Potential Models for the Revision of Liberal Learning

The Ad Hoc Liberal Learning Task Force

Background

On May 16, 2018, Steering created the Ad Hoc Liberal Learning Task Force and charged it "to discern faculty opinion regarding the scope and nature of the revision of the Liberal Learning Program and to define parameters for this revision, to engage the faculty in conversation regarding the role of Liberal Learning vis-à-vis the major, and to lead the faculty at large in defining the goals and composition of a revitalized Liberal Learning Program." On March 6, 2019, Steering charged the Task Force to continue its work and "to move forward by recommending a range of models for Liberal Learning including our current model. In explaining the recommended models the task force should note advantages and disadvantages of each." Steering also charged the Task Force to "consider how Liberal Learning designations would be assigned to coursework or experiences under each model proposed."

This document addresses the first charge from Steering and presents four substantially different models for a revised Liberal Learning Program. These models were developed during the 2018-19 academic year and were based on consideration of:

- the Liberal Learning self-study and external review,
- a set of models developed by the team TCNJ sent to the 2017 AAC&U Summer Institute on General Education and Assessment,
- the Faculty Senate memo to incoming President Kathryn Foster entitled "The Current State of The College of New Jersey," and
- feedback gathered by the Task Force from:
    - two open forums
    - one Faculty Senate meeting
    - one Academic Leaders meeting,
    - six school and department meetings, and
    - a survey of faculty.

For each model, the general concept of the model is presented, followed by the specifics of its curricular structure, the nature of the first-year experience, the total number of courses required by the model, the learning goals/outcomes met by the model, and the advantages and disadvantages of the model. The models are presented in order of the extent of change from the current program, with the first model most similar to the current program and the fourth model most different. At the end of this document, a table is presented that compares the major features of the current program and the four models.

Currently there are discussions on campus about changes to the undergraduate academic experience that might be implemented along with, or independent of, a revision to the Liberal Learning Program, including allowing first-year students to enter TCNJ without a declared major and assigning only pass/fail grades to courses during the first semester of the first year. Because all four models presented in this document could incorporate either or both of these changes, they are not incorporated into the presentation of the models.

Decision making regarding Liberal Learning will also be affected by decision making regarding the size of the undergraduate student body. We note that the undergraduate population has increased in size by approximately 21% since we instituted our current program in 2004. At the same time the size of the tenure-line faculty has remained comparatively stable, increasing by only 9%; this has impacted our ability to staff our current program with tenured and tenure-track faculty.

Model 1: Minimal Revision

General Concept

When created in the early 2000s, TCNJ's Liberal Learning program was a nationally-recognized, award-winning curriculum. It combined courses with co- and extracurricular activities to provide students with a general education that had breadth, rigor, and heart, embodying values of community service, intellectual curiosity, scholarly accomplishment, global awareness, and engaged citizenship.

In the years since its creation, the program has experienced slow but inevitable drift. In some cases, the original motives and goals of the program have been forgotten or diluted. Just to give a few examples:

- Liberal Learning has become a list of boxes to check rather than an exciting educational experience to explore.
- The number of sections of First Seminar (FSP) has increased significantly, and as a result, fewer of those sections are being taught by full-time faculty.
- Some departments and majors have reduced the foreign language requirement for their students.
- More and more courses have been approved to satisfy one or two or three (or more) Liberal Learning requirements, diluting the breadth of our students' education and allowing students in some departments to satisfy most of their Liberal Learning requirements without venturing outside their major.
- Expectations for the establishment of many mid-level writing-intensive courses were unclear, and as a result, not all our students are prepared for the kind of writing that their capstones (and their future lives and careers) will require.

This model proposes that TCNJ recommit to the values and goals of the Liberal Learning program as it was originally conceived by making changes to the current program to address the issues it currently faces. For the most part, the requirements and curricular structure would remain the same.

Specifics of the Curricular Structure

The table below delineates the specific issues with the current program and proposed revisions that would attempt to resolve these issues.

