

## Task Force on Review of All-College Distribution Requirements

May 9, 2018, 9:00-10:00am, Eustis 406

Attending: Bevin Engman, Laura Saltz, Alicia Ellis, Jonathan McCoy, Russ Johnson, Dave Angelini, Raffael Scheck, Keith Peterson

### Summary

We reviewed recent meetings that small delegations from the task force have held with departments, programs, and committees.

The **English** department expected students to learn “close reading,” clear and well-argued writing, as well as the “virtues of ambiguity;” they hoped students would appreciate the cultural-historical context of literature, the diversity of literary form, the capacity for “immersive reading,” and an appreciation of the role of “song and story” in human experience. They would also like students to recognize that “representation has real world effects,” and to gain the ability to assess unstated assumptions of texts and arguments. Concern was expressed that if the “critical interpretation” mode could be satisfied by courses other than English, then no one would need to take a literature course, and English might become obsolete.

The **American Studies and WGS** programs met together. Program members expected students to learn not to take knowledge for granted; to be reflexive and aware of their relations to structures of domination; to know oneself as an object of culture; to realize that the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves matter; to be suspicious of the idea of “objective” knowledge; to appreciate the gender, sexuality, and epistemological critiques embedded in the field; to read closely, and to work with concrete evidence. They would like students to learn history, sociology, and some methodological skills from other disciplines.

The **Librarians** discussed the importance of “information literacy” (critical thinking about information), and they will write their own policy and send the DRTF a document about this. Ideally, they would like IL built into the revised DRs somehow. They are interested in being part of the conversation.

The **Writing Across the Curriculum Committee** conversation focused on W1 courses as a model for others in terms of its “common understandings.” People with experience worked together to come up with the common understandings. The culture of expert participation open to revision is what makes it work. In a sense, the requirements are not just for the students, they are there for W1 teachers, and you become part of the community by participating in the program.