

Ithaca College

Core Learning Experiences Proposed Implementation Plan

Submitted to

Peter W. Bardaglio, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

By Garry L. Brodhead, Associate Provost

June 1, 2006

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 2005 the Core Experience Task force submitted its recommendations on core learning experiences for all Ithaca College students. The Task Force Report responded to two goals in the College's Institutional Plan under Academic Program Development: "Create opportunities for shared academic experiences for all Ithaca College undergraduates" and "Explore creation and implementation of a core set of courses for all undergraduate students." This document presents an implementation plan for five of the six recommended experiences developed by the Core Experience Task Force: New Student Orientation, The Ithaca Seminar, Learning ePortfolio, Aesthetic Appreciation, and Capstone Experience. Early in the discussion, it was decided that elements of the IC Residential Seminar could be folded into The Ithaca Seminar. The First Year Experience Coordinating Committee (FYECC), chaired by Roger Richardson, and three working groups met through the 2005-06 year and developed implementation drafts for each of the core experiences. This document is a synthesis of these implementation plans.

(NB: A fourth working group, Social and Environmental Responsibility/Diversity, was organized during the spring 2006 semester and had only foundational discussions about the group's charge, to develop an implementation plan that will reconcile the Diversity Task Force recommendation on required courses and the Core Experience Task Force identification of Social and Environmental Responsibility as one of the seven attributes in its report. No recommended experience was identified to address this attribute. This working group will need to continue its work during 2006-07 and make a recommendation at some point during the year. A goal should be to integrate that experience into the core experience program, with artifacts and reflection included in the student's Learning ePortfolio.)

Three important aspects of this implementation plan should be highlighted: the core experiences are proposed with an underlying goal of integrative learning that connects to the College mission, vision, and Institutional Plan; the academic adviser and a newly identified role, the ePortfolio mentor, are central in guiding the student's learning experience; and student involvement as faculty assistants and peer mentors can contribute greatly to the core learning experience. A Core Experience Steering Committee is

recommended to further develop, facilitate, and manage the implementation of the core experience program. A four year implementation timeline is proposed, 2007-08 through 2011-12, with 2006-07 dedicated to planning and preparation.

A summary of the essential elements of the proposed implementation for each of the core experiences is provided below, followed by information on training for students, faculty, and staff, as well as IT, budgetary, and other support information.

New Student Orientation (NSO) will continue to be reviewed and revised during the next two to three years to reflect the “stories” approach developed for NSO 2006. Viewed as a “gateway” experience, further consideration will be given to the following: full development of an electronic communication system that is linked with admission and recruitment activity; consideration of administering placement exams and indicating pre-registration preferences prior to NSO online or by some other means; shortening NSO to one overnight; and further exploration of developing Continuing Orientation into something other than a “start of school” activity. NSO can serve as an effective introduction to the core experience program and possibly even permit students to establish their Learning ePortfolio.

The Ithaca Seminar will continue as an interdisciplinary seminar with linkage to other core experiences. It is the centerpiece of the first year experience and will lay the foundation for developing the other core experiences. Skills such as reading critically, writing, speaking, and listening will continue to be emphasized, with outcomes such as learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view as goals. Continued development of the Ithaca Seminar through the next two years (2006-08) will result in replacing all other existing first year seminars by fall 2008. Significant communication with faculty in all departments regarding development of the Ithaca Seminar program will begin early in fall 2006.

The **Learning ePortfolio**, like The Ithaca Seminar, is an anchor in the set of proposed core experiences. It provides the student with a means to document their cumulative learning and personal growth and achievement through four years, while developing habits of thoughtful judgment and reflection. The ePortfolio is introduced in The Ithaca Seminar and culminates in the student’s fourth year with a Capstone project that reflects his or her cumulative and summative learning. The student’s adviser and ePortfolio mentors will guide the student in developing the portfolio. Additional support provided by student and faculty ePortfolio mentors and department portfolio programs, e.g., portfolio cohort groups, will reinforce the process of reflective learning that is integrative and reinforcing of a larger learning culture across the College. The Learning ePortfolio provides opportunities for assessing student learning at all levels--courses, program, and institution. The Learning ePortfolio is graded pass/fail and successful completion is required for graduation.

The **Aesthetic Appreciation** experience provides each student with the opportunity to develop a “path” that “elevates the human spirit and affirms connection of the individual to a larger cultural context, not limited to but often expressed as a work of art.” The

definition that is the basis for the approach taken here comes from John Dewey's *Art of Experience* and holds that aesthetic appreciation can be developed through multiple ways not limited to what are considered traditional areas of the arts. Structured experiences built around designated "art events" are the first tier in developing aesthetic sensibility, and "open" experiences provide broader options. One from a list of support courses will also be required. A final aesthetic appreciation reflective essay will be required and entered in the student's Learning ePortfolio. A number of methodologies will be incorporated in these various learning experiences.

A **Capstone Experience** in the student's discipline or one that is self-designed focusing on an interdisciplinary combination or a campus-community experience will be required of each student. The Capstone project demonstrates "synthesis, integration, and application of previous knowledge." The student's adviser and portfolio mentors play an important role in guiding the student in the development of the Capstone. The Capstone project as well as the Capstone Reflective Essay must be documented in the student's Learning ePortfolio.

Training for students, faculty, and professional staff will be necessary to implement this complex, multi-part program. For each core experience program special training materials and programs will need to be developed. To support the Learning ePortfolio program, the Core Experience Steering Committee will need to work with faculty and IT personnel to develop the necessary components of the existing college eportfolio template and appropriate training. This should be a priority for the Steering Committee in its early work.

IT and budget support will be essential in the implementation of the core experience program proposed here. For each of the experiences there are specific IT needs, but especially the New Student Orientation and the Learning ePortfolio will require concentrated development of software, hardware, and additional staff to support 6,000 students fully engaged in these programs within four years. A number of these issues have already been opened in conference with Mike Taves but it will be essential that timely development of software especially occurs so that implementation in fall 2007 can happen. Additional budget support will be need for program and staffing support in the New Student Orientation, The Ithaca Seminar, Learning ePortfolio, and Aesthetic Appreciation programs. A full estimate of cost is not possible at this time, but current projections for full implementation are approximately \$750,000.

The proposed core experience program has the potential to transform the learning culture at the College. It offers an opportunity for integrative learning that spans the student's four years and cuts across the divisions that artificially segment the student's living and learning experience— academic and student affairs, schools and departments. The FYECC and working groups have developed a spirit of innovation that is unique at the College and a vision that will enrich learning for all of us.

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In June 2005 the Core Experience Task Force submitted its recommendations on core learning experiences for all Ithaca College students. The Task Force Report responded to two goals presented in the College's Institutional Plan under the Academic Program Development priority: to "Create opportunities for shared academic experiences for all Ithaca College undergraduates" (Goal 1) and "Explore creation and implementation of a core set of courses for all undergraduate students" (Goal 2). In its report the Task Force identifies a list of seven attributes "to which all Ithaca College students would aspire by graduation" and six core experiences that would afford all students an opportunity to develop these attributes and share a common learning experience. In combination with learning in the major, minors, electives, and co-and extra-curricular activities, these core experiences will help students to realize the goals stated in the College's mission statement.

The seven attributes are:

- **Lifelong Learning:** The development of intellectual curiosity and the research skills to pursue it.
- **Competence:** The development of discipline-specific knowledge and skills and the interdisciplinary linking of that knowledge to other fields.
- **Communication Skills:** The ability to read, write, speak, and listen well, and the ability to use communication technology effectively.
- **Critical Thinking:** The ability to acquire, comprehend, analyze, and synthesize knowledge and information from print, electronic, and media sources.
- **Aesthetic Appreciation:** Recognize the variety of artistic expression and appreciate aesthetic perspectives and endeavors.
- **Personal Development:** The ability to collaborate with others as peers and as leaders, resolve conflicts cooperatively, assume personal responsibility, and create and live intentionally by values/ethics.
- **Social and Environmental Responsibility:** The ability to understand, appreciate, and think critically about cultural complexity, sustainability, and diversity and the development of a global perspective.

