Sonoma State University
Interim Program Review

Department or Program: Hutchins School of Liberal Studies
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Completion of a Program Review creates an important opportunity to assess the strengths and weaknesses of a program within the context of past and present events to form a plan of action for the future. It is, however, important to realize that this program review, and the reviews before it, captures only a small set of information that is part of a larger, growing, changing system. Any review, therefore, is an examination of certain variables, at a certain point in time, which exist within an even larger system that includes Sonoma State University, the California State University, and both national and world environments. Specifically, this document is not intended to be a full review of the Hutchins School of Liberal Studies as was completed in 2006, but rather focuses on: 1) a brief introduction to the Hutchins School of Liberal Studies; 2) new data gathered from ongoing program assessment since the last program review; 3) 2006 program assessment recommendations and subsequent responses to those recommendations; 4) an external review and response to that review; and 5) new recommendations for action based on the analysis of information from foci 2, 3 and 4.

I. A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE HUTCHINS SCHOOL OF LIBERAL STUDIES

The Hutchins School of Liberal Studies (Hutchins; LIBS) has been an integral part of Sonoma State University (SSU) since 1969. Originally a cluster school focused on a great-books inspired, grade-free lower division curriculum, Hutchins has evolved to incorporate multiple subject teacher credential (elementary school) preparation programs. Hutchins includes a Lower Division General Education (LDGE) program, an Interdisciplinary Studies minor, and three upper division major tracks. Additionally, Hutchins supports a B.A. Degree Completion Program taught through Extended Education, is connected to the community through the Hutchins Institute for Public Policy Studies and Community Action (HIPP), and the Hutchins Dialogue Center (HDC), and until 2011, supported an active “Action for a Viable Future” MA program, which is currently dormant. Extensive descriptions of these programs can be found in the 2006 Program Review.

Completion of the Hutchins Lower Division GE program, as recently re-articulated through the SSU General Education Subcommittee in May, 2013, fulfills all California State University (CSU) lower division GE requirements except mathematics, for a total of 47 GE units and 1 elective unit credit. The first semester is available credit/no credit, with an option for letter grades or credit/no credit in the final three semesters. Upon completion of the Hutchins lower division GE program, students typically remain in the major, minor in Interdisciplinary Studies, transfer to other majors at SSU, or transfer to other colleges and universities.

The upper division tracks include Track I - General Liberal Studies Major/Interdisciplinary Studies, Track II - Subject Matter Preparation (Pre-Credential), and Track III - Blended Program/B.A. and Multiple Subject Teaching Credential, or “Blended” Program. Track I allows students to design their own course of study, using up to nine units of coursework from outside of LIBS within the 40 unit major, and requires students to participate in both independent study and internship classes. Many students who choose Track I also choose to study abroad. Track II prepares students primarily for a career as an elementary school teacher, and requires students to complete courses across campus, as well as within the LIBS major, that prepare them for the California Subject Examination for Teachers (CSET) examinations and future coursework as
graduate students in teaching credential programs. Track III Blended, which begins in students’ freshman year, combines coursework from LIBS with coursework from the School of Education to allow students to graduate with both a BA in LIBS and a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential from the School of Education usually within four, rather than the typical five, years.

The Hutchins pedagogy, as explained in the extensive 2006 Program Review, remains centered around seminar based teaching with an emphasis on writing, critical thinking and self-expression. Hutchins continues to support the mission of SSU which has, since 1991, striven to create “lifelong learners” with a “broad cultural perspective,” cultivated “an appreciation of intellectual and aesthetic achievements,” encouraged students to become “leaders and active citizens,” helped students to gain skills to pursue “fulfilling careers” and attempted to create student-scholars who are dedicated to “contributing to the well-being of the world at large.”

The Hutchins pedagogy continues to focus on:

- Showing students how to participate in and become motivated to pursue their own learning
- Using small seminar based courses to foster discussion, critical thinking, and analysis
- Providing strong background and practice in multiple forms of writing
- Providing a viable learning community with close relationships between faculty and students
- Organizing learning around broad interdisciplinary themes rather than narrow disciplinary foci
- Integrating community service and learning opportunities into the curricula
- Creating collaboration between Hutchins faculty
- Encouraging cultivation of a broad range of faculty interests and expertise

Hutchins has, and still continues, to create lifelong learners who go on to successful careers in education, law, public service, and graduate work in many different disciplines.

