

Student Learning Committee (SLC)
Minutes from Meeting on November 29, 2011

Committee members present: Kendrick Brown (Chair), Nancy Bostrom, Cheryl Browne , Terri Fishel, Chad Higdon-Topaz, Lisa Landreman, Peter Mathison, Kimerly Miller, Libby Shoop, Yang Yu.

Absent: Adrienne Christiansen, Jim Hoppe.

I. Meeting date and time for next semester

SLC meetings will take place on Mondays at 3:30 PM, beginning on January 23.

II. Remaining work for this semester

SLC has two additional meetings, after today, and will continue to work through the remainder of the document. Ideally, this semester SLC will complete its revisions of all goals and outcomes. In January, Kendrick will draft language to address the “major issues.” The committee will take up the major issues when meetings resume the end of January.

III. Review feedback and suggestions for the initial draft

SLC discussed revisions to the document, continuing with Learning Goal D: Intercultural Knowledge and Competence. Highlights are included here, but for specific edits, see the revised draft.

- Language used in the Internationalism requirement does not specify “cultural dynamics.” The list here is intended to provide examples of cultural dynamics, not an exhaustive list.
- “Unequal distributions of resources” are articulated in the value section, but are not explicit here. SLC revised both the definition and LO# 4 to make this connection explicit.
 - “Unequal distributions of resources” may be interpreted very broadly to include both material and immaterial things such as access to systems, education and opportunities. This broad definition falls into the realm of cultural dynamics.
 - The addition of “unequal distributions of resources” respects “settled law” but is worded broadly enough to include different perspectives.
 - The addition of the term “power” focuses attention on distribution of resources related to power and privilege.
- LO# 4: “Cultural complexities” in this context relate to interrelationships between language, history, values, politics, etc.

- LO#3: What exactly is meant by “empathy” and should this word be included in the document?
 - “Empathy” is the ability to recognize the feelings and perspectives of another cultural group. This definition should remain in the outcome wording so that the meaning is clear, and not over-extended.
 - Empathy is a critical skill related to intercultural competency; it’s part of a “textbook” definition of intercultural competency.
 - Empathy does not have to be a teaching goal for every academic department, but as an institutional goal, it is something that students should be able to demonstrate after four years at Macalester. They may acquire this skill through co-curricular programming; study away experiences; internships; classroom discussions, etc.

Action Item: Kendrick will revise the draft and circulate to SLC before our next meeting. Track changes will be used to identify points for further discussion. Next week’s discussion will begin with a final review of the “empathy” question.