

Proposal

College of Integrative Studies USM L-A

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(in collaboration with the faculty of USM LAC)

This proposal provides the rationale for reconfiguring and expanding the academic scope and administrative functions of USM LAC in order to strengthen interdisciplinary teaching, learning and scholarship across the three campuses of the University of Southern Maine. It also addresses the critical need of providing an administrative home for General Education at USM.

Why restructure USM?

In recent speeches and publications, President Botman has explained that to ensure the fiscal sustainability of USM even as we “continue to operate in an environment of constantly increasing costs and decreasing revenues. . . we must reorganize so that we can capture dollars to invest in distinctive programs” (See “The 21st Century USM blog” <http://blogs.usm.maine.edu/publicaffairs/archives/category/21st-century-usm>).

The 2009-2014 Strategic plan clarifies that USM will refashion its structure and size in ways that make sound academic sense and that increase cost effectiveness (p. 25).

Fortunately, over the past several years, USM faculty and administrators working in partnership with the USM Board of Visitors (BoV), have been addressing the question of what curricular organizations make sound academic sense as we strive to meet the region’s higher education needs in the 21st Century. In *The Southern Maine Imperative* we were charged by the BoV to transform USM into a “top-ranked public, regional comprehensive universities in the United States in the quality, breadth, and the accessibility of its academic programs.” In response, USM has engaged in revitalizing its curricula and “deepening its organizational culture in support of inquiry and learning” (<http://usm.maine.edu/pres/pdfs/transforming0830.pdf>).

We have not been working in isolation. USM faculty and administrators have participated in and contributed to publications and conferences sponsored by AAC&U. Through her year long appointment as a USM Libra Scholar, senior AAC&U scholar, Lee Kneflekamp, consulted on the design of the new GenEd curricula and led many USM faculty through workshops and discussions of the principles underlying both the *Greater Expectations* report and the more recent *Liberal Education and America’s Promise* (LEAP) initiative which rejects the antithesis between liberal learning and professional preparation.

USM's work in this regard has attracted national attention. Carol Geary Schneider, President of the AAC&U, described USM's new program of general education as making excellence inclusive "by delivering to all students the quality of education usually reserved for elites" (see letter of March 23, 2007 to President Pattenaude). Professor Knefelkamp described our new general education as "cutting edge" in that it anticipates and incorporates the essential learning outcomes identified by civic and business leaders as well as university faculty across the country.

One of the key learning outcomes identified in the LEAP report as essential to the academic preparation for students in the 21st century is ***Integrative Learning*** that is demonstrated through the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex real world problems. USM was just at the point of addressing the pressing issue of restructuring the university to support its new innovative curricula (see appendix to the Guidelines and Criteria for General Education) and research initiatives when the ever pressing problem of the fiscal sustainability of USM hit the current level of crisis.

"Market smart and Mission driven"

We borrow this subtitle from Zemsky, Wegner and Massy's 2005 book *Remaking the American University*, to applaud the proposal drafted by colleague Lynn Kuzma which imagines a College of Interdisciplinary Studies designed to "foster and support interdisciplinary programs and initiatives in teaching and research" and support provide administrative support for new General Education curricula at USM (Kuzma, p. 1). We also recognize the effort of members of USM's General Education Council to identify the administrative functions that must be realized in order to successfully implement and maintain the new programs of General Education at USM. These include a need to a) design, develop, implement and assess GenEd pathways/programs; b) recruit and support the talented, creative, and committed faculty teaching in GenEd pathways; c) ensure that the academic leadership of the new integrative general education curricula is not dispersed across units or departments at USM. USM L-A could be the administrative home for this.

The need to establish a university wide College of Interdisciplinary Studies "for curricular experimentation and development" was noted in USM's 2004-2009 strategic plan and continues to make sound academic sense. Further, USM faculty of LAC wholeheartedly endorse Kuzma's observation that the special mission of such a College "can only be advanced by an administrative structure that is well-conceived and well-supported" (Kuzma, p. 4).