II. RECENT ASSESSMENT DATA AND ACTIVITIES

Before addressing the recommendations of the 2006 Action Plan, it makes sense to mention recent assessments of the Hutchins School of Liberal Studies. This will allow new information to more specifically address the 2006 Program Review Action Plan recommendations.

A. National “Online Learning Communities Student Survey”

In response to continued pressure to compare ourselves to a similar program in the CSU (which does not exist) we decided, at the suggestion of Dr. Nelson Kellogg, to participate in the “Online Learning Communities Student Survey” administered by the Washington Center for Learning Communities at Evergreen State College. This survey does not target online learning communities, but rather gathers information about learning communities using online survey techniques. This survey, specifically designed for learning communities, allows students who participate in learning communities across the nation to self-evaluate the effectiveness of their learning community experience and the faculty who deliver this curriculum. It might be worth
investigating the possibility of all SSU learning communities joining this survey in the future, as it would be interesting to see how Hutchins compares to other SSU learning communities, and to learn how data from SSU learning communities compare to national learning communities.

The first survey occurred in Spring 2012 and included students from both LIBS 202, the final class in our four semester lower division GE sequence, and LIBS 402, our senior capstone course. We also conducted the same survey in the smaller LIBS 402 course at the end of Fall 2012 to capture data from the Blended cohort, who take LIBS 402 exclusively during Fall semesters. The survey was repeated again in Spring 2013 for both LIBS 202 and LIBS 402 classes. The raw data from these reports can be found in Appendices 1-10. We were able to compare both the LIBS 202 and LIBS 402 cohorts to national results, and to each other, giving us insight regarding differences between our lower division and upper division students and between Hutchins learning communities and other learning communities across the nation.

Three of the sets of survey questions are student-oriented, including “In my learning community I:”, “My participation in this learning community helps me to develop my ability to:”, and the “amount of time spent in this learning community versus other courses.” There is also a section to assess the performance of teachers, “Teachers in my learning community:” Additionally, Hutchins added written response questions to these surveys that are specific to LIBS 202 and to LIBS 402.

Information gained from this assessment is particularly important for the accurate assessment of the Hutchins School of Liberal studies because this survey compares “apples to apples” – Hutchins, as a learning community, to other learning communities nationwide. Unfortunately, the sample size is smaller than expected, as some students did not complete this optional survey. Of approximately 140 possible students, only 35 and 24 students chose to participate.

1. In My Learning Community I:

Graphs of data from this category were created to compare Hutchins scores from all five student groups (LIBS 202, Spring 2012, 2013; LIBS 402, Spring 2012, 2013 and Fall 2012) to the Spring 2013 national averages as reported by the Washington Center for Learning Communities at Evergreen State College. (Figures 1-3).

Figure 1 shows that across the five Hutchins classes, the difference between the national average and Hutchins in the category “very often” was highest in “participate in class discussions or seminars,” and “reflect on new insights/understandings” and significant in “work on connecting or integrating idea/strategies, and “ask questions in class.” Figure 2 shows that Hutchins students also responded “very often” more than the national average in “work on reading/writing/problem solving skills,” “use what I’m learning to contribute to another class,” and “discuss class ideas outside of class.”

Figures 2 and 3 show that Hutchins students responded “very often” less than the average of students in the national survey in categories “present my work, or work done as part of a group,” “work with other students to examine complex issues” (LIBS 402 Fall 2012 only), “peer review
Figure 1: Learning Communities Online Student Survey - Comparison of National and Hutchins School of Liberal Studies Data LIBS 202 (Spring 2012, 2013) and LIBS 402 (Spring 2012, Fall 2012, Spring 2013)

In my learning community I:

- Participate in class discussions or seminars (National)
- Reflect on new insights or understandings (National)
- Work on connecting or integrating ideas or strategies or skills, etc.
- Ask questions in class (National)