Liberal Learning Elements	Issues	Potential Revisions
Goals	Too many goals, too diffuse and vague	Revise the Liberal Learning (LL) goals to give LL courses more refinement and definition.
Advising	LL too complex for easy advisement	Prepare a searchable database of LL courses (maybe with Amazon-style algorithms to suggest options to students for fulfilling the requirements, based on their past choices).
Summer Reading Program	Relatively low faculty participation, book choice process	Pay faculty a nominal stipend for participating.
First Seminar Program (FSP)	Issues with percentage of adjunct faculty, unevenness of courses, loss of focus	Recommit TCNJ to FSPs – predominantly full-time faculty (designated fellows?), revitalized goals/idea.
IDS 102 – Information Literacy Proficiency (online)	Anecdotal evidence that students don't take the current online course seriously	Reinforce and expand in first-semester half course on writing.
Oral communication	Left to majors, not enforced	Add to FSP?
First-Year Writing	Complaints about poor student writing skills in the FSP	Require all students to take two half-courses on writing, one first semester (tied to FSP, on general writing skills), one second semester (on writing for different situations and different disciplines – as prep for Liberal Learning courses and for mid-level writing-intensive courses. WRI 101 would remain a requirement for students who currently take WRI 101, and WRI 102, as a full course in the spring, could potentially remain a requirement (in place of the second-semester half course) for students who currently are required to take WRI 102.
Liberal Learning Elements	**Issues**	**Potential Revisions**
Capstone Writing	Mid-level writing-intensive courses do not prepare students for capstone writing	Encourage more departments to consider a writing-enriched curriculum (e.g., https://wec.umn.edu/).

Second language	Uneven across majors (some required, some not required)	Recommit to having all TCNJ students required to take a second language (perhaps two semesters rather than three?).
Community-engaged learning	First-year CEL experience is better when connected to FSPs	Work with CELR to improve the non-FSP experiences.
	Advanced CEL is not executed in all majors	Either eliminate as a requirement or recommit to executing it for all majors.
Civic Responsibilities Gender Global Race & Ethnicity	1. dated (need additional categories) 2. disagreement over flexibility (need more, need less) 3. students "gaming" the system by taking triple-counters	All the civic responsibilities requirements will be satisfied freshman year. A new category (sustainability? social class?) could be added, and/or current categories could be revised. Stop allowing courses to count for more than two LL requirements (civic engagement or breadth).
Domains Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts (LVPA) World Views and Ways of Knowing (WVWK) Behavioral, Social, and Cultural Perspectives (BSCP) Social Change in Historical Perspective (SCHP) Natural Science (NS) Quantitative Reasoning (QR)	1. inequity in approval of courses to meet these requirements across departments 2. too often satisfied within major (lack of real disciplinary breadth) 3. desire for more interdisciplinary opportunities 4. Some domain names are unwieldy and at times confusing (e.g., students often interpret "World Views" as equivalent to global perspectives)	In response to #1, create a process for requesting that a course prefix count automatically for a domain requirement (the way that all LIT courses count for LVPA, all HIS courses count for SCHP). In response to #2, cap the number of courses within a student's major that can count toward LL requirements. In response to #3, allow courses to count for more than one breadth requirement (e.g., LVPA *and* SCHP). Courses would have to meet the guidelines and goals of both requirements adequately. But no single course should count for more than two LL requirements total (whether breadth or civic responsibility – see under "Civic Responsibilities" above). In response to #4, rename domains to simplify and clarify.

Interdisciplinary Concentrations	Only 1% of students complete them	Either recommit TCNJ to the concept of interdisciplinary concentrations or eliminate them entirely.

First-year experience

Summer reading

Same as the current system, except that faculty would receive a stipend to participate, and the process of book selection would be revised.

Courses

- First semester
  - FSP (may include CEL)
  - 0.5-unit WRI course that incorporates current IDS 102
  - WRI 101 (if placed into)
- Second semester
  - 0.5-unit WRI course (or 1.0-unit WRI 102 if placed into)
  - CEL experience if not taken as part of FSP
- All civic responsibilities

Total number of courses

13-14 (12-13 units)

Learning Goals/Outcomes

The learning goals would be largely based on the current set, but modified as indicated above.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages

1. Recommitting ourselves to our award-winning Liberal Learning program allows us to capitalize on the many strengths of our current program while addressing the issues that have arisen in the years since its initial implementation. .
2. Making minimal revisions to the current Liberal Learning program requires less negotiation and less work than a more involved revision or replacement of the program would inevitably necessitate.

