as QCC and reported that it had a Spring, 1998 event . The report states that a coordinator would have been helpful at an event that:

- included representatives from UMass Lowell and another one of the state colleges. The goal of the event was to educate prospective students and their parents about the tuition advantages/savings that one gets by starting a BA at MCC, and also to highlight the transfer articulation agreements and joint admissions program we have with the state colleges and university. (11)

Middlesex also reports a college-wide open house, during which a coordinator would have been helpful. (11)

Another strategy is that the QCC LA Coordinator—or a designee—could meet once per semester, or even once per year, with say the Liberal Arts Person who is his or her counterpart at three or four of the area high schools and Worcester State College, UMass Amherst, and MCLA (A monograph, entitled, “New Challenges, New Opportunities,” published by the President’s Office at QCC, identifies Worcester State College, UMass, and—to a lesser extent, Clark, Assumption, and WPI as our major receiving institutions). One off-campus meeting, perhaps over lunch, is not unreasonable. The counterpart may prove to be a transfer officer, a dean, or simply the head of a humanities department. The title is not as significant as the salesmanship and energy we put out.

Clearly, a personal touch is needed here.

One could argue that there is a danger of over-committing the QCC Liberal Arts coordinator, but this task should be high on the priority list. We need visibility. Without it, the rest is an exercise in solipsism.

E. Does the program have appropriate equipment to meet the instructional demands of the program? (e.g., medical equipment, laboratory supplies, computer hardware and/or peripherals)

**Response:
Equipment**

The recent (2000/2001) implosion of dot-coms serves to illustrate the axiom that glitzy technology is sometimes a solution in search of a problem. Great care must be taken to insure that tight resources spent on technology should be allocated where those technologies are really used, rather than on “wow-factor” or where there is a “perceived” rather than a demonstrated need.

To help put some of this into perspective, Ken Dwyer, QCC’s Chief Technology Officer, and Professor Paul Connell, Humanities Coordinator, designed an informal, web-based survey to determine which technologies liberal arts faculty felt they needed in their courses. The purpose of the survey was to track current usage/future usage trends to make intelligent predictions for future purchases to support instruction.

Faculty (both liberal arts and general faculty) were asked, basically, how many hours they were using the following technologies in their courses, as well as how many hours they would like to increase the usage. It was interesting that the trends of both the liberal arts faculty and the general faculty replicated each other almost exactly. The following is a list of the technologies with projected percent increase or decreases:

Easels -----	44% Decrease in Total Hours
Cassettes-----	30% Decrease in Total Hours
Overhead Projectors -----	50% Decrease in Total Hours
Still Cameras-----	50% Decrease in Total Hours
Video Cameras -----	1% Decrease in Total Hours
VCR/Monitors-----	16% Decrease in Total Hours

Slide Projectors-----	95% Decrease in Total Hours
Data Projectors-----	109% Increase in Total Hours
Web-based Instruction-----	123% Increase in Total Hours
Video Conferencing-----	0% Increase or Decrease
Computer Labs-----	61% Increase in Total Hours

F. If no, provide a list of required equipment purchases or upgrades. Please present this list in prioritized fashion and identify immediacy of the priority.

Response:

The preceding table indicates that we might reasonably expect increased demand for the use of data projectors, web-based instruction, and computer labs. QCC ought to put more funding into developing the resources that support these instructional activities.

In addition, the Coordinator of Liberal Arts should assign a few individuals, drawn from a pool of the liberal arts faculty who have historically worked with technology, to develop a purchase plan with the Chief Technology Officer and to establish an ongoing system to evaluate needs and maintain the momentum.

G. Summary and Analysis: Program Supports

Response:

Most of the recommendations were inserted into the appropriate sections, but a list of themes that keeps cropping up might be worth repeating here:

In order for Liberal Arts, to flourish, QCC has to evolve an enrollment management strategy and a marketing initiative to raise the consciousness of public awareness about its mission, cost, and quality. Liberal Arts needs to develop a “presence” in Central Massachusetts.

2. Academic Supports

A. Are there sufficient instructional/research resources to support student learning in this program?

Response:

See next.

B. Assess the overall currency of the current collection of books, periodicals, and audiovisual materials in the library. Recommend new acquisitions and/or periodical subscriptions. In addition, please work with the library staff to weed outdated materials from the library's current holdings.

