

18 March 2002

## **Commission on Academic Priorities in the Arts and Sciences Draft Report**

### **Introduction**

The members of the Commission on Academic Priorities make their recommendations from the conviction that Lewis & Clark is a college of sufficient strength and self-confidence to work forthrightly to improve the quality of its curriculum and instruction. Currently the College is considering an ambitious capital campaign to grow its endowment and fund further projects in its facilities master plan. In addition, the College is committed to improve its standing among those superior liberal arts colleges with which we compete by attracting a higher percentage of outstanding high school seniors. Important as such initiatives are to our success, we believe that the faculty must also be purposeful in establishing and carrying out shared academic priorities.

In the Spring of 2000 President Mooney created the Commission on Academic Priorities, charging it with "examining the various disciplines we pursue and fields of knowledge we teach, determining their relative strengths and weaknesses, pointing up their gaps or redundancies, and proposing a plan for their development over the next 15 years that will ensure their uniform excellence and maximum coherence." The Commission was asked to consider what forms of knowledge and kinds of learning are "essential to a liberal arts education" and whether the value of a liberal arts education, so defined, is "articulated in the structure of our academic program as constituted at present." Are there important fields or subfields of knowledge that are neglected in our academic programs? Are there areas that are inappropriate, redundant, or over-represented? How should interdisciplinary programs ideally relate to established disciplines in the liberal arts and sciences? How should off-campus study relate to our departments and disciplines on campus? And how can we ensure that standards of performance and expectations of students are uniform across our disciplines and programs?

These are the questions that directed the Commission's investigation. As we studied them, we learned again what we already knew, that Lewis & Clark is a distinctive college, in possession of an excellent faculty, a student body of high quality, strong academic programs, and a superior physical setting for study, reflection, and learning. We quickly came to see our work as a task of improving an enterprise that is already fundamentally sound.

The Commission, whose membership is listed at the end of this document, began meeting in earnest in the Fall of 2000. After several meetings in which discussion centered on the nature and essential elements of a liberal arts education, the Commission was divided into six subgroups, each given special responsibility for a particular part of the academic

programs of the College. Three of these subgroups were assigned responsibility for the academic divisions, the others to the areas of Off-Campus Programs, Interdisciplinary Programs, and Physical Education and Athletics. Each member of the Commission was assigned to two of these subgroups, with the subgroups ranging in size from three to six members.

The Spring semester of 2001 was given over almost entirely to meetings with the faculty. The subgroups met with departments, divisions, program heads, and individual faculty members to assess the faculty's sense of the present state of the academic mission. The subgroups also consulted the College catalog and other published materials relating to the academic programs. On the basis of this information, the subgroups compiled reports of their findings. These reports were then distributed to the various faculty constituencies to confirm both accuracy and thoroughness.

While the subgroups sought the views of the faculty, the Commission as a whole continued to meet periodically throughout the Spring of 2001 to consider information from two additional sources: other colleges and Lewis & Clark students. Many of our discussions during this period focused on a close examination of the academic programs of other liberal arts colleges, in order both to establish a comparative frame of reference for our work and to establish benchmarks against which we could attempt to assess our own success in achieving excellence. The colleges in the comparison group were national liberal arts colleges comparably ranked in the 2000 *U.S. News & World Report* ranking (Colorado College, Dickinson College, Earlham College, Occidental College, St. Olaf College, Skidmore College, Whitman College, Willamette University, and the College of Wooster). The Commission looked at what majors and minors are offered at these and other colleges; how many faculty FTE, tenure-track and non tenure-track, are dedicated to each major; what interdisciplinary programs are offered; how the majors, minors, and interdisciplinary programs are structured; what is the size of the student body; and what is the size of the endowment. In addition, the Commission gave copies of the charge to two different student groups, the ASLC student government and SAAB, and solicited student opinions. These student views were taken into account as the Commission proceeded with its work.

By the end of Spring 2001 the Commission had completed, or nearly completed, its work of gathering and sharing initial findings with the faculty in their respective divisions and programs. In the Fall of 2001 we entered a new, critical phase of our work: formulating recommendations from the findings. Approximately 30 recommendations emerged from the findings, ranging across the entire spectrum of our academic programs and curriculum. Each of these was thoroughly debated during several long meetings of the Commission, including a 20-hour weekend retreat in early December. From these deliberations a shorter list of recommendations eventually emerged.

Our recommendations range across a wide array of different matters germane to our academic goals and aspirations. Yet they cohere around a common impulse and idea: that it is possible (and necessary) to chart a course of future academic development that is consistent with current fiscal realities and with a shared sense of academic seriousness

and purpose. In some cases we have not reached unanimous agreement, in others we have not been able to devote the time necessary to make firm recommendations. As to the former, we bring forward only recommendations that have a strong majority of support in the Commission. Matters of the latter sort we include in three Appendices attached to the end of this Report. The first Appendix covers the area of General Education. Those suggestions presented in bold type have achieved general agreement in the Commission as matters needing faculty deliberation and action in the short term. The second Appendix addresses concerns that are widely shared in the Commission related to our decision-making and administrative structures and also proposes one possible alternative structure that many of us believe could address these concerns. The third Appendix touches on three "Long-Range Priorities" that the Commission is not at this time prepared to affirm except to urge the faculty and administration to continue to monitor these as possible areas of future development.

## Section I. Principles

The work of the Commission has been guided by three basic principles, all of which are suggested by our desire to achieve preeminence. These are:

**Principle 1. The College should achieve curricular coherence in all programs it offers.**

Courses of study offered by the College should fit together in a coherent whole. Students should be well grounded in the fundamentals of their disciplines, and departments and majors should provide students with a broad introduction to the intellectual tools, theoretical constructs, and methodological techniques used in the disciplines. Because achieving coherence can be a particular challenge for interdisciplinary programs, we believe all such programs should have a required core of courses at both the introductory and capstone levels specifically designed to promote integration of the disparate disciplinary strands to which students are exposed. Off-campus study and co-curricular experiences should complement other parts of the curriculum as academically appropriate.

**Principle 2. The College should offer its students academic rigor and balance in all programs.**

All undergraduate majors and minors should embody academic rigor and balance. Rigor, as we understand it, implies a depth and breadth of study that consistently challenge our students and enable them to develop intellectual sophistication. We expect our graduates to be able to evaluate evidence, produce reasoned arguments, and seriously consider alternate points of view. Thus we believe that departments and programs have an obligation to make students conversant with the discipline's foundations, as well as the current trends and intellectual controversies that engage its practitioners. We should achieve balance between the historical and the contemporary, and between theory and practice in the various disciplines.

**Principle 3. The College should be selective and purposeful in all that it does.**

The College should select curricular areas that are most central to the liberal arts and focus its resources and efforts on achieving excellence in those areas. We should offer only a curriculum that the College has the resources to develop with coherence and rigor. Accordingly, we should not attempt to sustain any major, minor, or other academic program that we are unable or unwilling to support at a level of excellence.

## **Section II. General Recommendations**

The principles of curricular coherence, academic rigor and balance, and selectivity and purposefulness should guide the College in establishing and achieving its academic priorities. These principles underscore the necessity of setting clear limits to and requirements for what we do. From these principles we believe, further, that general and specific recommendations may be derived for guiding the development of academic priorities in the several academic divisions, departments and programs of the College. In every case our educational mission must include the attainment of curricular coherence, academic rigor and balance, and selectivity and purposefulness, and, as appropriate, reflect the general recommendations below for geographical focus, historical reach, and curricular balance.

### **Recommendation 1. Geographical Focus.**

Clearly, a small college cannot provide a curriculum that covers all parts of the world. The regions named below have had a significant influence on the development of modern intellectual, religious, cultural and political traditions, and they build on existing strengths and resources at the College. By establishing these as focus areas, we do not mean to eliminate study of other geographical regions; rather, we recommend giving priority, especially in a climate of limited resources, to ensuring strength in these particular areas.

The areas we recommend the College maintain and develop a curriculum in are: Europe (with priority given to Western and classical Europe and secondary emphasis given to Central Europe); the United States; and Asia. Within Asia, priority should be given to China because of its historical importance in the region and its likely centrality in the future. The pivotal importance of China is attested by the richness, depth, and originality of its historical and cultural traditions; its influential literary and religious productions and practices; the complexity of its social and political institutions; its great size both in geography and population; and its contemporary strategic importance, both economically and militarily, to the region and the globe. Secondary priority should be given to Japan and South Asia.