The six core experiences are:

- New Student Orientation
- The Ithaca Seminar
- The IC Residential Seminar
- Aesthetic Appreciation
- Capstone Experience
- Learning Portfolio

During the summer 2005 the Task Force Report was reviewed by several leadership groups for response and posted on the Provost Office website for public information. Early in the fall semester a First Year Experience Coordinating Committee (FYECC), chaired by Roger Richardson, was formed to address implementation of the first three core experiences as well as the larger set of programs that deal with the student's first year. Three working groups were also formed to develop implementation plans for the remaining three experiences. Later in the semester it was decided that an additional working group should be formed to reconcile the lack of a specific experience relating to the Core Experience seventh attribute, "social and environmental responsibility," and the recommendation from the Diversity Task Force that there be a course requirement on diversity for all students. The membership of the FYECC was comprised of point persons from the existing first year programs and initiatives, and the working groups were comprised of faculty from the five schools and DIIS, with a member of the Core Experience Task Force and Student Affairs and Campus Life on each. The FYECC and the working groups began meeting early in the fall semester 2005 and continued their work through the academic year. The Social and Environmental Responsibility/Diversity working group was formed early in the spring semester and began its work after Spring Break. A list of the working group membership is included with the implementation plan for each core experience. My role was to provide information and coordinate discussion among the FYECC and the working groups and to ultimately develop the implementation plan that is presented here. I attended the FYECC meetings and facilitated the working group meetings.

Process for Developing the Implementation Plan

The College mission statement, Institutional Plan, and details of the Core Experience Task Force Report provided the foundation for early discussions in the FYECC and working groups. An illustration that maps alignment among the key elements of the mission and the core attributes and experiences was the focus of early discussion and the basis for developing an implementation plan that would result in a set of integrated experiences (Attachment A). Early in the FYECC discussions it was decided that the IC Residential Seminar, which was being offered on a pilot basis during fall 2005, would have some of its elements folded into the Ithaca Seminar and be eliminated as a separate experience.

From these discussions ideas that led to developing an implementation plan for each core experience were shared among the FYECC and working groups. Key concerns in these discussions were issues relating to the variety of academic programming at the College, need to consider the student's full range of learning experiences both academically and in co- and extracurricular opportunities, credit constraints in some degree programs for including a set of experiences for all students, and the desire to develop an integrated set of experiences that would reinforce learning across the student's four years while addressing the broader goals articulated in the College's mission statement. As a result the discussions focused on developing experiences for all students rather than focusing on courses as the basis for shared experience. A draft implementation plan for each of the core experiences was developed and shared with the members of the FYECC and working groups. These drafts were discussed at two meetings, May 11 and 17, 2006. A proposed implementation plan for the core experiences that reflects these discussions is presented below.

During the course of conversations among the FYECC and working groups several important topics emerged that need to be given careful consideration for successful implementation of the core experiences. They are the core experiences and integrative learning, the role of the academic adviser in the core experience and Learning ePortfolio mentors, the establishment of a Core Experience Steering Committee, and student involvement as assistants and peer mentors in the core experience program. With a year of planning and preparation, 2006-07, implementation of the Program can begin with the entering class in 2007-08.

The Core Experiences and Integrative Learning

An underlying goal in developing an implementation plan for the core experiences was a process in which learning is both coherent and meaningful with outcomes that reinforce integration of learning across the student's full range of experiences. The primary means for facilitating this goal is the student Learning ePortfolio. Through the ePortfolio process students learn to collect thoughtfully information or *artifacts* on those experiences in the core, their major, other courses, and in co- and extracurricular activities that have been significant in their learning and reflect on these experiences. Well presented and reinforced by faculty, professional staff, the academic adviser, and others through the student's four years, this process will develop in the student a sense of purpose and connection in her or his overall learning experience at Ithaca College.

The FYECC has focused its efforts on this larger goal with plans for a strategy that begins with pre-matriculation information, possibly as early as the letter of acceptance, and continues through New Student Orientation. In this sequence communication with new students will center on how learning at Ithaca College is an integrative experience that continues through their four years and prepares them for lifelong learning. They will begin to experience learning that is integrative in the Ithaca Seminar, which is interdisciplinary and includes a number of complementary activities that facilitate successful transition and continuation through their years at the College. In the Ithaca Seminar students will learn more about the core experience program by beginning their

Learning ePortfolio, having their first Aesthetic Appreciation experience, and receiving information about the senior Capstone.

The core experience working groups have developed implementation plans that reinforce and contribute to the larger goal of integrative learning. Following the Ithaca Seminar students will continue to develop their Learning ePortfolio in succeeding semesters with artifacts and reflections on their Aesthetic Appreciation experiences, information that leads to the Capstone project, and learning in the major, other courses, and co-and extracurricular activities. In the Capstone students will draw together their learning through a project in their discipline, or an interdisciplinary or campus-community project of their own design and complete a required Capstone Reflective Essay.

The Role of the Academic Adviser and Learning ePortfolio Mentors

The academic adviser is central in the success of the implementation plan. Traditionally the adviser works with students to guide them in selecting courses, provide academic advice, facilitate communication with other academic offices and personnel, and give general encouragement to facilitate timely completion of the degree. The Learning ePortfolio has the potential to enhance the current advising model and reinforce more developmental approaches to working with students. Through the four years students will need to meet with their adviser for guidance on developing their ePortfolio and for the adviser to monitor its progress. A number of recommendations that will facilitate more effective advising and ePortfolio development are given in the Learning ePortfolio implementation plan. Among them prominently is to move advising to the Service category, develop a cadre of faculty in each school who are truly good advisers and want to advise, and consider hiring professional advisers. The academic adviser serves an important role in the development of the Learning ePortfolio throughout the student's four years, but especially in that the adviser along with the portfolio mentor make the final determination on whether the student's portfolio passes or fails. A pass is required for graduation.

The Learning ePortfolio mentor/s serve as a complement to the student's adviser in developing the Learning ePortfolio and may assist in providing additional developmental advising. The portfolio mentor may be a faculty member beyond the student's adviser, a member of the professional staff or the larger professional community, or an alumnus/a. This person can provide professional expertise, experience, insight, and support for the student and help them think through issues and make important decisions that may not relate to purely academic matters. At the conclusion of portfolio development the student's portfolio mentor consults with the academic adviser and together they assign the final portfolio grade.

The Core Experience Steering Committee

To organize, facilitate, and manage the implementation of the core experience program, a steering committee will need to be established. The four-year implementation plan outlined below will require the steering committee to develop a strategic plan for

communicating the proposed implementation plan across campus, identifying the necessary staffing and capital resources to support the successful implementation and continuation of the core experience program—some of which are provided in the implementation plans for each core experience, and developing a multi-year budget that will support full implementation of the program. This committee should be organized prior to the beginning of the 2006-07 year and begin to meet as soon as the semester opens.

Implementation Timeline

Full implementation of the core experience program will take place over four years (2007-11) preceded by a year of detailed planning (2006-07).

2006-07—Planning and Preparation Year

- Continue to develop New Student Orientation
- Continue the Ithaca Seminar
- As a pre-implementation experience and for learning purposes, introduce the Learning ePortfolio on a voluntary basis in Ithaca Seminar sections and other programs that would like to participate (e.g., MLK and Park Scholars, Leadership students); develop guidelines for elements to be included in the Learning ePortfolio—required and elective
- Communicate the implementation plan across campus and seek feedback (September and early October)
- Review implementation plans for each recommended core experience and develop appropriate mechanisms for effective implementation
- Identify necessary staffing, space, and capital resources needed to support implementation of the core experiences program
- Develop a multi-year budget that will support full implementation
- Work with admission and marketing personnel to develop necessary information to promote the program
- Identify faculty and professional staff that will be necessary to support the first year of implementation
- Work with appropriate personnel to develop training elements necessary to implement the program, especially for the first year of implementation
- Develop an assessment program for each of the core experiences and the full program
- Meet with departments to begin the process of developing learning outcomes for each major for inclusion in the student's Learning e-Portfolio; work with departments to develop strategies for effectively using the ePortfolio for advising, assessment, and other learning opportunities
- Work with each school/division to develop a model Learning ePortfolio for each
- Work with appropriate IT personnel to develop the College's Learning ePortfolio template so that it can accommodate various program and departmental/school learning outcomes

- Begin to develop a new advising model that encourages developmental advising (see Learning ePortfolio recommendations)