Response:

Library

Anticipated new building aside, QCC's Library is undergoing a number of other changes, including the new development of its own website, and connection to multiple databases that electronically catalog everything from Consumer Reports to The Constitution of the United States. According to Dean Anne Pound, a faculty member can search the library's catalog from his or her desk to determine whether we need to make changes in both the print and non-print collections.

Currency of Book Collection

Liberal Arts covers a huge amorphous spectrum of the subjects collected in the contents of the QCC Library. Although Liberal Arts is usually associated with the humanities and social sciences, many scientific, mathematical, and even technical areas overlap into it. It would be reasonable to expect that these lines will become even more blurred in the future, partly as a result of the attempt in Liberal Arts to enter partnerships in non-traditional academic areas.

Therefore, the task of evaluating the currency of the entire collection of books of *all* subjects in the Liberal Arts posed a real challenge to a team of three individuals whose areas of expertise are narrowly defined.

Professor Paul Connell took on the task of evaluating the currency of the collection. However, he had no expertise (nor credentials) to evaluate books on Anthropology, Music, Physics, Algebra, Calculus, Botany, Zoology, Psychology, Languages, and Sociology. Although he could probably have made educated guesses about the effectiveness of History, Art, Journalism, Marketing, and Music books, the political ramifications of such actions would have proven antithetical to the purpose.

So, he opted to evaluate a significant and representative sample of the collection—the books that covered his own area—Literature—books that he was qualified to make assertions about.

Connell went through the stacks, with the help of Jenny Shih, QCC Librarian, and examined titles, authors, and occasionally, signature cards. What he found was revealing.

Many texts had not been signed out in decades, especially in the British Literature shelves. Jenny Shih reported the British Literature (PR sections) “were not moving.” She was being kind with understatement. Literally hundreds of these books have never been signed out, or signed out only once or twice during the 1970's or 1980's.

The British Literature section has twice the volume of almost any other literature section, an estimated 3,060 volumes. Yet, the irony is that British Literature has a spotty history of enrollment, lately. The course is just not that popular. It is often run under enrolled and sometimes cancelled.

In addition, much of this collection is esoteric and impenetrably erudite. There were, for instance, 15 volumes of *Medieval English Plays*, as well as other volumes that contained repeats of the same plays. There were many obscure authors, sometimes in multiple copies or repeated in other volumes, taking up a lot of room—such literary lights as four volumes of Sir Thomas Browne, and works by Samuel Butler,

Lawrence Sterne, William Cowper, Henry Vaughn, Thomas Traherne, etc. Is it necessary to have ten volumes of devotional poetry of the 17th Century, for instance?

The library depends on faculty to weed out these collections, and it would seem the faculty has been depending more on divine intervention. On the surface, it would seem that there is nothing wrong with all this esoterica. After all, libraries collect books, some of them by obscure authors. However, the collection is out of balance. By sheer size alone it takes up valuable space that could support instruction.

There were not enough critiques and multiple volumes of critiques to support what we term “high-usage” assignments. There ought to be two shelves of critiques on *Oedipus the King*, for instance, with multiple copies of each, because the play is assigned in many English classes. This arrangement supports instruction and student research.

In addition, the Rhetoric section of the shelves contained many old composition texts and freshman readers. Collections of essays that are force fed to composition students are useless on library shelves. They are catalogued by the title of the book, which gives students no clues to which particular essays are located in which particular books. So they gather dust.

Handbooks and rhetoric books, however, can be useful, but there were not enough handbooks here.

The following is an approximate count of books in the Literature Area, (Estimate: one shelf = 30 vols):

	Shelves	Volume Count
PA (Classical Literature, Greek & Latin)	12.....	360
PE (English Language, writing/grammar).....	14.....	420
PG (Russian Literature).....	9.....	270
PJ (Oriental Literature).....	6.....	180
PN (Literary History, Theatre, Motion Pictures, Collection of plays).....	48.....	1,440
PQ (French Literature)	26.....	780
PR (British Literature)*	102.....	3,060
PS (American Literature)*	79.....	2,270
PT (German Literature).....	10.....	300
PZ (Fiction/Juvenile Literature)	28.....	840

Information Literacy

The library is developing comprehensive computer and online resources, as well as extensive staff expertise in information literacy, which is the basic ability to assess, access, evaluate, and apply information, according to Loan Anh Vidmanis, QCC’s Library Director.

