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Tami S. Carmichael
University of North Dakota

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HISTORY OF HUMANITIES AND
INTEGRATED STUDIES PROGRAM
1983-2008

Tami S. Carmichael
History of Humanities and Integrated Studies Program (1983-2007)

By

Tami S. Carmichael

Humanities Program 1967 – 1983: A Brief Overview

The Humanities Program and the Humanities courses it offers are vibrant, fully-enrolled courses at the University of North Dakota. Though the unit itself has seen some change since its creation by the University Senate 40 years ago, and has been the recipient of over $200,000 of federal and local grants, it has evolved into a pedagogically innovative unit with strong emphases on student-based learning, interdisciplinary curriculums, and direct assessment of student learning. (For a list of the many Humanities courses offered at UND, see Appendix 2).

The Humanities Program at the University of North Dakota came into existence in 1967 through an action of the University Senate and under the direction of Jackson P. Hershbell. The structure of the program was dictated by a number of factors. It had been decided that there must be both lecture and discussion components to Humanities courses, and each Humanities discipline/department on campus assumed an obligation to contribute faculty to the program, who would act as leaders of discussion groups, or as lecturers or both. Discussion leaders were also recruited from faculty outside of the humanities.

In the early 1970’s, the number of graduates and undergraduates in the Humanities disciplines rose to such heights that there was good reason for the faculty contributions to the Humanities Program to be pulled back into disciplinary offerings. At the same time, enrollments in the Humanities Program itself began to climb. The influence of Vietnam, the student rebelliousness expressing itself in the counter-culture, and the general expansiveness of the educational atmosphere all seemed to contribute to an increased student demand for humanistic studies.

The problem this created, the need to offer enough sections of Humanities 101 and 102 to meet the demand of the courses with completely inadequate faculty resources, was the driving force in the subsequent structural changes in the program throughout the years until 1976-77 when the demand for and interest in the Humanities underwent a significant decline, which continued through 1983.

During the early period of demand, a number of things happened to give the Humanities Program unity and direction. First, there was, by then, a core Humanities tenured faculty consisting of professors Pat Glassheim, Gerald Lawrence, Thomas Rand, and Doug Wills, who were normally joined by one or two other faculty persons from outside departments. All Humanities classes were organized in “clusters” consisting of four

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1 This section is derived in part from: Lawrence, Gerald C. History of the Humanities Program, 1983 (University of North Dakota Special Collections).
sections of fifteen students each. Cluster-meetings each week planned teaching strategies and discussed the content of the week’s assignment.

By 1976-77, a number of trends began to coalesce and brought about another significant change in the organization and sense of purpose of the Humanities Program. Among these trends were the criticism of the program’s “experiential” orientation which veered from a “content oriented” curriculum and projections of declining enrollments both at the university and in Humanities Program courses. These influences added up to a decision on the part of the Humanities Program faculty to reduce the size of the program to just that number of course sections that could be taught by the core faculty and to return, as much as possible to the study of the classics. This sort of change would also allow the faculty to be more directly involved in dealing with student enrollment.

**Humanities and Integrated Studies: 1985 - 2007**

The Humanities Program existed in this basic form until the mid-1980’s when the faculty, led by Patricia Sanborn (formerly Glassheim) and Gerald Lawrence, decided it was necessary to make vital changes to the program. In addition to teaching traditional sections of Humanities courses (introductory and advanced), which the unit still offers (Humanities 101, 102, 212, 224, 225, 270, 271, 300, 391) and which still fulfill General Education Requirements/Essential Studies for students, it was felt that a tandem method of instruction was needed, particularly for first year students.

To be clear, traditional, individual Humanities classes are still taught at UND, but a new program was added that would offer a different, more experimental program of Humanities courses to encourage students’ interest in the humanities.

In 1985, the faculty received an internal grant from UND’s Office of Instructional Development for $30,000 to fund planning activities for a new general education program that would reestablish the necessity of Humanities studies and reconfigure the general education experience of first year students. Sanborn and Lawrence had felt that for some time the Humanities discipline could no longer be effectively taught in isolation from other subject matter. Dr. Lawrence particularly felt that “one reason the humanities no longer occupy a central position in American education is that they seem to students to be disembodied and anachronistic islands of quaint ideas and art from the past. Universities have partly contributed to this idea by abdicating their role as champions of an integrated liberal education and by permitting students to choose their curriculum as one might fill a luncheon tray in an ambitious cafeteria.” To begin to remedy this situation, Sanborn and Lawrence felt that students needed to be “taught how to enter into a relationship with a book, how to contemplate it, and how to perceive answers to their questions….It was thought that if students could be let to see connections within the entire body of material that constituted their semester’s study, and if their humanities texts were to prove to be the main nexus of those connections,…they would be even more likely to come to a recognition of the value and power of thought grounded in the relationship to books.”