2007-09—Phase 1 of Four-Year Implementation

- Continue to develop New Student Orientation with emphasis on “The Ithaca Experience” as the basis for introducing core learning experiences
- Offer 30-50 sections of the Ithaca Seminar, ten additional each year
- Formalize introduction of the Learning ePortfolio based on guidelines established in 2006-07
- Formalize introduction of Aesthetic Appreciation as a required experience based on guidelines established in the implementation plan below
- Introduce information on the Capstone (e.g., “The Ithaca Seminar and the Road to a Capstone Experience,” Attachment B) based on guidelines established in the implementation plan below
- Implement assessment program for each of the core experiences and the full program
- Develop Learning ePortfolio template to accommodate “blog” component for open Aesthetic Appreciation experiences (needed for Phase 2, 2009-11)

2009-11—Phase 2 of Four-Year Implementation

- Continue development and implementation of New Student Orientation with appropriate changes and refinements based on assessment information from 2007-09
- Offer full number of sections for Ithaca Seminar
- Continue implementation of Learning ePortfolio and Aesthetic Appreciation with appropriate changes and refinements based on assessment information from 2007-09
- Implement student portfolio mentors
- Implement “blog” component for Aesthetic Appreciation experiences with third-year students serving as blog moderators
- Consider incorporating second- and third-year student assistants in the Ithaca Seminar

Student Involvement in the Core Experience Program

Discussions in both the FYECC and the working groups have considered the role that students might play in the core experience program both as facilitators and peer counselors. Research on similar programs in other institutions indicated that this can benefit the students and the program, as well as secure continuity and enthusiasm for the program over time. Currently students act as orientation leaders in the Summer Orientation Program and will continue to do so in the proposed New Student Orientation. Students who have completed the Ithaca Seminar could serve as both an assistant to the faculty member and peer counselor for new students, helping the faculty member in facilitating some of the seminar activities and providing transition and friendly advice to seminar students. In the Learning ePortfolio and Aesthetic Appreciation working groups

discussions centered on using selected third-year students as informal portfolio mentors and blog moderators, respectively. In the case of the Learning ePortfolio, the student would provide mostly experience and suggestions to first- and second-year students for developing their ePortfolio. This could be formalized if ePortfolio cohort groups were developed on some basis—either within a department, with each adviser, or on some other institutional model, a recommendation by the Learning ePortfolio working group. (In some institutions groups of students from each class work together through their four years, mentoring each other and having upper class students providing younger students with insights into their learning experiences.) Having selected third- and fourth-year students serve as blog moderators is proposed by the Aesthetic Appreciation working group. These experienced students would lead on-line discussions following certain designated events for a specified period of time and be responsible for summarizing the blog discussion.

The Core Experience Steering Committee should discuss these options for student involvement at some point during 2006-07 for feasibility. While student orientation leaders will presumably continue, it would not be until 2008-09 when the first student assistants could be used in the Ithaca Seminar, and 2009-10 until they could be used as blog moderators or portfolio mentors.

Implementation Summaries for each of the Core Experiences

Implementation summaries for each of the core experiences are given below. Those for the New Student Orientation and the Ithaca Seminar were developed by subcommittees within the First Year Experience Coordinating Committee and vetted with the Committee. The NSO has been in revision for the past 15 months and has a new format for the 2006 Summer Orientation. The Ithaca Seminar is the result of several years of planning and one pilot offering (fall 2005). The proposed implementations for the Learning ePortfolio, Aesthetic Appreciation, and Capstone Experiences were developed by their respective working groups. As has been stated above, there was an intention to coordinate the recommendations where possible to maximize the opportunity for integrative learning, especially through the Learning ePortfolio.

New Student Orientation

FYECC subcommittee consisting of:

Kim Conrad, assistant director, First Year Programs

David Garcia, associate dean, Humanities and Sciences

Terry Martinez, director, Center for Student Leadership and Involvement

Definitions. The subcommittee defines New Student Orientation (NSO) as an experience for “all students on campus...and inclusive of both ‘summer’ and ‘continuing’ orientation activities. It extends “from paid deposit, to first successful advance registration.” Three key elements of NSO are **electronic communication** through the defined period, a **two- to three-day on-campus Summer Orientation experience** during which new

“student[s] interact with students, faculty, and staff” in a variety of activities, including “registration for first semester courses.[.]” and **Continuing Orientation**, which consists of a series of required and optional enriching experiences supported by ongoing “intentional communication.” Built on an orientation program that has been in existence for over 20 years, the evolving NSO will have as its goal becoming a more efficient offering that reflects current practice in orientation programs and that more closely aligns with the mission and academic purposes of the College.

Goals. The subcommittee endorses the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) standards and guidelines, which include the following:

- facilitating the transition of new students into the institution
- preparing new students for the institution’s educational opportunities
- initiating the integration of new students into the intellectual, cultural, and social climate of the institution

Institutional goals, which are consonant with CAS standards, include:

- gain an understanding of the college mission and vision
- make connections with student peers, faculty, and staff, both within their academic school and college-wide
- understand their rights and responsibilities as an IC community member
- register for the classes they will take in the fall
- be exposed to some of the academic and social challenges they may face

Learning outcomes and the College mission. CAS “relevant and desirable outcomes” for student orientation programs are consonant with the College’s mission statement, reinforcing intellectual growth, aesthetic appreciation, and character development. They “resonate” with Dee Fink’s conception of “significant learning,” which is being used to articulate and assess learning for all students at the institution level. Although not articulated as such, these outcomes are the basis of the values that underlie the three pillars of the mission cited above and for lifelong learning.

- intellectual growth
- effective communication
- enhanced self-esteem
- realistic self-appraisal
- clarified values
- career choices
- leadership development
- healthy behavior
- meaningful interpersonal relationships
- independence
- collaboration
- social responsibility
- satisfying and productive lifestyles
- appreciating diversity
- spiritual awareness
- personal and educational goals

Linkage to the Core Experience Program. As a “gateway” experience to the first year, NSO lays the foundation for and articulates the narrative that students will develop and make their own through a combination of academic and co- and extracurricular experiences. Information about the core experiences will be provided as part of this narrative and students will begin to learn the central role that these experiences play in developing their intellectual potential, sense of aesthetic appreciation, and continued character development. In electronic communication prior to and in NSO, students will learn about the Learning ePortfolio and have an opportunity to make an initial entry consisting of basic biographical and academic information—e.g., “Who I am” and “What I hope to learn at Ithaca College.”

Guidelines for Implementing NSO. For Summer Orientation the student schedule narrates a series of “stories” that parallel a version of their IC experience. Fee structures and logistical are presented. Transfer students will attend any one of the summer orientation sessions. The final orientation session (August) will be reconfigured to include the possibility of an off-campus activity such as ECHO or Community Plunge.

One fewer day between check-in and the start of classes will provide more focus to the student’s academic beginning at Ithaca College. Programming will be adjusted accordingly. Continuing Orientation will extend through the first week of classes and continue until course registration for the spring semester.

During the next two to three years the following aspects of NSO will continue to be reviewed and developed.

- The communication component should be fully developed. This will entail articulating goals that will link with admission/recruitment activity and new program development.
- The length of Summer Orientation needs to be fully investigated. One possibility is to develop a program with a one-night stayover (second night option). This will facilitate better use of campus resources.
- The Summer Orientation schedule will continue to be reviewed and revised. Changes such as doing math, writing, and language placement prior to Orientation (online or some other means) and pre-registration by preference questionnaire are possibilities for consideration.
- Continuing Orientation needs further development as something other than a “start of school” activity.

IT Support Needed to Implement NSO Program. The ongoing electronic communication and NSO program changes that are proposed will need substantial IT support. Included will be access to WebCT and/or the web profile manager (for Learning ePortfolios) as soon as they pay their deposit. Additional hardware and software resources to support a rich interaction with students and training for faculty, staff, and students will be necessary.

Budget to Support the NSO Program. The above-stated IT needs should be addressed as part of the larger core experience program implementation. In addition, resources to support augmented Continued Orientation activities and staffing needs in the Office of First Year Programs will be needed. The proposed changes to Summer Orientation will have budgetary impact on other offices, most notably Conference and Event Services.

Implementation Timeline.