We find that Kuzma's proposal sets out a compelling rationale for taking interdisciplinary work seriously. It argues that by integrating knowledge and modes of thinking with application, interdisciplinary work enables the "rigorous examination of real world problems and issues," and has the potential "to produce exciting and relevant programs that will distinguish academic programs at USM" and attract new students (p.2). The proposal also rightly underscores the fact that on the Portland and Gorham campuses, the

current administrative structures, reward systems and staffing challenges impose serious constraints on faculty (and departments) interested in participating in providing our students the new innovative program of General Education and in pursuing interdisciplinary work. It wisely cautions that the suggestion (found in the current restructuring scenarios) to house non-degree granting General education programs (Honors, Russell Scholars, USM Core) in a “division of undergraduate studies” detached from academic programs would be a mistake. The proposal calls for a university wide administrative structure that will support undergraduate and graduate, degree granting and non-degree granting programs on the three USM campuses and locates programs related to “engaged learning” within that structure.

In order to renew, enhance or create programs of distinction, the proposal also insists upon the necessity of having a “collegial, collaborative environment, where diversity of thought and ideas, engagement with our local communities, and risk-taking and innovation will be rewarded (p.3). It sees that a College of Interdisciplinary Studies will help distinguish USM “as a leader of interdisciplinary studies, a provider of engaged learning opportunities, and a potential community partner vis-à-vis its experiential learning programs” (p. 1).

How fortunate it is, then, that there is already a unit at the University of Southern Maine that has this precise mission and these characteristics.

USM LAC Mission statement:

Lewiston-Auburn College of the University of Southern Maine is committed to being a national leader in interdisciplinary education, to serving as a resource for the community, and to providing an outstanding educational experience for its students through degree programs that are responsive to changing cultural and workplace demands and are available to a non-traditional and diverse student body.

The aim of the college is to increase the educational preparedness of the people of central Maine for meeting the challenges of our dramatically changing, global and pluralistic world. The curriculum is marked by integration between the liberal arts disciplines, between the liberal arts, the professional concentrations and the workplace, and between the college and the community. We hire and retain faculty who embrace a teaching philosophy that emphasizes student-centered learning, analytical and creative thinking, effective oral expression and writing across the entire curriculum. The college makes a rigorous liberal arts education available to students of varying levels of readiness in order to foster in them a sense of ethical and civic responsibility, a disposition toward lifelong learning, and the capacity to live responsible, creative and productive lives.

<http://usm.maine.edu/lac/facultystaff/handbook.pdf>

Integrative teaching and learning at USM’s Lewiston-Auburn College

USM LAC was originally established through collaborative efforts of college and community members. Civic and business leaders in L-A wanted college graduates who

could write and speak effectively, think critically, contribute solutions to community problems, and more broadly, conceptualize the world in ways that transcend academic molds. The founders decided that the college should consist of interdisciplinary programs which would integrate the liberal arts with each other, with professional studies, and with the community and the workplace. The current mission statement for the College clearly reflects this vision.

Interdisciplinarity is central to the philosophy and practice of education at the College. In fact, USM LAC is a longstanding institutional member of the Association of Integrative Studies and is among only a handful of higher education institutions in the country providing interdisciplinary majors within an interdisciplinary General Education curriculum. In Fall, 2007 we launched our new Lewiston common core curriculum (LCC), *“How, Then, Shall We Live: Citizenship in a Global Society.”* It is developmental and intentional, outcomes-based, and focuses on four, overarching themes: Justice, Democracy, Difference, and Sustainability. The Lewiston Common Core also includes a career development sequence of courses and internship experiences. Prof. Kneflekamp characterized LCC as “a statement of the civic mission of the college.”

Current organization of USM LAC

We do not have separate academic departments at USM Lewiston-Auburn College. Rather, fulltime faculty from all of our undergraduate and graduate degree programs work and meet together as a whole for discussion and decision-making around pedagogical, institutional and program concerns. Our undergraduate degree programs, such as “Arts and Humanities” and “Social and Behavioral Sciences,” were designed to involve faculty and courses crossing more traditionally and narrowly defined academic fields (i.e., “English,” “History,” “Psychology,” etc). Most of our courses draw upon material from more than one discipline. Our team-taught courses, which bring together faculty trained in different disciplines with their alternative ways of knowing, further highlight an interdisciplinary model of learning.

Consistent with the mission of USM LAC, the Masters degree programs in Occupational Therapy (MOT) and Leadership Studies (MLS) are cutting edge programs responsive to student and marketplace needs and built on demonstrated university strengths. MOT and MLS are designed for students who desire graduate level educational opportunities that integrate the insights of several disciplines of thought and analysis. They address real world problems and open new doors by synthesizing knowledge from the humanities, social sciences, communication, and the natural and environmental sciences.