In addition to these areas, the Commission also recognizes the importance of the Middle East historically, culturally, religiously, and in contemporary affairs. But beyond religion is the cultural heritage in literature, law, and, to some degree, the arts. There is also a considerable historical interest in this region: the Middle Ages, the crusades, the Ottoman Empire, the emergence of nation states, colonialism, the politics of oil and water, the rise of Israel, current East-West cultural conflict, and much else.

Thus, while we recommend giving primary place to work in China and secondary emphasis to Japan and South Asia, the Commission also recommends an additional secondary emphasis should be placed on the Middle East. The areas to be built up as opportunity arises are the Middle East and South Asia.

### **Recommendation 2. Historical Reach.**

Understanding the modern world requires an appreciation of its historical antecedents; study of the liberal arts requires not only an appreciation and understanding of the present but of how the present came to be as it is. Therefore, it is necessary for students to learn the historical traditions and antecedents of the modern world, and the curricula of departments and programs throughout the College should give appropriate attention to the study of historical and pre-modern materials.

To correct an evident imbalance of temporal coverage in our curriculum and thereby improve the curricular coherence of our programs, we recommend extending the historical reach of our curriculum by giving appropriate attention to the study of historical and pre-modern materials, with particular respect to the geographical foci identified above in Recommendation 1.

### **Recommendation 3. Curricular Balance.**

A liberal arts education recognizes the importance of the quest for knowledge for its own sake. It also recognizes that in some disciplines knowledge is acquired not only through textual study but also through the doing or practice of the disciplines. A well-structured liberal arts curriculum will thus attempt to achieve an appropriate balance of theory/history and practice/application in those disciplines. This balance should provide our students with a strong theoretical/historical foundation of the disciplines in question as well as the opportunity to deepen their knowledge through practice, performance, or application.

### **Section III. Arts and Humanities**

Because Recommendations 1, 2, and 3 are of such wide scope and importance, we think it useful to spell out more concretely how these recommendations should be implemented in several affected departments and programs.

We find the disciplines and departments within the Arts and Humanities Division considerably strengthened by numerous new faculty appointments. The different disciplines have worked hard to redesign their major curricula, and implicit in the eight arts and humanities disciplines is an interdisciplinary quality and commitment which we applaud and encourage. We believe there should be still more curricular cooperation and collaboration among faculty in the various disciplines, both with respect to developing and planning their majors and to the future development of specially designed clusters of arts and humanities courses that could serve as general introductions to the two divisions for all students. (For discussion of developing such clusters of courses, see Appendix I of this report, General Education.)

#### **Humanities.**

##### **Recommendation 4. Foreign Languages.**

The Commission recognizes the fundamental importance of the study of other languages to an excellent liberal arts education. We therefore support continued strength in the Foreign Languages and also recognize the substantial commitment of resources entailed in sustaining a foreign language requirement for all students. In attempting to balance the acknowledged centrality of language study with responsible resource allocation, the Commission makes the following recommendations.

In the short term, the Commission recommends retaining French, German, and Spanish as majors. French and German should be staffed with two tenure-track positions; Spanish with three tenure-track positions. We recommend establishing a three-year term appointment in French and, in the third year, evaluating the effectiveness of this staffing configuration. All tenure-track faculty would teach both language and literature courses on a 3/2 load. If additional courses are required in the languages through 202 (beyond what can be supplied by tenure-track faculty and senior lecturers), we recommend that they be taught by language instructors. The full time load for language instructors would be 3/3.

We also recommend that all students majoring in these three languages (French, German, and Spanish) be required to spend one year abroad in a language program modeled on the Munich program in Germany. The annual number of such overseas programs for French and German would be limited to one each. There would be two overseas programs annually in Spanish: one in Spain and one in Latin America.

The Commission also recommends retaining Chinese Language and Literature as a minor (supported by one tenure-track position) and retaining Japanese Language and Literature as a minor (also supported by one tenure-track position).

Because we must be selective and should not be teaching languages that are not supported by other courses or strengths in the curriculum, we recommend phasing out the Russian Language minor. The Russian courses in Foreign Languages and Literatures are, with rare exceptions, the only offerings in Russian at the College. This phasing out should occur over the next four years to ensure that students currently enrolled at the College and intending to complete a Russian Minor will be able to do so. The existing tenure-track position in Russian will be retained for the duration of the present incumbent's time at the College but will not be renewed thereafter.

In the longer term, the commission recommends adding Latin and Greek, in support of the development of a Classical Studies minor/major, through 202. (For discussion of a proposed Classical Studies program, see Section VI: Interdisciplinary Studies.)

### **Recommendation 5. History and English.**

American History and American Literature are central to an excellent liberal arts education, especially at Lewis & Clark with an acknowledged emphasis on the United States as a primary geographical focus area. Yet both departments, as currently staffed, have difficulty mounting a sustained, rigorous curriculum in this area without regular reliance upon adjunct and visiting faculty. To remedy this deficiency, the Commission recommends additional strength in the fields of American History and American Literature.

### **Creative Arts.**

The Fine Arts are an important part of the liberal arts and, in keeping with our principles, should be supported to the level of excellence in well-defined areas. As in other parts of the College, it is appropriate for programs in the Fine Arts to focus on particular areas of excellence. We recognize that programs in the Fine Arts require facilities adequate for their support – performance and display spaces, practice space, and studio space – and adequate levels of staffing.

Our current catalog notes that both “the practice and study of the Creative Arts can increase students’ appreciation of the artistry of others, and stimulate and enhance learning of all kinds” (p. 16). The practice of the arts is encouraged at Lewis & Clark in Theatre, Music, and Art through numerous course offerings designed specifically to engage students in performance and production. Students may elect to perform or produce artistic works in any number of ways. At the same time, the study of the arts requires students also to become familiar, again through numerous course offerings, with texts dealing with the theory, history, and literature of the various arts. Both elements, practice and textual study, are essential to a complete and rounded liberal arts education. Therefore, the curricula of our Fine Arts programs in Art, Music, and Theatre should

reflect a balance between the history and theory of creative work and its practice and performance.

## **Visual Arts**

### **Recommendation 6. Art.**

Currently the Art Department has 2 tenure-track positions in Art History (one in Western Art, one in East Asian Art), and 6 positions in Studio Art (two tenure-track, three senior lecturers, one lecturer). In light of recommendations above and the practices of our comparison group institutions, we recommend a shifting of balance between Art History and Studio Art, with a goal of moving to approximately equal balance of theory/history and practice.

Thus, we recommend increasing the number of Western Art Historians to two tenure-track lines, while at the same time phasing out the graphic design studio position. We also recommend that the remaining studio positions be prioritized with an eye toward achieving the goal of this recommendation as retirements permit.

## **Performing Arts**

One important way of achieving familiarity with and appreciation for the arts is through performance. Performance takes many forms, from acting in or directing theatre productions to participation in music ensembles to acquiring skill in solo composition or display. The Commission acknowledges the centrality of performance in the disciplines of Music and Theatre and also the significance of performance to a quality liberal arts education. We believe the Theatre Department has achieved a strong curriculum that adequately balances theory, history, production, and performance and that also affords students sufficient opportunity for participating in the performative aspects of the discipline. In order to be responsive to the guiding principles of this Report the Commission recommends the following specific initiatives for the future development of the discipline of Music. In achieving these recommendations the Commission acknowledges a central role for the faculty of the Music Department in its departmental deliberations in coming years.

### **Recommendation 7. Music.**

During the past several years, the Music Department has made certain curricular and structural changes that are now in place and serve as a secure building block for long-range stability and excellence. Now it is necessary to turn the same attention and focus to the performing groups, especially those that use instruments. We recommend that sufficient resources be devoted to building a fine chamber orchestra in which a body of string players would be augmented (depending on orchestration) by winds, brass, and percussion. A prime function of the orchestra would be to rehearse and perform chamber orchestral works from the classical canon. A second focal group would be a New Music Ensemble. A significant portion of the music they rehearse and perform would originate

from student composers. Such an ensemble would allow for a great diversity of instrumental resources. We recommend a continuation of some kind of jazz ensemble, and all music majors who are instrumentalists will be encouraged to study the art of improvisation with members of our faculty. In short, to create a quality repertoire, we will encourage all interested instrumentalists to participate in chamber orchestra, in a newly formed New Music Ensemble, and in a jazz ensemble.