2006-07

- Development of communication component
- Investigate shorter, more compressed summer orientation; implement if feasible
- Investigation and development of preference questionnaire for pre-registration and pilot
- Development of Continuing Orientation component

2007-08

- Implementation of communication component
- Implementation of registration revisions
- Implementation of Continuing Orientation revisions

2008-09

- Full assessment of orientation practices

The Ithaca Seminar

FYECC subcommittee consisting of:

Bonnie Prunty, director, Residential Life and Judicial Affairs, and Core Experience Task Force

Jim Rothenberg, associate professor, Sociology, and director, The Ithaca Seminar

Warren Schlesinger, associate professor, Accounting

Background. The Ithaca Seminar was developed in response to the Academic Program Development priority to “Create opportunities for shared academic experiences for all Ithaca College undergraduates,” and “Develop first-year courses that emphasize critical thinking and intellectual inquiry and that include elements such as civic responsibility, conflict resolution, teamwork, and problem solving.” A study committee developed the basis for the current Ithaca Seminar, which was piloted during fall 2005. Assessments at the midpoint and end of the seminar were conducted and information gathered for future development. The Ithaca Seminar links strategically with six of the seven attributes in the Core Experience Task Force Report. It provides a foundation for lifelong learning, communication skills, critical thinking, aesthetic appreciation, personal development, and social and environmental responsibility.

Goals. The goals of the Ithaca Seminar are:

- to provide a common experience for all first year Ithaca College students.

- to have all first year students participate in a liberal arts course with an interdisciplinary perspective that stresses active learning, with an emphasis on exploration, engagement, and reflection.
- to prepare students for future learning at Ithaca College by developing skills in reading critically, writing, speaking, and listening.
- to teach students to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.
- to teach students how to find and use resources for answering questions and solving problems.
- to provide an experience that connects classroom and academic learning with other aspects of college life, including community living, character development, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

Learning Outcomes and the College Mission. Learning outcomes at both the institution and school/department levels are supported in the Ithaca Seminar. At the institution level students will:

- learn that education occurs across disciplines.
- learn institutional expectations for the Learning ePortfolio, aesthetic appreciation, and capstone experiences.
- develop the skills necessary for future learning (reading critically, writing, speaking, and listening).
- learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.
- learn how to find resources for answering questions and solving problems.
- discuss shared program activities with students outside of their seminar section.

Learning outcomes at the school and department level include enabling faculty and students from different schools and departments to interact.

Linkage to the Core Experience Program. The Ithaca Seminars will reinforce six of the seven core attributes but especially develop skills in three areas:

- Lifelong learning—The development of intellectual curiosity and the research skills to pursue it.
- Communication skills—The ability to read, write, speak, listen well, and the ability to use technology effectively.
- Critical Thinking—The ability to acquire, comprehend, analyze, and synthesize knowledge and information from print, electronic, and media sources.

Guidelines for Implementing The Ithaca Seminar.

- Offer Ithaca Seminars that will be required for all fall semester first year students. All seminars will have an interdisciplinary perspective. The decision regarding whether the Ithaca Seminar will offer three-credit or four-credit seminars will need to be decided.
- Eliminate or replace all other existing first year seminars.
- Faculty teaching the Ithaca Seminar will determine the respective topics. Credit hours generated in each section are credited to the department of the instructor offering the seminar.

- By the third year of implementation, all sections must be either linked or part of a team taught set of sections. (Further information to be developed.)
- Ithaca Seminars will include a set of topics/programs that will create a shared experience for all Ithaca College first year students. (See Ithaca Seminar Proposal form for more information.)
- All students in Ithaca Seminars will be scheduled for one common hour to allow them to participate in Ithaca Seminar programs, guest speakers, and workshops. Assistant and associate deans within each of the schools will work to make sure other first year courses (level 1) are scheduled around these times. (Monday and Wednesday at noon are the preferred time periods for these common meetings.)
- Faculty members will be the assigned advisers for all exploratory students in their sections.
- All Ithaca Seminar courses will be designated as liberal arts (LA), will have the appropriate HU/SS/FA/NS designation, and will have an H&S General Education designation.
- Each school/department will be required to offer a specified number of sections a year based on their size. Each school may determine the mechanism for how this will be accomplished.
- The Ithaca Seminars will cover academic and programmatic content such as:
 - Diversity
 - Ethical decision making
 - Making healthy choices
 - Aesthetic appreciation
 - Class teambuilding
 - Educational planning
 - On-campus extracurricular opportunities
 - Sustainability
 - Community service
 - Introduction to the Learning ePortfolio
 - Introduction to the Capstone Experience

Some of these will be covered by faculty in the context of their courses, some will be covered by workshops and guest speakers, while others will be developed and presented by other college staff—most likely in the Division of Student Affairs and Campus Life. These programs are intended to be engaging, active learning experiences that are connected to the mission and priorities of the College.

As part of the Ithaca Seminar experience, each student will be required to write two short essays about their experiences as a new student. A subset of these essays will be compiled for publication each year.

Faculty Development Support Needs. Faculty who have not led an Ithaca Seminar previously will be required to attend a 3-5 day series of workshops in May for professional development related to the seminars. Continuing faculty members will be

expected to attend a 1-2 day workshop. The workshops will help faculty to develop skills and new ideas/approaches in the following areas:

- Introduction to the philosophy and goals of the Ithaca Seminars
- Developmental advising
- Exploratory advising
- Learning ePortfolio development and its use in the Core Experience Program
- Aesthetic Appreciation experience
- Active learning approaches

IT Support Needed to Support The Ithaca Seminar Program. The Ithaca Seminars will require normal course support such as WebCT. In order to introduce the Learning ePortfolio in the Ithaca Seminars, all seminar faculty will need training on the College eportfolio template. The Core Experience Steering Committee will need to coordinate this effort with other faculty development and training programming.

Budget to Support the Ithaca Seminar Program. The following compensation and budget support will be needed to effectively implement the Ithaca Seminar program. Compensation: Faculty who teach at the normal load for their department will receive a \$600 stipend for leading a section of the Ithaca Seminar. In addition, faculty who have an overload as a result of teaching an Ithaca Seminar will receive the current replacement rate per credit hour.

Budget: Faculty stipends—65 sections @ \$600	\$39K
Program (speakers, events, etc.)—7 activities @ \$2500	17.5K
Section initiatives—65 sections @ \$100	6.5K
Additional staff facilitation	2K
Faculty development and training	5K
Program coordinator—one course replacement	<u>3.6K</u>
TOTAL	\$73.6K

Implementation Timeline. The subcommittee proposes a three-year implementation for the Ithaca Seminar. (See the subcommittee implementation document for details.) Proposed here, however, is a four-year implementation plan that coordinates with details of implementation for the other core experiences, especially the Learning ePortfolio and Aesthetic Appreciation. Both include implementation of students in their third year allowing them a year to develop sufficient experience and insight about the College and the Core Experience Program during their first two years. Additionally, allowing four years for a full cohort of students to experience the program would facilitate a clear assessment in each year and at the end of the experience. The Core Experience Steering Committee will need to examine this question and make a determination as to which should be followed.

2006-07—Preliminary and Planning Year

- Continue implementation of the Ithaca Seminar as planned
- Visit departments/schools/DIIS to provide planning information on the full implementation of the Ithaca Seminar

- Identify faculty who will lead Ithaca Seminar sections during 2007-08 (at least 40 sections)
- Develop necessary training program and materials for full implementation of content in the Ithaca Seminar in 2007-08
- Develop full assessment program that links Ithaca Seminar goals with the College mission and Core Experience
- Begin to discuss the role student assistants/peer mentors might play in Phase 1 implementation

2007-09—Phase 1 of Four-Year Implementation

- Offer 40 sections of the Ithaca Seminar in 2007-08
- Offer 50 sections of the Ithaca Seminar in 2008-09
- All H&S Seminars become part of the Ithaca Seminar Program
- All first-year exploratory majors will be required to take an Ithaca Seminar (fall 2007)
- Continue to communicate with departments/schools/DIIS to update and identify faculty necessary to fully staff number of sections needed for each year
- Incorporate student assistants/peer mentors
- Implement formal assessment linking Ithaca Seminar goals with the College mission and Core Experience
- Review assessment information from previous years and make changes that will refine program for Phase 2 Implementation

2009-11—Phase 2 of Four-Year Implementation

- Offer 60-70 section of the Ithaca Seminar for full implementation
- All Ithaca Seminar sections must either be part of either a team-taught course or linked to one or more sections as described above
- Continue to implement elements introduced in Phase 1
- Formal assessment of program considering information from previous years
- Refine to align with mission and Core Experience

Learning ePortfolio

Working group members:

Lis Chabot, director, Library, Core Experience Task Force, and ITPAC
 Jennifer Haywood, assistant professor, Music Education
 Kathy Lucas, academic counselor, Humanities and Sciences
 Cindy Scheibe, associate professor, Psychology
 Kelly Stevens, associate director, Center for Student Leadership and Involvement
 Bill Tastle, associate professor, Business Administration
 Pat Tempesta, assistant professor, Teacher Education
 Deb Wuest, professor, Health Promotion and Physical Education

Purpose, Goals, and Learning Outcomes of the Learning ePortfolio. The student Learning ePortfolio is a thoughtful collection of documents and experiences that

demonstrate “growth, achievement, and learning over time.” It presents the full range of the student’s learning in the classroom and out, on campus and off, and provides evidence of the student’s accomplishments through their four years at Ithaca College and how that experience will prepare the student for continued learning through the course of their life. Done well, the portfolio will document:

- the development of critical thinking and writing skills and
- integration of academic experiences and other learning, both as a general student at the College and within their major, as well as in co-curricular and life experiences.