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In addition to more effectively situate Humanities within the university curriculum and reestablishing its importance to undergraduate education, Sanborn and Lawrence also wanted to create an alternative and more valid liberal arts-style general education experience for university students that would give them a greater stake in the educational enterprise. According to Lawrence, the structure of general education as it existed in the 1980’s and still exists at many universities today, “severely distorts the learning process and gives a false picture of the structure of knowledge.” This disappointment over general education practices at universities was echoed by other educational researchers including Ernest Boyer who asked, “Can the American college, with its fragmentation and competing special interests, define shared academic goals? Is it possible to offer students, with their separate roots, a program of general education that helps them see connections and broadens their perspective?” The goal for the initial grant at UND then, was to organize a structure for a learning program which would answer this challenge by developing a coherent, integrated program that would provide this continuity and integration.

Sanborn and Lawrence decided to model their new program on the Coordinated Studies model of undergraduate education that was then employed at Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington. The idea of coordinated studies provided the pedagogical basis for what was to become the Integrated Studies Program, a component of the Humanities offerings at UND.

The goal of such a program was, in the words of the program’s first director, Clay Jenkinson, “not to replace the traditional curriculum but to stand respectfully beside it...to resist the artificial fragmentation of mental activity and to bring new meaning and energy to the basic Arts and Sciences, which we see as the foundation not only of intellectual life, but of one’s preparation for citizenship.” It was to be a program whose main goal was the integration of knowledge.

In essence, the Integrated Studies Program (ISP), which Sanborn and Lawrence developed, started a first year general education learning community that offers an extraordinary option for students at a public, research university. The program offers a cluster of 3-5 courses each semester which helps students fulfill general education requirements necessary for all UND undergraduate degrees. The program offers a model learning community wherein students engage in active learning projects, primary research and lively discussion of challenging and pertinent texts. Work and study in the program are organized around a central theme, and are carried out in a variety of small group settings in which discussion among students is encouraged. Pedagogically, one of the most important aspects of the program is that it consistently attempts to break down the barriers between disciplines and draw together the various disciplinary areas into comprehensive, connective units that demonstrate the relationships between the different fields of knowledge. Additionally, to facilitate a strong learning community environment, close contact between students and faculty members is encouraged. There

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is a 20:1 student/faculty ratio, and the faculty members view themselves as fellow-
learners, participating in the entire semester's workload and learning experience.

Throughout the fall of 1985 and the spring of 1986, Sanborn and Lawrence laid the
groundwork for this program, and used the UND Instructional Development grant money
to travel to Evergreen State College and consult with experts there, including Barbara
Leigh Smith, in developing an integrated learning program. Additionally, they hired
Richard Jones, author of Experiment at Evergreen to attend their first planning retreat,
held in Marmarth, North Dakota, which was also funded by the internal grant.

The first planning retreat, held in the spring of 1986, included a core group of faculty and
staff members from a variety of disciplines who would go on to work with and shape the
program for many years: Patricia Sanborn (Humanities, Philosophy), Gerry Lawrence
(Humanities, History), Jan Kelly (now Moen) (Sociology), David Wiener (English), Don
Halvorson (Geology), David Ramsett (Economics), and Dorothy Uherka, the newly-
hired administrative assistant. In addition, Clay Jenkinson, an independent scholar who
has the distinction of being one of only two North Dakota Rhodes Scholars ever
produced, also joined the group as its first Coordinator (His tenure as Coordinator was
brief. He resigned in December of 1986 and was replaced by professor Jack Barden).
The background areas of these professors helped shaped the first curriculum which
included courses and study in Humanities, History, Geology, Economics and English
Composition. The total credit load for that first semester was 17, and the faculty
members were involved in the preparation, integration and workload for all courses.

