

Eastern Wyoming College

Instructional Program Review 2011 - 2012

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:

	2008-2009	2009-2010 *	2010-2011	5-Year Average
Annualized FTE Enrollment	92.1	64.9	65.5	76.3
Annualized FTE Faculty	4.7	2.6	2.8	4.0
# Students	169	219	214	168
# Graduated	37	19	35	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. Students by Design (HMDV 1250) will be offered for the first time in fall 2012. It will be in lieu of College Studies and count towards a graduation requirement for those enrolling students. Reading placement scores were standardized across the state during 2011-2012.

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 168 (2006 – 2011). 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 cooperative 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 Branch 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 Branch Campus offers day and evening courses emphasizing general education, business, computer applications, criminal justice, 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 2010-2011 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 3.79. “EWC did an excellent job of preparing me for full-time work in my chosen career profession” – average rating of 3.79. “EWC did an excellent job of preparing me for further study at a four-year institution” – average rating of 3.40. 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 Skills, Fundamentals of Reading I and II, 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 Skills course is an elective class for students who need additional help with organizing and learning how to study. Fundamentals of Reading I and II are classes 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 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 fall semester on campus and is also available as a distance learning class. 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 Humanities and Cultural Awareness portions of EWC's general education requirements. This course is offered online in both the fall and spring semesters and will be offered in the classroom in the Spring 2013 semester. 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. Heidi recommends the review of the distance learning schedule for this class.

Sophomore Project: Comment by Diane McQueen

Sophomore Project (HMDV 2000) is a research based course where students develop the skills needed to successfully write an I-search paper which incorporates interviews, published research, and internet sources. The course requires that students develop and utilize such writing skills as brainstorming, narrowing a topic, and free writing and utilization of these skills to write a paper on a topic of their choice. Students write multiple assignments through this course, but the main component of the course is a multi-chapter I-search paper. Although students are familiarized with the traditional means of writing academic papers, they learn that the I-search process is entirely different as it is written in first person where the writer's opinions become vital components to the paper itself. Students are required to gather information from at least three interview sources, six published sources, and at least three internet sources to develop a comprehensive understanding of their chosen topic. The interviews require that the student find an individual who is working in the profession in which they are researching and interview them about the different aspects of the career. The process then requires students to synthesize this

information, interjecting their own opinions on their findings, and then write a three chapter paper. Initial drafts of each chapter are submitted periodically throughout the term for review and comments. Once each draft is returned to the student, students are expected to revise each chapter and submit the final draft along with a title page, reference page and an appendix which must include a complete transcription of all interview sources.

Students who enter this class with a positive attitude seem to enjoy learning about the various aspects of the career and some have even changed careers because of what they've discovered in the course of this research. As the term progresses, students seem to improve upon their writing conventions, but I still believe there is considerable weaknesses in their writing styles, most particularly in their use of syntax and the proper use of mechanics throughout the paper.

Having the course available on LancerNet as a distance course makes it easy for the delivery of content as well as for students to submit and receive written comments from the instructor. However, there are some students who could benefit from having this course taught face-to-face.

College Studies: Comment by Court Merrigan

College Studies (HMDV 1000) is a graduation requirement at Eastern Wyoming College; nearly every matriculating student takes this course at some point in their careers. The class has been extensively refashioned and standardized in the past two years, for both face-to-face and distance learning sections. Emphasis is placed on working toward 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 areas such as navigating LancerNet, advising, and EWC policies and procedures. While the course is not designed to be an academic challenge, necessarily, in my experience nearly a third to a half of students taking the course for the first time will either withdraw or fail because of absenteeism and failure to turn in assigned work. For some students, College Studies serves as a useful wake-up call, and those students who retake the course generally succeed the second time around. My main recommendation would be consistency in having students take the course in Block A of the first semester they enroll in at EWC (fall or spring). In my view, this course contains so much useful information that those students who don't take the course until later in their EWC careers are at a disadvantage.

Students by Design: Comment by Court Merrigan

Students by Design (HMDV 1250) will be offered for the first time in Fall 2012. It will be in lieu of College Studies as counting towards a graduation requirement for those enrolling students. My hope in designing and ultimately teaching this course is to address students at the root level of their concern; the theory being that students who are unable to effectively utilize the hidden rules of the college environment. For example, students who will likely not succeed no matter what their academic efforts are (and usually these results go hand-in-hand). Students will confront many personal and societal roadblocks to their own success but they will not there: they will learn to understand these roadblocks and be taught effective tools to overcome them. The major difference between this class and standard academic offerings is that the direction and

discussion areas will largely be determined by the students themselves; the initial syllabus, while it does contain a grading rubric, has been left intentionally vague in the details, so that I can be flexible in giving assignments as they relate to what has been happening in class. For that reason, attendance is going to be crucial for students. Philosophically speaking, a certain degree of group cohesion is going to be necessary to achieve good results in the class.

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.

Continuous Improvement Plan - (needed assessments, changes to improve student learning (review/write student learning outcomes), equipment, curricular changes, budget, faculty/staff, recruitment and retention efforts, faculty development, new initiatives, grant writing, mission relevancy

Advisory Committee Recommendations: N/A

Division Chair Recommendations:

1. 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.

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.

I commend the group of faculty members and others who reviewed and revised the College Studies curriculum a couple of years ago in order to make the topics more pertinent to the success of the student. The Interdisciplinary Studies program is unique because it belongs to all of our faculty and instructional administrators. The Sophomore Project is 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 the Sophomore Project. 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. During the 2012-2013 college year, faculty will review general education requirements.
2. Teach the Sophomore Project class in a face-to-face manner every spring semester in order to benefit on-campus students.
3. Ensure articulation agreements for AA and AS degrees with receiving institutions, primarily the University of Wyoming and Chadron State College.
4. 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.
5. Work with the recruiters to identify potential Interdisciplinary Studies or undeclared students and follow-up with them via letters and other personal contact.