

AAC&U conference - Baltimore
Overview of Core Curriculum and ACT-In
February 6, 2009

Development of Interdisciplinary general education and experiential learning

WILLIAM JEWELL COLLEGE – Liberty, Missouri

Time-line

- 1993-1996 Curriculum planning by faculty committee: reforming the Distribution model to an Interdisciplinary hybrid; new courses and program are approved by faculty in spring of 1996
- 1996-2006 The new 'General Education' curriculum is launched with Level I of the system; a common learning experience entitled the Responsible Self. All students take a common course their first semester (*Responsible Self*), followed by a series of Level II interdisciplinary courses, culminating in a senior Capstone course (Level III).
- 1995-2006 Experiential learning components integrated in a small number of core classes, facilitated by the Chaplain's office; subcommittee formed to promote and develop experiential learning throughout the curriculum; Three service-learning courses (two credit-hours each) created, allowing students who enroll in each to earn a 'Service-Learning Certificate'
- 2000-2009 Adoption and integration of *Three Questions* for core unification – 'What can we know?', 'What is real?', 'How should we live?'; on-going faculty development, studying the ways in which these questions can be approached in various classes, while sustaining the essential interdisciplinary content
- 2005-2007 Ten-year review of 'General Education' program, led by the Associate Dean; program title and identity change to 'Critical Thought and Inquiry' with addition of applied learning activities; a new major is added entitled ACT-In (Applied Critical Thought and Inquiry), approved by faculty in the spring of 2007.
- 2007-2009 Students can earn a second major (ACT-In) by completing the core and three applied learning activities – *Disciplinary Scholarship*, *Reflective Citizenship*, and *Active Engagement* (outlined as follows). New tag-lines created: "Experience Curriculum" – *Live What You Learn*; New branding: "Living Responsibly in Community"; adoption of Honor Code

Applied Learning goals for the ACT-In major

- To enable students to integrate interdisciplinary intellectual skills and studies with practical activities beyond the CTI classroom.
- To strengthen campus engagement by encouraging individual and collective partnerships, careful reflection, and sustained impact on our community.
- To allow students to successfully demonstrate through action the benefits of a high quality liberal arts education by purposefully and specifically making connections between the classroom and the world.

Disciplinary Scholarship – The student fulfilling this requirement will

- Give evidence of advanced critical thinking and synthesis in a discipline through written or oral presentation or through a means appropriate for the discipline
- Show evidence of sophisticated writing and research skills in a discipline, guided by faculty mentors
- Present his/her work in a public forum, receiving written critique and then graded accordingly

Reflective Citizenship – The student fulfilling this requirement will

- Actively engage another culture or an issue(s) important to contemporary society through engagement in a significant project (mission trip or service-learning) or academic study away
- Reflect on his/her intentional engagement by producing a thoughtful reflection on the project or academic study away
- Give evidence of synthesis of his/her academic work in the CTI curriculum and the project or study away experience, including articulation of the personal impact of the experience (i.e. what new perspectives were gained, what is the sustained impact)

Active Engagement – The student fulfilling this requirement will

- Apply his/her critical thinking skills in a setting that requires sustained engagement with the local or college community and has meaning and motivation for the individual student
- Show how the activity is interrelated to his/her work in the CTI curriculum and role of the experiential learning cycle in the activity
- Work with faculty or staff mentor(s) while engaging in the activity to ensure proper rigor and discipline
- Contribute to the campus intellectual and cultural climates by reporting his/her work in a public forum

Sample courses, activities and projects approved for the ACT-In Major

<i>Disciplinary Scholarship</i>	<i>Reflective Citizenship</i>	<i>Active Engagement</i>
Senior Honors Thesis	CRV207 -	Leadership in Theatre org.
CHE415 – Chemical research	EDU475 -	EDU425 – Student teaching
ENG496 – English capstone	Science summer learning camps	All Internships approved by committee
HIS400 – Research seminar	LSP250 – Leadership training	LSP350 – Capstone Leadership
PHY351 – Research experience	Study Away experiences w/ reflective component	PSY303 – Mental Health practicum
POL400 – Senior seminar	SVL301 – Honduras mission work	SVL301 – Service Learning Intern
PSY422 – Senior seminar	BUS351 – Students In Free Enterprise	Greek Leadership: Chapter presidents