Disadvantages

1. Making minimal changes to our current program may stifle creativity by limiting the possibilities for curricular innovation that accompany a reconsideration of what general education at TCNJ ought to be.
2. Retaining our current program with only minimal changes risks failing to meet the changing needs of our students as the world around us evolves in ways that we could not have conceived when we created our Liberal Learning program in the early 2000s.

Model 2: Integrative Strands

General Concept

An "integrative" model of general education creates connections across disciplines; a "strands" model focuses on themes. The "Integrative Strands Model" described below thus organizes an interdisciplinary, "integrative" approach to Liberal Learning into three thematic "strands": Nature & Technology, A Purposeful Life, and Global Citizenship (see below for the outcomes that define the strands). This model adopts and adapts existing Learning Outcomes from the current program to create a more cohesive, yet flexible, structure for Liberal Learning at TCNJ.

Specifics of the Curricular Structure

To create this model, we will take current courses across all schools and fit them into the three proposed strands. In some cases, a modification of course content to increase integration with the proposed thematic strands may be necessary.

Students will be required to take 9 Liberal Learning courses + the Language Requirement (= 10-12 total).

- 9 Integrative Strand courses (inclusive of FSP and CEL), with 3 courses from each strand:

Nature & Technology	A Purposeful Life	Global Citizenship
3 courses	3 courses	3 courses

- Current Liberal Learning domains and civic responsibilities will be integrated into the new strands.
- Every course counts toward one--and only one--strand.
- At least one of the three required courses in each strand must be taken outside of the School in which the student majors.
- Most Integrative Strand courses could be taken during students' first year.
    - Students must complete an FSP and a CEL course, both of which will have strand designations.
    - Civic responsibilities (race/ethnicity, gender & sexuality, class), quantitative reasoning, and writing will be integrated into the first-year.
    - The remainder of the 9 required integrative stand courses (+ foreign language requirements) must be completed before graduation.

- Welcome Week and 099 Courses must integrate curriculum on negotiating difference, including the possible topics of: white privilege, implicit bias, micro-aggression, diversity, equity, gender/sexuality, consent, and intersectionality. These experiences will not count as strand courses.
- Foreign Language Requirements:
    - Option 1: Foreign language requirements will be up to the majors and departments.
    - Option 2: Foreign language remains part of Liberal Learning, but the current foreign language requirements will be additions to the nine required Integrative Strand courses.

First-year experience

Fall	FSP • writing-intensive • no CEL • Strand Designation	Nature & Technology *	A Purposeful Life	Global Citizenship • Race & Ethnicity**
Spring	CEL Course • Strand Designation	Nature & Technology*	A Purposeful Life	Global Citizenship

*A student must take at least one quantitative reasoning class during the first year.

**In keeping with TCNJ's commitment to diversity and inclusion and to better serve the College's CEL experience, students should be strongly encouraged to fulfill their LL R&E requirement in Fall semester of their first year.

Students can substitute one course from their foreign language requirement for one of the integrative strand courses for each semester of the first year (e.g., SPA 101 instead of "Nature & Technology" during the Fall).

- If students choose to take foreign language in their second semester of their first year, they cannot replace the same integrative strand they did in the first semester (e.g., if SPA 102 replaced "Nature & Technology in the Fall, SPA 102 *cannot* replace "Nature & Technology" in the Spring).
- Students must take at least one course in each of the three strands during their first year and, in their second year, the two courses they replaced with their foreign language requirement during their first year.