Integrating the liberal arts with professional preparation

Interdisciplinary courses expand and cross “boundaries” of what are often separate areas of thought and study. Sometimes this, most simply, involves use of materials from other academic fields, keeping one disciplinary approach “primary.” In other instances, methods, concepts and applications from multiple disciplines will be brought together in a complementary manner to address different facets of a topic. More intensive

interdisciplinary courses make explicit the assumptions and implications inherent in each of the disciplinary perspectives such that the nature of the “disciplines” themselves is also examined.

Real world problems confronting our students and society, now and in the future, do not neatly fall within the boundaries of traditionally defined academic disciplines. Rather, effective problem solving requires the ability to selectively identify and apply relevant concepts and skills associated with a range of fields. For instance, effectively responding to social problems may involve a mix of understanding from political, economic, psychological and sociological disciplines, to name a few - it may even be that works of art, such as imaginative literature, may be the catalyst for a new level of insight into the issues.

We believe, at the most fundamental level, that interdisciplinarity, as a philosophical and pedagogical approach, strengthens both the liberal arts and career preparation we offer to our students. Interdisciplinarity facilitates greater appreciation of the importance of how one thinks about different types of problems and solutions. Being flexible - and rigorous - in one’s examination of varied areas of inquiry and knowledge expands the intellectual and practical resources at one’s command. One of the most profound levels of learning to be offered through higher education occurs with the deepening and broadening of the range of processes with which one can formulate questions and evaluate the answers and actions available to us as individuals and as a society. At USM Lewiston-Auburn College, we view interdisciplinarity as one of the most powerful means available to us, as faculty and as an institution, in achieving this educational outcome.

As recently argued by Bruce Henderson in his work on public comprehensive universities, the expanded conception of scholarly activities contained in the Boyer model is the conception most appropriate to valuing faculty work in universities whose mission – like USM LAC’s – is to integrate a strong liberal arts education with professional preparation. LAC’s tenure & promotion criteria were constructed using the Boyer model, and they encourage scholarly activity in the areas of discovery, integration, application/practice, and teaching. Program curricula that are responsive to regional needs at the undergraduate and graduate level as well as the new Lewiston Common Core provide evidence that these criteria reward faculty work in the area of curriculum development. Further, the list of scholarly publications in the areas of teaching and learning testify to the fact that USM LAC encourages its faculty to engage in innovative and reflective pedagogy. (go to: <http://usm.maine.edu/lac/directory/scholarship.html> for a list of those publications.

Further evidence of the effectiveness of USM LAC policies for establishing tenure and promotion within an interdisciplinary context came to us in the form of an external reviewer’s letter for a tenure and promotion case we are considering this Fall. A reviewer from a major research institution recently commented: "Having served on university level promotion and tenure committees, I commend the Lewiston Auburn College for the document, *Evaluation Criteria for Tenure, Reappointment & Promotion*. I reviewed this document in its entirety before I began my study of [LAC faculty

member's] portfolio. This is among the clearest documents I have read concerning the standards for promotion and tenure." (to review USM LAC's P&T document, go to: http://usm.maine.edu/prov/faculty_resources/Personnel/criteria/unit_P_and_T_criteria.htm)

Proposing a university wide College of Integrative Studies (administered by USM L-A)

USM's 2009-2014 strategic plan pledges that USM will utilize "the potential inherent within the combined intellectual capital of the faculty as a whole" to create new programs, renew and enhance existing programs, and invest in signature interdisciplinary, cross-campus efforts designed to address the needs of students, interests of faculty, and aspirations of USM's surrounding communities in central and southern Maine (p. 15). It also renews USM's pledge to fulfill its mission as northern New England's outstanding public, regional, comprehensive university, and to build a sustainable university "by focusing [its] resources on those programs and activities most critical to its mission" while increasing cost effectiveness.

This proposal describes one way to fulfill those pledges. In what follows we suggest a way to restructure USM LAC so that it provides the administrative resources needed for interdisciplinary teaching, learning and scholarship at USM in a cost-effective and academically sound manner. We address the need for USM L-A's College of Integrative Studies to meet USM's critical need of establishing an administrative structure to support its nationally recognized program of General Education and innovative interdisciplinary programs on the Portland and Gorham campuses in a way that protects the integrity of those programs and provides the academic support they need.

