

Proposal for the Ithaca Seminar Program To be implemented beginning Fall 2007

October 30, 2006

Recommendations: Based upon the subcommittee discussions and input from the groups listed below we recommend the following.

- Offer four credit Ithaca Seminars that will be required for all fall semester first year students. All seminars will have an interdisciplinary perspective.
- Eliminate or replace all other existing first year seminars.
- Faculty teaching the course will determine the Ithaca Seminar topics. Credit hours generated are credited to the department of the instructor offering the course.
- All Ithaca Seminars will include a set of topics and programs that will create a shared experience for all Ithaca College First Year Students. (See Section on “Common academic and programmatic content ” for more information.)
- By the third year of implementation, all sections must be either linked or part of a team taught set of sections. (See section on linked courses and team-taught courses.)
- Faculty members will be the assigned advisors for all exploratory students in their sections. (See Section below on Exploratory Advising).
- All Ithaca Seminar Courses will be designated as Liberal Arts (LA) courses, will have the appropriate HU/SS/FA/NS designation, and will have an H&S General Education designation.
- Each school 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.
- All students in Ithaca Seminars will be scheduled to meet for four hours per week. One of those hours will be at a common meeting time to allow students to participate in Ithaca Seminar programs, workshops, and attend presentations by guest speakers. 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. (At this point, the Monday, Wednesday, and Friday noon hour are the preferred time periods.) Programs will be provided during seven of these “common hours.”

Rationale: Academic Program Development (APD) is the first area covered in the College's institutional plan that was adopted in 2001. The first two APD goals focus on creating shared academic experiences for all Ithaca College students. In support of these goals the College Wide Core Experience Task Force was convened in Spring 2003. This Task Force was charged with creating a core set of experiences for all Ithaca College Students. The Task Force drew heavily on the three pillars in the Ithaca College Mission Statement (intellectual growth, aesthetic appreciation and character development) to help identify the focus areas for the core experiences. The proposal for a required First Year Seminar for all new students is being developed, as recommended by the Core Experience Task Force, to help implement the institutional plan.

In addition to implementing the goals of the institutional plan as mentioned above, the First Year Seminars will accomplish the following:

- Through the First Year Seminars our students will start their academic experience with a greater appreciation for a multidisciplinary perspective which is appropriate for a 21st century education.
- The seminars will help students develop the foundational skills and learn about support services necessary to be successful during their IC career.
- The seminars will enhance retention and enable more students to complete their degree programs. Research shows that students are more likely to remain at the college if they feel connected with faculty and other students. This seminar program provides a small group opportunity for students to develop these connections.
- The Ithaca Seminar program is an essential point of introduction to other components of the core experience (e-portfolio, capstone, aesthetic appreciation experiences)
- By expanding developmental advising training for First Year Seminar faculty, advising for all students will be improved.
- Ithaca College's peer institutions have been offering first year seminars in various forms for many years. Parents and students expect IC to offer a high quality freshman year experience.

History: In fall 2005 Ithaca College launched a pilot of the Ithaca Seminar Program. These seminars were offered in addition to the already existing Humanities and Sciences Seminars, First Year Seminar for Business Majors, and Honors seminar. Also in fall 2005, Ithaca College offered a pilot section of the IC Residential Seminar. All of these seminars are intended for first year students. The variety of seminars created some confusion for students and academic advisors.

In fall 2005, the Provost convened a First Year Experience Coordinating Committee of faculty, student and academic affairs administrators. Its charge was to review the various programs that target first year students, and to make recommendations for creating a more intentional and coherent First Year Program.

The members of the First Year Experience Committee created subcommittees to look at the various pieces of the First Year Program. Jim Rothenberg, Associate Professor of Sociology and Coordinator of the Ithaca Seminar Program and Bonnie Solt Prunty, Director for the Offices of Residential Life and Judicial Affairs, and facilitator for the IC Residential Seminar worked to gather feedback and develop this proposal regarding the Ithaca Seminar Program. At their request Warren Schlesinger, Associate Professor of Accounting and a first year seminar instructor in business joined the subcommittee. The subcommittee in developing its preliminary proposal sought feedback and recommendations from across campus from groups such as:

- H&S First Year Seminar Coordinating Committee
- Individual Meetings with Associate/Assistant
- Individual Meetings with Deans
- First Year Experience Committee
- Core Experience Workgroups

Linkage to other aspects of the core experience: Ithaca Seminars were developed as part of the transformation of the first year experience plans for new students at Ithaca College. Ithaca Seminars will help students to develop skills in several of the attribute areas identified by the core experience committee. Ithaca Seminars will most directly address the following attributes:

- **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.

Ithaca Seminars will also provide a venue for introducing all first year students to three other components of the core experience. These components are: the e-portfolio, the aesthetic appreciation experience and the senior capstone. Students will complete two essays about their first semester at IC to place into their e-portfolio.

