

Eastern Wyoming College

Instructional Program Review 2014 - 2015

Program: Interdisciplinary Studies

Prepared by:

**Mike Durfee, Associate Vice President for Outreach and Learning
Dr. Dee Ludwig, Vice President for Learning**

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EASTERN WYOMING COLLEGE Instructional Program Review

Program Name: Interdisciplinary Studies

Part I: Statistical Data from the past three years:

	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	5-Year Average
Annualized FTE Enrollment	32.2	31.1	30.5	31.8
Annualized FTE Faculty	2.4	2.6	2.3	2.5
# Students	215	172	178	200
# Graduated	38	22	28	28

FTE = Full-time equivalent Notes:

Statistical data include Human Development and Developmental Studies courses.

- **Developmental Studies courses were renamed into the discipline areas in 2009-2010.**

Modes of Delivery:

online compressed video face-to-face

Advisory Committee Members and Title or Role: (if applicable)

Community Partners or Internships: (if applicable)

Revisions in Curriculum Since Last Review:

The College Studies curriculum was reviewed, revised and standardized two years ago. Developmental courses in English and Math were moved to their respective discipline areas in 2009 – 2010. Reading placement scores were standardized across the state during 2011-2012. A new course entitled, “Bridge Reading” was implemented in Fall 2014. This one-credit hour course helps students achieve college-level reading skills in a shortened amount of time and is “blocked” meaning it is offered in 8-week sections. The Sophomore Project course was reviewed and categorized with an ENGL prefix and renamed Interdisciplinary Writing. Court Merrigan is the primary instructor of this course.

General Education requirements were reviewed by the faculty during 2013-2015. This resulted in new general education requirements that will be in effect for fall 2015 and going forward. This massive undertaking resulted in few overall hours, an elimination of “double counting” and a realignment of many of the A.S. and A.A. degree programs. This was necessary in order to align more closely with the statewide direction of reducing associate programs to 60 credits.

Part II Narrative Analysis

Description of Community Need:

Interdisciplinary Studies has more majors than any other major at Eastern Wyoming College. The five-year average of the number of Interdisciplinary Studies majors is 200 (2011 – 2014). The need for Interdisciplinary Studies is more of a “need” for a transfer major which includes a variety of courses and electives. It also serves as an alternative for students who have been concentrators in a certain program area but because of transfer plans will not be able to complete or need to complete all of the specific program requirements.

In the Outreach areas, the Interdisciplinary Studies degrees are achievable in all locations because all of the credits can be completed as Distance Education classes. Many times, students in Outreach can use the Interdisciplinary Studies program as a tailored educational program.

In summary, the program is very popular with students, faculty and advisors because of its flexibility and ability to meet the needs of students and all courses can be completed through EWC’s Distance Education course offerings. It is also a transfer program with general education requirements that are accepted at our articulated receiving institutions.

Current Community Need/Growth of Industry:

This program serves the needs of primarily transfer students entering into a variety of majors at their receiving institutions. Most students finish their EWC program in the Associate of Art Social Science area.

Activities in Support of Student Recruitment and Retention:

Faculty, recruiters and the Learning and Outreach Office assist students during summer advising sessions. Outreach coordinators, Douglas Campus Director and the Associate VP for Outreach and Learning assist and advise most Outreach students. The faculty visits with most prospective students. The college works cooperatively with all public schools in the six-county service area in eastern Wyoming to provide a wide variety of classes, programs and services. EWC has Outreach Coordinators in Hulett, Moorcroft, Sundance, Upton, Newcastle, Lusk, Glenrock, Douglas, Glendo, Guernsey, Wheatland, and Chugwater who plan and organize credit and non-credit classes for their communities. The Eastern Wyoming College Douglas Campus offers day and evening courses emphasizing general education, business, computer applications, criminal justice, elementary and secondary education, interdisciplinary studies, and health technology.

Assessment of Student Learning: Analysis of Student Learning. Include placement if known. Statistical Data Results, What has been learned?

EWC student Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency scores are at or above the national level in all categories. The 2012-2013 graduate survey (administered every other year) shows students are satisfied with their EWC experience. On a 4 –1 rating scale with 4 being strongly agree, students said “they were glad they attended EWC” - average rating of 3.90. “EWC did an

excellent job of preparing me for full-time work in my chosen career profession” – average rating of 3.61. “EWC did an excellent job of preparing me for further study at a four-year institution” – average rating of 3.56. For program assessment, students who are concentrators in a different field may choose to take that field’s program assessment. All faculty participate in Classroom Assessment Techniques.