In order to be the crucible in which USM programs of real distinction are renewed, enhanced or created, the College of Integrative Studies must be the focus of significant fund-raising efforts and re-investment. Half-hearted support will seriously jeopardize these mission-critical programs.

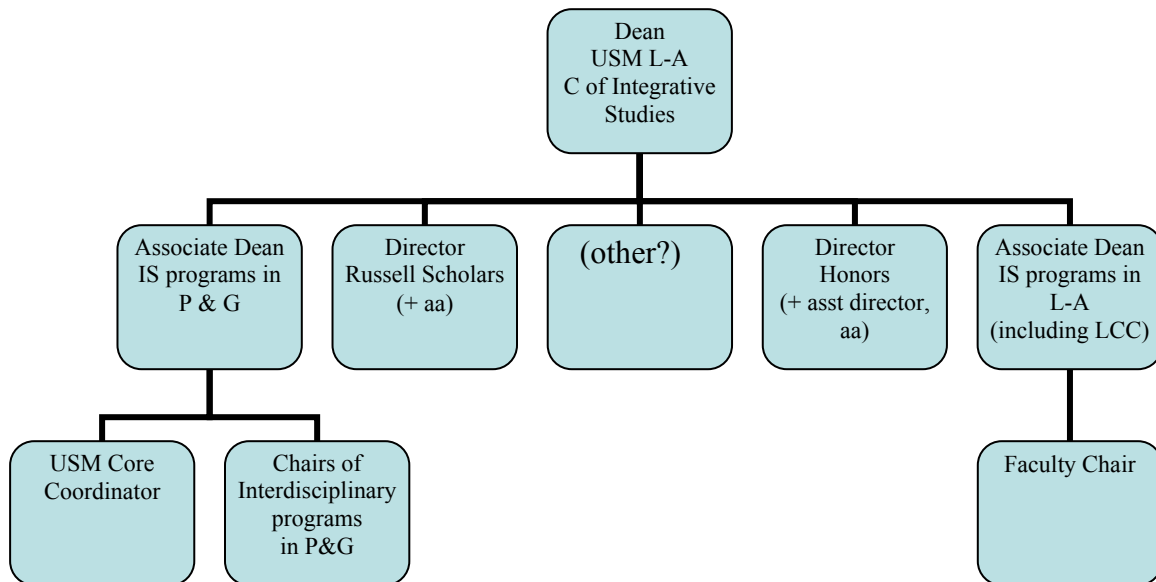
- CIS Administrative offices and meeting spaces must be located on each of the three USM campuses. College wide faculty meetings should be scheduled on a regular basis (3 or 4 times per year) with the location rotating between L-A, P & G.
- CIS will continue USM LAC's practice of holding summer faculty development workshops that specifically address ongoing faculty work in the area of curricular development and assessment as well as a focus on the theory and process of interdisciplinary teaching and scholarship.
- Existing university-wide programs (i.e. Russell Scholars, Honors) that are responsible for community outreach and hosting co-curricular events and/or working closely with Admissions on recruiting students will maintain separate faculty councils to oversee program curricula and will continue to have their own

budgets and be administered by Directors. Directors of these programs might work in conjunction with Associate Deans on establishing and working with community advisor boards in P-G and L-A [these and other details will need to be worked out by faculty in the programs.]

- Mirroring the practice currently in place at USM L-A, faculty teaching in interdisciplinary programs in P-G might work together as a faculty council with one faculty chair.

Change the name USM LAC to “USM L-A, College of Integrative Studies” (CIS) This name change will allow continuing reference to “USM L-A” in marketing efforts for the campus and programs located in Lewiston. This change clarifies that current LAC programs are, in fact, USM programs and will thereby help dispel long standing confusion in the minds of people in the local communities. Internal to USM, renaming LAC the “College of Integrative Studies” will create a sense of shared identity for the IS programs located on the three campuses and it will also be useful in academic publications as faculty further advance the College’s mission of being a “national leader in interdisciplinary education” through scholarly publications.