Seminar guidelines:

- The seminars are liberal arts courses with an interdisciplinary perspective that stress active learning, with an emphasis on exploration, engagement, and reflection.
- The seminars prepare students for future learning at Ithaca College by developing skills in reading critically, writing, speaking, and listening.
- The seminars teach students to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.
- The seminars teach students how to find and use resources for answering questions and solving problems.
- The seminars 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.
- By the third year of implementation, all sections must either be linked to one or more other sections or be part of a team taught set of sections. (See below.)

Common experiences and common academic and programmatic content

The Ithaca Seminars provide a common core experience for all incoming first year students in several ways.

First, all students will have the experience of taking a small interdisciplinary course during their first semester at Ithaca College.

Second, each student in an Ithaca Seminar 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 and a copy of this publication will be distributed to all Ithaca Seminar students and instructors.

Third, there will be some content and programs that will be common to all Ithaca Seminars. Some of this content will be covered by faculty in the context of their courses, some of these issues will be covered by workshops and guest speakers, while others will be developed and presented by other college staff – most likely staff in the division of Student Affairs and Campus Life. These programs are intended to be engaging, active learning experiences connected to the

mission and priorities of the college. Activities developed and led by staff could be done within sections, with several sections, or with larger groups.

The full range of topics and the specific activities will be developed by the Ithaca Seminar steering committee, Student Affairs and Campus Life staff, and faculty members teaching Ithaca Seminars. It is expected that the topics and activities will be modified over the years with experience and as new issues emerge. Some topics will be required to be incorporated in all seminars; other topics will be optional and instructors may choose among a set of choices. The topics and activities described below are meant to be suggestive, not prescriptive.

Topics and activities that could be part of regular class sessions led by regular course instructors:

- How to be a “good” seminar participant
- Incorporation of themes introduced by the reading initiative
- Information about on-campus extracurricular opportunities

Topics and activities that could be part of regular class sessions led by either regular course instructors or by outside facilitators:

- Educational Planning
- Introduction to E-portfolio
- Aesthetic appreciation (perhaps attendance at an arts event – and then class discussion)
- Class teambuilding

Topics and activities that might be led by outside facilitators in individual sections, with several sections, or with larger groups:

- Ethical decision making
- Making healthy choices
- Diversity
- Sustainability

Linked and team-taught courses:

Seminars are intended to be team taught or linked across departments to encourage students to recognize that learning occurs both within and across disciplines and to value Ithaca College as a comprehensive institution. Faculty will also benefit from this experience by working with colleagues from across the campus. Faculty teaching in the seminars will participate in faculty development activities related to the Ithaca Seminar program.

Linked courses are courses taught by faculty members from at least two different departments that have closely related topics. Instructors coordinate some of their teaching and activities.

Team-taught courses are courses with multiple sections. They all share the same syllabus and have the same course requirements. Each section has its own professor who is responsible for leading group discussions and evaluating students’ work. Sections meet together at various times during the semester for large group sessions. (Two faculty members may team teach a single Ithaca Seminar section. In such cases they would have to work out issues of overall appropriate teaching loads with their departments and schools, and appropriate compensation with the Academic Coordinator.)

Course approval procedures

- Faculty members who plan to teach Ithaca Seminars submit proposals, signed by their department chair, to the Ithaca Seminar Program Steering Committee and the Academic Program Coordinator for approval.
- Instructors must work with the H&S Curriculum Committee in order to get a Liberal Arts designation, a distribution designation (HU/SS/FA/NS), and for H&S general education designation.
- As with any new courses in the college, Ithaca Seminars previously approved by the Ithaca Seminar Steering Committee as experimental courses may be taught for up to two times before going through the APC approval process.
- After the 2nd time a seminar is taught, instructors must make formal course proposals (using APC forms). These proposals must be approved by the Ithaca Seminar Program Steering Committee and then submitted to the special programs review committee. The proposals are then forwarded to APC.

Exploratory Advising:

All Ithaca Seminar faculty members, regardless of their school or program, will be exploratory advisors and will be the assigned advisor for all exploratory students in their sections. (The average range of exploratory students in each section is likely to be between four and six students.) Training for instructors new to advising exploratory students will be provided.

Approximately 350 students a year enter the college as part of the exploratory program. About 70% of them currently enroll in an H&S first year seminar. Exploratory advising has been an integral part of the H&S First Year Seminar Program and has proven to be very successful. Exploratory students in these seminars not only have an advisor who is also their instructor in a seminar, and thus someone who knows them in that context, but seminar instructors receive additional training in being advisors. Since the Ithaca Seminars will replace the H&S seminar program, it is essential to maintain the exploratory advising component in the Ithaca Seminars.