This recommendation has several implications for the future development of Music. It suggests that the Music Department should focus on some but not all ensembles and that Chamber Orchestra should have the highest priority among these. It suggests also that at least one ensemble should focus on contemporary music. Resources should be shifted from the tenure line in organ to a tenure line for an orchestra and New Music Ensemble conductor who is also able to teach music theory/history. Organ instruction should be handled by adjunct faculty. Finally, this recommendation suggests that priority also be given to hiring a tenure-track pianist who is also able to teach music theory.

## **Section IV. Social Sciences**

Encompassing six distinctive yet highly interrelated departments, the Social Sciences Division is committed to blending rigor and coherence and persistently attracts large numbers of students in most majors. Over the last decade, social science curricula have been generally well designed and implemented, contributing to a strong and innovative division. Completion of the planned Howard Building and improvement of the faculty-student ratio will help position the social sciences for the future. As in the case of the Arts and Humanities, we applaud the interdisciplinary quality and commitment of the Social Sciences, and we encourage development of clusters of social science courses to serve as general requirements. (For discussion of creating divisional clusters of courses, see Appendix I, General Education.)

### **Recommendation 8. International Affairs and Political Science.**

Our governing principles call for curricular coherence in all our majors. Crucial to achieving such coherence is that the central dimensions of a discipline all be taught as part of that major's requirements. Moreover, a balanced program in the social sciences necessitates exposure to quantitative as well as qualitative methodologies. Both the International Affairs and Political Science Departments possess small teaching staffs and exhibit gaps in coverage (with IA, for example, unable to offer or require a quantitative methods course). Both departments, in addition, perennially experience large enrollments in their 100-level courses.

We recommend that an additional tenure-track, joint position be considered in Political Science and International Affairs, conditional upon the two departments working out a persuasive joint curricular plan that achieves curricular coordination between the two majors and that shows how this new resource will be defined and shared. This bridge position would provide incentives to the two departments to identify curricular commonalities for enhancing the strength of both majors. The position will not be allocated if the condition for curricular coordination in this recommendation is not met.

### **Recommendation 9. Sociology and Anthropology.**

The SOAN faculty should deploy its considerable talent to craft a more coherent, more sharply focused major. The field is attractive and has drawn many students. At the same time, the department's focus appears unduly tilted toward a socio-cultural, modern to post-modern focus. Existing tenure lines can be retained, and development of more traditional methodological courses and strategic new courses can, in time, further strengthen the major.

We recommend strengthening the combined Sociology and Anthropology major through strategic redeployment of course offerings and, in the longer term, by careful hiring to better balance the curriculum. Students should have the opportunity to learn about the full richness of Sociology and Anthropology so that they may more thoroughly contextualize both the subfields and analytical techniques they choose to emphasize. The

offerings in Sociology need more depth and coverage of the historical antecedents of modern societies and social theories from the introductory to the advanced levels of the curriculum. The offerings in Anthropology tilt almost entirely to ethnography and specific geographical areas. Planning to strengthen the SOAN curriculum should include consideration of coursework in areas such as history of ethnography, physical anthropology, archaeology, and demography.

## **Section V. Mathematical and Natural Sciences**

Strength in the Mathematical and Natural Sciences characterizes the best liberal arts colleges, and Lewis & Clark College's aspirations require excellence in this area as well. We found that the College's natural science and mathematics programs have been remarkably successful over the last decade in providing excellent educational opportunities for students. Overall, the quality, coherence, and rigor of curricula in the Mathematical and Natural Sciences Division are high, and the level of staffing is generally appropriate for current needs.

Despite these numerous successes, we found several areas where additional progress is needed. First, we noted that the quality of the current science facilities are inadequate for teaching and research. Second, although the quality of the students attracted to the sciences is very high, the number majoring in the mathematical and natural sciences is less than desirable and disproportionately smaller than at comparable liberal arts colleges. Programs in biology, biochemistry, and computer science have respectable enrollments, but those in the mathematical and physical sciences (chemistry and physics) are undersubscribed. These are the very disciplines that depend most heavily on quantitative and mathematical foundations and that are thus affected most severely by the tendency of Lewis & Clark College students to be underprepared mathematically. Our later recommendation (Recommendation 24) that the College emphasize quantitative and mathematical preparation both in its admissions policies and its on-campus curriculum is intended in part to remedy this deficiency and to attract more students interested in studying the natural sciences and mathematics. Excellence in science programs requires establishing flourishing communities of students who study these disciplines as well as maintaining vibrant curricula. The faculty in the Mathematical and Natural Sciences Division should remain attentive to developments in frontier areas of science, including areas of interdisciplinary intersection such as biophysics, as they consider their future curricular developments.

### **Recommendation 10. Biology.**

We found that there were serious staffing needs in biology. The biology faculty contribute to staffing three of the College's more popular majors: biology, environmental studies, and biochemistry. The burgeoning of knowledge in the life sciences suggests that these strong interests will persist for the foreseeable future. We judge that the biology department is stretched somewhat thin, given the high demand for their services from these quarters. Should some members of the department receive joint appointments in biochemistry or environmental studies (see Recommendation 26), this may tax the department's support of its major. Thus we recommend an additional tenure-track position in Biology. Because of current space limitations, this recommendation is contingent on development of new space for research and teaching needs of faculty in the department and on continued strong student demand in the areas served by this department.

### **Recommendation 11. Chemistry.**

Enrollments in lower-division chemistry courses are strong, and the department provides substantial support for the biochemistry major, which has consistently solid enrollments, but the number of chemistry majors in recent years has been sub par compared with the other institutions that we considered. A current external review of the department will address in part the ways in which the chemistry program should evolve to stay abreast of current research and pedagogical trends. Elsewhere we recommend (Recommendation 26) that faculty contributing to interdisciplinary programs such as biochemistry and environmental studies be offered joint appointments that specify their expected contributions. Any alteration of the current offerings of the department or dedication of some defined fraction of the faculty's effort to interdisciplinary programs will have substantial staffing implications. As the department anticipates several retirements in the next half dozen years, the College should carefully evaluate replacement requests with an eye to maximizing the use of resources both to support the chemistry major at a level of excellence and to ensure that other programs that depend on offerings by the department, such as biochemistry, environmental studies, and biology, also are well served. We recommend that this situation be monitored carefully in the future and that the College and department work together to ensure that the program is strong and that enrollments reflect that strength. The best use of resources might involve reconfiguration of existing faculty lines to bring new expertise to the department and/or to establish joint appointments with cognate programs.

### **Recommendation 12. Mathematical Sciences.**

An increased emphasis on developing students' quantitative skills (see Recommendation 24) will fall heavily on the Mathematical Sciences department. Currently three to four courses per year in mathematics are taught by adjunct faculty. The hiring this year of a new faculty member, coupled with a partial, phased retirement, will add staffing for three additional courses by tenure-line faculty in the near term, bringing the department's complement of faculty to 5.6 FTE in mathematics and another 3 in computer science. This should eliminate the need for adjunct faculty in support of the department's core programs. For the longer term, we recommend that the College monitor demand for mathematics courses as a result of the recommended emphasis on quantitative literacy and consider a full 6 FTE in mathematics if warranted by increased demand; this should be decided when the phased retirement is complete in five years.

## **Section VI. Interdisciplinary Programs**

The College's interdisciplinary programs have grown and achieved success over the last decade, reflecting the constantly changing boundaries of intellectual inquiry. Programs reviewed for this report were Biochemistry, East Asian Studies, Environmental Studies, Gender Studies, Latin American Studies, and Political Economy. These programs encompass different disciplines across divisions of the College as well as within divisions; each has the goal of weaving together with rigor and coherence differing perspectives – and often different terminologies – on common subject matter. Some of our programs have incorporated considerable innovation, serving as models for others to follow; others have done less well. To be strong and successful, interdisciplinary programs require a coherent core set of courses and a critical mass of faculty with appropriate disciplinary training.

### **Recommendation 13. East Asian Studies**

The East Asian Studies interdisciplinary program began in 1994 as part of the College's effort to establish Lewis & Clark as a focus for international education. (Among the group of peers we identified, only Colorado College has a similar program, a Department of Asian Studies.) Our interdisciplinary EAS program now involves 11 participating faculty from seven departments in the humanities and social sciences, as well as the recent addition of a 12th faculty member through the a grant from the Luce Foundation. Faculty resources and program design have led to an interdisciplinary major with principal emphasis on China and Japan. Students electing this major are required to complete a minimum of five semesters of either Chinese or Japanese language.