Legend:
- Very Often
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never
Figure 2: Learning Communities Online Student Survey - Comparison of National and Hutchins School of Liberal Studies Data LIBS 202 (Spring 2012, 2013) and LIBS 402 (Spring 2012, Fall 2012, Spring 2013)

In my learning community I:

Work on reading/writing/problem-solving assignments:
- Very Often
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

Present my work or work done as a part of a group:
- Very Often
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

Use what I am learning to contribute to another class:
- Very Often
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

Discuss class ideas outside of class:
- Very Often
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

Percentage distribution over different semesters and courses.
Figure 3: Learning Communities Online Student Survey - Comparison of National and Hutchins School of Liberal Studies Data LIBS 202 (Spring 2012, 2013) and LIBS 402 (Spring 2012, Fall 2012, Spring 2013)

In my learning community I:

- Work with other students to examine complex issues
- Peer review my and other students’ work during class
- Work with other students on group projects
- Work with classmates outside of class
- Develop friendships based on shared experiences

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Very Often Often Sometimes Never
my and other students’ work during class,” “work with other students on group projects,” “work with classmates outside of class,” and “develop friendships based on shared experiences” (LIBS 402, Fall 2012 only).

2. My Participation in This Learning Community Helps Me to Develop My Ability to:

In the section “my participation in this learning community helps me to develop my ability to:” Hutchins reported “very often” in all categories except “work effectively with others to complete projects” (LIBS 402, Fall 2012 only). In the category “be successful in future courses and programs, Hutchins students reported “very often” more than the national average except for LIBS 202, Spring 2013, which ranked nearly the same as the national average (Figures 4-6).

Specifically, all sections of LIBS classes surveyed ranked “speak clearly and effectively,” “connect my learning to community and world issues,” “write clearly and effectively,” “think critically and analytically, “identify effective learning strategies for me,” “persist when faced with academically challenging work,” and “take responsibility for my own learning” as “very often” more than the national average.

3. Amount of Time Spent in this Learning Community versus Other Courses

In the section “amount of time I spent in this learning community versus other courses,” Hutchins reported spending more time than the national average in their LIBS classes “thinking through my assumptions,” “synthesizing ideas, experiences or theories, “integrating information from multiple sources,” “evaluating information methods, and arguments,” “applying theories to practical problems,” and “analyzing elements of an idea, experience or theory” than other students in learning communities nationwide. Hutchins students reported spending significantly less time “memorizing facts and figures” than the national average (Figures 7-8).

4. Teachers in My Learning Community:

In the section “Teachers in my learning community:” results were more mixed, largely due to anomalously low instructor scores given by students in LIBS 202 in Spring 2013 (Figures 9-11). In all sections except LIBS 202 in Spring 2013, Hutchins instructors ranked higher than the national average in all categories except “teachers in my learning community encourage me to seek other resources on campus,” and “teachers in my learning community encourage me to plan my education with an advisor.” All sections of LIBS 202 and 402 said that their professors “encourage students to discuss assigned work in class” and “encourage students to ask questions in class” more often than the national average.

LIBS 202 students in Spring 2013 seem to have been particularly “hard” on their instructor(s) compared to the other surveyed section of LIBS 202 (Spring 2012). The Spring 2013 section of 202, ranked their teachers lower in all categories except “encourage students to ask questions” and “encourage students to discuss assigned work in class.” The number of students in this selection was only 24 of a possible 70, indicating that all sections of LIBS 202 did not participate
Figure 4: Learning Communities Online Student Survey - Comparison of National and Hutchins School of Liberal Studies Data LIBS 202 (Spring 2012, 2013) and LIBS 402 (Spring 2012, Fall 2012, Spring 2013)

My participation in this learning community helps me to develop my ability to:

- Speak clearly and effectively (National/Local)
- Write clearly and effectively (National/Local)
- Connect my learning to community/world issues (National/Local)
- Think critically and analytically (National/Local)

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
Figure 5: Learning Communities Online Student Survey - Comparison of National and Hutchins School of Liberal Studies Data LIBS 202 (Spring 2012, 2013) and LIBS 402 (Spring 2012, Fall 2012, Spring 2013)