- USM, Lewiston-Auburn’s College of Integrative Studies is the administrative home for current programs of LAC including graduate, undergraduate and the Lewiston Common Core, interdisciplinary programs located in Portland and Gorham, and the new General Education pathways. The responsibilities of the current USM LAC Dean will be expanded accordingly. The administrative structure should be as follows:



This structure expands the administrative responsibilities of the USM L-A Dean to include a new Associate Dean of Interdisciplinary Studies in Portland and Gorham (including General Education) and Directorships of Russell Scholars and Honors and potentially other IS programs.

Additional administrative positions required for this expanded support of interdisciplinary programs at USM include:

Associate Dean, USM Core and Integrative Studies programs in Portland and Gorham: A tenured faculty member appointed by the Provost with experience in administration and interdisciplinary teaching. This person will have budgetary responsibility and will provide administrative support, promotion and coordination for interdisciplinary activities and initiatives, e.g. retreats, workshops, assessment, and faculty professional development. He/she will provide leadership for academic coordination, collaboration and communication between interdisciplinary programs in Portland and Gorham. Reports to the Dean; coordinates with Admissions, Advising & Academic Assessment (*Student Success*)

USM Core Coordinator: FT Professional staff. Develops and organizes teaching and learning events, researches and reports on best practices; maintains and conducts analysis on USM Core data base as required. Provides administrative support to the General Education Council, USM Core Curriculum Committee. Organizes activities and events related to general education and the USM Core; oversees program assessment; has budgetary responsibility for the above activities. Provides administrative support as needed for Core scheduling, transfer evaluation, delivery and assessment in coordination with the Registrar, Transfer Affairs, Advising and Academic Assessment; coordinates with the chairs of the GEC and USM CCC. Reports to the Assoc. Dean; sits on the General Education Council, USM Core Curriculum Committee.

Chair for IS programs in Portland and Gorham. Faculty member who chairs a faculty committee charged with overseeing the development and administration of the curricula for IS programs on the Portland and Gorham campuses. Reports to Assoc. Dean, CIS/P&G, identify faculty and personnel needs, sit on tenure committees, evaluate part-time faculty.

Administrative Assistant, Russell Scholars Program. The intensive and successful recruitment efforts (and retention successes) of this nationally recognized learning community warrant re-investment by USM in the form of both an AA and an expanded budget.

Directors and Chairs will be appointed to three-year, renewable terms. Prior to reappointment, there will be an evaluation submitted to the Dean. The evaluation will be carried out in accordance with college policies and procedures

- **Faculty:** at present, 2 full time faculty lines in “Interdisciplinary Studies” are assigned to USM LAC. We recommend increasing the number of (whole and

partial) faculty lines assigned to the College sufficient to providing the faculty necessary for the degree granting interdisciplinary programs and for the general education pathways (Honors, USM Core, Russell Scholars). This increase makes sound academic sense because it will create a larger pool of faculty committed to interdisciplinary approaches who can be a resource to the various programs. Expand LAC practices re: cross listing courses and “double dipping” between LCC courses and those required in the majors; sharing faculty resources, cross listing courses. Those working in interdisciplinary degree programs are likely to also be interested in developing and teaching general education courses in the expanded college. Furthermore, USM LAC has developed a set of practices for establishing and maintaining close and productive relationships with professionals in the southern and central Maine community – lawyers, artists, business leaders, occupational therapists, psychologists, directors of social service agencies, independent researchers, among others – who regularly teach our courses, attend faculty development workshops and work on developing courses in our curriculum. Given the current resource-scarce environment, it is critical for the success of new general education curricula that USM expand these collaborative practices so as to cultivate its relationship with these creative and committed members of the USM faculty.

- Dean of USM L-A will need to work closely with the Provost on the issue of the y privileges & responsibilities associated with either having “joint appointments” or dedicating portions of faculty teaching responsibility within the College of Integrative Studies. What would the faculty relationship be with the college with these different arrangements? What are the optimal arrangements to insure the faculty USM needs to successfully implement and maintain GenEd and other interdisciplinary majors, and what arrangements are needed to put appropriate recognition and reward system in place (i.e. College of Interdisciplinary Studies T&P criteria)
- Increase faculty exchanges and cross-campus options for students by instituting a regular bus service between Portland and USM L-A. Note that scheduling of courses at USM L-A (9a, 1p, 4p, 7p) simplifies this arrangement.