The problem these days is not that information isn’t available but that there is so much information available, how do you keep the “junk” information from eating up your time.

Anne Pound, in a recent (as yet unpublished) article submitted to Visions, the Staff Development newsletter, explained information literacy this way:

What information literacy is not.

Obviously, the level of information literacy described in the ACRL standards is not the result of a 50-minute session in the library. Successful programs partner faculty and librarians over time and weave information literacy throughout the curriculum in much the same way that “writing across the curriculum” sought to bolster writing skills in all students.

An information literacy program is not a technology initiative. However, the flood of information available via the Web did drive college faculty to seek a remedy for the gap which appeared between their expectations for a good research paper and the papers they were getting from students. The old way of approaching this problem in classrooms and libraries was not working.

What are some of the characteristics of the best information literacy programs?

The best information literacy programs:

- are faculty driven (i.e. faculty and writing lab managers and librarians coordinate their efforts to integrate program specific information literacy into courses);
- support faculty requests for assistance with new and emerging online reference tools in their disciplines;
- include information literacy in college general education requirements and include a formal course requirement;
- provide clear assessment strategies and constantly improve.

What are the results of a comprehensive information literacy program?

Almost immediately, faculty see improvement in student research skills, i.e. in the quality of the sources used, in the relevance of the sources, and in the student's understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of different information resources.

Information literacy is (perhaps unrealistically) expected by our receiving institutions when our students transfer to UMass or to Lowell or to Worcester State, according to Loan Anh Vidmanis, and if they don't have it, they will be dysfunctional. Perhaps there is fertile ground here for developing future Liberal Arts program goals

Recommendations:

- **A person from each subject area should be assigned to weed through the collection and recommend systematic purchases that reflect and support what we are actually doing in the classroom.** Much of this would be a judgment call, based on the “weeder’s” sensitivity to other colleagues’ wishes, and the sense of how important the book in question is to a comprehensive understanding of the subject balanced against how often the book has been used in 30 years. In English, at least, there’s not much call for Thomas Traherne or William Cowper these days. If the purpose of the QCC Library is to support instruction, the collection is not doing it. It is not current. Many books have not been used in decades. Many books are esoteric in the extreme. Some are disintegrating. Perhaps an incentive to some areas such as Literature would be to let the people who volunteer their time to have first choice to keep the books that are deadlined as not useful. It would also solve the disposal problem.
- **We should purchase at least 10 copies each of any secondary sources for popular assignments—especially subjects used in research papers.** In English, for instance, there aren’t enough multiple copies of high-usage criticisms. For instance, a book containing critical essays on *Hamlet* or *Oedipus the King* should not be purchased singly, but in repeat volumes. However, the only way this could be done effectively and systematically would be extensive involvement (at least initially) of a member from each subject area. Dean Pound reports that the state may provide approximately \$40,000 in funding to build or weed our book collections. We ought to take advantage of that. Departments could be surveyed for “high-usage” assigned texts and we could weed accordingly. Certainly, the play, *Othello* would appear more often in this poll than the Cavalier Poets.
- **Eliminate many of the old textbooks in the collection and set a finite limit to the collection of old texts.** We could also maintain an ongoing collection of “backup” texts that are currently being used. These could be designated reference only and limited to stay in the room. If a student lost a text and was waiting for a replacement, or left a text home, this would prove extremely useful and would support instruction.
- **Since Information Literacy has become a critical issue, build it into coursework and perhaps even into the program objectives.** The Liberal Arts have an opportunity here to build partnerships with library personnel to help develop information literacy. Writing and research instructors, in particular, ought to have an enlightened self interest in this area—an interest strong enough to drive a partnership initiative. Instructors could construct modules that would invite library personnel to participate, or one-credit seminars in information literacy could be offered, the same way research-paper seminars are offered.

C. Are there sufficient technology resources, specifically software and hardware_resources? Are these resources available and accessible to students? To faculty?

Response:

This question was also addressed in III, 1., E. Additionally, labs and technology at QCC are expanding by an order of magnitude. This is one of our strongest assets.

D. Provide a list of recommended technology acquisitions (i.e., software, hardware, PC projection units, etc.) Please prioritize this list and identify the immediacy of the priority.