In recent months the EAS program has undergone significant curriculum revision. The changes involved in this revision were prompted by a concern that the major “better guide students to think carefully and clearly about their interests.” The Commission has received and reviewed these changes and finds the EAS faculty have succeeded in creating a more coherent and rigorous major. The restructuring of concentrations is especially notable insofar as it encourages students to select courses that fit together intellectually and academically and provides better preparation for work on the senior thesis. At the same time, the Commission affirms the importance for any interdisciplinary program to provide a substantial “core” of several courses that cohere around the essential focus of the program, and we believe further progress in this area is desirable.

In keeping with the principles and earlier recommendations of this report the Commission proposes a further extension of the logic that led to these curricular revisions. Because of the importance of language study in the existing EAS major, the Commission believes it would be prudent to acknowledge that importance by attaching the major more formally to language study. We also believe that the designation “East Asian Studies” is at present misleading, both because there is very little curriculum in some parts of East Asia and because the designation seems to exclude South Asia. Thus, the Commission recommends converting EAS into an “Asian Studies” major with two tracks: the primary

track, Chinese Studies, and the secondary, Japanese Studies, each formed around strong language skills. Both tracks should consist of a substantial core of courses in language, literature, and history cohering around the disciplinary focus, as well as a number of electives, chosen for coherence with the core, that round out the major. Anchoring Asian Studies in the disciplines of language, literature, and history will give this new major appropriate foundations. A third track, "South Asian Studies," might eventually be called for in keeping with Recommendation 1. This recommendation could entail, over time, a gradual shifting of resources from Japan to South Asia, to achieve greater balance.

#### **Recommendation 14. Environmental Studies**

The Environmental Studies major, instituted four years ago, encompasses complex interdisciplinary insights from all three divisions at the College, and as such it is extremely difficult for someone trained in just one discipline to provide the necessary guidance for the program. As recognized in the recent external review of Environmental Studies, effective leadership for the next stage of the program's development will require in-depth grounding in Environmental Studies and in at least one of the participating disciplines. Given the emphasis of the external review on the potential of the major and the need for its wise stewardship in the future, such a joint appointment appears to be prudent. Therefore, we recommend that, upon retirement of the current head of the Environmental Studies major, a joint appointment should be made of someone with both significant disciplinary training at the graduate level in Environmental Studies and in another discipline. The home department and discipline of this person should be based on the needs of the College at the time of hire.

#### **Recommendation 15. Latin American Studies.**

Latin American Studies was developed in 1994, along with the East Asian Studies program, in an effort to establish Lewis & Clark as a focus of international education. (Three of the Commission's comparison schools have interdisciplinary programs in Latin American Studies: Willamette, Earlham, and Macalester.) The Lewis & Clark program began offering a minor in 1997 and graduates about eight to 15 students a year; there is no major. Students select six courses from a list of options and are required to participate in a Lewis & Clark overseas program in Latin America or Spain. Overall, we found that the Latin American Studies program lacked coherence in the program. No core course has been designed specifically to serve the minor; faculty participation in the program has come from a small number of untenured faculty; and little coordination and communication occur between the Hispanic Studies program and the Latin American Studies program. Hispanic Studies is primarily a Spanish language and literature program, with courses taught in Spanish and with mastery of the language central among its aims, whereas most of the courses in Latin American Studies are taught in English.

For these reasons, and in view of the recent departures of two of the key faculty participants in the program, the Commission recommends phasing out the Latin American Studies minor. Simply to add more resources to Latin American Studies to achieve adequate coherence and depth is inconsistent with the principles articulated

earlier and the geographical areas of focus established in Recommendation 1. This phasing out of the minor does not, however, imply a reduction in current faculty FTE with expertise in this area. The phasing out is of the minor only and should occur over the next four years to ensure that students currently enrolled at the College and intending to obtain a minor in this area will be able to do so.

**Recommendation 16. Political Economy.**

The Political Economy program originated in 1985. According to the director, it was most active in its early years. Over time, especially after the switch from quarters to semesters, courses were offered less frequently, and the program lost some of its focus. In the past several years, very few students have declared the minor (two in 1998-9; one in 1999-2000; three in 2000-1). Given the absence of both well-defined core courses and the shortage of faculty with appropriate training and teaching emphasis in political economy, this minor would need substantial additional resources to give it the rigor and coherence it should have. There is no compelling reason for the College to commit such resources. Without these additional resources, the Political Economy minor fails to meet the institutional standards of excellence. We recommend phasing out the Political Economy minor. This phasing out should occur over the next four years to ensure that students currently enrolled at the College and intending to attain a Political Economy minor will be able to do so.

**Recommendation 17. Classical Studies**

It is unusual for a college of the academic caliber and reputation of Lewis & Clark not to have a program in Classical Studies. Indeed, most comparable colleges have major programs in this area and offer several years of both Greek and Latin languages as well as other courses in various aspects of Greco-Roman history and culture. At present, a major program in Classics is not feasible here. We do, however, recommend the introduction of a minor in Classical Studies. This can be readily achieved in a way that is academically responsible and would involve no additional faculty positions. This minor need not require courses in Latin and Greek. Indeed, the only extra costs involved in the introduction of this program would be a modest investment in library purchases, which would be required to make sufficient resources available for study in the area.

## Section VII. Off-Campus Programs

For nearly four decades, Lewis & Clark College has been strongly identified by students and faculty alike with its overseas and off-campus programs. The opportunity to study abroad has drawn many students to the College, and leadership of off-campus programs has provided many faculty with opportunities to develop new teaching and scholarly interests. In surveys, students report both that they are attracted to the College by its off-campus programs and that they find these programs to be among the most significant and memorable aspects of their college experience. We affirm that Lewis & Clark College should continue its aspiration to be an exemplary liberal arts college with strong international, especially off-campus, programs.

Lewis & Clark's success in this area is due to the talents and efforts of a diverse group of faculty and staff over the years. Currently the International Studies Coordinating Committee, a faculty-student committee, establishes and monitors off-campus programs, which are supervised by the Director and staff of the Office of Overseas and Off-Campus Programs. They have succeeded remarkably in providing popular programs for students. Currently, over 60 percent of Lewis & Clark graduates each year have taken advantage of at least one off-campus study opportunity through Lewis & Clark, a figure that rises to about 70 percent when non-Lewis & Clark programs are included. Few colleges can claim similar levels of participation.

Success brings challenges. Drawing on a self-study by the ISCC and interviews with students, faculty, and staff, we learned of several issues that should be addressed to ensure that off-campus programs continue to be a jewel in the College's crown. First, this extensive off-campus enterprise entails substantial costs in money, staff and faculty time, and replacement for faculty program leaders. It will continue to be a challenge, especially in the current atmosphere of fiscal uncertainty, to ensure that off-campus programs are financially accessible to all students and to ensure that on-campus programs can maintain excellence through the faculty who replace those leading off-campus programs. Second, the high demand for off-campus study, coupled with numerous demands on faculty time and energy, sometimes have resulted in non-faculty personnel leading programs. Because these leaders are responsible for assigning grades to students and overseeing independent studies, we were troubled by this occurrence. Third, even among faculty leaders, there seems to be some variability in the degree to which students are prepared for their off-campus experience and monitored academically during it. Fourth, some "leaderless" programs are tightly integrated with on-campus programs and curricula so that each reinforces the other; other such programs seem more tenuously linked to Lewis & Clark curricula. Fifth, some popular programs are chronically required to turn students away while others do not attract a full complement. Finally, some students seem fully prepared to benefit academically from their off-campus experience, while others seem more interested in a respite from academics (according to both students and faculty leaders).

Elsewhere we recommend two changes that will, if adopted, have substantial impacts on the off-campus programs. First, we recommend institution of a capstone experience

(Recommendation 25) for all graduates. For most majors, such a capstone will require the student to be in residence on campus during at least one semester, and sometimes both semesters of the senior year. Second, we recommend that the College focus its resources to support strong programs in studies of European, U.S., and Asian culture, history, and art. We believe that off-campus programs should reflect those foci. We do not mean that programs to other parts of the world, such as the popular Australia program, should be discontinued but that overseas offerings should be structured to ensure that there is consistent and continuing support for study in Europe and Asia in particular.