Richard Jones of The Evergreen State University, began the planning retreat meetings by
talking about the successes and challenges which his institution had faced in instituting
and developing an integrated, non-content based, student-oriented curriculum. He
detailed many of the problems which he knew the faculty of ISP would themselves
encounter, including possible faculty incompatibility, students dropping out of ISP and
being unable to transfer courses, the pressures on students to choose a career early and
start specializing, the problem of fitting into an already existing university system, and
the "crises of conscience" that he knew the faculty would experience over not being able
to teach as much content as they felt their individual subject areas required.4

Another subject that Jones addressed was that of grades. At The Evergreen, students are
provided with continual feedback and assessment information but do not receive letter
grades, something that makes that university unique. This choice is based on the theory
that all too often students are taught to focus more on the "carrot" or grade, than on the
learning process itself. By removing the grade incentive, students, it is hoped, will
concentrate on feedback information that encourages them to examine their ideas and
revise them. Integrated Studies, on the other hand, intended to use grades since the
courses students enrolled in still remained within the curriculums of departments like
English, Geology, and Economics, and because the university grading system would not
allow for the aberration of non-graded courses.

4 Uherka, D. Unpublished recollections of Integrated Studies Program.
The subject of grades highlights one of the major differences between The Evergreen and Integrated Studies. The Evergreen is fortuitously able to function as an entirely separate entity. The whole college operates according to the same pedagogical beliefs; students encounter the same style of learning and the same style of evaluation throughout their entire four years at the college. The Integrated Studies Program, however, was designed as a one-year program only and has to operate within the setting and according to the requirements of the University of North Dakota. Students enrolled in the program move on into traditional departments with traditional curriculums, so to serve their best interests (institutionally speaking), the faculty members who created ISP felt that the students should ultimately exit ISP with letter grades.

The initial planning retreat held by this group of faculty members set the agenda for future planning retreats, for it was decided then, that planning retreats were essential to the building of curriculum in the Integrated Studies Program for several reasons:

This first retreat established a pattern for future planning sessions. Common to all retreats are discussions of: program structure, theme, books, field trips, evaluations, . . . science labs [and writing activities]. . . . Often a coup would occur during the retreat when, after a day of discussion and decision making, a new theme would be proposed . . . or the book list would be rebuilt from scratch, or a new idea would emerge for a group [activity].

In addition to planning the semester, it was realized that an important function of the retreat was to help develop a community among the faculty and staff to serve as a base for the larger community with students. The retreats were designed to help establish community by setting up an opportunity for maximum involvement in program planning. Sites were selected [for the retreats] that separated the individuals involved from other problems, that enabled [group members] to cook meals together . . . and still have time for some diversions like hiking and bird watching.

The activities of cooking, hiking, and bird watching, may seem tangential, or even unnecessary to curriculum planning, and over the years some faculty members have grumbled over the requirement of participating in a retreat that seems to involve such “frivolous” and time-consuming activities. When faculty members’ time is so highly demanded in their home departments and on university committees, it does seem like such planning retreats are a luxury to be done without. But, it has certainly been corroborated by experience that these activities are necessary to team building, and ultimately the strength of the semester’s program depends upon the strength of the faculty team. Upon those rare occasions when a faculty member refused or was unable to participate in the retreat, or when it has been impossible to hold retreats, the faculty team has been noticeably weakened, often to such an extent that curriculum and classroom activities have suffered severely. In some instances, this breakdown on the part of the faculty team has been evident to students and has, according to them, so negatively impacted their experiences that they refuse to reenroll in the spring semester’s program. The first step toward disciplinary integration, then, is integration on the part of the faculty team members. Co-founder Pat Sanborn described the joy of being involved in planning retreats like this:

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5 Ibid.
I like the collegiality that emerges when faculty members work together, and I like the feeling that more than one head is working over the material. I like the fact that I am working with colleagues on hard stuff, not the soft stuff of academic committees and complaints about the institution. . . . over the years, faculty members have talked about their fields, the texts, their thoughts, and the changes they are going through. We have talked about students, in depth – trying to make sense out of what we were seeing happen.6