It will develop understanding and practice in:

- intentional decision making
- values and ethics, and
- goal setting as means for directing both short- and long-term choices.

Critical reflection is an integral part of the ePortfolio process at every step and reinforces the development of an individual “voice” that is authentic to the student’s identity. The completed portfolio will provide a means for students to demonstrate learning and growth, while preparing them for graduate school, professional opportunities, and life choices. It will give them experience in the creative use of technology to document their thinking and growth. Over time the ePortfolio process should influence habits of intentionality in planning and decision making, increased critical thinking skills that support establishing values and good judgment, and the ability to express individual thought more effectively both in writing and visually.

The Learning ePortfolio is an academic document that is maintained by the student but open to faculty, professional staff, the student’s adviser, and mentors for review, consultation, and evaluation. It should always be viewed as a “work in progress.” Ultimately the Learning ePortfolio is evidence of real student centered learning. It is developed by the student who is responsible for maintaining its contents, which are documentation of the student’s learning and growth as a person during their four years at Ithaca College.

Linkage to the College Mission and Institutional Plan. The Learning ePortfolio provides each student with the opportunity to demonstrate that their learning experience at Ithaca College is a reflection of its intention “[t]o provide a foundation for a lifetime of learning...that will foster intellectual growth, aesthetic appreciation, and character development” as well as to develop knowledge and competence so that they may become responsible citizens in the global community. The ePortfolio responds to the first and second goals under Academic Program Development in the College’s Institutional Plan and reinforces directly all seven of the core attributes.

Learning Outcomes and the ePortfolio Process and Content. The Learning ePortfolio is a means for students to demonstrate and document their cumulative learning, growth, and achievement over their four years at Ithaca College. The process is iterative and reinforces critical reflection on learning and personal development—What has been learned? How has that learning influenced habits of thoughtful improvement?—and

establishes a foundation for continued learning after College. Through the Learning ePortfolio process students will learn to:

- assume responsibility for their learning and its representation in the Learning ePortfolio
- identify meaningful learning activities
- reflect critically on the content and learning that embody these activities
- write a meaningful narrative that conveys that learning
- identify and incorporate visual representations of learning
- review and re-evaluate learning over time as both formative and summative—add or delete entries in the Learning ePortfolio
- learn to identify short- and long-term goals and represent them in the ePortfolio
- demonstrate balanced learning through both academic and personal achievement and accomplishments
- develop a final portfolio that will have value after the student graduates from Ithaca College

Guidelines for Implementing the Learning ePortfolio. During the student’s first year the Learning ePortfolio process is guided by the Ithaca Seminar faculty member and their faculty adviser. In the second and following years the portfolio process will be directed by their adviser and school/department portfolio mentors, with other portfolio mentors—faculty, professional staff, members of the larger professional community, and alumni/ae—providing input and feedback. In the third and fourth years trained student mentors may be part of the portfolio development process (if a portfolio cohort program is developed by a department or school).

The Learning ePortfolio process will be introduced in the Ithaca Seminar. Students will post entries such as the following examples to demonstrate a developmental progression of learning through their first semester.

- Personal and academic profile statement—possibly their first posting on expectations for learning and personal development. This entry may include an autobiographical narrative, information about their areas of academic interest/major, their preferred learning style, future goals and a “learning path” if they have a sense of them at the time.
- Goals statement: this entry would narrate the student’s academic and personal goals for the first semester and first year as well as the co-curricular and other learning activities in which would like to become involved.
- An entry focusing on the theme of their Ithaca Seminar. This may be a progressive entry that continues through the semester.
- An entry that documents the required structured Aesthetic Appreciation experience
- Resume development: introduction to the resume and first entries. This may be the beginning of developing a resume over four years and could become part of a professional credentials section within the ePortfolio.
- A final reflection that focuses their full semester experience. It might focus on the academic and personal goals and learning expectations indicated in bullets 1 and 2 above.

During the spring semester of the first year, the student will continue to develop his or her Learning ePortfolio. Entries such as those below should be posted.

- Goals statement: academic and personal goals for the spring semester, as well as the activities they intend to pursue. Any follow-up thinking to the final reflection from the preceding semester that may have changed their goals should be included.
- One entry from a course in the major or other interest area.
- One entry that documents the required structured Aesthetic Appreciation experience.
- Reflection on the direction toward the Capstone Experience (if any)
- Continued resume development (if any)
- A final reflection that focuses on the full semester experience and the student's first year at Ithaca College. It should include specific reflection on the student's continuing expectations for learning and personal development as well as their academic and personal goals.

In the second and third years the portfolio process will reside in the student's academic major/exploratory department. Students are required to consult with their adviser and are encouraged to seek portfolio mentors as resources for help in developing the portfolio during their second and third years. (See the section below, **The Student's Adviser and Portfolio Mentors**). The suggested entries for the second semester given above follow for the second and third years with additions that may be specified by the student's major department. Students are encouraged to include creative elements in the portfolio to convey their individual approach to reflective practice and learning.

In the fourth year, the ePortfolio process focuses on the student's cumulative and summative experiences at Ithaca College and results in a final portfolio that can be used for application for advanced study, employment, or other life advancing activity. The timeline for final portfolio review will be established by each academic department for discipline based Capstone projects, and by the adviser for interdisciplinary and campus-community Capstone projects.

Implementation Timeline. A four-year implementation plan beginning in 2007 will facilitate students becoming involved as portfolio mentors beginning in their third year, 2009-10.

2006-07—Planning and Preparation Year

Introduce the Learning ePortfolio in the May 2006 May Faculty Development Institute and voluntarily in the 2006 Ithaca Seminar based on faculty interest and expertise. Leadership, MLK, and Park Scholars may be included. The Core Experience Steering Committee should work with IT personnel to develop the

format and protocols for Learning ePortfolios using the College eportfolio template.

Phase 1 Implementation

2007-08—Begin the Learning ePortfolio process in all sections of the Ithaca Seminar with optional inclusion of other programs. Assessment of the first year of implementation and make recommendations for improvements in 2008-09.

2008-09—Begin the Learning ePortfolio process in all sections of the Ithaca Seminar. Implement improvements resulting from the previous year assessment. Continued assessment of the portfolio process.

Phase 2

2009-10—Begin the Learning ePortfolio process in all sections of the Ithaca Seminar. Inclusion of student portfolio mentors. Continued assessment of the Learning ePortfolio program with changes from previous assessment.

2010-11—Complete implementation of Learning ePortfolio in all sections of the Ithaca Seminar (first class is now seniors). Continue assessment including Capstone Project development as an element of the Learning ePortfolio.

Integrating ePortfolio Development with the Major: Departmental Learning Outcomes. One of the recommendations contained in the Core Experience Task Force Report is: “Integration of portfolio development with academic majors: faculty will articulate departmental learning outcomes and identify any relevant professional standards to be addressed (e.g., NY Teacher Education, OT, PT, AACSB).” The Learning ePortfolio working group recommends that the Core experience Steering Committee review this recommendation for specific direction on implementation. Brief conversation by the working group indicates two possibilities for this implementation: attach specific department portfolio entries to a “course in the major” requirement for each semester, or identify a separate set of requirements for inclusion in the student’s ePortfolio.

To facilitate development of the Learning ePortfolio, each school/department/DIIS will identify a structure and person to manage the program in its unit.