Total number of credit-bearing courses

9 (without language requirement: 9 units)

11-12 (with language requirement: 11-12 units)

Potential Learning Goals/Outcomes

Nature & Technology

- Engage in the process of scientific investigation in order to learn the distinctive ways in which information is acquired in the natural sciences and recognize how empirical reasoning informs other disciplines
- Apply major features of scientific reasoning, and/or apply design concepts and principles to solve engineering and technological problems and extend human capability in ethical and socially responsible ways
- Use quantitative methods to solve problems and to evaluate quantitative arguments and their logical implications for other disciplines
- Identify ways in which modern societies are constructed on an infrastructure of technology and science and demonstrate familiarity with landmark discoveries that shaped at least one natural science discipline
- Formulate ethical solutions that incorporate scientific reasoning and the application of appropriate scientific and/or quantitative principles to social problems

A Purposeful Life

- Pose intellectually, artistically, and/or ethically challenging questions about the nature and significance of human (and/or non-human) life, values, modes of thought and/or representations
- Identify the potential interconnection of questions about human history, representation, values, and ideas across academic disciplines
- Demonstrate the literacies and habits of mind necessary for thoughtful, articulate, and informed engagement with others
- Address complex social, political, philosophical, economic, and/or aesthetic problems and pose potential resolutions to such problems
- Develop thoughtful and equitable personal, ethical, and political decision-making abilities when considerations of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and social class are involved

Global Citizenship

- Adopt multidisciplinary approaches to international and intercultural problems
- Identify the intersectionality of international and intercultural problems
- Implement the concepts and analytical tools of Critical Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Class Studies
- Identify and explain constructed systemic patterns of privilege and oppression in society, such as race, ethnicity, gender, class, and sexual orientation
- Assess how experiences across cultural and social boundaries challenge cultural-centric preconceptions

Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages

1. Minimizes the "box-checking" approach to Liberal Learning;
2. Affirms TCNJ's commitment to FSP and CEL, to specific areas of inquiry (Arts, Sciences, Humanities), to foreign language study, and to writing;
3. Ensures both breadth and well-roundedness in the skills and knowledge acquired through Liberal Learning;
4. Updates civic responsibilities to incorporate issues such as intersectionality, sustainability, and social class, and better prepares students for community engagement experiences;
5. Adopts an interdisciplinary framework that encourages all Schools to demonstrate a shared commitment to Liberal Learning

Disadvantages

1. Dual and double designation majors, accreditation requirements, 5-Year programs, and major/School-specific needs must be evaluated and addressed.
2. In some cases, a modification of course content to increase integration with strands may be necessary.
3. Liberal Learning Council will need to devise an efficient and equitable approval process to ensure that existing LL courses-- as well as any new courses that might be created if this model is implemented-- are assigned to appropriate strands.
4. Scheduling coordinated courses may be difficult for students.

Model 3: Mini-Minors

General Concept

All first-year students begin with a common course, TCNJ 101, that structures assignments (e.g. film screenings, multimedia, readings) and dialog that continues from summer reading theme toward articulating values in a project by the end of the semester, which is presented at a campus-wide symposium. Students then complete three interdisciplinary and integrated "mini-minors", each consisting of three courses. In their junior or senior year, students enroll in TCNJ 401, reflecting on their own education and serving as mentors to students in TCNJ 101.

Specifics of the Curricular Structure

TCNJ 101

- 1-unit course taught by tenured faculty; replaces FSP
  - Having only tenured faculty teach course allows students to build important relationships with faculty who are available and committed to help them build connections.
- Facilitated by junior/senior peer mentors, who are enrolled in TCNJ 401 (see below).
- Course structure encourages the following:
  - Welcome students into an intellectual community by teaching commensurate habits (e.g. note-taking, study skills, respectful dialog, time-management)
  - Ask students to articulate their values and allow students to determine some aspects of the course structure
  - Ask students to address issues of "difference" from each of the perspectives: 1) race and ethnicity, 2) gender and sexuality, and 3) class
  - Include conversations/exercises that ask students to integrate what they are learning in their mini-minor 100 courses

Complete three, 3-course "mini-minors."

- Mini-minors will be based in one of the following broad disciplinary areas, although mini-minors may include courses from other disciplines. The student's major will be deemed to cover one of the four disciplinary areas, and students will take one mini-minor in each of the remaining areas.