Strengths of the Program and Faculty:

The purpose of the program is to offer students an opportunity for a broad-based degree rather than focusing on any one major area. Specific required courses meet the general education requirements for EWC. The program’s greatest strength is the flexibility it offers students. The courses and degrees (both AA and AS) transfer to colleges and universities all over the United States. The Associate of Arts degree is considered the traditional “transfer” degree, so it is a better choice for most students. Most of the Interdisciplinary Studies graduates attend the University of Wyoming, Chadron State College, and Black Hills State University. Interdisciplinary Studies graduates go on to major in a variety of programs such as business, education, or preprofessional. Statistics from the University of Wyoming show that our transfer students are more successful than students who start at the University. Other colleges report anecdotally that EWC students do well at their institutions.

The faculty members who teach the general education requirements at Eastern typically have Masters or higher degrees. Although the Vice President for Learning coordinates the overall program, the program does not have assigned instructors but relies on all faculty members.

The Human Development (HMDV) faculty members report to the Associate Vice President for Outreach and Learning and are responsible for teaching the College Studies, Study Strategies, reading courses, Orientation to Distance Learning, Empowerment, Success in the Workplace, Lifestyle Management, and Sophomore Project courses. College Studies or Orientation to Distance Learning is a requirement of all AAS, AA and AS degrees at Eastern. College Studies is a freshmen orientation course designed to help students become successful students. The Study Strategies course is an elective class for students who need additional help with organizing and learning how to study. Reading classes are designed to help students further develop reading comprehension skills, vocabulary skills, and general reading strategies. Orientation to Distance Learning provides an overview of the elements required for successful distance learning. This course is highly recommended for students who enroll in a distance education course. The Sophomore Project (Interdisciplinary Writing) course is designed as the Outcomes Assessment activity for Interdisciplinary Studies and represents a culminating writing and research project.

Part III Recommendations

Faculty Recommendations:

The following paragraphs are from faculty who teach in the following areas: Library Science, Philosophy, Religion and Human Development.

Ethics: Comment by Ellen Creagar

Ethics in Practice (PHIL 2300) satisfies the Humanities requirement at EWC and the Cultural Humanities requirement at the University of Wyoming. It is offered as a traditional on campus course every other year and as a distance learning course every summer and every third semester, thus playing a part in the distance learning rotation. Ethics is a course required for pre-nursing majors and recommended for business majors. Because of the majors of the students who take Ethics, the English 1010 prerequisite, and the sophomore level of the course, the Ethics course has an excellent retention rate. In the time period covered by the program review, 95% of the students who began Ethics, successfully completed the course.

Literature for Children: Comment by Muriel de Ganahl

Literature for Children (LIBS 2280) is offered as an option at Eastern for meeting the humanities general education requirement. It is primarily designed for students majoring in Elementary Education because of the course's emphasis on reviewing various forms of children's literature and planning classroom activities based on literature. It has a prerequisite of successful completion of English 1010 with a grade of C or better. The course is taught every semester on campus and is also available as a distance learning class in the fall. The enrollment in this course ranges between 15-20 students each time the course is taught.

Introduction to Religion: Comment by Heidi Edmunds

Introduction to Religion (RELI 1000) is a three credit course that fulfills both the Social and Cultural Awareness portion of EWC's general education requirements. This course is offered online in both the fall and spring semesters and in the classroom in fall semesters. The course is generally very popular and sections are nearly always full, at time necessitating additional sections or increased capacity. While no degree program in Introduction to Religion exists at EWC, RELI 1000 provides students a thorough overview of many world religions. A prerequisite of English 1010 exists for this course, and students complete in multiple writing activities.

Sophomore Project (Interdisciplinary Writing): Comment by Court Merrigan

Sophomore Project is transitioning from an HMDV class (HMDV 2000) to an English class (ENGL 2001), for ease of transferring credits for students – English was thought to be a more universal category than Human Development. It was also given a new subtitle: “Interdisciplinary Writing.” This was done to reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the writing undertaken in the class, as well as to reflect the reality that Interdisciplinary students arrive at the class with a variety of interests, goals, and academic experiences. Therefore, within the boundaries of good academic writing, the class is designed to be flexible with regards to various approaches to student writing. The first half of the semester is devoted to learning to write with a conversation, where the student practices and refines various methods for joining a conversation on relevant topics of their choice. In the second half of the semester, students independently work on a research paper. This paper can take one of two forms: 1) a more “traditional” research paper, where students research a relevant topic for various points of view and arrive at a perspective of

their own, stated in proper terms, and with accompanying scholarly research; 2) a “career-oriented” paper, where students outline the academic path they intend to take to reach a desired career – this option also requires research, but of a less academic and more practical nature, allowing students to research career options and the academic requirements to get them to their goals.