Response:

This question was also addressed in III, 2., B. We need data projectors, and, anecdotally, we need some screen/VCR replacements for those of us who are still wedded to old technology.

E. Does the Individualized Learning Center provide ample academic support services for students in the program?

Response:

Yes. Additionally the library staff are always willing to work in conjunction with faculty, including giving tours of the library resources and offering to help faculty make inroads with information literacy.

F. Provide recommendations for improved academic support services.

Response:

- Liberal arts needs to build closer, hands-on working relations with library staff in all areas.
- *Information Literacy*, if not immediately included in the goals of the Liberal Arts, ought to be strongly considered for inclusion soon. This would also necessitate closer working ties with library staff.
- Additional and upgraded screens for VCRs.
- Additional and upgraded VCR's.
- Additional Data projectors.

3. Student Supports

A. How do your students explore career opportunities and prepare to access them?

Response:

Currently, career concerns are deferred until after transfer.

B. Provide recommendations for enhancing students' career exploration and planning.

Response:

See previous question.

C. Are current student support services adequate to support the teaching and learning process?

Consider:

- **Counseling Services**
- **Disability Services**
- **Health/Wellness Center**
- **Transfer Information**
- **Other Services (as listed in QCC catalog)**

Response:

The Internal Program Review Team informally polled the Liberal Arts faculty as well as the staff directly responsible for the student support services areas, by asking this question over e-mail. What we gathered were perceptions garnered from daily experience.

Several faculty thought that although the services might be adequate, students must be made more aware of these services and how to access them. Respondents also indicated that students need support developing their interpersonal skills through classroom experiences which help students integrate student learning with life experience.

The information we received pointed to a number of directions:

Student Services ought to be viewed as a partner in the teaching and learning process.

The connection between faculty (full and part time) and support staff must be strengthened.

Services are more available to the day students than they are for evening and weekend students.

The following additional needs, concerns, and challenges were also expressed:

Advising:

- New students need more effective help in choosing a program (such as distinctions between Liberal Arts and General Studies) and choosing courses.
- Returning students need assistance structuring programs to improve transfer options.
- Faculty could develop stronger advising relationships if their advisees were drawn from their classes.
- New students need more information and support to enable them to accept more responsibility for their own education.

Counseling:

- Students avoid using this area, due to the stigma attached to counseling.
- Counseling staff have trouble reaching out to students either because there are too few staff or because students don't want the services.
- More vigorous "exit" interviews are needed for students leaving the College and/or a course.
- At least one male counselor is needed.

Health Services:

- Students need information and referral regarding health insurance and how to access health care.
- Information on concerns such as: alcohol awareness, health fairs, depression and eating disorders screenings, smoking cessation and street drugs update are valuable.

Transfer

- The Transfer Office currently offers outstanding documents and advisement to guide students through the maze of transfer options. This office is also intricately involved with recruitment activities and strategies and is receptive to liberal arts aims. Since transfer is a major liberal arts goal, the LA Coordinator should build bridges here as well as in admissions.

Disability Services:

- Students profit more from tutoring than note takers or tape recorders.
- The increase in the number of students with disabilities and their types necessitates more staff in this area.
- Staff that are knowledgeable about adaptive technology are needed.

Race/Ethnic Minority Support Services:

- Students need support to discuss issues concerning racism.
- Non-native English speakers would benefit from support to meet the foreign language requirement.

Public Safety:

- Students are offered information on self protection, personal safety and sexual assault

Financial Aid:

- According to the Office of Admissions *Recruitment Plan* for 2001, over 45% of our students receive financial aid.

Faculty as a Resource for Students

As mentioned elsewhere in this report, a solid core of full time faculty is necessary to develop the critical mass to revitalize the Liberal Arts Program. We need many experienced faculty members, some who may need to get released time, to overcome the initial inertia in the areas that need development.

For instance, the English faculty constitutes the largest group of instruction in the Liberal Arts, and even in the college at large. English Composition I & II are required courses for degree programs. In 2001, half the English faculty retired. In addition, the following table illustrates that *before* that retirement, only 27% of the total English courses offered in Academic Year 2000/2001 were taught by full-time faculty members. A whopping 73% of the English courses were taught by part time faculty.

To be fair, the college has made extensive efforts to redress this shortcoming by replacing retirees. However, we still need to address this area.