It was also decided at that first planning retreat that since such a retreat was essential to community building, it should be extended to the students as well. Don Halvorson, the group’s geologist, recommended adapting the idea of a retreat into a camping field trip into Canada. The field trip would allow for the desired community building and would also allow for geological study of the region and time for integrative student/faculty discussion of geological findings and texts they were dealing with in their ISP courses. The field trip has remained an essential (and fondly remembered) component of ISP. For several years, this trip took place in Canada, but in more recent years, the ISP faculty take all of the students into the remote North Unit of the North Dakota Badlands for two days’ camping without hot water and with lots of back-country hiking and wildlife sightings (bison, big horn sheep, and coyotes.). Though it is often nerve-wracking, no students or faculty members have been severely injured, and the trip allows for an incredible bonding experience as well as for unique pedagogical opportunities to study the natural world and participate in informal discussions about those findings with other students and faculty members. In addition, the field trip setting really helps promote another ISP goal: that of helping students rethink the educational structure wherein the faculty members are distant, knowledge-filled beings whose main objective is to impart wisdom by filling up the voids of student minds. This trip provides one of the first object lessons that ISP faculty set out for students that lets them see that teachers are really fellow-learners. They don’t always know more than the students and often learn as much from the students as the students do from the teachers. This trip truly provides an opportunity for student-faculty cooperation and collaboration.

Other innovative pedagogical practices were developed during the first and in the future retreats. As Pat Sanborn was always fond of saying, “you know, we don’t have to do it the way we’ve been doing it” because the main goal of the program has always been to facilitate student learning in whatever way works best. Integrated Studies always offers the opportunity for curriculum innovations as well as curriculum revisions. Many of the experiments begun in ISP classrooms have, honestly, failed, but many more have made their way into other classrooms in various departments across campus, providing effective methods for faculty members to help their students engage in a more meaningful learning process.

All of these innovative practices were made possible, not only because of the funding and the work and interest of the faculty, but also because of the heavy administrative support from Bernard O’Kelly, the Dean of Arts & Sciences at the time. His commitment to true faculty governance and, most importantly, to serious liberal arts study provided a fertile ground for the development of such programs as Integrated Studies.

In the years following the program’s founding, a physiology professor from the medical school, Tom Akers, introduced the idea of Cooperative Learning Units (CLUs) which were based, in part, on the UND medical school’s new Problem Based Learning Modules. The purpose of CLUs was to create a mechanism that would facilitate active student learning and that would deemphasize the need for faculty lectures. The CLUs have been refined over the years and now stand as a major component of the ISP curriculum. Most students who have fully participated in CLU activities have found themselves empowered as learners. They discover that they do not need to rely on a professor to tell them everything. They learn to make use of the resources available to them, to gather information from those sources, to think critically about their findings, and to connect what they’ve discovered to their own experiences and/or other information they have learned.

Such innovative classroom activities are only an option as long as there is funding for faculty, staff, and program needs. It is true that a program with the resources to engage in activities and assignments that require low student-faculty ratios looks expensive, so one of the challenges ISP has always faced is that of obtaining either internal or external funding.

After the initial planning retreat in 1986, the faculty of ISP were successful in obtaining a large NEH grant (and extension grant) for $208,691.00 to fund the program for three years. During the first academic year of the program (1986-1987), the program ran for the fall semester and then the faculty spent the second semester evaluating what had happened. After this semester-long assessment process, some changes were made to the curriculum including the grading method. The faculty group recognized problems with the letter-grade based evaluation process, traveled to Alverno College to study this institution’s grading process and revamped the ISP evaluation process into a combination of assessment (individual feedback) and final grades. In the fall of 1987, the program ran again, this time for a full two semesters.

In 1992, Carl Barrentine was hired as the program’s first scientist. Until that time, the science component of the program was supplied by other departments, most often Geology. With the addition of Barrentine, who holds a Doctorate of Arts degree in Biology, ISP was able to more fully integrate the sciences with the rest of the curriculum. In addition to supplying an expertise in the area of the biological sciences, Barrentine also brought along a highly creative approach to curriculum and a great love of teaching. These two qualities have combined to strengthen both the integration factor of the curriculum and the quality of the classroom experience. It is certainly the case that professors who are involved with such an integrated, general education learning community must be devoted to the improvement of undergraduate education as a whole, and not to the preservation of their own disciplines.

Since the end of the NEH grant, the University of North Dakota has funded the program, though with varying degrees of commitment depending on university funding levels, enrollment pressures, and university strategic planning goals. For the past ten years, the
university's financial commitment has been consistent and supportive though there have not been enough funds to plan adequately for the future or to make any kind of major innovative changes (like adding a minor). The three full-time positions initially allotted to the program have dwindled to two, as the faculty members (including Jack Barden, Gerry Lawrence, and Pat Sanborn) have left or retired, and at this point, only one faculty member (the Director) holds a tenure track position (initially, all three members were full professors with tenure).

