

## Background Summary

Since 1988, the Committee to Review the Undergraduate Experience [CRUE] Opportunities for Renewal Report ushered in a new era for MSU's general education requirements by combining the "traditional" expectations for writing and math with a heavy emphasis on integrative studies coursework (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Overview of MSU General Education and Integrative Studies Program**

Area	Coursework	Credits
<i>Writing</i>	Tier I Writing (first-year writing)	4
	Tier II Writing (in-major course)	3/4
<i>Math</i>	Quantitative Reasoning sequence (MTH 101 and 102) or College algebra plus one additional math or statistics course	3-6
<i>Integrative Studies</i>		
• Integrative Arts and Humanities (IAH)*	2 courses the first of which is writing intensive (4 credits each)	8
• Integrative Studies in General Science Sciences (ISB & ISP)**	2 courses + 1 lab (one course each in biological and physical science; courses are 3 credits each and lab is 2 credits)	8
• Integrative Social Sciences (ISS)*	2 courses (4 credits each)	8
<b>Minimum Credits</b>		<b>34</b>

\*These four courses must also fulfill an International (I) and National (N) diversity distribution requirement.

\*\*STEM majors follow an alternative, disciplinary-track of coursework.

## New Strategic Directions & Connection to LEAP

Between 2005 and 2010, MSU undertook a range of activities focused on enhancing the undergraduate student experience. Collectively, these efforts resulted in campus-wide discussion and agreement on a set of Undergraduate Learning Goals (ULGs) and rubrics, which provide a basis for the development of learning experiences and assessments for the campus (see <http://undergrad.msu.edu/outcomes.html>).

The institution's goals align well with AAC&U's LEAP efforts, and MSU has been part of several LEAP and cohort initiatives relative to integrative learning. As such, the LEAP initiative was part of the framework that led to the creation of MSU's ULGs, so all curriculum and activity at MSU is asked to align with the LEAP concept through ULGs to some degree. This activity includes majors, minors, co-curricular programs, study abroad, and orientation and residential programming.

Relative to integrative studies specifically, the reform efforts have led the institution to:

- Define integrative learning and global education in the context of the MSU experience;
- Affirm the ULGs as a basis for MSU's integrative studies program;
- Connect with the University Committee on Liberal Learning to outline interim changes to the current integrative studies curriculum that may help move it toward the desired outcomes; and
- Start discussions about developing integrative studies specific learning outcomes (yet aligned up to the ULGs) and a new model that is global in focus, outcomes-based, sequential in nature, and embeds a first-year and capstone experience into its structure.

Based on the work already completed, the MSU working group would like to move forward with the following activities over the next year:

- Develop, refine, and implement a statement that clearly connects IS outcomes to the institution's outcomes and portrays IS as one important part of the larger undergraduate learning experience;
- Work with the colleges and IS Centers and faculty to evolve an IS model to better align with the vision of a truly integrated core learning experience;
- Integrate the IS model with other aspects of the student curriculum to create a more transparent and coherent global learning experience;
- Consider the structural changes, if any, and faculty development efforts necessary to support this institutional change; and
- Create an on-going culture of learning outcomes assessment to provide an evidence based approach to curricular reform.

### *Assessment*

As a first, and on-going, step in the reform effort, the integrative studies team wanted to better understand the contributions of the current curriculum to student learning before launching a wholly new set of courses. To move forward on assessment, the Associate Provost's Office is co-funding three positions, one for each center, to serve as assessment specialists connected with the disciplines. These three individuals work collectively to conduct assessment efforts related to integrative studies.

To date, the assessment work has included the following:

- Content reviews of faculty syllabi
- Students satisfaction surveys
- Students self-reported learning
- Embedded course assessments (class assignments)
- Focus groups and wide-range surveys of faculty and students

This year, the assessment team is focused on the question of "how do we know," and they are current surveying faculty to better understand how faculty gather and evaluate evidence of student learning.