**Table of Day Sections Offered by Full-time (FT) Faculty vs. Part-time Faculty
Academic Year 2000-2001**

Organized by Department and Numbers of Sections

(Applies to Day Courses Only—all other courses are “part-time” by definition)

	2000 - 01					
	Fall			Spring		
	FT	PT	%FT	FT	PT	%FT
Anthropology**	0	12	0%	0	6	0%
Art	0	30	0%	3	30	9%
American Sign Lang	0	12	0%	0	12	0%
ESL	24	99	20%	36	99	27%
English (GS,HU,IS,SH)*	129	228	36%	141	192	42%
French	0	3	0%	0	6	0%
General Studies*	0	27	0%	6	12	33%
German	3	3	50%	0	3	0%
History	30	24	56%	27	27	50%
Humanities*	21	24	47%	24	30	44%
Music	0	9	0%	0	12	0%
Philosophy	6	3	67%	3	6	33%
Political Science	6	12	33%	9	15	38%
Psychology	54	90	38%	63	93	40%
Sociology (AN,SS)**	3	54	5%	12	69	15%
Social Science**	0	9	0%	0	6	0%
Spanish	12	30	29%	15	24	38%
Speech*	18	15	55%	18	15	55%

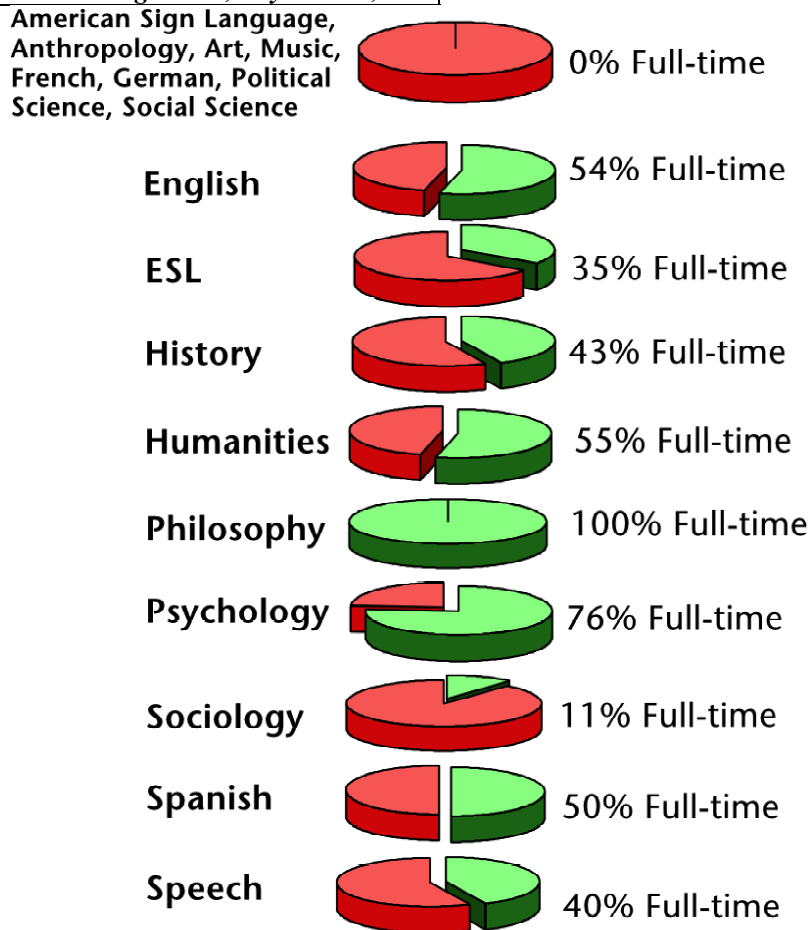
In other words, in courses as critical as English Composition, *part-timers outnumbered full-timers two to one*, until Fall, 2001 when the total rose to 54% full-time! Now, for English, the figure is roughly half, and in addition, half the English Department—the core of the Humanities area—is being replaced by instructors without much QCC experience, which at first will further stress the cohesion of the Liberal Arts Program (in spite of whatever advantages it might offer in the long view).

Even considering that some full-time department members are on released time, conducting critical administrative tasks, the ratio illustrated in the preceding table is way out of balance.

A look at the percentages tells a similar story for some of the other disciplines essential to the humanities and social sciences that strongly contribute to the identity of liberal arts. In the fall semester of 2001, some ratios improved, but not to the point where we get near an ideal ratio of approximately 70/30.