We offer a number of recommendations below for off-campus programs, designed to anticipate the impact of adopting these two recommendations or to address the issues noted above. We recommend that off-campus programs be coordinated with on-campus programs as much as possible to enable the two to reinforce each other. We recommend that Lewis & Clark programs be led only by regular faculty, and that all leaders receive a standardized orientation in program leadership. We recommend that students be asked to reflect on their purposes for studying off campus both before and after participating in a program. And we recommend that the College explore options for forming consortia with other liberal arts colleges to maximize both the use of the resources it devotes to off-campus programs and the opportunities for students to study off campus.

#### **Recommendation 18. Focus of Off-Campus Programs.**

Because we are recommending that many on-campus programs focus on the geographical areas of Europe, the U.S., and Asia, we believe it is desirable that our off-campus programs be structured to support this emphasis. Students' understanding of a foreign culture will be enhanced if they can take relevant coursework prior to undertaking overseas study; some programs, such as the one to India, have typically required such coursework. In addition, student contribution to on-campus courses will be enhanced by their direct experience in the culture or political system being considered. Thus classroom study and experiential learning can be mutually enriching, and this symbiosis should be fostered wherever possible. We therefore recommend that the preponderance of off-campus programs share a focus on Europe and Asia or have other well-focused curricular ties. We also recommend that the College evaluate existing overseas study programs in France, China, and Japan and select a single site in each of these three countries to mount our off-campus study programs. Strong working relationships should be developed with the faculty at each of these three sites to ensure that the range of our students' academic interests is served.

#### **Recommendation 19. Faculty Leadership of Off-Campus Programs.**

1. Program leaders function as faculty members in numerous capacities. They oversee student independent study projects, they consult with host country faculty about the appropriate academic standards for Lewis & Clark students, and they often assign grades. Therefore we feel that program leaders should be chosen with the same care as permanent faculty members teaching on campus, and that they possess an appropriate terminal degree. For these reasons we recommend

that only tenure-track faculty and senior lecturers should be eligible to lead off-campus programs. To ensure adequate faculty participation to sustain off-campus programs, the ISCC and Office of Overseas and Off-Campus Programs are encouraged to develop an aggressive faculty recruiting effort. If a faculty member cannot be found to lead a scheduled program, it should be cancelled far enough in advance to allow students to adjust their plans.

2. There is considerable variation in the extent to which Lewis & Clark faculty leaders are actively involved in the programs they lead and in the degree of preparation they receive to lead them. It is important to develop a common understanding among faculty leaders of what will be expected of them and of what support they can expect to receive. It is impossible to anticipate all contingencies of foreign study, but it is possible for all leaders to have similar preparation to meet them. We recommend that the ISCC and Office of Overseas and Off-campus Programs develop an orientation program for faculty leaders and a handbook that details both their responsibilities and the resources available to assist them. When faculty apply to lead off-campus programs, one of their responsibilities should be to complete this training.

#### **Recommendation 20. Expectations of Students.**

We believe that students' educational experiences should be integrated and that students should be encouraged to reflect on their curricular choices, including their choices to study in off-campus programs. Moreover, we feel that the students' experiences are enriched when they have an opportunity to consider an off-campus program's significance in a structured way. To this end we recommend the following.

1. Students applying for off-campus programs should be required to write an application that demonstrates how the program advances their curricular goals and plans at the College.

Students already write an extensive application and are asked to address why they are applying for the program. However, we feel that they should be encouraged to reflect more specifically on their educational goals. This requirement is common among quality liberal arts colleges and is designed to ensure that students articulate to themselves and others their educational motives for off-campus study. We do not mean to say that students' off-campus programs should necessarily serve their major but that it is appropriate to ask them to reflect on their purpose for studying off-campus and on how they plan to achieve that purpose.

2. The student's advisor should have to approve any application for off-campus study. This is to ensure that students have carefully considered with their advisers how their plans for off-campus study will bear on their ability to complete their

majors, to meet pre-professional requirements, and to complete graduation requirements in a timely way.

Some students have participated in multiple programs, thus diminishing the chances of other students who have not yet done so. In some cases the curricular benefit of multiple programs is obscure. While exceptions might be granted for compelling reasons (e.g., a student with two majors, each of which would be enriched by off-campus study), a single program is generally sufficient for students to realize the academic and personal benefits of off-campus study. Therefore:

3. Students should normally be limited to one semester of off-campus study during their Lewis & Clark career, whether offered by Lewis & Clark or another provider, with the exception of Foreign Language majors, where a year of off-campus study is required.

Some students have suggested that they feel orphaned upon return to the campus and have no outlet for the complex task of assimilating their experience off campus into the academic context in which they find themselves again. A thoughtful program of coursework where appropriate, public presentations of their independent work, and other mechanisms should be established to assist the students in making the transition back to the academy and to enrich the opportunities available to others on campus to learn from returning students about their experiences in other cultures. We thus recommend that:

4. Students who participate in off-campus programs should be required to participate in a formal post-program to aid them in reintegrating into the campus community.

At many colleges the "junior year abroad" model still prevails, in which only juniors are permitted to study off campus. We feel that this narrow window of opportunity is not consistent with Lewis & Clark's ethos and history. However, we believe that there are good reasons to ask that students focus on the campus community at the beginning and end of their academic careers. Since elsewhere we recommend a senior capstone experience (Recommendation 25), we believe that all seniors should be in residence during their final semester. We wish to ensure that they take advantage of that capstone, that they fulfill the obligation described in part 4, above, and that the community has an opportunity to benefit from their experience as they make the transition to life beyond Lewis & Clark. We thus recommend that:

5. Participation in off-campus programs should normally be restricted to second-semester sophomores, juniors, and first semester seniors.

Currently first-semester students can apply for off-campus study before they have completed even a semester of college-level work. We regard this as premature for most students. They have not had sufficient opportunity either to assess their ability to handle the academic rigors of college or the time to develop a coherent study plan for their college years. With the exception of dedicated foreign language majors who may know that they will benefit from a sophomore year abroad, most students would profit from waiting until the spring of their first year before applying for off-campus study. Since

there is a year's delay between the student's application for a program and its occurrence, this would postpone most students' eligibility for off-campus study until the spring of their sophomore year.

#### **Recommendation 21. Consortial Arrangements.**

Lewis & Clark cannot hope to offer programs to all desirable locations with its resources. Currently, the Munich program offers an intriguing model. Although it is run by Lewis & Clark, students from other colleges in the region can participate in it. Lewis & Clark realizes income from these students, and their colleges can provide study abroad opportunities to them without having to maintain their own infrastructure to do so. A consortium among Bates, Colby, and Bowdoin Colleges similarly leverages the resources of these institutions and expands the opportunities for study abroad for their students.

The faculty-led model for off-campus study that has been a hallmark of Lewis & Clark's programs is nearly unique and should be maintained. But many Lewis & Clark programs, while overseen by Lewis & Clark faculty and ISCC, are not led by Lewis & Clark faculty members (the Munich program and other language programs provide many examples.) These also provide valuable educational experiences for students. We believe that a consortial arrangement, perhaps with faculty leaders from any of several colleges and students from all of them, could realize some efficiencies of scale while maintaining the group experience that is so central to Lewis & Clark's model. We recommend that this possibility for a consortial arrangement for off-campus study receive further study and perhaps implementation.

#### **Recommendation 22. Establishing and Evaluating Off-Campus Programs.**

We found that there is disagreement among faculty and administrators, and to some extent among students, about what role off-campus programs should play in the life of Lewis & Clark. Are they underemphasized, overemphasized, or is their prominence about right? What criteria should be used to determine whether programs are offered regularly, sporadically, or only once? How should on-campus and off-campus programs be coordinated? The ISCC has wrestled continuously with these issues and has done exceptional work in maintaining the consistency and integrity of our off-campus programs. But we believe that ultimate responsibility for these programs rests in the whole faculty and that the time is propitious for a public airing and discussion of these matters. We hope that a widely shared vision for off-campus programs will result and that this vision will serve to guide future members of ISCC in assessing off-campus programs. Therefore we recommend that the College empower a task force to develop a conceptual framework for determining where off-campus programs should be established, the frequency with which they should be offered, and what criteria should be used to evaluate them, as a step toward implementing the recommendations of this Commission.