Additional benefits of the Learning ePortfolio experience that will reinforce and enhance student learning include advising beyond course selection and degree progress, developing in the student a sense of the larger relationship among courses, learning, and personal and professional goals, evidence for determining scholarship and awards recipients, recognition and rewards for outstanding student accomplishment, and documenting co-curricular activity, including leadership and service contributions. An illustration titled “Learning ePortfolio” (Attachment C) shows how the ePortfolio can be used in a variety of ways to support departmental learning outcomes.

ePortfolio Learning and Assessment. Developing a Learning ePortfolio is a student centered learning experience with faculty, adviser, and portfolio mentors as guides and

support resources. The student is responsible for developing the portfolio in ways that will foster continuous learning. While no formal plan for assessing the Learning ePortfolio prior to the final semester is proposed at this time, the Core Experience Steering Committee should give this possibility serious consideration. The working group discussed the possibility of having students enroll by the semester for a 0-credit Learning ePortfolio course on a pass-fail basis. There was not a consensus on this and the group decided that this should be decided later when there is more experience with the ePortfolio and when there is a more concrete sense of what the portfolio will contain. (The Learning ePortfolio would be an ideal form of demonstrating broad-based student learning across the institution in ways that are required by Middle States.)

At this point, the working group recommends the following approach to assessing the Learning ePortfolio. At the conclusion of the first semester, the Ithaca Seminar faculty member and the student's adviser will review the student's Learning ePortfolio for comment and advice but the portfolio will not be graded. At the end of the second semester the student's ePortfolio will be reviewed by the student's adviser for comment and advice but not for a grade. In the second year, the student's ePortfolio will be reviewed by the student's adviser and one other portfolio mentor at the end of each semester for comment and advice but not for a grade. At the beginning of the third year, the student's adviser and one other portfolio mentor will review the ePortfolio to determine adequate progress in development of the portfolio. The student will continue to work with portfolio mentors during the year and seek advice and comment from them and his or her adviser. At the beginning of the fourth year, the student should have a formal meeting with the adviser to determine progress toward completion of the ePortfolio. Plans for developing and completing the Capstone project should be an important part of this discussion.

The student will be required to enroll in IC Learning ePortfolio for zero (0) credit in their last semester. The portfolio will be submitted to the student's academic adviser and one other portfolio mentor of the student's choice (faculty, professional staff, or professional community member only) for their review and consultation. The final Learning ePortfolio will be graded with either a pass or fail (P/F) and listed on the student's transcript. A passing grade will be required for graduation. If the student does not pass, stipulations for successful completion of the ePortfolio will be made by the student's adviser. When these conditions have been met, the student receives a pass on the portfolio requirement.

The Student's Adviser and Portfolio Mentors. The student's adviser and portfolio mentors play a central role in providing guidance to the student in developing the Learning ePortfolio. The adviser provides academic advice, direction and support, and encouragement in program considerations, course selection, and communication with other academic offices and personnel. The Learning ePortfolio has the potential to enhance the advising process and offer more opportunity for developmental advising.

The second key element in providing support for the student in developing the Learning ePortfolio is the portfolio mentor who provides a complement to the student's adviser. The portfolio mentor, who may be any of a number of faculty, professional staff,

members of the professional community, alumni, or third- or fourth-year students during the course of the student's total experience at the College, can provide professional expertise, experience, insight, and support to the student to help them think through issues and make important decisions that may not relate to purely academic matters.

Academic departments will play an important part in identifying faculty who can serve effectively as portfolio mentors for their majors and other students. Additionally, departments can provide portfolio support for their students by organizing portfolio cohort groups that meet periodically, providing support by graduate students—if appropriate and available, and creating portfolio development activities that will help students develop the portfolio content in the major.

Training for Advisers and Learning ePortfolio Mentors. Successful implementation of the Learning ePortfolio program will require training for students, faculty, professional staff, and other portfolio mentors. The Core Experience Steering committee should make development of training materials a priority in its early work in fall 2006 so that the training program will be ready for summer 2007.

IT and Implementing the Learning ePortfolio Program. Members of the working group met with Mike Taves and Kathy Barbieri early in Spring 2006 to discuss a number of aspects inherent in implementing the College's eportfolio template. Several issues were discussed, including software licensing, ability of students to access their portfolio from off campus, portability and continued development after graduation, hardware and software, support for labs (space) and equipment, and additional staff to fully support effective implementation of the proposed ePortfolio program. Workload issues for all of those involved in implementing an effective ePortfolio program were emphasized. Beginning a phased implementation in fall 2007 was viewed as reasonable and possible if the above issues were addressed in a timely way. Resources will have to be identified and a budget plan developed during the fall semester 2006. The Core Experience Steering Committee should devote its attention to this early in its work.

Resources and Budget Support. Successful implementation of the proposed Learning ePortfolio program will require resources that are beyond what is currently available. Additional staffing will be necessary to provide instructional support for portfolio development, coordinate the training of portfolio mentors, and develop ongoing support for the program once it is fully implemented. A central Learning ePortfolio website should be developed with ongoing maintenance for student, faculty, portfolio mentors, and prospective students. Done well, the website could be used effectively as a recruitment tool. In the area of physical resources software, hardware, and space for portfolio activities will also be needed. By phasing in the Learning ePortfolio program over four years, the College will be able to plan for these human and budgetary resource needs.

ITPAC discussions have addressed a number of these resource needs. In its Electronic Portfolios plan, ITPAC recommends renovation and preparation of Library space where students will be able to do portfolio development work, purchase of hardware and

software, necessary file server space, and the addition of one use support position. In its discussions the Learning ePortfolio Working Group identifies support needs beyond those recommended by ITPAC for the program it is proposing. They include an instructional design specialist, student technology mentors, and website development personnel to facilitate the infrastructure necessary for a successful program. The following will be needed to support the implementation of the Learning ePortfolio program:

- Renovation and preparation of identified library spaces (ITPAC)--\$150K
- Purchase of hardware and software (ITPAC)--\$270
- File server space (8, 72GB drives) (ITPAC)--\$70K (update with current cost)
- User support position—IT specialist (ITPAC)--\$52K
- Instructional design specialist/Lab Director (LePWG)--\$60K
- Support for departmental implementation (LePWG)--\$40K

During the fall semester 2006, the Core Experience Steering Committee should work with IT personnel and appropriate individuals in the schools/departments/DIIS to identify program needs that will be necessary for effective implementation of the Learning ePortfolio program. This should be a priority for the Steering Committee at the beginning of its work.

Recommendations for Implementing the Learning ePortfolio. A set of recommendations relation to the implementation of the Learning ePortfolio are included in the working group implementation plan. They address:

- Developing a model ePortfolio for each school/DIIS
- Developing an institutional website for student Learning ePortfolios for documentation and recruitment purposes
- Developing a Portfolio Mentor Agreement
- Establishing Learning ePortfolio cohort groups
- ITPAC-Learning ePortfolio support
- Revising the advising system

Aesthetic Appreciation Experience

Working group members:

Cheryl Kramer, assistant professor, Art History, and Gallery Director

Jairo Geronymo, assistant professor, Music Performance

Darcy Plymire, assistant professor, Sport Management and Media

Simon Tarr, assistant professor, Communications—TV-R, and Core Experience Task Force

Greg Woodward, professor, Music Composition, and Dean of Graduate Studies

Purpose, Goals, and Learning Outcomes of the Aesthetic Appreciation Experience.

The approach taken by the Aesthetic Appreciation working group provides students with opportunities to develop an individual sense of aesthetic appreciation through a variety of experiences, both structured and open, with formal study of some aspect of the aesthetic in a course of their choice (from a list of selected courses), and through reflective practice

over the student's four years at Ithaca College. Students will be encouraged to develop an individual "path" of aesthetic appreciation that "elevates the human spirit and affirms connection of the individual to a larger cultural context, not limited to but often expressed as a work of art." They will begin their experience in the Ithaca Seminar where they will be required to engage in one structured aesthetic experience. Through similar experiences during their first three years it is hoped that they will develop a basic foundation for aesthetic appreciation that they will carry with them through life.

The goals and objectives for developing aesthetic appreciation address the human or personal aspect and the "full range" of experiences through which this appreciation can be nurtured. By successfully completing the Aesthetic Appreciation experience, students will be able to:

Goal 1: develop a rich, individual view of the human experience by cultivating a sense of the aesthetic as a cornerstone of everyday life.