Over the past 21 years, the administrative structure of the program has changed only slightly. During the years when there were more permanent faculty members assigned to the program, the position of Program Coordinator was passed around so that no one person became burned out with the added administrative responsibilities (on top of the rigorous teaching schedule demanded by the program). Often the position of Coordinator was granted to an outside faculty member so that permanent members could focus on pedagogy and teaching and so that an outside faculty member could gain experience in administering an interdisciplinary program. The current composition of Integrated Studies includes a permanent Coordinator, Tami Carmichael, with a Ph.D. in English who is also a tenured associate professor with the program; one full-time associate professor, Carl Barrentine (Biology), one assistant professor (special appointment), Mark Magness, with specialties in Law (he is a retired Airforce J.A.G.) and in English, and one instructor, Yvette LaPierre who was hired specifically by the English Department to teach composition for Integrated Studies. Her specialties are in composition, public speaking, journalism and environmental science.

The program still retains a full-time, ten-month administrative assistant, Yvonne Holter, who, like her predecessor, Dorothy Uherka, works intimately with the faculty and students and is essential to curriculum development and program activities.

Occasionally, other part-time instructors are supplied by funding from the college or the office of Academic Affairs. Currently the program is seeking to reinstate tenure-track status for the current faculty members so that there is more stability for the program and more security for the professors. This, of course, is difficult to do in a research university where individual commitment to specialized research is prized over commitment to undergraduate education.

To supplement the ISP faculty, historically, professors from other disciplines have left their home departments to teach with ISP for a few weeks, a semester, or a year and often bring courses with them. For instance, a visiting professor from History might bring a section of Western Civilization with her. Integrated Studies students would be enrolled in that class and credit for student enrollments would return to the History department. However, working with ISP is a full-time commitment for these professors, so it is necessary that they be released from other departmental teaching obligations while they

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7 Professor Tom Rand remains the only tenured Humanities professor (associate) who exclusively teaches non-Integrated Studies Humanities classes. Although, many of the faculty teach non-ISP Humanities classes with some regularity, including correspondence courses.
work with ISP. Gaining this release has become increasingly difficult over the years. However, involvement from outside faculty is essential to the integrative quality of the program, so new ways to facilitate this involvement are continually tried. Frequently, individual professors have been granted developmental leave time to come and work in the program. (A list of the faculty who have taught in the Integrated Studies Program over the years is available in Appendix 1.)

For the past eight years, UND’s Office of Instructional Development has granted two “Integrated Studies Faculty Fellowships” each year to professors in order to work with ISP faculty and students on special two-week-long projects. Faculty members who have held these fellowships over the past years have included: Sally Pyle, Biology; Anne Kelsch, History; Mike Wittgraf, Music; Kathy King, English; Heather Larson, Theater; Birgit Hans, Indian Studies; and Steve Finney, Languages. These fellowships have allowed the program to incorporate new insights, course material, and teaching strategies into the curriculum, while they have also given non-ISP faculty the chance to experience interdisciplinary, integrative team-teaching while pursuing projects they are passionate about. Some of these projects have included doing primary research on Nazi Germany, debating the decisions regarding the incarceration of “Typhoid Mary,” writing and performing Chance Music compositions, and creating and performing various types of dramatic productions. In addition to experiencing teaching in the ISP environment, Faculty Fellows also take what they’ve learned about teaching in a student-centered learning environment with an interdisciplinary faculty back to their home departments, where they can incorporate what they’ve learned into their own courses.

Over the past 21 years, student enrollments have fluctuated according to regional trends and based on funding for faculty positions, but the essential pedagogical philosophies have remained the same. Over the past three years, enrollments have been high, with students placed on waiting lists to gain admittance in both fall and spring semesters. Integrated Studies is a place for experimentation, innovation, and advancement. The mix of faculty, courses, and students shapes the dynamics in slightly different ways each year, but, if anything, the curriculum has only become more integrated and less rigid. As a recent article in The Journal of General Education states, “Interdisciplinary synthesis needs to be constructed, not just taught,” and it is evident in student responses (formal and informal) that the ISP faculty teams have been highly successful in achieving this synthesis.8

One experiment in course development worth mentioning here is Yvette LaPierre and Mark Magness’ work in developing a summer Humanities course (Hum 224: Integrated Social Science) specifically for American Indian students planning to matriculate at UND in the fall semester. This course was taught in the summer of 2007 and was successful, enrolling seven students, six of whom went on to enroll in ISP classes. This work was funded by the Vice President of Academic Affairs in conjunction with Office of Summer Programs and the American Indian Programs. It remains unclear whether or not this course will be offered again.