**Recommendation 23. Public Representation of Off-Campus Programs.**

Currently, some printed materials concerning the College's off-campus programs are produced by the Office of Overseas and Off-Campus Programs, some are produced by the Office of Admissions, and others are overseen by the ISCC. In a few cases, we have found that information provided by different sources is inconsistent or even contradictory. Because off-campus programs are so important to Lewis & Clark, it is essential that the College speak with one voice about them. A committee that promotes coordination among the various offices is needed to ensure that consultation among them is a regular occurrence. Therefore, we recommend that the Dean, in consultation with the Academic Council, establish a coordinating committee to oversee all literature and Web materials related to off-campus programs.

## Section VIII. Curricular Initiatives

### **Recommendation 24. Rhetorical and Quantitative Reasoning Skills.**

We state in our current catalog: “Lewis & Clark College considers the following elements to be essential to a liberal arts education: 1) Mastery of the fundamental techniques of intellectual inquiry: effective writing and speaking, active reading, and critical and imaginative thinking” (p. 11). In many academic and civic circumstances, active reading and critical and imaginative thinking require the ability to reason quantitatively.

We also promise in our catalog: “Students therefore encounter significant writing requirements in a range of courses throughout the entire curriculum and, where appropriate, are encouraged to present their ideas orally in the classroom and in other public forums” (p. 12). Currently, however, we have few formal structures to assure that the students we graduate have well-developed writing and speaking skills. The first-year course in the General Education program is a logical locus for these activities, but further development of writing and speaking skills should continue throughout a student’s four years and should culminate with a senior capstone experience (see Recommendation 25).

We pay even less formal attention to the development of our students’ skills in quantitative reasoning. Currently, too many of our students struggle or do not succeed in courses requiring quantitative reasoning skills even at the most elementary level. Deficiencies in quantitative reasoning may dissuade some students from pursuing certain areas of study and may necessitate that courses be offered with less-than-desirable rigor.

We believe that we should have similar expectations for our students’ quantitative reasoning abilities and for their rhetorical abilities. In accord with our principles and stated curricular goals, we should establish both as academic priorities, i.e.,

1. no matter what level of skill they enter with, our students should graduate with improved quantitative and rhetorical skills, and
2. all our graduates should be able to demonstrate these skills in a measurable fashion approved by the faculty.

**Quantitative Reasoning Skills:** We currently require that all students take two courses that emphasize quantitative reasoning (Categories B and C of the Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning Requirement). We know little about how effective this requirement has been at developing our students’ skills, but anecdotal evidence suggests that more improvement is needed. Toward this end, we recommend:

1. Revise the language in our catalog to reflect that the normal requirement for entering students is to have at least three years of college-preparatory mathematics and to recommend four years for students interested in the mathematical and natural sciences and in certain areas of the social sciences.

2. Category B courses should require that students use quantitative skills at a high level. Where appropriate, faculty teaching these courses should include among the course goals the improvement of students' quantitative reasoning abilities. Faculty teaching these courses should resist diluting their expectations.
3. The minimum prerequisite for Category C courses should be the same as that for Category B courses, as listed in the footnote on page 16 of the current catalog.
4. For every discipline with a quantitative dimension, that major's curriculum should be structured to give students training in the use of quantitative tools. Each discipline must determine what an appropriate level is for its own majors, but every discipline in which quantitative competence is appropriate should make it a priority that students achieve that level.
5. In order to formulate more specific recommendations, we need to gather data on:
  - a. what our students' quantitative abilities are at the time of entrance, and
  - b. whether our students' abilities have significantly improved by the time they graduate.

We propose the creation of a Quantitative Reasoning Task Force to gather and analyze these data. On the basis of their results, the Task Force should recommend ways to support the appropriate development of students' quantitative skills.

Rhetorical Skills: During the 2000-2001 academic year, the Writing and Speaking Task Force developed a number of recommendations designed to improve students' writing and speaking skills. This group recognized that students and faculty have diverse needs and are best served by different kinds of support. We recommend that the College support diverse initiatives to help improve students' writing and speaking skills. Possibilities might include (but should not be restricted to):

1. providing faculty development workshops.
2. establishing writing-intensive and/or speaking-intensive courses.
3. creating and supporting a network of writing and speaking student-mentors.
4. creating a Student Rhetoric Center.
5. creating increased opportunities for students to present their work to their peers.
6. as a long-range goal, reducing class size, thus making it more feasible to work with students individually to develop these skills.

### **Recommendation 25. Senior Capstone Experience.**

There is currently inconsistency among departments and programs with respect to the senior experience. In some departments, students are deemed ready to graduate as soon as they have taken the required number and distribution of courses; in others, there is a culminating experience of some kind. We think that seniors in every major benefit from an experience in which they reflect on what they have learned and engage the materials and methodology of their discipline to demonstrate their proficiency, their depth, and their intellectual sophistication in that discipline. This exercise can also provide students an opportunity to demonstrate that they have achieved a high level of competence in the

skills of written and/or oral communication. Thus, we recommend that each major in the College have or develop a senior capstone experience as a requirement for graduation.

We recognize that this requirement may have considerable resource implications and that different disciplines will vary in what is appropriate and feasible. Depending on the field, the experience might require students to draw together and synthesize the particular elements that go into the formation of a discipline, or to produce a significant creative or analytical project, or to consider how their major connects with other branches of learning and other endeavors. Therefore, each department or program should have considerable freedom in designing this senior experience. The many departments that already have such a requirement can offer some models for those departments moving forward to achieve this goal.

### **Recommendation 26. Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning.**

Few problems fall neatly into traditional departments, and both students and faculty can gain by developing a multi-faceted approach to the analysis of problems. However, we find that there are some serious impediments to first-rate interdisciplinary education at the College.

The first concern relates to how one educates students in an interdisciplinary program. While interdisciplinary programs and some departmental majors require students to take courses from several different disciplines, students are often left on their own to integrate the different approaches they learn in these courses. Students are rarely lucky enough to be taught by a faculty member who has mastered more than one disciplinary approach or by a teaching team with multiple disciplinary perspectives.

**Team-teaching:** The College should encourage team-teaching, both in support of interdisciplinary interests and programs and, where intellectually appropriate, within and between departments. The Divisional Deans should invite proposals for team-teaching, either in existing or in new courses (which would pass through the regular approval process). Faculty would receive full teaching credit for participation in approved, team-taught courses. The Academic Council should determine annually the number of courses that can be team-taught, given its budgetary guidelines. Priority would be given to courses with interdisciplinary content team-taught by individuals with different disciplinary backgrounds, but intra-departmental team-teaching should be considered as well.

Second, interdisciplinary programs labor under considerable uncertainty about the staffing of their courses. Because faculty teaching in interdisciplinary programs are hired into particular departments, their expected contributions to interdisciplinary programs are not always clearly laid out and are sometimes secondary to their departmental responsibilities. Formally negotiated joint appointments have the potential to provide staffing stability for interdisciplinary programs.

**Joint Appointments:** The College should examine contractual agreements with faculty who currently teach in interdisciplinary programs or in more than one department and, when appropriate, recognize formally and define explicitly their responsibilities. As these faculty are replaced, the College should plan, seek, and fill those positions with joint appointments as well.

In addition, new position requests should be framed and approved in terms of meeting the curricular objectives of recommendations for geographical foci, temporal coverage, and balance of theory/history and practice. The Commission has identified as examples the following areas as particularly appropriate for consideration at this time for joint appointments:

1. A joint appointment between Religious Studies and History in Jewish Studies.
2. Joint appointments in new languages, as they are added, e.g., between Foreign Languages and History in Latin, Foreign Languages and English Literature in Italian, Foreign Languages and Philosophy in Greek.
3. Joint appointments between Art and SOAN in Archaeology.

