April 18, 2012

To: University Council

From: Kirk S. Kidwell, Chair, University Committee on Liberal Learning

RE: 2011-2012 Annual Report

The formation of the University Committee on Liberal Learning (UCLL) was recommended by the Working Group to Improve Undergraduate Education (WGIUE) and approved by the Academic Council (AC) at its September 26, 2006, meeting. As stated in the AC meeting minutes, the mandate of UCLL was defined as “provid[ing] for broad-based participation by University faculty and students in promoting and advancing general education and liberal learning in undergraduate education.” More specifically, the minutes defined the functions of UCLL as an advisory-consultative committee reporting to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies:

UCLL establishes and maintains campus-wide dialog focused on advancing liberal learning among University, College, and Disciplinary academic programs. UCLL, working with the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, initiates new ideas and polices relevant to liberal undergraduate education, making recommendations appropriate for consideration by governance committees, typically University Curriculum Committee (UCC) and University Committee on Academic Policy (UCAP). UCLL also reviews and makes recommendations on courses, programmatic requests, or policies relevant to liberal undergraduate education referred by UCC or UCAP.

Since UCLL first convened as a working committee in Fall 2007, it has revised and refined the goals for liberal learning originally recommended in the WGIUE final report. The final version of the Liberal Learning Goals and Outcomes (LLG/O) were approved by UCLL on April 22, 2009 and have since been adopted as the institutional learning outcomes for undergraduate education at MSU. In addition, UCLL has explored possible revisions to the Integrative Studies curriculum (in Fall 2009, at the request of Provost Wilcox), has reviewed early efforts to implement the LLG/O at the college and programmatic levels, as well as in co-curricular institutional programs, and has explored means to enhance further both the awareness and the implementation of the LLG/O more broadly throughout undergraduate education.

In 2011-2012, with the support of the Provost, UCLL initiated an institutional effort to develop rubrics for each of the LLG/O by convening teams—consisting of faculty, advisers, and librarians—to develop criterion-referenced rubrics that define the dimensions of the LLG/O and characterize expected levels of performance for each dimension. These rubrics will provide ways to assess evidence of student learning and, consequently, help to shape the character and content of curricular and co-curricular learning experiences. The work of the rubric development teams culminates in a multi-day workshop at the Spring Institute in which the teams will (a) come to consensus around a final set of draft rubrics, (b) review and finalize authentic examples of ways the learning goals are enacted across the undergraduate learning experience, and (c) review proposals for next steps in the implementation of the rubrics.

UCLL has done much to fulfill the mandate and functions of the committee as established by the Academic Council in 2006. However, it is the consensus of UCLL that the work of the committee to develop the LLG/O and rubrics for their assessment is but part of the long-term effort by MSU to
enhance undergraduate education. Hence, UCLL adopts the following guidelines for its work in 2012-2013 and beyond.

1. The mandate for the University Committee for Liberal Learning will be defined as follows:
   • to support ongoing improvement in liberal learning at the institutional, college, and programmatic levels;
   • to promote innovative pedagogies and curriculum development efforts that would enhance liberal learning;
   • to advise the Provost and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies regarding efforts to enhance undergraduate teaching and learning at MSU;
   • to make recommendations, as appropriate, to relevant committees in academic governance (e.g., UCC or UCUS) regarding efforts to enhance undergraduate teaching and learning at MSU;
   • to review and make recommendations on courses, programmatic requests, or policies relevant to liberal undergraduate education referred by UCC or UCUS.

2. In order to accomplish its mandate, the University Committee for Liberal Learning will undertake activities as appropriate, including the following:
   • review recommendations of the LLG/O rubric development teams and refer such recommendations as are deemed appropriate to academic governance
   • promote efforts to institutionalize the LLG/O and the global competencies
   • further institutional and programmatic assessment practices of the LLG/O and the LLG/O rubrics
   • to seek feedback from various university constituencies regarding the LLG/O and their rubrics, and the global competencies, and to revise as appropriate
   • encourage administrative units as appropriate to develop and implement courses, programs, co-curricular, and experiential learning opportunities that address the knowledge, attitudes, and skills associated with the LLG/O and the global competencies
   • foster collaboration between integrative studies, disciplinary majors, and co-curricular programs in order to promote liberal learning
   • support efforts to enhance integrative and global learning in order to develop a program of increasingly-complex learning experiences that allow students to connect, reflect on, and take action based on diverse ways of knowing and habits of mind
   • to inventory assessment practices relevant to student learning as it relates to the LLG/O and the global competencies and to make recommendations on relevant measures to enhance undergraduate education