**For discussion at the November 14 Open Meeting: Stern Great Room – 12-1:30; 3:00-4:30**

**Bulletin copy -- reflecting the edits to the document presented to the faculty at the October 2016 meeting.**

Dickinson offers a rich educational experience. Students learn key skills at the core of the liberal arts and sciences including inquiry and analysis, critical thinking, creativity, effective written and oral communication, information literacy, problem solving, and integrative and applied learning. We also strive to make our students responsive to emerging new knowledge and the challenges of the day. Our curriculum places the liberal arts and sciences within a contemporary context.

Above all, our students acquire the ability to learn how to learn, to apply the multifaceted capacities engendered by a liberal arts and science education innovatively in a rapidly changing, complex world. Students enjoy independence to craft individual educational programs. They are encouraged to find their own voices and to develop a sense of purpose as learners and citizens.  The ability to follow their own interests enhances students’ intellectual curiosity and engagement, builds capacity for lifelong learning and inculcates a sense of accountability for decisions.

The academic program at Dickinson can be envisioned in terms of three dimensions. The first is composed of elements infused across the curriculum. These elements include critical thinking, and pedagogical approaches, such as active learning, research and internship possibilities or interdisciplinary work. Our faculty are innovative, providing a range of programming and pedagogy that enriches our students’ learning.

The second dimension is constituted by an enviable set of majors, certificates, minors, and off-campus study options. Our requirement for a major concentration of study in one area ensures that each student engages in complex levels of intellectual examination and inquiry.

Finally, there is a third dimension of the curriculum made up of experiences which we believe are essential to a Dickinson liberal arts education for all students – our general requirements for the degree.

**1. General requirements for the degree:**

The requirements include an opportunity for students to focus on two specific skills: writing and quantitative reasoning. Regardless of the specific career one chooses, it is necessary to be able to write well. Therefore, we require two courses – the first-year seminar and writing in the discipline – where students can develop and refine their writing. Because quantitative information is all around us, students must develop the ability to critically evaluate that information so that they can make informed decisions.

**First-year seminar:** The First-Year Seminar introduces students to Dickinson as a "community of inquiry" by developing habits of mind essential to liberal learning. “Seminar” indicates that there will be discussion and interaction among students and between students and their professor. Through the study of a compelling issue or broad topic chosen by their faculty member, students will develop skills in the areas of critical analysis, writing, and information literacy. *This course does not duplicate in content any other course in the curriculum and may not be used to fulfill any other graduation requirement.*

**Writing in the Discipline (WiD) (one course): The Writing in the Discipline course builds on the writing and information literacy skills learned in First-Year Seminar.** Preferably completed in the major or other related field, WiD courses teach students about a discipline and its discourse community. In WiD courses, students learn how members of a discipline effectively communicate new knowledge – their specific research and writing processes, the forms and conventions they use to deliver knowledge, the purpose of those forms and conventions, the ways to appeal to disciplinary audiences, and the ways to position themselves as members of the discipline in a piece of writing.

**Quantitative Reasoning Course (QR):**  The Quantitative Reasoning Course provides a foundation for the interpretation and critical understanding of numbers, logic and/or graphics.  Both words – quantitative and reasoning – are carefully chosen: "quantitative" suggests having to do with relations and logic, while "reasoning" refers to the creation and interpretation of empirical and/or analytical arguments.

**2. Distribution Courses:** The challenges and opportunities facing our students require complex and sophisticated responses. Therefore, we require courses that introduce students to the special nature of inquiry in each of the four fundamental branches of the academic curriculum: the arts, the humanities, the social sciences, and the laboratory sciences. *Normally, the expectation is that distribution courses will be completed by the end of the sophomore year.*

**The Arts.** Courses that fulfill the arts requirement allow students to explore the nature of art, both past and present, as a distinct form of human communication. This occurs through the specific mediums of dance, film, music, theatre, visual arts, and creative writing.

**The Humanities.**  Courses that fulfill the humanities requirement allow students to understand, explore, analyze and interpret the historical, cultural, and philosophical dimensions of human experience. .  This occurs through focused analysis of texts, narratives, rituals and/or other media as well as philosophical argumentation.

**The Social Sciences**. Courses that fulfill the social sciences requirement allow students to explore the ways that human beings actively shape the social world, and social and/or cultural processes shape human experiences.  This occurs through examining the social and/or cultural components of human experiences through analysis and interpretation of people, structures, ideas, and institutions.

**Laboratory Science**. Courses that fulfill the laboratory science requirement allow students to understand the natural processes that govern Earth and its inhabitants, as well as the universe. This occurs through systematic observations and experimentation, formation and verification of theories, and computational methods in a laboratory setting.