The class is offered both face-to-face and online, and is especially popular during the spring semester, when many students are looking to graduate.

College Studies: Comment by Court Merrigan

College Studies (HMDV 1000) is a graduation requirement at Eastern Wyoming College; nearly every matriculating student takes the course at some point in their careers (there is also a challenge process available for those who believe their prior academic experience has already prepared them for college). The class is reviewed, revised, and standardized via an Instructor’s Manual and common textbooks every two years. The next iteration of the class will likely involve a textbook specifically designed for two-year college students.

Emphasis is placed on working towards college success in an EWC context. So, in addition to general information on study skills, health, test-taking and note-taking, students also receive EWC-specific information in such as navigating LancerNet, advising, and EWC policies and procedures. My recommendation continues to be insofar as is possible, students take the class during their first semester of enrollment, preferably during the A Block. This course contains so much useful information that students who don’t take the course until later in their EWC careers are at a disadvantage.

Other courses students frequently take to complete their Interdisciplinary Studies major include Public Speaking, World Regional Geography, Sociological Principles, Introduction to Women’s Studies, Computer Application courses, Art courses, and Music courses.

Advisory Committee Recommendations: N/A

Division Chair Recommendations:

1. Continue to schedule annual orientation for new College Studies instructors.
2. Provide training to students on LancerNet during freshmen orientation.
3. Encourage all new students to take College Studies during the first semester they attend EWC.
4. Continue to increase distance learning course options for Interdisciplinary Studies majors.
5. Meet semi-annually with College Studies instructors to revise and update curriculum and assess student success in College Studies.
6. Ideally, it would nice to have identified instructors who always teach College Studies courses.
7. The College Studies curriculum needs to continue to be reviewed, revised and standardized every two years.

Vice President's Recommendations:

I agree with the Division Chair recommendations which were provided by Mike Durfee, Associate Vice President, who serves as the fourth division chair at our college. The division is small in some ways as it coordinates a handful of part-time instructors who teach in the Human Development area such courses as College Studies and Sophomore Project. However, the importance of these courses cannot be underestimated as the freshmen orientation courses have been proven to help with retention efforts nationwide. In the new general education requirements, this category of classes has been termed "Freshmen Foundations."

I commend the group of dedicated faculty members and others who review and revise the College Studies curriculum so that it stays current and allows for consistency across sections which are taught by multiple instructors. The Interdisciplinary Studies program is unique because it belongs to all of our faculty and instructional administrators. The Sophomore Project which was renamed Interdisciplinary Writing continues to be a reasonable program assessment for those students who are truly exploring various discipline areas. If a student does have an "emphasis" area, then the appropriate outcomes assessment activity is allowed in lieu of this course. One other comment includes the importance of the reading courses that we provide as a college. Good reading skills are the most important college preparatory skill students can have—and the skill, if lacking that, can cause the most difficulty for students. Our reading courses have been taught by an adjunct instructor in recent years who has been dedicated to these students and helped them achieve higher placement scores so they can be successful in college-level courses.

My recommendations follow:

1. Teach the Interdisciplinary Writing course in a face-to-face manner every spring semester in order to benefit on-campus students and offer it on a regular basis via distance learning.
2. Continue to ensure articulation agreements for AA and AS degrees with receiving institutions, primarily the University of Wyoming and Chadron State College. This will also mean following through on the 2 + 2 agreements with the University of Wyoming.
3. Research and develop a recommendation for a student club for Interdisciplinary Studies students as well as other transfer students. Develop topical presentations of particular interest to transfer directed students. These students do not have a natural cohort as other programs do—and the formation of a student club or other activities directed at them could help them form a sense of connectedness with others, the college, and could contribute to the retention and graduation of the students.
4. Work with the recruiters to identify potential Interdisciplinary Studies or undeclared students and follow-up with them via letters and other personal contact.
5. Continue specialized retention efforts to students who may be at risk for various reasons. We have termed these students, "Students of Concern."