My participation in this learning community helps me to develop my ability to:

Identify effective learning strategies for me (National)
Libs 202 - Spring 2012
Libs 202 - Spring 2013
Libs 402 - Spring 2012
Libs 402 - Spring 2013
Libs 402 - Fall 2012
Libs 402 - Spring 2013
Persist when faced with academically challenging work
Libs 202 - Spring 2012
Libs 202 - Spring 2013
Libs 402 - Spring 2012
Libs 402 - Spring 2013
Libs 402 - Fall 2012
Libs 402 - Spring 2013
Take responsibility for my own learning (National)
Libs 202 - Spring 2012
Libs 202 - Spring 2013
Libs 402 - Spring 2012
Libs 402 - Spring 2013
Libs 402 - Fall 2012
Libs 402 - Spring 2013

Very Often
Often
Sometimes
Never
Figure 6: Learning Communities Online Student Survey - Comparison of National and Hutchins School of Liberal Studies Data LIBS 202 (Spring 2012, 2013) and LIBS 402 (Spring 2012, Fall 2012, Spring 2013)

My participation in this learning community helps me to develop my ability to:

- Be successful in future courses and programs
- Work effectively with others to complete projects
- Analyze quantitative problems

Very Often
Often
Sometimes
Never
Figure 7: Learning Communities Online Student Survey - Comparison of National and Hutchins School of Liberal Studies Data LIBS 202 (Spring 2012, 2013) and LIBS 402 (Spring 2012, Fall 2012, Spring 2013)
Figure 8: Learning Communities Online Student Survey - Comparison of National and Hutchins School of Liberal Studies Data LIBS 202 (Spring 2012, 2013) and LIBS 402 (Spring 2012, Fall 2012, Spring 2013)
Figure 9: Learning Communities Online Student Survey - Comparison of National and Hutchins School of Liberal Studies Data LIBS 202 (Spring 2012, 2013) and LIBS 402 (Spring 2012, Fall 2012, Spring 2013)
Figure 10: Learning Communities Online Student Survey - Comparison of National and Hutchins School of Liberal Studies Data LIBS 202 (Spring 2012, 2013) and LIBS 402 (Spring 2012, Fall 2012, Spring 2013)

Teachers in my learning community:

- Very Often
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never
Figure 11: Learning Communities Online Student Survey - Comparison of National and Hutchins School of Liberal Studies Data LIBS 202 (Spring 2012, 2013) and LIBS 402 (Spring 2012, Fall 2012, Spring 2013)

Teachers in my learning community:
in the survey, and therefore may reflect personal frustration of a particular group of students with a particular professor.

5. Written Responses, LIBS 202 Students

In addition to the questions asked of all students from all colleges that participated in the Online Learning Communities Survey, the Hutchins School asked a few questions to gain specific information from the LIBS 202 students. These questions included: 1) How many semesters did you opt for “graded” (rather than CR/NC) (0, 1, 2, or 3); 2) Do you think Hutchins should continue to offer a graded option for LIBS 102-202?; 3) What is your overall opinion of the graded option? How do you think this graded option has affected the seminar (quality of student work, effects on student creativity, effects regarding student self-motivation, any problems with student dynamics, etc.; 4) What is your overall opinion of the Hutchins Lower Division Program? What elements are strong? What elements need improvement; and 5) What are your plans after lower division (ex: stay in Hutchins, other major, transfer, etc.). Written responses can be found in Appendices 1 and 4, and the tabulated summary of responses in Appendix 7.

a. Grades in Hutchins Lower Division GE

The first three questions are meant to capture student perceptions of a new change to the Lower Division GE curriculum. After literally decades of debate on the issue, the Hutchins faculty decided to run a pilot program (which is now permanent) which allowed students to choose the option for letter grades for LIBS 102, 201 and 202, which were previously offered only credit/no credit (CR/NC). LIBS 101, the first course in the Lower Division GE sequence, remains ungraded to allow students to more easily transition into college life and to the unique pedagogical requirements of the Hutchins School. As these students were the first two groups to experience the graded option from beginning to end, we wanted to know how many opted for grades, how many times they chose to be graded over choosing credit/no credit, and how they feel grades have influenced the dynamics of seminars.