**3. Cross-cultural studies:** The college requires three different types of course work to familiarize students with the ways in which the diversity of human cultures has shaped our world. In an interdependent world, students must be aware of the breadth of voices, perspectives, experiences, values, and cultures that constitute the rich tapestry of life and history.

**Languages:** Courses that fulfill the language requirement allow students to expand their horizons and reflect on their own worldview through the understanding of others. as well as through a grasp of the complex relationship between language and culture. This occurs by obtaining intermediate level skills which will prepare them to be immersed in another language and culture.    
  
*This includes languages not currently taught at Dickinson College, including American Sign Language. Fulfillment of this requirement may take the form of college-level courses for which credit is earned at Dickinson (or transferred from another institution) or through certification based on approved testing without the posting of college credit. Intermediate language courses for which credit is posted do not fulfill any other general or distribution requirements at the college. Students for whom English is not their native language, may be able to use English to fulfill this requirement. No exemptions of the language requirement will be provided.*

**U.S. Diversity:**Courses that fulfill the U.S. diversity requirement allow students to explore the ways in which diversity has enriched and complicated people’s lives by examining the intersections of two or more of the following categories of identity in the United States: race, ethnicity, gender, class, religion, sexual orientation, and/or disability. This occurs by considering people’s lived experiences as members of dominant and subordinated groups, this course equips students to engage a complex, diverse United States.

**Comparing Cultures:** In the US, the dominant intellectual and cultural traditions derive primarily from Europe and post-colonial North America, commonly referred to as “Western traditions.” Courses that fulfill the comparing cultures requirement allow students to (a) examine one or more non-Western cultures in depth, (b) explicitly compare societies or cultures – including at least one non-Western society or culture, or do both, as appropriate to the discipline.

**4. Sustainability:** The planet is on a trajectory that is not sustainable, therefore the college requires one course that allows students to develop the competencies and dispositions to integrate knowledge about complex systems, learn from and adapt to changing conditions, and envision and implement sustainable solutions.

**One course coded as either Sustainability Connections – SCON or Sustainability Investigation – SINV):** *Sustainability Investigations courses*engage students in deep and focused exploration of sustainability as a major theme of the course, through which students gain a rich understanding of multiple dimensions of sustainability. *Sustainability Connections courses*build competencies in knowledge and methods of a field that is relevant to understanding sustainability and demonstrate connections between the subject matter of the course and sustainability.

Courses that fulfill the sustainability requirement address the question, “How do we improve the human condition equitably in this and future generations, while conserving environmental systems necessary to support healthy and vibrant societies?”

**5. Physical Education:** The Physical Education requirement contributes to students' physical, social and psychological development. The primary emphases of the program include learning and developing skills and understanding the benefits of physical activity.

Satisfactory completion of four blocks of physical education is required: four fitness activity blocks or three fitness activity blocks and one cognitive physical education block.

*Participants in intercollegiate sports will receive credit for one block of physical education for each season they play a varsity sport; ROTC students will receive credit for one block of physical education for each year they remain in the program. Selected sports club activities may also receive a maximum of two fitness blocks. Transfer students with junior standing with no physical education course work need to take only two blocks of physical education. Persons who enter Dickinson after at least two years of active military service will be awarded two fitness blocks toward the requirement. Every student must complete the physical education requirement unless excused in writing by the Chairperson of the Physical Education Department.*

*Physical education blocks are graded on a pass/fail basis and carry no academic credit. Most meet for half-semester; all courses, even those meeting for the entire semester, count as one block. Students are expected to have completed the physical education requirement by the end of the first semester of their senior year.*

**Important notes:**

* It is the responsibility of the student to choose and satisfactorily complete courses that fulfill the requirements for graduation.
* All students must complete the general course requirements are described above. Be aware of the following restrictions:
  + A single course may be used to fulfill a distribution requirement in only one of the four fundamental branches of the academic curriculum (the Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Laboratory Sciences).
  + A single course that fulfills a distribution requirement and another requirement may be used to fulfill each requirement, but counts as only one of the 32 required for graduation. The following exception applies: A course that fulfills both the laboratory science and quantitative reasoning (QR) may fulfill only one or the other.
* Students must complete a major, the specific requirements for each are listed in the sections describing the courses of study.
* Only those students who have completed all requirements for the degree are eligible to participate in the Commencement ceremony each May.
* A student must pass 32 courses with a cumulative average of 2.00.
* A student must complete a minimum of 16 courses on campus; twelve courses must be completed on campus after the student has matriculated and has declared a major. The final four courses or six of the last eight courses immediately preceding graduation must be completed on campus. To be considered "on campus" a student must be registered for a numbered course at Dickinson and must be physically on the Dickinson campus for this course work.