To: Graduate Academic Council

From: Sridar Chittur, Chair
       GAC Committee on Curriculum & Instruction (CC&I)

Date: April 23, 2012

Subject: Report and Recommendations

CC&I Members Present: P. Caban, S. Chittur, B. Dieffenbach, A. Krause, A. Redlich
                      and F. Bolton (staff).

CC&I Members Absent: D. Dewar and E. Eisenbraun

Guests: Charles Sheperdson and John Pipkin

The CC&I Committee met on April 23, 2012 to discuss two items of business. The following recommendations are now forwarded for GAC's review and further action.

1. College of Arts and Sciences – Request to revise the Liberal Studies MA degree program

Dr. Charles Sheperdson, professor in the English Department, introduced the College of Arts and Sciences proposal to revise the MA in Liberal Studies degree program that resulted from a review undertaken at Dean Elga Wulfert's request.

The following statement taken from the proposal serves to both summarize some of Dr. Sheperdson's comments and set forth the intent of the revisions.

"Program Definition and Goals

The above revisions are guided by the following goals, some of which reach well beyond the current Liberal Studies program:

(1) to strengthen academic quality;
(2) to provide intellectual coherence and focus;
(3) to enhance interdisciplinary research and teaching in humanities, arts and social sciences;
(4) to support the university's goal of greater internationalization.

The proposed revision of the Liberal Studies Program explicitly reorients this program in a distinctive direction, not only in relation to its current configuration, but also relative to such programs nationally. We will no longer primarily recruit local students who are already employed. We will no longer configure the program as a terminal degree. We will only admit students whose academic backgrounds are substantial, and we expect many of these students to go on doctoral work in regular academic disciplines, or to careers related to their research.

The revised Liberal Studies program will seek to cultivate new areas of interdisciplinary research that are emerging in response to contemporary intellectual life, and that cut across disciplinary boundaries in the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences — research areas that are crucial to the intellectual culture of the contemporary university (postcolonial studies, globalization, human rights, contemporary cultural theory, issues of race, gender, ethnicity, and religion as they intersect with transnational or diaspora studies, and related areas). Accordingly, the revised program will be loosely focused on "Cultural
Theory in a Global Context." This conceptual frame is intended to be broad enough to allow various departments to contribute from a number of disciplinary perspectives, while at the same time providing sufficient intellectual coherence to give the program a visible identity and a core conceptual orientation.

We also aim to contribute to the University's efforts at internationalization, as is fitting for a program focused on Cultural Theory in a Global Context. We aim to cultivate partnerships, exchange programs and dual degree opportunities, and other collaborations with universities abroad. Our aim is to produce a distinctive, intellectually rigorous, and internationally visible degree that responds to the rapidly changing nature of knowledge in the humanities, arts and social sciences, a degree that allows students to pursue areas of research that are not readily available under normal departmental restrictions.

The present Liberal Studies MA entails the completion of 30 credits: three required interdisciplinary core courses Gls 500 (Topics in the Humanities 4 credits), Gls 501 (Topics in the Social Sciences 4 credits), Gls 600 (Topics in the Natural Sciences 4 credits); Gls 680 (Research Project 3 credits); and 15 electives.

Program revisions focus the interdisciplinary core by limiting it to College of Arts and Sciences Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences and Rockefeller College’s Department of Political Science. The science disciplinary core is dropped. (Dr. Sheperdson commented that student backgrounds in the sciences have historically been inadequate for the present program.) Students will still be required to complete one course in humanities/art and one in social sciences. These courses are to be chosen from a targeted set of options. A master’s thesis is to replace the Gls 680 research project as the capstone culmination of the degree. With advisor supervision and approval students will define their chosen area of research and register for the remaining courses needed to fulfill the degree’s requirements.

While grasping the proposal’s intent to strengthen the rigor and focus of the program, CC&I members felt the structure of the program requirements was not well defined in its original documentation. Dr. Shepherson agreed to craft a set of "guidelines" for the program that would provide information to form the basis of Graduate Bulletin program requirements, admissions letters and final degree clearance. That supplemental document was received and distributed to CC&I members for review and comment and then returned to program administrators. Revised guidelines were redistributed to members who believed the guidelines now addressed the need to outline and set forth the expectations and academic requirements of the revised program. An email vote was conducted with 5 of 7 CC&I members approving the planned changes to the Liberal Studies MA program. Therefore, the original proposal with its accompanying guidelines is sent forward to the GAC with the endorsement of the Committee on Curriculum and Instruction.

2. College of Arts and Sciences – Proposal to make requirement changes to its Industrial/Organizational Psychology PhD program

The Psychology Department's proposal sets forth updates and changes to its PhD program. One course, Psy 758, Ethics and Professional Issues, is added to its list of required courses. Psy 759, Occupational Health Psychology, and Psy 757, Performance Appraisal and Management, (previously taught as topics courses) are now listed to enrich the choices of advanced seminars offered. Psy 614, Meta-analysis, expands the course listings needed to fulfill the advanced statistics requirement. Several textual changes were felt necessary for clarification reasons.

As the changes enhanced the rigor of the program and updated curriculum offerings, the Committee voted unanimously (5-0-0) in favor of the proposal.