Of the 32 students who responded in both classes (LIBS 202, Spring 2012 and 2013), 59.38% chose 3 of 3 graded semesters, with 31.25% choosing 2 of 3 graded semesters. Only 2 students took all classes CR/NC, and 1 took 1 of 3 semesters graded. In the Spring 2013 group, all students chose to take either 2 or 3 semesters graded. It seems that students welcome the chance to receive letter grades for at least some of their 12 credit Lower Division GE courses.

Students overwhelmingly agree that it is a good idea to continue the graded option, with only 1 student out of 32 in dissent. A close reading and tabulation of written responses indicate that student perceptions of positive effects of the graded option include:

- Motivating students to work harder in class (60%)  
- Providing a measure of successfulness in the course (20%)  
- Helpful to have grades for transfer, graduate school, and study abroad (14.29%)  
The only drawbacks to the graded option as listed include increased stress (5.71%), increased competitiveness (2.86%), and a decrease in creativity (2.86%).
b. Hutchins School Lower Division GE Program: Strengths and Weaknesses

Student responses were again, closely read and then categorized by common responses (Appendix 7). Surveyed students have an overwhelmingly positive overall impression of the Hutchins GE program (97.41%). Even the one student, who gave less than a positive assessment, said that the program was “OK” (2.86%). No students assessed the program negatively overall.

When asked to identify elements of the program that they consider “strong,” students listed:

- The ability to think critically and analyze (17.14%)
- Learning more about world issues (11.43%)
- Provided a well-rounded education (8.57%)
- “Took a lot from the program” (8.57%)
- Openness to other viewpoints (8.57%)
- Better communication skills (8.57%)

Students also listed fifteen other program strengths including better writing skills, learning more in other classes, independent thinking, improved listening skills, and personal growth (Appendix 7).

Elements of the Hutchins Lower Division GE program that could use improvement include:

- Better science instruction (34.29%)
- More organization from teachers, especially on field trips and during labs (20%)
- Field trips felt rushed and were confusing (8.57%)

Other elements listed for improvement include fairer grading, more academic rigor, greater variety in seminar groups, better teacher communication, and more consistency with requirements between sections of the course. For the full list see Appendix 7.

c. Student Plans After Completing Hutchins Lower Division GE

This survey indicates that most students choose to continue into Hutchins upper division classes (83.33%). Students who leave Hutchins choose to stay at SSU but pursue other majors (16.67%) including history, English, human development and business, rather than transfer to another school. One student who chose to leave Hutchins decided to stay connected to the Hutchins community by pursuing a minor in Interdisciplinary Studies.

When evaluating these responses, it is important to keep in mind that of the approximately 70 students enrolled in each LIBS 202 class, only 19 (Spring 2012) and 13 (Spring 2013) completed the written portion of the survey. This means that these responses, while helpful, do not reflect the views of all Hutchins Lower Division GE students.
6. Written Responses, LIBS 402 Students

Written responses by LIBS 402 students came in two forms. First, as with the LIBS 202 survey, the Hutchins School chose to add additional questions to the survey. These questions included: 1) What are the overall strengths of the Hutchins Program; 2) What are some elements of the program that could be changed or improved; 3) What was your favorite part of your Hutchins education; 4) Did you participate in Hutchins Lower Division; and 5) What is your “track” (1=non-teacher; 2=teacher; 3=blended).

Second, the Washington Center for Learning Communities at Evergreen State College asked the Spring 2013 LIBS 402 class to participate in a special written response version of the Online Learning Communities Student Survey in addition to the usual online portion of the survey. Students hand wrote answers to several questions, chosen by the Washington Center for Learning Communities at Evergreen State College which were designed to ask students to provide specific examples from their experiences that correlate with the questions in the survey. These results were then faxed to the Washington Center for further analysis. These questions began with the following direction “For each of the survey questions below, provide one or two examples or occurrences in your learning community that came to mind as you were responding to the question.” Students were asked to give examples for: 1) Work on connecting or integrating ideas, strategies, or skills from classes (or disciplines) including in this learning community; 2) Reflect on how these connections lead to new insights or understanding; 3) Use what I am learning to contribute to another class; 4) Teachers in my learning community demonstrate how to integrate concepts and skills from different classes in a meaningful way; 5) Teachers assign work that asks me to connect concepts and skills from different classes to reach new understanding and/or applications; and 6) In my learning community, compared to other classes, I spend more, less, or about the same amount of time integrating ideas, strategies, and skills from multiple sources. Written responses from LIBS 402 classes can be found in Appendices 2, 3, 5 and 9. Tabulations of these written responses can be found in Appendices 8 and 10.