The following chart appears in Section II, but it is worth repeating here. Note that ASL, Anthropology, Art, Music, French, German, and Political Science have zero full-time members. English, although reinforced, has only 54%. ESL—a major market for us—has only 35%. With the exception of philosophy, the thin red line is still pretty thin.

Full-time / Part-time Teaching Ratios, Day Classes, 2001



The Humanities and Social Sciences, the core of a quality Liberal Arts Program, needs full-time faculty.

Statistics—QCC’s Mathematical Demi-myths

Other than actual enrollment figures in programs, meaningful statistics are very difficult to compile at most community colleges, especially in the Liberal Arts, and even more difficult to use to derive competent decisions.

In the Liberal Arts Program, people drift in and out. Some transfer and don’t graduate. Some take General Studies. In fact—judging by the graduation and enrollment figures—most take General studies. One thing is clear. We need to use, and to interpret statistics with caution.

General Studies Enrollments

Fall 96	Spring 97	Fall 97	Spring 98	Fall 98	Spring 99	Fall 99	Spring 00	Fall 00
1107	962	1047	951	1068	1015	1244	1176	1335

Liberal Arts Enrollments

Fall 96	Spring 97	Fall 97	Spring 98	Fall 98	Spring 99	Fall 99	Spring 00	Fall 00
340	316	344	289	311	246	272	274	302

General Studies Graduates

1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
25	34	35	55	50	46

Liberal Arts Graduates

1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
63	52	42	17	22	23

It would seem, from the preceding table, that fewer and fewer liberal arts students are graduating each year and that there is a significant discrepancy between enrolled students and graduation rates. Is this an attrition figure? Perhaps not. Currently, there is almost no way to track them. Perhaps they transfer into other institutions without graduating. Certainly, if you are getting a bachelor’s degree, it may be tempting not to bother jumping through the hoops to get an associate’s degree. Dan Daly, in a recent article for *Visions* (May, 2001), QCC’s Staff Development newsletter, reiterated the difficulty of getting *any* meaningful statistics in a community college but did note some consistent trends among the general student population here:

- Nearly half of the persisters did not earn the associate degree. In fact, 25% of the students with 60 or more college credits earned never received the AS or AA degree. *Maybe even graduation rate questions are unanswerable.* [italics ours]
- Students of color were far more likely to complete the associate degree than whites. [yet other sources state just the opposite!]
- The more credits earned at the community college, the higher the GPA at the university. It seems we are a good place to prepare for advanced study.
- By and large, race/ethnicity did not significantly relate to success. Students of color were just as likely to persist as white students. [again, other sources state just the opposite!]

Daly’s point is that other than a few general observations, we cannot get statistics and those statistics we can get should be used with caution.

Lately, the phrase, “anecdotal evidence” has been used as a derisive synonym for “invalid.” But often, anecdotal evidence is based on experience, informed intuition, and informal observation. Acting on that evidence often indicates sound judgment and can sometimes be as valid as acting on statistics.

Liberal Arts, at QCC is often confronted—and occasionally whipped—with statistics. that seem to have the authority of scripture (as well as scripture’s *scientific* accuracy). Many of our statistics take on a mythical mantle.

Twenty-three people graduating in Liberal Arts in the Year 2000, was an indicator, to some, that the program needs major work. Indeed? Yet in Dental Hygiene, fifteen students graduating is considered a success and merits an expensive new lab. How many institutional resources (cost of offices, labs, staff—as well as salaried faculty) are expended upon the individual students in many of QCC's discreet health and technology programs? What uniform criteria for evaluating success is operational here? The point, of course, is not to denigrate the obvious successes of Dental Hygiene, or any other program, but that Liberal Arts should be measured by the same uniform criteria and that statistics can be misleading.

4. **Physical Facilities**

- A. **Are the current physical facilities sufficient from an instructional perspective? If no, explain and provide recommendations.**

Response:

This is really a college-wide question. Yes, we need classrooms, lab space, office space, a new library, and the parking is dreadful. However, because of the size and interdisciplinary scope of the program, this has been a question that has been historically addressed at cabinet level. Everyone is keenly aware of these shortcomings, but the information and organizational resources for dealing with them is probably better left to existing budgetary processes. In other words, the current system for dealing with these problems seems to work as well—when it is allowed—and we shouldn't fix what ain't broke.