**Recommendation 27. Consistently Rigorous Grading.**

Our recommendation concerning grading is related directly to our first principles: excellence marked by curricular coherence and academic rigor in all our programs. We found inconsistency among departments, programs, and divisions with respect to the grading standards used. Data presented to the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges in the College's *Report on Assessment in the Arts and Sciences*, April 2001, indicate that mean grade point averages vary across divisions and departments as well as across course levels, i.e., 100 level; 200 level; 300/400 level. Among departments, average grades range from a low of 2.6 for 100-level courses (in a single department) to a high of 4.0 for 300/400-level courses (in a single department). The following mean GPAs were reported for each division for 1995 through 2000:

	<u>Arts &amp; Humanities</u>	<u>Math &amp; Natural Sciences</u>	<u>Social Sciences</u>
1995	3.3	2.8	3.1
1996	3.3	2.9	3.1
1997	3.3	3.0	3.1
1998	3.3	2.9	3.2
1999	3.4	3.0	3.2
2000	3.3	3.0	3.2

In addition, evidence exists that grading on many of our off-campus programs is higher than the norm for on-campus study.

We have had few College-wide discussions of the causes or the consequences of these trends. In addition, we provide new faculty with little or no information about what sorts of grading standards exist at the College. While our goal is not necessarily the leveling of GPAs or standards across divisions, departments, and course levels, we believe that it

is appropriate to give more attention to grading standards and to the information transmitted by the College's grading systems. Therefore, we recommend that periodic faculty discussions be held to discuss grading practices, standards, and trends, and that the divisional deans be given the responsibility of working with departments and programs to establish consistently rigorous grading policies and to resist the erosion of those standards over time.

### **Members of the Commission on Academic Priorities**

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Stephen Dow Beckham, Dr. Robert B. Pamplin, Jr., Professor of History  
Paulette F. Bierzychudek, Williams Swindells, Sr., Professor of Natural Sciences  
John F. Callahan, Morgan S. Odell Professor of Humanities  
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Janis E. Lochner, Dr. Robert B. Pamplin, Jr., Professor of Science  
Bob Mandel, Professor of International Affairs  
Robert W. Owens, Professor of Mathematics  
C. Gary Reiness, Dean of Mathematical and Natural Sciences and Professor of Biology  
Richard L. Rohrbaugh, Paul S. Wright Professor of Christian Studies  
Harold J. Schlee, Dean of Social Sciences and Associate Professor of Economics  
Gilbert Seeley, James W. Rogers Professor of Music  
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### **Subgroups:**

#### **Arts and Humanities**

Harold Schlee, convener  
Donald Balmer  
Stephen Beckham  
John Callahan  
Gilbert Seeley

#### **Social Sciences**

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#### **Physical Education and Athletics**

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## Appendix I: General Education

The Commission did not conduct a formal study or review of General Education as such. Nevertheless our work inevitably forced us from time to time to confront matters that fall within the scope of General Education at Lewis & Clark College. We here summarize areas touching on General Education that we believe are in need of remedial action by the faculty.

1. **The 1/3-1/3-1/3 Requirement.** Many majors, including most of the majors in the Mathematical and Natural Sciences Division, require more course work in the major than the current 1/3 rule permits. This has led to violations of the rule and, in some cases, hiding requirements. It is probably sensible to acknowledge that a problem exists and change the policy. The Commission initially thought that the requirement could be modified by stipulating that "major requirements along with general education requirements should not exceed 2/3 of the total credits needed for graduation." This solution, however, does not work for all students. Some would still exceed the 2/3 limit because of the number of courses needed for the major and for general education.

It was interesting to discover that the so-called "1/3 rule" has apparently never been affirmed as a "rule" by any faculty body. In the late 1970's the catalog first describes a "general education philosophy," "a common core of learning" that all students should have and that should consist of 1/4 of all coursework. The 1/3 rule seems to have evolved silently from this philosophy under the quarter system.

2. **Inventing America.** The Curriculum Committee and the CAS faculty reviewed Inventing America as a part of a General Education review in 1998-99. The Commission did not discuss this first-year course or make recommendations about it. It is, however, scheduled for a review by the faculty within the next one to two years, and some of the Commission's recommendations, if adopted, may have implications for that review.
3. **International Studies.** Although this requirement was not discussed in any detail by the entire Commission, it was the subject of discussion in several subgroups. The consensus among those who did address it is that the international studies requirement is a weak link in our General Education Program. Essentially it lacks coherence and possibly rigor. Members wondered what educational goal is served by this requirement under its current definition, apart from the altogether vague and general notion that it will "engage students in a significant manner with a region of the world other than the United States." In particular, it seems questionable that students will acquire the desired engagement with another culture from simply choosing two courses from the list of courses on p. 15 of the current catalog. The list furnishes no assurance that the two courses will cohere in any way either with each other or with students' other academic interests.

- 4. General Education Clusters in Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Mathematical and Natural Sciences.** The Commission recommends the creation of small clusters of courses in the Arts, the Humanities, and the Social Sciences to serve as general introductions for all students to these branches of learning. **We make this recommendation recognizing that Inventing America's considerable benefits do not include the ability to be an acceptable substitute for general requirements in either the humanities and arts or the social sciences.** If this recommendation is adopted, these courses might replace the International Studies requirement in the General Education program.

In the arts, students currently may choose any one from a long list of courses, including all courses in Art and Music, almost all courses in Theatre, and two of the writing courses in English. The Commission believes that the fine arts faculty, in collaboration with humanities faculty, should design clusters of courses that introduce students to both the history/theory and practice of the arts, and address relationships among the arts.

Of the present General Education requirements in the three divisions, we find those in Mathematical and Natural Sciences the most strenuous introduction to the disciplines. In our judgment, even these courses might profit from a certain sharpening of focus so that, however students choose to satisfy these eight semester hours of general requirements, they come away with solid, introductory knowledge of the scientific method for understanding natural phenomena and an appreciation of how scientific disciplines are interrelated.

- 5. Physical Education and Athletics.** The Commission does not recommend a change in the PE&A General Education requirement. **We do, however, recommend the creation of a faculty standing committee on PE&A, charged with monitoring and reporting regularly to the faculty on issues related to PE&A at the College.** This committee should incorporate the gender equity task force and should be anchored by the two Faculty Athletics Representatives.

The reason for this recommendation is that currently the faculty receives for the most part only occasional, indirect, and informal information about matters related to PE&A. This standing committee will remedy that deficiency.

## **Appendix II: Divisional Structure**

In its report on priorities set forth above, the Commission identified three basic principles that ought to guide our choices and efforts in the coming years. First, since we cannot do everything, we must be purposefully selective about what we choose to undertake. Second, in making choices and setting priorities, curricular coherence should be a basic criterion. And finally, we should look for an outcome that balances theory and practice, the contemporary and historical in a program that is rigorous and demanding.

Implementing such a program requires that we think not only about what we do, but the way we organize ourselves to do it. Obviously no organization of disciplines and programs is perfect, and all such schemes have both strengths and weaknesses. Our current structure with three divisions is one way to organize ourselves. But it is not the only way or perhaps even the best way to go about it. In fact, it is possible that other approaches might serve the needs of the present moment better. Before imagining alternative structures, however, it is important to clarify what we see to be the weaknesses of our current pattern of organization.

### **Concerns Raised by the Current Structure**

In mulling over how to implement the principles stated above, the Commission has been struck by a tendency in the current system toward redundancy, in particular a structural redundancy, which seems inadvertently to discourage the close collaboration required for groups of like-minded faculty to articulate and deliver the strongest possible curriculum. Specifically, our current structure has three administrative tiers: departmental (under the sway of individual departments, often zealous on behalf of their autonomy), divisional (under the leadership of divisional deans), and decanal (under the aegis of both the Academic Council and the Dean of the College).

At times this multi-tiered structure acts as an impediment to the faculty's ability to take full, effective responsibility for the curricular programs they and cognate faculty offer to our students. Curricular initiative or collaboration may be blunted or even abandoned during the bureaucratic ascent (e.g., some course proposals or other curricular initiatives now require five separate approvals). When added to the fact that departments are sometimes too insular to recognize curricular overlaps or genuine interdisciplinary possibilities, this kind of structural redundancy often works against us.

In the present structure, a substantial amount of faculty time is given over to the administrative responsibility of chairing departments, a responsibility which, in many departments, falls consistently on the same one or two persons. Currently 30+ tenured faculty members hold administrative positions (in 26 departments/programs) as deans, department chairs or program heads, on top of their teaching and research responsibilities. That number is at once too many and too few. It is too many in requiring large numbers of our best faculty to shift their efforts away from the classroom. Yet it is too few to do all the work necessary, hence requiring that a few do a disproportionate share.