a. Overall Strengths of the Hutchins Program

Students surveyed in LIBS 402 Spring 2012, Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 listed the following overall strengths in the Hutchins Program:

- Teaches critical and analytical thinking skills (26.32%)
- Addresses a wide variety of topics and issues (17.89%)
- Feels like family; strong sense of community (14.74%)
- Creates an inviting and safe learning environment (13.68%)
- Teaches you to teach yourself; creates lifelong learners (12.63%)
- Successfully uses seminar pedagogy to teach students (12.63%)
- Includes small classes; intimate (12.63%)
- Teaches students to be responsible/accountable for their own learning (10.53%)
- Creates close relationships with teachers (10.53%)
- Increases open-mindedness; challenges assumptions (9.47%)
- Improves writing skills (9.47%)
Students also mentioned 37 other traits, including increased personal expression and creativity, excellent professors, integration of ideas, connection of ideas to real-world situations, increased confidence in social situations, improved listening skills, and finding their voice on the page and in seminar discussions (Appendix 8).

b. Elements of the Program that could be Changed or Improved

The 95 students surveyed in these three sections of LIBS 402 mentioned the following as suggestions for improvement:

- Nothing (24.21%)
- Hold lazy students more accountable; stricter grading (11.58%)
- More information and experience for students who want to become teachers (10.53%)
- More classes – especially core (LIBS 320) courses (7.37%)
- Smaller reading assignments; emphasize quality over quantity (7.37%)
- More consistency between professors and classes (5.26%)
- More organized professors (5.26%)

Students mentioned an additional 37 suggestions for improvement, which were mentioned by 1-3 students, including more hands-on experiences, more guidance for Track I students in terms of their future prospects, more interesting topics for discussion, more money for Hutchins, better ways of choosing who graduates with distinction, and more equal participation in seminar discussions (Appendix 8).

c. Favorite Parts of a Hutchins Education

Students included 44 different favorite elements of their Hutchins experience. The most commonly mentioned items included:

- Seminaring (21.05%)
- Community and relationships with peers and faculty (21.05%)
- Wide variety of information covered; well-rounded education (14.74%)
- Quality of professors; accessibility and relationships with professors (13.68%)
- Personal growth experienced (9.47%)
- Writing skills and assignments (7.37%)
- Small classes; intimate (7.37%)
- Active learning about the world (6.32%)
- Critical thinking skills (5.26%)
- Personal connections to material (5.26%)
- Enhanced creativity (5.26%)

Other comments indicated appreciation for learning without tests, confronting assumptions, field trips, projects, “mind blowing moments,” becoming a lifelong learner, and being encouraged to make a difference in the world.
d. Student participation in Hutchins Lower Division and Major Track

Of the 92 students who answered these questions, 48.91% of students completed Hutchins Lower Division GE, with 51.09% transferring in the program. Students in 402 in Spring 2012 were 23.26% Track I and 76.74% Track II, with no Track III students. In Fall 2012, 4 of the 9 students were Track III Blended (44.44%), and 5 were Track II (55.66%) with no Track I students. Spring 2013 students were 25% Track I, and 75% Track II. In all three classes combined 21.74% were Track I, 73.91% Track II, and 4.35% Blended. In sum, approximately 25% of Hutchins students are Track I, and 75% either Track II or Track III.