  Area 1: Arts and humanities

  Area 2: World languages and cultures

  - Includes a component addressing global culture
  - Whatever language requirement we agree to will be incorporated into this mini-minor

  Area 3: Social sciences and history

  Area 4: Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics

  - includes an experiential (lab?) scientific component
  - includes a quantitative reasoning component

- Specifics of mini-minors.
  - Each mini-minor will begin with a writing-intensive component that may also be an introductory level course in a disciplinary area.
  - As part of at least one mini-minor, students will explore deeply issues of "difference" from the perspectives of race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, and class, building on the TCNJ 101 class experience.
  - Mini-minors may be built from packages of 4-6 courses, with students given some freedom to choose three specific courses within the package according to interest and scheduling constraints.

- Capstone paper

  At the completion of one of the student's mini-minors, the student will write a paper discussing some tie (perhaps a comparison of content, perhaps a comparison/contrast in disciplinary approaches to exploring truth, perhaps focused on a cross-cutting theme) to another completed mini-minor or to the student's major. The paper will be jointly supervised by a faculty member from each mini-minor or from a mini-minor and the student's major, as appropriate. Faculty members will each receive compensation in the form of credit for independent study (.2 units per student). For the student, the paper will be viewed as an extra component of the final course in the mini-minor.

- TCNJ 401
  A 0.25-unit course in which seniors mentor students in TCNJ 101 and reflect on their (the senior's) education at TCNJ.

First-year experience

- Summer Reading
- TCNJ 101

Total number of credit-bearing courses

10.25 units (or possibly as many as 11.25 for students starting a new language if we adopt an expectation of a 3-course language sequence for all students)

Potential Learning Goals/Outcomes (based on the LEAP goals)

Each student will:

1. gain breadth of knowledge incorporating the arts, humanities, social science, history, science and mathematics
2. gain intellectual and practical skills including inquiry and analysis, creative and critical thinking, written and oral communication, quantitative literacy, information literacy, foreign language proficiency, and teamwork and problem-solving
3. explore civic responsibilities including equity, diversity, and inclusion, intercultural knowledge and experience
4. experience integrative learning through synthesis across courses within mini-minors and through the capstone paper.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages

1. Students will pursue in-depth examination of a few areas in which they have genuine interest.
2. With the final paper, students will examine integration between disciplinary areas, possibly including the major.
3. Reaffirms our commitment to civic responsibilities and updates these to allow for issues such as intersectionality and social class. Allows for an early introduction of these topics through TCNJ101 followed by deeper exploration later in the curriculum.

4. The ability to mandate a smaller or larger number of specific requirements for each mini-minor allows us to set the balance between substantive independent exploration beyond the major (fewer specific requirements), possibly fostering greater intellectual curiosity, and exposure to a greater variety of civic responsibilities and/or disciplines (more specific requirements).
5. If we choose, professional schools could opt to require students to complete only 2 mini-minors.

Disadvantages

1. Scheduling coordinated courses may be difficult for students.
2. 101 course, with over 100 sections, will be challenging to coordinate.
3. This model may require increased faculty commitment to Liberal Learning, and we have not had sufficient commitment to support the current program (but a new program may spark increased faculty interest for a time).
4. If too many mini-minors are made available, student outcomes may be widely diverse.
5. If too few mini-minors are made available, students may not find options that are engaging for them.
6. Approach doesn't foster Integration across areas.

Model 4: Interdisciplinary Themes

General Concept

Themes would be centered around an issue of importance to society, an enduring question, a wicked problem, or a complex issue, and would be integrated across disciplines and address all of the learning goals below. Although similar in concept to the current Interdisciplinary Concentrations, Themes would have greater integration across courses and would cover all of the above learning goals, not just the breadth requirement.

Specifics of the Curricular Structure

Each theme would consist of nine courses and would address all of the learning goals listed below. Each theme would identify courses that need to be completed in the first, second, and third/fourth year, and the sequences of courses would represent a scaffolded pathway, not a collection of independent courses. Two courses in the first year (one each semester) would set the stage for the Theme and develop academic skills important to success at TCNJ (e.g., communication, information literacy). There would be a capstone project or experience that integrates the courses in theme. Themes could also serve as the basis for living-learning communities during the first year.