The following objectives will be used to achieve this goal:

- Introduce principles of an aesthetic experience through structured experiences beginning in the Ithaca Seminar.
- Identify existing courses that include or could be modified to include aesthetic appreciation. These courses will fulfill an aesthetic appreciation requirement within the student's general electives.
- Establish a system that makes students accountable for a variety of aesthetic experiences over their four years—structured, open, formal, and informal.

Goal 2: recognize, appreciate, and articulate the full range of sensory experiences, semantic meanings, and cultural contexts inherent in an aesthetic experience.

The following objectives will be used to achieve this goal:

- Connect discussions and presentations by historians, theoreticians, and practitioners with designated community events that will fulfill the structured aesthetic appreciation event requirement. Examples include pre-concert lectures, theatre and gallery opening previews, post-event discussions, etc.
- Develop a weblog-based infrastructure that will facilitate discussion for and among first- and second-year students with third- and fourth-year student facilitators following a number of designated community events that will fulfill the structured Aesthetic Appreciation requirement.
- Integrate written reflection on aesthetic experiences in the student's Learning ePortfolio.

Linkage to the College Mission and the Institutional Plan. Deriving from the College's historic beginning as a music conservatory, this core requirement directly addresses the mission goal of "provid[ing] a foundation for a lifetime of learning. Ithaca College is dedicated to fostering intellectual growth, aesthetic appreciation, and character development... ." The Aesthetic Appreciation experience responds to the first and second goals under the Academic Program Development priority in the College's Institutional

Plan. In mapping the mission statement to the seven attributes and six experiences recommended by the Core Experience Task Force, the aesthetic appreciation experience links to the first six of the attributes, although a case can be made for linking it to the remaining attribute, social and environmental responsibility.

Definition of Aesthetic Appreciation. Following initial conversations regarding the need to develop the broadest possible approach for students to experience aesthetic appreciation, the working group endorsed the definition developed by Greg Woodward, which is based in John Dewey's *Art as Experience*. This expository definition is included as Attachment D.

Protocols and Guidelines for Implementing the Aesthetic Appreciation Experience. The student's four-year experience in developing a sense of aesthetic appreciation will consist of a series of varied experiences beginning in the Ithaca Seminar and concluding in the Capstone Experience. These experiences begin with a *structured aesthetic experience*—attending a concert or other musical performance, theatre performance, gallery exhibition, poetry reading, or the like, with a pre-event lecture or discussion as preparation and a follow-up discussion and reflection, which should be posted in the student's Learning ePortfolio.

The *open aesthetic experience* can take several forms and is initiated by a student or group of students. These experiences may be the result of a course or other activity in which the student will explore the concept of aesthetics in a topic area of their choice. Open experiences are not limited to what are considered traditional areas of the arts and may focus on topics within mathematics, the natural sciences, the physical sciences, the humanities, and the like. Interdisciplinary explorations are encouraged. The open experience must be proposed to a faculty member/s and approved in advance using the Open Aesthetic Experience Proposal Form. An example of this form is included in the working group implementation document as Attachment E. The process for structured experiences must be followed, i.e., preparation, project experience, discussion and reflection, which should be posted in the student's Learning ePortfolio.

For both the structured and open aesthetic experiences a follow-up verbal or on-line discussion (blog) is required. Beginning in their third year a student may serve as a blog moderator for the follow-up discussion component of a structured aesthetic event. The student moderator will be responsible for managing the blog discussion for a specified period, e.g., five days, and for posting a summary of the discussion on the appropriate website (to be determined by the Core Experience Steering Committee). Student blog moderators will be trained prior to the event and may use their moderator activity to satisfy their semester aesthetic appreciation requirement.

Another Aesthetic Appreciation experience is taking a course in a subject area that will reinforce the student's understanding of aesthetic appreciation. This course will be chosen from a list of courses to be developed by the Core Experience Steering Committee. The course should be in an area that is not directly related to the student's major.

During the senior year the student will complete a reflective essay on how their sense of aesthetic appreciation has developed during the preceding three years and project how this experience may influence their life choices during the next three to five years. This essay should be based in part on a review of the student's Learning ePortfolio aesthetic appreciation entries from the previous three years. If the student's Capstone project relates to their developing sense of aesthetic appreciation, the Aesthetic Appreciation and Capstone essays may be combined with the student's adviser approving. The reflective essay should be posted in the student's Learning ePortfolio. The Core Experience Steering Committee will need to develop more specific guidelines on the Aesthetic Appreciation essay, both for structured and open experiences as well as the senior-year essay. (For example, "consider the definition of aesthetic appreciation as it relates to your experience, thinking, and development during the past three years. Give specific examples from your Learning ePortfolio and other experience to illustrate your essay.")

During their four years, students will be required to complete the following aesthetic appreciation experiences:

- First year: Structured aesthetic appreciation experience in the Ithaca Seminar
 Structured aesthetic appreciation experience in the second semester

- Second year: Structured aesthetic appreciation experience in the third semester
 Structured or open experience in the fourth semester
 Enroll in aesthetics-related course from a list of courses outside of
 the student's major (one course in semester 3-6)

- Third year: Structured or open experiences each semester
 Enroll in aesthetics-related course from a list of courses outside of
 the student's major (one course in semesters 3-6)

- Fourth year: Senior reflective essay on how the student's previous aesthetic
 experiences have influenced their sense of aesthetic appreciation
 and how it may affect their life choices in the following three to
 five years. This essay may be linked to the student's Capstone
 essay, if there is a logical connection.

Implementation Timeline. A four-year implementation is planned to coordinate with implementation of the Ithaca Seminar and to allow third-year students time to develop understanding and experience with the aesthetic appreciation requirement during their first two years so they can serve as a blog moderator.

2007-09—Implement aesthetic appreciation structured experiences for students entering in these years. Identify a list of courses that students may take for the aesthetic appreciation requirement.

2009-11—Introduce third- and fourth-year blog moderators for structured experiences.

The Core Experience Steering Committee will need to develop processes to facilitate. More details on this are contained in the working group implementation document.

IT Resources Needed for Implementation. IT support is the primary resource need to implement the Aesthetic Appreciation experience. This will center primarily on adapting the ePortfolio template to accommodate the aesthetic experience program. A second need will be training for student blog moderators in the third year of implementation. The Core Experience Steering Committee will need to direct development of these features. Until these details are known it will be difficult to determine even an approximate cost.

Capstone Experience

Working group members:

Les Black, assistant professor, Music Theory

Mark Cordano, assistant professor, Business Administration

Linda Koenig, Student Affairs and Campus Life

Eric Lewis, associate professor, Accounting, and Core Experience Task Force

Pat Spencer, assistant professor, Writing

Purpose, Goals, and Learning Outcomes of the Capstone Experience. The capstone is a summative learning experience that demonstrates “synthesis, integration, and application of previous [disciplinary and interdisciplinary] knowledge.” It will be a requirement for graduation from Ithaca College. The capstone shows mastery of content, skills, and reflective practice through a project in the student’s major, an interdisciplinary combination, or campus-community experience. It provides the student with an opportunity to bring together the breadth of their learning experience in a focused, well-articulated presentation. Depending on the type of capstone—disciplinary, interdisciplinary, or campus-community—an opportunity for public presentation of the project should be made possible through a required event or an elective public forum. All students will document their capstone experience in the Learning ePortfolio and include a required Capstone Reflective Essay.

By successfully completing the Capstone Experience, students will be able to:

Goal 1: synthesize, integrate, and apply previous disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge.

The following objective will be used to achieve this goal:

- Students will successfully complete a project, course, program, or an activity identified by their department and/or school as satisfying the definition of a capstone experience. The activities include examples such as out-of-class co-curricular experiences, service learning or community-based learning, college-to-work and career transition experiences, e.g., internships, student teaching, and other pre-professional activity.

Goal 2: engage in thoughtful reflection on lessons learned throughout the college experience.

The following objectives will be used to achieve this goal:

- Students will document their capstone experience their Capstone Experience through an extended written reflection.
- Students will be encouraged to include experiences from both their learning and living communities.

Goal 3: demonstrate intellectual growth, aesthetic appreciation, and character development, the pillars of the College’s mission and an important part of the foundation for lifelong learning.

The following objectives will be used to achieve this goal:

- Students will provide written and/or spoken demonstration of these skills
- Students will model individual judgment and/or decision-making skills.