In our current system, there are approximately 20 course releases per year given to persons in administrative positions. In addition, a substantial number of stipends are provided for department or program chairs not taking a course release. The potential number of released courses in any given year is 27, but many faculty opt for the stipend instead. These courses are either filled by adjuncts or, in many cases, not filled at all because adjuncts for a single course are not available or desirable.

It is obvious that any structure that draws lines between or creates groupings among disciplines/majors/programs simultaneously enhances and inhibits collaboration and shared responsibility. Any lines we draw would highlight distinctive contributions and focus effort; the groupings we establish would enhance common interests and facilitate collaborative programs. Excellence requires both, yet no structure delivers both in equal measure. It is our conviction that the current tripartite divisional structure focuses on the lines to the detriment of shared interests. There is insufficient collaboration between departments and insufficient encouragement of faculty whose appointments for the most part are solely to individual departments to work with those in other departments.

It has become clear to us that our current divisions are too diverse and complex, and that they have become a layer of administration with little purpose or mission that is distinctly divisional. This is especially true of the Arts and Humanities Division, which includes nearly half the current tenure track faculty. It is difficult for one divisional dean to master the intricacies of eight departmental curricula and attend to the multitude of needs these departments inevitably present. The other divisions, while smaller, remain large enough that developing a common and coherent curricular mission has proven difficult to attain. In our present configuration, position requests do not always result from curricular planning so much as from disciplinary planning, often done in a setting of departmental isolation. At the end of the day, divisions are not really effective curricular planning units that are capable of long range planning and setting coherent curricular priorities.

Finally, it seems to us that the Academic Council may be too small to represent adequately our varied curricular interests, nor is it able to function well as a priority-setting body for the College curriculum. It is so focused on the (necessary) task of day-to-day administrative needs that it rarely gets to the larger picture. Nowhere is that problem more obvious than in the fact that the Academic Council often determines curriculum by virtue of approving position requests but does so without a true curricular plan.

In sum, it is the Commission's conviction that the present configuration of departments and divisions is not an optimal structure for the development and delivery of the curriculum. While we are not agreed on the best way to change the structure at the present time, we believe that some combination of structural change and policy recommendations might serve us well in the next decade. It might be possible to do better than the current system.

We therefore recommend to the President that means be developed in the immediate future to study alternative structures and policies that might enhance a culture of shared responsibility for the curriculum. The goal would be to develop a structure that will enhance the visibility, efficiency, coherence, and interrelationships of the various programs and majors we offer in the curriculum.

### **Guidelines for Next Steps**

Members of the Commission have discussed these issues in some detail. We were unable to reach agreement about how best to address them; however, we did agree that certain principles are important:

1. Some group, whether the Academic Council or another group, needs to be assigned the ongoing responsibility for developing academic priorities. This should be a continual effort, not a once-in-a-decade undertaking.
2. Ways need to be found to share curricular responsibility across departmental lines. In many cases this will be the result of conscious interdisciplinary planning, but in all cases we should recognize the need to maximize disciplinary interactions and avoid duplications.
3. Divisions, if we retain them, need to develop a common mission that guides curricular planning and position priorities. Any structure we design should enhance an ongoing faculty discourse about the shape of the curriculum beyond the walls of departments and majors.
4. Ways need to be found to spread the workload of administrative tasks so that we minimize the number of faculty taken from the classroom for administrative duties. This may require simplifying the present three-tiered administration of the curriculum.

### **Putting It Into Practice**

The obvious question is how we might achieve the goals stated above. What kind of structure might enhance the common curricular responsibility we imagine? Would policy changes help? Obviously there are a number of possibilities, and each would have strengths and weaknesses. The Commission spent considerable time looking at alternatives. One possibility would be to structure smaller divisions, each mounting a variety of majors, minors or other programs.

Below is an example that the Commission discussed at length. While we are significantly split as to its merits, and while we can envision other possibilities, we did explore the ways such a divisional structure might enhance a sense of common curricular mission. No doubt other faculty can imagine different structural models, and it is precisely that kind of creative thinking about how to address the goal we seek to encourage.

The proposal below imagines seven divisions. Each would have between 14 and 17 tenure-track faculty members, each contractually hired to staff a particular major, minor or interdisciplinary program offered by the division. The seven divisions would ultimately be the administrative units responsible for the development, coherence and delivery of the programs that constitute the College curriculum. Listed under each division is the number of current faculty assigned to those programs.

1. Arts (currently 16.5 FTE, of which 5.5 are senior lecturers)
  - a. Art
  - b. Music
  - c. Theatre
2. Letters (currently 19 FTE, of which 2 are senior lecturers)
  - a. English Literature
  - b. Asian Languages and Cultures
  - c. European Languages and Literatures
3. History, Philosophy, and Religion (currently 16 FTE, including 1 senior lecturer)
  - a. History
  - b. Philosophy
  - c. Religion
4. Political and Economic Sciences (currently 17 FTE, including 1 senior lecturer)
  - a. Political Science
  - b. International Affairs
  - c. Economics
5. Social and Behavioral Sciences (currently 17 FTE)
  - a. Anthropology
  - b. Communication
  - c. Psychology
  - d. Sociology
  - e. Gender Studies
6. Life Sciences (currently 15 FTE)
  - a. Biology
  - b. Biochemistry
  - c. Chemistry
  - d. Environmental Studies
7. Mathematical and Physical Sciences (currently 14 FTE)
  - a. Mathematics (and Statistics)
  - b. Computer Science
  - c. Physics

We are quick to acknowledge that this is not the only way we could organize ourselves. Moreover, it is not our intent to bring this forward as a proposal at the present time. Our example is offered in the spirit of creative exploration with the hope that full discussion of the possibilities will emerge in the near future. To that end, we make our recommendation to President Mooney to undertake with the faculty the next steps in structuring ourselves for our common task.

## **Appendix III: Long-Range Priorities**

The members of the Commission also spent some time talking about the directions in which we should move over the longer term, as fiscal realities permit. There were three curricular areas that received considerable attention in this discussion: one interdisciplinary, one in the Mathematical and Natural Sciences Division, and one in the Arts and Humanities Division. In addition, one broader priority had significant support. The three curricular areas are to be regarded as areas for possible future development only after the recommendations in the main body of this Report have been carried through.

### **Interdisciplinary**

Neuroscience, the study of the biological basis of behavior, represents the intersection of psychology and biology but also draws on philosophy, computer science, biochemistry, biophysics, sociology, and anthropology. Neuroscience is a rapidly growing field that is and will be at the forefront of research and discovery for many years to come. Most of the top liberal arts colleges have developed programs in this area in the last decade. Lewis & Clark currently offers quite a few courses that are typically part of an undergraduate curriculum in Neuroscience (e.g. Brain and Behavior; Drugs and Behavior; Neurobiology; Perception; Perspectives in Cognitive Science, and others). We believe that Neuroscience is an area we should move toward in the future, especially given existing faculty and curricular resources in this area.

### **Mathematical and Natural Sciences**

Drawing on principles from chemistry, mathematics, and physics, geology is offered as a major by many of the best liberal arts colleges. Lewis & Clark is situated in a landscape that has been shaped by dramatic geological processes, and the Environmental Geology course currently being offered is enjoying considerable popularity and engendering student interest in further course offerings in this area. The practical implications of geological processes for humans, and for our future on Earth, are profound. Geology is a discipline with strong historical traditions and clear future significance and would have many points of intersection with our current programs, especially in Environmental Studies. It would also give us a strength nearly unique among our regional rivals. We judge that it deserves a larger place in the curriculum in the future.

Mounting a program in Geology will require considerably more resources than Neuroscience would, because at present there is only one faculty member with expertise in this area. Shared positions with Physics, Chemistry, or Biology might be one way to garner some of these resources in the future.

### **Arts and Humanities Division**

Our focus on Europe is currently supported by three European languages: French, Spanish, and German. When resources are available to add an additional European

language, we recommend Italian as the most logical choice. Offerings in Italian (through the level of 202) would support our overseas program in Italy and would complement current curricular offerings in History, English, Art, and Music.

In addition to these specific areas, broader concerns were discussed. One of these had sufficient Commission support to warrant bringing it forward with this report. It is, very simply, that permanent faculty should deliver the curriculum. Our goal should be that when a department or program's tenure track-lines are all filled, and all tenure-track faculty are on campus and available to teach full time, that department or program should be able to deliver its curriculum without the use of adjuncts. Achieving this goal within a decade should be a high priority.