Beyond pedagogical practices, one major change which has contributed to the program’s overall visibility and effectiveness is the newly designed space to which it moved in 2004. Humanities & Integrated Studies was moved after the flood of 1997 from the top floor of Babcock Hall, to the first floor of O’Kelly Hall. In 2004, it was moved again to second floor of Ireland Hall (which directly connects with O’Kelly). The space, in Ireland Hall originally housed a cancer research facility which has since moved to a new building. The Dean of Arts & Sciences, Martha Potvin, gained the space and the funds to renovate it, and granted it to Humanities and Integrated Studies. The main office, all faculty offices, and all classrooms for Integrated Studies (and some Humanities classes) are housed within the space which was designed to allow comfortable student interaction, easy movement of student groups from class to class and activity to activity, and easy faculty-student interaction, in a relaxing, aesthetically pleasing environment.

The nuts and bolts of the Integrated Studies Program have metamorphosed as new challenges presented themselves and new needs became evident. Though ISP is essentially true to its original Evergreen model, it has transformed itself in part as students’ needs have changed. By and large, these changes have only strengthened the program and made it one of the exciting places a meaningful, liberal arts style education is still available within a large, public research university.

**Program Goals and Successes**

Though some of the basic mechanisms and assignments have changed over the years, the goals of the Integrated Studies Program have remained consistent. And college and university provide ongoing support of the program’s pedagogical mission. The program remains highly visible and admired at UND and, in 2003, won the University’s McDermott Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching.

The main goals of Integrated Studies include:

- Providing theme based, interdisciplinary general education
- Reviving a true liberal arts style learning atmosphere
- Reshaping students’ perspectives about education so that they:
  1. take an active role in their own learning process
  2. understand why ideas matter
  3. view faculty as facilitators and fellow-learners (resources to their own education)
  4. gain confidence in their own abilities to ask question and posit answers
  5. become adept at handling perplexity, of entertaining complex notions about conflicting ideas
  6. develop and value intellectual curiosity
  7. hone their reading, writing, discussion, and critical thinking skills

Certainly, though the Integrated Studies Program at the University of North Dakota has been highly successful in initiating and helping students fulfill these goals, they are also accomplished in other learning communities. What remains clear in examining the ISP model is that learning communities in some form are particularly essential to quality undergraduate education. As ISP co-founder Pat Sanborn once wrote,
Learning communities are good because the participants in them talk to each other. This needs to happen in a media-dominated, manipulative world. We need to know where each of us stands; we need to know where we stand. We need to hear our own voices, trying out ideas, responding to others, probing texts. . . We need to learn to beware of easy hierarchical distinctions. We need to break down the notion of teacher as god, and student as peon. In a strong learning community, that re-visioning can happen, if things are going well. We need to learn to assess what we do, often and in consultation with others. And those others don’t need to be faculty; they can be friends and fellow students.

Learning communities are also good because they allow for the unexpected. Students can change how things are going; faculty members can break into the curriculum and turn it on its head if things are not going well. . . Taking control of one’s education, even if it is only for a semester, can have a life-long impact.

Learning Communities, like Integrated Studies, work well because they address essential needs and real problems within the university curriculum while still making use of the university’s structure. Though they may seem expensive because of the need for lower student-faculty ratios, they are far cheaper than a total restructuring of the university.

An ongoing longitudinal study of student perceptions of learning, begun by the ISP coordinator in 2005, indicates that students have found their academic experiences in ISP classes to be essential to their college education. In fact, over 90% of the students surveyed desire more UND classes like ISP classes and would enroll in an Integrated Studies Minor if one were available.

The American College of Norway: An International Collaboration
One major addition to the Humanities and Integrated Studies unit is the addition of a collaboration with the American College of Norway (ACN). In recent years, ISP Faculty had increasingly felt the need to broaden the students’ understanding of international and multi-cultural issues because ISP students, like most first-year students in this less-diverse region, need more extended opportunity for becoming familiar with other countries’ histories and viewpoints and for comparing these histories and viewpoints with that of the United States. Since the majority of students in ISP and at UND are from North Dakota and Minnesota (with very few from other states or countries), and have rarely traveled outside of the upper-midwest, adding this international component becomes particularly important for helping them become better educated and informed citizens.