- B. **Are the current physical facilities sufficient from a competitive perspective? If no, explain and provide recommendations.**

Response:

See preceding.

5. Program Financing

- A. Has the program's funding been sufficient over the last five years? Please explain your response.**

Response:

No. This too has been historically addressed at Dean/Vice-President level. That we desperately need more faculty and a coordinator and perhaps a center is detailed elsewhere in this report. The funding for salaries, etc., is usually a cabinet-level matter that originates with the Dean and moves upward. It works differently from many of the other (health/technical) programs at QCC which rely heavily upon coordinators for this function.

- B. Provide an analysis of the cost of this program. Be sure to include ALL costs. (For example, costs associated with instructional salaries, space, lost opportunity costs, equipment rentals and/or maintenance, etc.**

Response:

See preceding

- C. Based on your enrollment projections, are there projected increases or decreases in the budgetary requirements of this program over the next five years?**

Response:

The numbers increase in General Studies as the general enrollment increases, but not in the Liberal Arts Program. If we put these recommendations into operation, especially the high-visibility ones, we can't imagine that no enrollment increase would happen. However, just how much of an increase is a matter for conjecture.

D. Summary and Analysis: Program Financing

Response:

We would hope the current budgetary process would be flexible enough to adapt to increased faculty and enrollment, since it's enrollment driven. This too has been historically addressed at Dean/Vice-President level. We need more full-time faculty, a coordinator, a place to gather, and perhaps some identity-building emblems (jackets? pins? hats?)—the kinds of things used to build employee cohesiveness during All-College Day.

Section IV: Executive Summary of Findings

- A. Briefly summarize the program highlights and recommendations for program improvement (2-4 pages). Provide a summary of action steps that prioritize what needs to be done with an estimated timeline for completion. Remember that this document will be presented to the QCC Board of Trustees and the President's staff as a tool for negotiating necessary program resources.**

Response:

Introduction

The Liberal Arts Program at QCC is a series of "liberal arts courses" with no coherent theme or set of program goals. In the early years of the College's existence, most students used the College as an accessible, inexpensive entrance into college. The majority sought to develop their college skills and then transfer to a public or private four-year college. In effect, all students who sought to transfer were "liberal arts" students. When the College began to increase its career programs, particularly the health care programs, the Liberal Arts Program was used as a holding bin for students whose skills would not allow them to enter directly into one of the programs. The General Studies program was developed to change the holding bin image of the Liberal Arts Program. However, no defining status was provided for Liberal Arts at that time.

In 1993 a strong language requirement was added to the Liberal Arts Program. Intermediate proficiency in a language was required. It is our supposition that this requirement, along with the milder science and math requirements in the General Studies program made General Studies the program of choice for students not enrolled in other programs. As a result, the numbers of students graduating with a degree in Liberal Arts has steadily declined since 1992.

From 1996 through 2000 the enrollments in General Studies have steadily increased from 1107 in the fall of 1996 to 1948 in the fall of 2001. The completion rate for the General Studies Program during that time has averaged about forty with a high of fifty-five in 1998. The decline in the graduation rate in Liberal Arts may be due to a number of influences. Some students may transfer to four-year institutions before they complete an Associate Degree. Some students may opt out of Liberal Arts due to its more rigorous requirements versus those of General Studies. Others may feel that they will be unemployable without a "technical" degree. While the college does not have a mechanism to track these statistics specifically, it is clear that the enrollment in Liberal Arts Program is declining.

- The QCC Liberal Arts Program, (unlike many of the programs that have undergone the process of Internal Program Review):
- Does not, traditionally, have an immediate postgraduate market
- Does not currently have an external agency or review board to oversee its curricular content
- Includes a large number of the full and part time faculty under its umbrella, unlike the other programs reviewed in the past which have a smaller number of faculty involved with their program
- Has long-standing traditions, with a large amount of inertia or "past practices" to get past
- Has no coordinator and no advisory body; and
- In the past, has not had any cohesive format.

The intended outcome of the Liberal Arts Internal Program Review is to establish a coherent foundation for the development of a viable and vibrant Liberal Arts Program. The full establishment of this program may require time beyond the review period and should involve a Program Coordinator and Advisory Committee.