In addition to the benefits for exploratory students, the rationale for having all seminar instructors become exploratory advisors includes the facts that (1) many students who enter I.C. with declared majors or programs switch to other majors or programs, (2) many students who enter as exploratory students intend to transfer to a professional school, and (3) many students in the professional schools switch into the School of Humanities and Sciences. The implications of these facts are that advisors from all schools and programs are advising many students who are not formally designated as exploratory students but who are for all practical purposes in fact “exploratory” students. The benefits of advisors learning how to advise exploratory students will thus benefit many students who are not in the exploratory program. Also, some exploratory students who are thinking of switching out of H&S will have advisors who know the professional programs well.

Exploratory advising involves developmental advising. Advisors work with their advisees in the following areas:

- Identifying values
- Identifying career interests
- Decision-making
- Selecting appropriate courses
- Exploring internship and study abroad opportunities

Faculty Obligations:

- a) New Seminar faculty 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 each year.
- b) Seminar instructors agree to participate in a midterm and end of term course and program assessment.
- c) Seminar instructors agree to attend two meetings during the semester to discuss their experiences, provide feedback, make suggestions for the program, etc.
- d) Seminar instructors agree to attend sessions held for their students during the “common hour” experiences.
- e) Seminar instructors will be the assigned advisor for exploratory students in their sections.

Faculty Development Needs:

The workshops for new and continuing Ithaca Seminar faculty members will help instructors to develop skills and new ideas/approaches in the following areas:

- E portfolio use
- Introduction to the philosophy and goals of the Ithaca Seminars
- Aesthetic Appreciation Experience
- Developmental advising
- Active learning approaches
- Exploratory Advising

Staffing:

Each school and program will be expected to offer a specified number of sections a year based on their size. Professional schools with limited numbers of elective freshmen courses will have greater difficulty in mounting seminar sections. The number of sections that each school is expected to offer should result in “proportional hardship” for all of the schools at IC. Each school may determine the mechanism for how this will be accomplished. Ithaca Seminar instructors will normally be full time faculty members. Exceptions to this may be made at the discretion of the Associate Provost, in consultation with the appropriate dean. (There are a number of adjuncts who have taught for a number of years at the college who would be appropriate candidates for such exceptions.)

Compensation:

Each school will determine appropriate ways to compensate faculty members for their participation in the Ithaca Seminar program and for the additional work required of faculty in this program. Some schools may offer faculty an additional stipend while others may receive a change in their workload. The additional work required of faculty is outlined in the section on “Faculty Obligations.”

Peer Mentor Program:

Research indicates that students are more likely to persist at an institution if they establish strong connections with faculty and peers. Clearly the seminar program creates an opportunity for a student to develop a close connection to their seminar instructor. Equally, the program would like to provide an opportunity for the seminar students to form a strong connection with an upper class student mentor. An upper class student, who completed the seminar program, would be assigned to work with each seminar class. The responsibilities of the mentor would include:

- Attending all seminar classes and program activities
- Planning all class icebreaker and team building activities
- Actively participating in all class discussions
- Tracking student participation in all program events
- Arranging the logistics for all class program events

The student mentor position would be a volunteer position. The student mentors would be added to the program in the third year of implementation.

Administration of the Ithaca Seminar Program:

Strong and significant leadership is required to implement a successful Ithaca Seminar Program. The Academic Coordinator of the Ithaca Seminar Program will be a faculty member who teaches an Ithaca Seminar in the fall term, two courses in the spring term, and receives a summer stipend.¹ The Academic Coordinator will chair a faculty Steering Committee for the program.

Responsibilities of the Academic Coordinator (and First Year Experience staff)

- Administers the budgets of the program and of the seminars.
- Schedules courses, makes room arrangements, and other administrative tasks.
- Coordinates and implements the nonacademic aspects of the Ithaca Seminar Program.
- Organizes the end-of-term presentations.

Membership and responsibilities of the Ithaca Seminar Steering Committee

- Membership of the committee will include at least one faculty member from each school and from DIIS. At least one associate dean will be a member of this committee.
- The committee reviews and approves seminar course proposals.
- The committee assesses and reviews the program and individual instructors.

Joint responsibilities of the steering committee and the Academic Coordinator

- Recruits interested faculty members and works with the schools to staff the courses.
- Works with faculty to help them develop courses appropriate for the Ithaca Seminar program, and to foster a seminar culture that encourages creativity and engagement.
- Along with the colleges faculty development coordinator, plans and runs training and workshops.

¹ During the fall term, the Academic Coordinator will be heavily involved in the administration of the program, including the coordination of special programs. Also, the fall term is the time when proposals for the following fall must be solicited and approved and thus when new Ithaca Seminar faculty members will need to be recruited. The summer stipend is compensation during the summer planning special programs and participation in new student orientation.