Themes could be completely prescribed (i.e., a Theme consists of nine specific courses) or allow students to choose from a pre-fixed menu for portions of the Theme. Courses in a pre-fixed menu must be integrated with other courses and not just a set of disconnected courses.

There could be two forms of Themes: 1) stand-alone and available to any major, and 2) integrated with a major (but open to students from other majors). Students in departments with integrated themes would be allowed to choose between the two forms.

Language requirements, either in the current configuration (some majors have a language requirement, whereas others do not) or as a requirement for all students, could be accommodated by Themes either by having language courses connected to the themes or by having students take language courses whose content is independent of the themes

Community engagement

CEL will begin with an introduction in Welcome Week and CELR-run preparation sessions during the first year that would give students an understanding of the need and value of community engagement. At least one course in each theme will have a CEL experience in the sophomore or junior year (similar to ACEL), and the CEL experience will be developed with participation from CELR. Alternatively, we can consider allowing Themes into which CEL doesn't fit, but are otherwise excellent, to consist of one fewer course (i.e., eight), and have students meet CEL through a set number of hours of engagement in other experiences, such as ACEL courses or experiences developed and led by CELR.

Number and availability of Themes

We'll need to determine how many Themes should be available for a given entering class of students and the number of entering classes for which Themes would need to persist. We would need to pay careful attention to ensure that there is a small enough number of Themes that multiple sections of each course can be offered at different times so that students can complete their chosen themes in a timely fashion (we'll probably will need to do some modelling).

Development and Approval of Themes

Themes would be developed by interdisciplinary groups of interested faculty. Departments interested in developing themes integrated with their major would need to collaborate with other departments to develop courses that provide mastery of student learning goals that lie outside the disciplinary background and expertise of faculty in the focal department.

Themes would be approved based on the degree to which the theme addresses the above learning outcomes, the relevance and timeliness of the theme, and how integrated and interdisciplinary the theme is.

First-year experience

Goals: Help students transition into college; for students to connect learning in major with first-year experience and with broader learning outcomes.

Summer reading

Book would be the same for all incoming students to allow for a shared experience, but each Theme course could cater assignment/discussion to fit or we could weave it in with CELR preparation sessions if applicable.

Courses

Two courses in the first year (one each semester) would set the stage for the Theme and develop academic skills important to success at TCNJ (e.g., communication, information literacy). Courses should be writing-intensive. To allow more time for students to make informed choices of themes, the first or first and second courses could be built to be the initial courses for all themes.

Community engagement

CEL will begin with an introduction in Welcome Week and CELR-run preparation sessions during the first year that would give students an understanding of the need and value of community engagement.

Living-Learning Communities

Living-learning communities could be constructed around interdisciplinary themes.

Total number of credit-bearing courses

9 if no language requirement (9 units)

11-12 if language requirement (11-12 units)

Potential Learning Goals (adapted from the LEAP Essential Outcomes)

- Integrate the ways of knowing of, and knowledge from, the arts, humanities, social science, history, science and mathematics to address enduring questions, complex problems and important social issues.
- Develop and apply skills in:
    - Inquiry and analysis
    - Critical and creative thinking
    - Written, oral, and visual communication
    - Information literacy and lifelong learning
    - Teamwork and problem solving
- Civic responsibilities
    - Diversity and inclusion
    - Power and privilege
    - Constructive dialogue
    - Community engagement
    - Ethical reasoning and action
- Proficiency in a second language?

Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages

1. Interdisciplinary approach helps students see how the different perspectives derived from the domains/civic responsibilities are essential to addressing complex and important issues.
2. Trains students in how to apply their Liberal Learning education to relevant problems and issues.
3. Students can pick a theme that they find interesting, thereby enhancing student engagement.
4. Allows majors to integrate Liberal Learning with their majors.
5. Allows majors with very constraining curricula to develop an integrated theme.
6. Obviates the need for approval of Liberal Learning designations for individual courses.