Highlights of the Internal Program Review Findings

Students with a degree in liberal arts bring a variety of skills to the workplace. These skills match nicely with those required by employers according to the U.S. Department of Commerce report, 21st Century Skills for 21st Century Jobs. According to the report employers seek basic skills in reading, writing, &

computation; technical skills such as facility with computer technology, information literacy, and ability to gather and analyze data; organizational skills; and in general, multi/cross skilled employees.

The Liberal Arts Program is the primary transfer program at QCC. According to the QCC Transfer Guide, no other program transfers to as many other colleges or to as many other programs. LA graduates are not limited to LA programs at the receiving schools. A recent article in The Boston Globe highlighted a new engineering program at Smith College that emphasizes the Liberal Arts. The goal of that program is to help students make the connection between their work and society. With that approach in mind, it is our intent to strengthen the Liberal Arts Program so that our graduates will receive that theoretical base upon which they can build their future careers. The essence of Liberal Arts Programs is to provide the context within which students learn how to learn.

In this spirit, the IPR team and the faculty and staff of the Division of Academic Affairs proposes the following Liberal Arts degree program outcomes. A revised curriculum can be found in the 2002-2003 QCC Catalog and also, on-line at www.qcc.mass.edu/academics/index.htm

Liberal Arts Program Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the Liberal Arts Program, graduates will be able to:

- Demonstrate a broad range of knowledge, skill, and abilities for interpreting human experience via the arts and humanities, mathematics and natural sciences, and the social and behavioral sciences;
- Appreciate and contribute to the history of diverse human cultural experience and develop a global perspective for interpreting and evaluating it;
- Use rich, descriptive language and logical, coherent structure to convey ideas effectively in multiple modes of communication--speaking, reading, writing, and listening;
- Demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language;
- Acquire, analyze, organize, and utilize data to determine appropriate solutions to myriad work/life/personal challenges;
- Develop comprehensive scientific, mathematical and computer/technological competencies
- Develop a life path that develops self-actualization, adapts to change and recognizes the value of lifelong learning.

Recommendations for Program Improvement

The faculty authors and their colleagues in the Division of Academic Affairs recommend the following actions to strengthen and revitalize the Liberal Arts degree program:

- Position the Liberal Arts degree program as a primary transfer program and aggressively market the program's features and benefits;
- Accept the proposed Liberal Arts Program outcomes;
- Revise the Liberal Arts Program curriculum as noted;
- Appoint a Liberal Arts Program coordinator to work with faculty to refine program outcomes, instructional strategies, and assessment methodologies;
- Strengthen and improve advising in the Liberal Arts Program through establishment of LA faculty advisors and improved advisor training regarding the LA program;
- Develop a new course called "Introduction to the Liberal Arts"
- Develop a capstone course as a summative experience for all prospective graduates of the LA program;
- Explore further the relevance and need for establishing a selection of curriculum concentrations within the Liberal Arts degree program;
- Incorporate innovative learning strategies such as: portfolio development/assessment; colloquia; service learning; and individually tailored programs;
- Establish a Liberal Arts Program advisory committee and
- Promote involvement of community and employers in partnerships and cooperatives.

Conclusion

"Writing in a special Daedalus issue devoted to liberal arts, Richard H. Hersch wrote, ". . . a liberal arts college education offers people exactly what they claim they are seeking—the most professional and

practical education possible.”¹ While he was writing about the liberal arts college, his comments certainly are in concert with many of the comments made by QCC faculty and staff about the value of the QCC Liberal Arts Program in professional life.

But many also believe that to realize the full virtue of liberal education in the contemporary world, reformation both of the curriculum and of the teaching/learning environment will be necessary. Glen Gabbard’s challenge speaks well to this point: “At the same time that we strive to cover "content" we need to establish processes which assure that the content has some application and meaning in the larger worlds in which we and our students live. The challenge is that these worlds are often very, very different from one another.”(Excerpt from Babcock’s facilitator’s Report, dated December 13, 2001)

The work of the IPR team along with the thoughtful input and discussion of over 30 faculty and staff members in Academic Affairs has underscored the need for the College to move forward to significantly revamp both the Liberal Arts curriculum and the critical support systems necessary to insure learner success.

¹ “Generating Ideas and Transforming Lives,” *Daedalus*, 128, no.1 (1999), p. 192.