Motion for the Formation of a Task Force to Review/Revise the All College Academic Distribution Requirements

Rationale: Colby distribution requirements date back to 1991 (with the exception of the First Year Writing requirement, which is more recent). While there have been some modifications since that time, the central framework has remained substantially the same. The world as a whole, and the world of education have changed a great deal since 1991. The vast majority of Colby faculty were not here in 1991. Entire bodies of knowledge did not exist then, and ways of thinking about globalization, experiential education, multiculturalism, sustainability, and data and computation are substantively different. Finally, students are entering Colby with different preparation than they did in 1991.

During the faculty retreat of May 2015, many people suggested that it might be time to review our distribution requirements to ensure that they provide learning outcomes reflective of liberal education in the 21st Century. The Academic Affairs Committee shares the sense that we would benefit from a thorough review of our requirements—one that might lead either to affirming our current distribution requirements or revising them. Toward that end, AAC offers the following motion:

Motion: The College will establish a Task Force to review the current Colby academic distribution requirements and make recommendations about them to the faculty.

Charge:

- Review the Educational Precepts as a statement of learning goals
- Review the current distribution requirements
  - Assess the learning outcomes in the current requirements
  - Identify logistical and operational challenges with the current requirements
  - Solicit community feedback about the current requirements
- Review distribution requirements at peer institutions
- Make recommendations to the faculty about the distribution requirements and the role that those requirements play as part of a liberal arts education in the 21st century. Such recommendations should:
  - Articulate clear, sustainable, and assessable learning goals
  - Define the academic distribution requirements for Colby
  - Describe an assessment plan for the academic distribution requirements

Timeline: The work of the task force will conclude in the spring of 2017 with a report presented to the faculty in March; any motions would be ready for the April 2017 faculty meeting. Progress reports will be given to AAC the faculty for feedback at the end of the spring and fall semesters 2016.

Composition of the Academic Distribution Requirement Task Force:

- Provost, chair
- 10 faculty representatives
  - 1 elected from each division
  - 3 elected at large
  - 3 appointed
- 4 student representatives
- Ex officio (with voting rights)
  - Dean of Students
  - Senior Associate Provost
  - Registrar
  - Director of the Libraries
  - Senior Associate Dean of Students