In the spring semester of 2004, the program took a step toward addressing this need for a more international perspective when it was granted permission and funds to develop a collaboration with the American College of Norway (ACN), an institution that has partnered with UND since 1992, offering study and teaching abroad opportunities for UND faculty and students. International students at ACN, then, frequently transfer to UND to finish their four-year degrees (ACN does not grant degrees but offers first-year

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courses for international students who plan to transfer to other universities, often in other countries).

Each semester, UND faculty members join the ACN faculty in Moss, Norway, to teach a series of classes in their disciplines. Students from UND who attend the international college are able to do so at UND’s regular, low tuition rate. The courses at ACN are offered through UND’s registration system, so all students there (American and international) receive UND course credits on their transcripts. This makes it easier, more appealing, and more affordable for UND students to study abroad and likewise provides an incentive for the non-American students at ACN to transfer to UND to continue their educations (since they will earn all their first year credits from UND). The collaboration benefits both institutions, the students, and the faculty.

Though the UND/ACN collaboration has been successful, both institutions saw the development of an Integrated Studies experience at ACN as desirable and beneficial since the model offers students a more connected learning experience and because it develops communication skills and encourages student interaction. For UND’s Integrated Studies students, this collaboration offers an international opportunity for continuing the integrated style of learning they enjoyed as students in the stateside program. In addition, creating an Integrated Studies Program experience at ACN would bring interdisciplinarity to the curriculum, something that has remained underdeveloped in the study abroad experience.

Since not all Integrated Studies students would choose to travel to ACN in the spring, ISP faculty thought that there needed to be two parts to the collaboration in order for all students to develop an international perspective. In addition to the study-abroad component, Integrated Studies Program faculty also decided to develop a Norwegian Language and Culture component to precede the study-abroad experience and be added into the fall 2004 curriculum. The purpose of adding this component was two-fold: to help prepare students who intend to study at ACN in the spring, and, more importantly, to enrich the curriculum for all students in ISP by giving them the opportunity to study the history, economics, arts, politics, geography, and contributions of another country (and integrate this learning into their studies of U.S. history, culture, and politics).

Following this internationalized curriculum, then, the Integrated Studies faculty decided to offer two versions of the Integrated Studies Program each spring semester: one at the University of North Dakota (as usual) and one at the American College of Norway. The two programs would operate simultaneously, exploring the same theme and using many of the same texts and assignments. ISP students at both institutions could participate in cross-Atlantic discussions related to their studies via a Blackboard site maintained at UND. Each spring, one or two faculty members from ISP would live in Norway and teach at ACN while the rest of the faculty team (supplemented by adjunct instructors or by other faculty members who want experience teaching in an integrated studies program) would remain at UND. This collaboration was funded in part by UND’s Office of Academic Affairs, the College of Arts and Sciences, and by the American College of Norway. Professors who have participated in this collaboration from UND thus far
include: Mark Magness, Yvette LaPierre, Steven Finney, Jeanne Anderegg, and Tami Carmichael.

It is the hope of both Humanities and Integrated Studies and The American College of Norway, that this collaboration will continue into the future as it benefits the learning experiences of both groups of students and has bolstered enrollments at ACN.

Conclusion

The programs and practices of Humanities & Integrated Studies were created not as an institution in and of themselves, but in spite of the institution. They were counter moves to a university game plan that did not always seem to meet student needs or value faculty development. A colleague once identified ISP as a sort of rebel force fighting desperately to counteract the often dangerous tendency of the university to value cost effective education over quality education. Once we are recognized and valued by the institution, he said, we are no longer doing our job. We must remain on the fringes, always providing critiques of and alternatives to mainstream university thinking.

Though this view is rather extreme, there is merit to the notion that programs and curriculums should change in response to student needs and university philosophies. And it is pleasingly evident that, over the years, despite our subversive tendencies, the university has come to value the endeavors of Humanities and Integrated Studies because of the program’s integrity and commitment to providing an excellent educational experience for students, no matter what. We are, therefore, no longer the rogue nation at UND. We are valued and admired because we offer an alternative.

Still our strength does lie in the recognition that every good curriculum, every good syllabus, every good assignment, must be open to – indeed is obligated to – change. Nothing has to be done just because that’s the way it always has been done. No reading list, no assignment is so good that it can’t be improved upon. No philosophy is so eternal that it can’t lose relevancy.