Disadvantages

1. Theme development will require substantial work.
2. Students will need to select a theme upon entrance to TCNJ before the student has had any opportunity to explore diverse areas of the curriculum. This disadvantage could be mitigated to some extent if all themes began with a common first-semester course and then choose a theme that they would begin in the spring semester.
1. Students that decide they are not interested in a theme they have begun won't be able to switch themes easily.
2. Students switching out of a major with an integrated theme may find it difficult to complete another theme in a timely fashion.
3. Issues associated with transfer students will need to be carefully considered (e.g., a student with substantial incoming general education credits couldn't be required to begin a theme from the start, but it may be difficult to enter a theme in the middle). Perhaps a couple of mini themes with fewer courses could be created for transfer students.
4. The diversity and breadth of perspectives and topics available to students will be less than in the current program because students will choose a theme (unless there were a theme on exploration).
5. There will need to be careful monitoring of course offerings to ensure that courses in each theme are sufficiently available to allow students to complete themes. This will mean having sufficient numbers of sections.

Comparison of Models for the Revision of Liberal Learning

Model	General concept	Number of units required	First-year experience

Current Program	• Common first-year experiences
	• Menu approach to breadth requirement (domains) and civic responsibilities
	• Three writing-intensive courses (FSP, mid-level, major capstone)
	• Oral communication skills developed in major program
	• Second language requirement for about half of majors and students
		9 units; if a language is required then a maximum of 12 units	• Summer reading
			• First semester
			  o FSP
			  o WRI 101, if placed
			  o Information literacy (IDS 102)
			• Second semester
			  o CEL experience if not part of FSP
			  o WRI 102, if placed

Minimal Revisions	• Retain current program but revise to address current issues
	• Significant revisions
	  o Addition of 0.5-unit writing course in first and second semesters
	  o Language requirement for all majors (2-3 semesters)
	  o All civic responsibilities completed first year
	  o Courses can satisfy two domains but may satisfy no more than two requirements (2 domains, a domain and a civic responsibility, or 2 civic responsibilities)
		10 units; if a language is required then a maximum of 13 units	• Summer Reading
			• First semester
			  o FSP + 0.5-unit writing course
			  o WRI 101 if placed in
			• Second semester
			  o 0.5-unit writing course
			  o CEL experience if not part of FSP
			• All civic responsibilities during first year

Integrated Strands	• Students complete three courses in each of three strands (Nature & Technology, A Purposeful Life, and Global Citizenship)
	• Current TCNJ courses are grouped into the strands with some modification to increase integration
	• One course from each strand must be taken outside the student's major
	• Most Strand courses could be taken in the first year
	• A required CEL course and the required FSP will be given strand designations; language requirement will not be part of strands
	• Welcome Week and 099 Courses integrate curriculum on negotiating difference
		9 units; if a language is required then a maximum of 12 units	• First semester
			  o FSP (writing-intensive, no CEL)
			  o Potentially, one course from each Strand
			• Second semester
			  o CEL course
			  o Potentially, one course from each Strand

Comparison of Models for the Revision of Liberal Learning (cont.)

Model	General concept	Number of units required	First-year experience
Mini-Minors	• First semester: TCNJ 101 (taught by tenured faculty and facilitated by peer mentors) • Complete three interdisciplinary and integrated "mini-minors," each consisting of three courses • Mini-minors are based on broad disciplinary areas: o Arts and humanities o World languages and cultures (to include global civic responsibility and at least final course of language requirement if instituted) o Social sciences and history o Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics • Student's major covers one of the four areas • Race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, and class introduced in TCNJ101 and explored more deeply in one of the mini-minors • In junior or senior year, students enroll in TCNJ 401, serving as mentors to students in TCNJ 101 and reflecting on their own education	9 units; if a language is required then a maximum of 10-11 units	• Summer Reading • TCNJ 101
Interdisciplinary Themes	• 9 courses, tightly integrated across disciplines and addressing an issue of importance to society, an enduring question, a wicked problem, or a complex issue • Community engagement experience linked to the Theme in the sophomore or junior year	9 units; if a language is required then a maximum of 12 units	• Two courses in the first year (one each semester) are writing-intensive and integrate summer reading • Community engagement is introduced during the first year in Welcome Week and through CELR-run preparation sessions • Living-learning communities constructed around some themes.