Phase-in Plan:

Ithaca Seminars will be phased in over 3-5 academic years (2007-2011) depending upon the ability of academic departments and schools being able to reallocate time and/or obtain additional funds to support the faculty teaching Ithaca Seminars.

- In fall 2007:
 - All H&S Seminars will become a part of the Ithaca Seminar Program.
 - The exploratory advising program proposed in this document will be implemented and all first year exploratory majors will be required to take an Ithaca Seminar.
 - Each of the schools will be expected to offer a certain number of seminar sessions [a minimum number will be set for each school].
- In fall 2008 additional sections will be added. All students in H&S and students in some selected programs in other schools will be required to enroll in an Ithaca Seminar.
- In fall 2009 all sections must either be either part of a team-taught course or linked to one or more other sections as described above. We also recommend the addition of a peer mentor to each of the seminar sections.
- In fall 2010 or 2011 all new first year students will be required to take an Ithaca Seminar.

Seminar Sign-ups:

Shortly after new students pay their deposit, the Ithaca Seminar Program will contact them and request their top five seminar preferences. Students will be assigned to a seminar section prior to their arrival for summer orientation. (Some schools and programs pre-register students for certain required courses. The Ithaca Seminar Program will need to coordinate with those programs.) This sign-up process will accomplish the following items:

- Allow us to better manage enrollment numbers in each of the seminar sessions.
- Help students to develop an early connection with IC and the seminar program – hopefully reducing the summer melt.
- Allow students to set their schedules around their preferred seminar choice.

Budget:

This proposal recognizes the institutional priority the President and Board of Trustees place on developing a First Year Seminar for all incoming students. This proposal expects departments and schools to restructure and reallocate existing resources over time in order to staff this important college-wide program. For example, faculty resources devoted to existing H&S first year seminars, and resources devoted to existing Ithaca seminars, will be made available to staff the new Ithaca Seminars. We also expect some departments to shift some faculty resources from existing courses to courses that could be modified to become part of the Ithaca Seminar program. This is most likely to occur in H&S, which currently offers the most first year liberal arts courses on campus of any school and where demand for first year electives in the fall semester will decline once students are enrolled in the Ithaca Seminars.

In all schools and in all departments we expect that deans will work with department chairpersons and faculty to identify courses and sections of multiple section courses that could be eliminated or offered less frequently in order to shift faculty resources into Ithaca Seminar classrooms. This process will be more difficult to achieve in some departments and may take some time to implement and may result in the size of some classes increasing from their current

size. Some electives may also not be offered as frequently as in the past. This is why we are recommending a 3-5 year phase-in for the Ithaca Seminars.

We expect that one-half to two thirds of the seminar sections needed can be funded by reallocation of existing resources as described above. This will require the full commitment and effort and creativity of the faculty and deans and other administrators. The success of the Ithaca Seminars like any other academic program requires commitment. But additional budget funds will also be needed. Reallocation alone within departments and schools will not be sufficient.

We expect over a 3-5 year phase-in that an additional \$200,000 – \$250,000 will have to be added to the budget to fund additional part-time faculty and perhaps to contribute in some departments toward full-time lines. Whether this money is reallocated from elsewhere in the academic budget, e.g. from faculty development or whether it represents new expenditures is up to the college's budget committee to determine.

Other Costs

In addition to staffing costs, a program the size of the Ithaca Seminar Program will incur other costs if it is going to be a signature academic program at Ithaca College.

Program budget: (for speakers, special events or staff facilitators etc.): at \$2500/ program activity x 7 activities = \$17,500

If a program activity requires hiring staff facilitators, these staff members will be compensated at the rate of \$50 for the first time they facilitate a topic (to cover both the training and facilitation time), and \$40 for each repeat session.

Academic Coordinator: Three course replacement at \$3,600 per course = \$10,800

Faculty development and training fund: \$5,000

Section Initiatives Funding: 70 sections x \$200 = \$14,000 this is money for each instructor to use to purchase materials, tickets or other items needed for the seminar

Special Initiatives Funding: \$5,000. This is money to be spent at the discretion of the Academic Coordinator to fund special projects and initiatives for class related activities for faculty teaching in the program.

Production costs of student essay book: 1600 students x \$5.00 per book = \$8,000.

Total Additional Costs: \$60,300

Approval Process:

1. The proposal will be sent to all faculty members and to the division of student affairs for feedback. The proposal committee will be available to meet with departments.
2. A final proposal will be submitted to each school's curriculum committee for comment.
3. The final proposal, along with the comments of the schools' curriculum committees will be submitted to the Special Program Review Committee.
4. If approved by the Special Program Review Committee, the final proposal, along with the comments from the schools' curriculum committees, will be forwarded to APC.