In the best of all possible worlds, only the proper things would motivate such change: student needs, faculty strengths, incredible new books, or pressing social issues. Certainly all of these things have brought about changes in how we do things. However, very practical events become catalysts as well. As the university changes, Humanities and Integrated Studies is impacted just as is every other department. Since we are so non-traditional in our basic structures, we are, perhaps, even more impacted. Like the canary in the mines, the health and direction of the university itself can first be determined by examining the health of our program.

Currently, for instance, we have great difficulty bringing in faculty members from other departments to teach with us for a semester. Student enrollments are high and faculty numbers are low across the university. This means that departments are not free to lend out their professors, even for faculty development opportunities. Additionally, as the University of North Dakota continues to emphasize its role as a research university,
professors are encouraged to put more time and energy into research projects, writing, graduate students, and graduate courses than into their undergraduate teaching.

Along with everyone else, too, we face issues of low funding and increased enrollments. These are just a few of the practicalities that will drive programmatic changes in the near future. Hopefully, given our history and our philosophies, we will tackle these problems by considering these changes only in the light of what is best for the students. Despite the aforementioned problems, the university has remained loyal to us because it recognizes that we “do undergraduate education right.”

As we engage these challenges, we are also asking how we can move our model beyond its current form so that we can reach more students in their sophomore, junior, and senior years, offering opportunities for integrated, student-centered learning. Plans are currently underway to create new opportunities for faculty members who want to be involved with us and who want to participate in interdisciplinary teaching opportunities but who cannot be freed from departmental teaching loads. We hope to become facilitators of linked courses and interdisciplinary seminars that can provide upper level students with more diverse and engaging educational opportunities, while providing faculty members with opportunities to interact more closely with students and to revision their disciplines through the lens of interdisciplinarity.

Thus, for internal or external reasons, Humanities and Integrated Studies is always growing, always changing, constantly questioning who we are and what we can do to best facilitate student learning. Additionally, we also firmly believe that Humanities & Integrated Studies remain vital to the education of the students at this university, and indeed all students in the United States. And we will continue to encourage students to engage in a liberal arts education and to study Humanities courses here at the University of North Dakota.
Appendix

Permanent, Full-Time, Part-Time, and Visiting Integrated Studies Faculty

Tom Akers: 1988
Michael Anderegg: 1993
Jack Barden*: 1987 - 1991 (served as Coordinator of Humanities and Integrated Studies)
Carl Barrentine*: 1992 - present (served as Coordinator of Humanities and Integrated Studies)
Kathleen Brokke: 2000 - 2003
Tami Carmichael*: 2000 - present (current Coordinator of Humanities and Integrated Studies)
Kendra Ellenbecker: 2005 - 2006
Steve Finney*: 2003 - 2006
Don Halvorson: 1986 - 1987
Caroline Hartse*: 1999
Toby Howell: 1988
Clay Jenkinson: 1985-1986 (served as Coordinator of Humanities and Integrated Studies)
Kathy King: 2002 - 2003
Gretchen Lang: 1990 - 1992 (served as Coordinator of Humanities and Integrated Studies)
Yvette LaPierre: 2003 - present
Gerald Lawrence*: 1986-1993, 1995 - 1996 (served as Coordinator of Humanities and Integrated Studies)
Melinda Leach: 1996
Mark Magness*: 2002-present
David Ramsett: 1986
Elizabeth Rankin: 1990
Patricia Sanborn*: 1986-1995, 1996-1998 (served as Coordinator of Humanities and Integrated Studies)
Rachel Scott: 1989
Kathy Tiemann: 1990

*Faculty permanently assigned to/hired by Humanities and Integrated Studies
Appendix 2

Courses Currently Offered by Humanities & Integrated Studies

Humanities 101: Introduction to Humanities I*
Humanities 102: Introduction to Humanities II*
Humanities 212: Integrated Cultural Experience*
Humanities 224: Integrated Social Science Inquiry*
Humanities 225: Advanced Integrated Social Science*
Humanities 270: Integrated Studies Life Sciences*
Humanities 271: Integrated Studies General Science*
Humanities 271L: Integrated Studies General Science Lab*
Humanities 300: Knowledge, Truth, and Reality
Humanities 308: Writing Across Disciplines
Humanities 391: Advanced Humanities Seminar

* These classes all fulfill UND General Education/Essential Studies Requirements