Linkage to the College Mission and Institutional Plan. The Capstone Experience provides students an opportunity to demonstrate their cumulative knowledge and skills through a project that integrates learning in the major and other experiences. If done well, it will provide evidence that “a foundation for a lifetime of learning” has been established, demonstrate “intellectual growth, aesthetic appreciation and character development,” and show potential “to achieve excellence in their chosen field,” all in preparation for “responsibilities of citizenship and service in the global community.” The Capstone responds to the first and second goals under the Academic Program Development and Experiential and Performance-Based Learning priorities of the College’s Institutional Plan. In mapping the mission statement to the seven attributes and six experiences recommended by the Core Experience Task force, the Capstone Experience links to all of the attributes and six experiences.

Types of Capstone Experiences. Each student will be required to complete successfully one of the three types of capstone projects during their senior year: disciplinary, interdisciplinary, or campus community. *In cases where a student has a strong interdisciplinary or campus-community interest and experience, a second capstone project, either interdisciplinary or campus-community, may be developed.* The capstone project/s must be documented in the student’s Learning ePortfolio and include the required capstone reflective essay.

- **Discipline-based capstone.** The discipline-based capstone is the culmination of a student’s undergraduate experience focused within the major. “Capstone Preparedness” assumes a significant preceding body of undergraduate study and should be offered only to those with senior standing. Department requirements primarily will define the process and requirements for preparing and completing the capstone and develop specific approaches to documenting it. Credits assigned to this capstone are determined by the requirements of the major.

The discipline-based capstone is both integrative and summative, drawing heavily on prior academic preparation within and, in some cases, beyond the student's major field of study. It may be comprised of a course, performance, exhibit, practicum, or other form appropriate to the culmination of the major. It will include a "deliverable" element that is assessable. Assessable elements may include a final paper, project, performance, exhibit, presentation, thesis, written or practical examination, or other evidence of the student's synthesis and integration of and reflection on prior academic experiences.

If the capstone is a course its focus should be integrative, rather than the introduction of new material and concepts. This does not preclude the introduction of tools with which the integration or synthesis may be accomplished and/or tools and concepts that help focus the reflective elements of the experience.

- **Interdisciplinary capstone.** The interdisciplinary capstone is the culmination of a student's undergraduate experience combining the major and at least one other area of study, possibly through a double major or a major and a minor/s. The purpose of this capstone experience is to provide students with the opportunity to formally integrate knowledge across disciplines in an original project. It assumes a significant preceding body of undergraduate study and is offered only to those with senior standing. The student may enroll for 0-3 credits.

The interdisciplinary capstone project integrates streams of disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge and skills. The project should model learning that will prepare them for their near term professional career, graduate study, or other work. The project will demonstrate mastery of knowledge, skills, and concepts across disciplinary boundaries as well as judgment and values that reflect personal and professional growth.

The capstone may be based on a paper, performance, production piece, exhibit or other form appropriate to the culmination of the project and may involve students from several majors. It will include a "deliverable" element that is assessable. Assessable elements may include a final paper, project, performance, exhibit, presentation, thesis, written or oral examination or other evidence of the student's synthesis and integration of and reflection on academic experiences across disciplines.

- **Campus-community capstone.** The campus-community capstone is the culmination of a student's undergraduate experience that synthesizes learning in and out of the classroom while focusing on the student's individual interests and development. Students will be expected to connect their classroom learning with activities they have participated in on and off campus utilizing the Core Experience attributes. Students will select two or more attributes to focus their capstone project.

The campus-community project should model learning that will prepare them for their near term professional career, graduate study, or other work. It will include a “deliverable” element that is assessable. Assessable elements may include a final paper, project, performance, exhibit, presentation, thesis, written or oral examination or other evidence of the student’s synthesis and integration of and reflection on academic and campus-community experiences.

The Capstone Reflective Essay. All students will be required to produce a reflective essay that accompanies their Capstone project. This reflection will draw together the student’s learning across their four years at Ithaca College and address how this experience has impacted their larger learning and influenced their Capstone project. It should address how their learning has helped them achieve their academic, personal, and professional goals and demonstrate evidence of personal and professional identity and values. When possible, students should address how their learning has prepared them for specific academic or professional work that they will pursue following graduation. (To facilitate development of the Capstone Reflective Essay, the Core Experience Steering Committee should consider including a section within the Learning ePortfolio template that is organized around the three “pillars” of the College mission, intellectual growth, aesthetic appreciation, and character development, leading the student through their four years at the College.)

Linking the Capstone to the Learning ePortfolio Experience. The Learning ePortfolio process can facilitate development of and help ensure a quality Capstone project. During their first three years, students will learn to gather information and, through critical thought and reflection, establish a disciplined approach to learning. In the Ithaca Seminar they will be given a brief descriptive overview that tells them how they can prepare for the Capstone (Attachment B). Additional information and guidelines on developing the Capstone project through their four years will be available through their department, adviser, and portfolio mentors. In the second and third years, when heavily engaged in course work and activity that prepare her or him for culminating work in the senior year and the Capstone project, the habits and processes established in the first year in the ePortfolio are reinforced and acquire depth and hopefully sophistication. With thoughtful preparation and discussion with their adviser and portfolio mentors through their first three years, the Capstone project should be a logical culmination of their previous work.

Role of the Adviser and Portfolio Mentors in Developing the Capstone Project. The student’s adviser and portfolio mentors play an important role in developing the Capstone project. In the case of a required disciplinary Capstone, the student will need to work closely with his/her adviser and other appropriate faculty in developing the Capstone. For the interdisciplinary and campus-community capstones, the Capstone guidelines (to be developed by the Core Experience Steering Committee) will be an important source for planning the Capstone project. Students are encouraged to think about and begin to explore possible capstone topics early in their study to enable them to develop the content

basis through their second and third years. The student's adviser and portfolio mentors will be important in providing direction and guidance in this process. The student's adviser especially is critical in this since that faculty member will assign the final grade for the Learning ePortfolio.

The Capstone and Assessment. The student's Capstone project will be a basis for assessing student learning both in the major and at the institution level. Departments will establish learning goals and assessment protocols for the required disciplinary Capstone. For the interdisciplinary and campus-community Capstones, the Core Experience Steering Committee will need to work with appropriate faculty and professional staff to develop guidelines for developing and assessing the Capstone. (As part of this, the Committee should consider developing a set of rubrics and a protocol for assessing institutional goals based on the College's mission for all three capstone project types. This information can be useful in analyzing institution-level student learning for assessment purposes.)

Implementation Timeline. Based on the implementation plan for the other core experiences, the first Capstone "class" will be seniors in 2010-11.

Recommendations.

- Academic departments that do not currently have a capstone requirement should consider developing one that will encourage thoughtful integration of work in the major and other course areas, e.g., a double major or major and minor/s.
- Opportunities for sharing Capstone projects publicly should be developed. Department senior project events, colloquia, and other campus for a such as the annual James J. Whalen Academic Symposium are examples of these possibilities. Consideration should be given to developing a "Day of Scholarship" that would afford students an opportunity to share their Capstone projects.

June 1, 2006

Dear Peter:

Following submission of the Core Experience Task Force Report in June 2005 you charged me to develop an implementation plan for the core experiences recommended by the Task Force. Working with the First Year Experience Coordinating Committee (FYECC), chaired by Roger Richardson, I coordinated the efforts of the FYECC and three working groups during the 2006-07 year to develop an implementation plan for the recommended core experiences. Plans for each of the experiences were developed with an underlying goal that would provide an integrative learning experience for the student through four years at Ithaca College. The implementation plan presented here will require development of a Core Experience Steering Committee to develop the necessary ground-level details on: effective communication of the implementation plan to the campus community; identification of faculty, staff, capital, and space needs for successful implementation; training and other support processes for full implementation; and budget required to support the core experience program. Developing and implementing this program will be a major challenge for Ithaca College, but one that has the potential to transform it in ways that will take it successfully into the future.

An Executive Summary precedes the implementation document, which contains an overview section and implementation plan for each of the core experiences. Detailed discussion and implementation drafts for each experience are included as Appendices.

I am convinced that implementing the core experiences will contribute to the transformation that we have been talking about for several years and that it will ultimately mean a different Ithaca College and a different Ithaca College education, one that will reflect the goals and aspirations that are articulated in the College's mission statement. It has been a challenging but gratifying experience to work on this project at this point in my career. I wish you and the College the best as you continue with the next stage of this work. I look forward to hearing about the progress of implementation of the core experiences in the coming years.

Best regards,

Garry L. Brodhead
Associate Provost