e. Information from Written Responses to the Evergreen Survey Questions

When asked to provide examples of “connecting or integrating ideas, strategies or skills from classes (disciplines) included in this learning community” student written results indicated the highest occurrences of the answers:
- Connecting reading and writing through discussion in seminar (19.57%)
- Discussing and connecting ideas to and in non-LIBS courses (15.22%)
- Analyzing ideas and constructing critical arguments (13.04%)
- Evaluating and connecting lower division topics in light of new knowledge (10.87%)
- Learning to become accepting of others’ view and perspectives (10.87%)
- Senior project integrates ideas from various courses (8.70%)
- Working together on group of peer projects connects ideas (8.70%)
- Applying knowledge to real-world situations; life skills (8.70%)

When asked to “reflect on how these connections lead to new insights or understandings” students most commonly stated:
- More open minded, respectful, and open to learn from peers (34.78%)
- See how knowledge connects to everyday life; real world (21.74%)
- Understand connections between topics and disciplines (17.39%)
- Leads to deeper understanding and more complex ideas (13.04%)
- Leads to better critical thinking and argument creation (13.04%)
- Leads me to new realizations, insights and thoughts (10.87%)
- Pushes me to learn for myself; proactive learning (10.87%)
- Creates deeper self-awareness and understanding (8.70%)

When asked how they use information from their learning community to contribute to another class, students responded that they:
- Speak about ideas from LIBS classes in non-LIBS classes (30.43%)
- Connect ideas from LIBS classes to other classes (26.09%)
- Use their improved writing skills from LIBS classes in other classes (10.87%)
- Use knowledge from LIBS classes in their everyday experiences (10.87%)
- Always have something to contribute to non-LIBS class discussions (8.70%)
- Use critical thinking skills in non-LIBS classes; question everything (8.70%)
- Are better speakers because of LIBS classes (8.70%)
Students claim to contribute most often in human behavior classes (psychology, sociology, human geography and AMCS) but also in kinesiology classes, classes that study gender roles, education classes, in study group sessions, in environmental science classes, in science courses, in logic classes, in art history classes, in English classes, in classes that use information about marketing and in classes that explore religion.

When asked how teachers in their learning community “demonstrate how to integrate concepts and skills from different classes in a meaningful way” 3 of 46 students (6.52%) stated that Hutchins teachers do not do this purposely or well. Examples of how Hutchins professors do integrate skills and ideas, students most commonly reported that professors:

- Connect ideas to real world situations and current events (13.04%)
- Encourage integration of concepts from other classes (10.87%)
- Facilitate good discussions (10.87%)
- Show how LIBS classes connect to teach other (8.7%)
- Make us want to learn; encourage lifelong learning (6.52%)
- Share their personal ideas and experiences (6.52%)

When asked how teachers assign work to connect concepts and skills from different classes to reach new understandings, students most commonly said that Hutchins teachers:

- Assign readings and create syllabi that encourage connection (26.09%)
- Connect previous classes to other LIBS classes (10.87%)
- Assign projects or papers that integrate ideas (10.87%)
- Assign creative projects (not writing projects) that integrate ideas (6.52%)
- Use multiple media to show concepts (6.52%)
- Use prep and response papers to integrate concepts (6.52%)
- Require synthesis in seminar discussions (6.52%)

Four of 46 students (8.70%) said that teachers do not assign work that specifically integrates concepts and skills from multiple classes.

When asked if they spend more, less or about the same amount of time integrating ideas, strategies and skills from multiple sources in Hutchins classes versus other classes, 89.13% of students said they spend more time integrating ideas in LIBS classes. Only 4 students reported about the same amount of time spent (4.32%) or less (2.17%) but spending less time was due to the scientific coursework they experienced in their other major.

**f. Comparisons between LIBS 402 and 202 students in the Online Survey of Learning Communities**

Overall, Hutchins ranks higher than the average of participating learning communities in all categories except those that include peer and group work, and memorizing facts and figures. The common threads that run most obviously through all sections of both LIBS 402 and LIBS 202 are:
In my learning community, I:
- participate in class discussions or seminars
- reflect on new insights and understandings

My participation in this learning community helps me to develop my ability to:
- speak clearly and effectively
- connect my learning to community/world issues

Amount of time spent in this learning community versus other courses:
- less time memorizing facts and figures
- more time thinking through my assumptions
- more time synthesizing ideas, experiences or theories

LIBS 402 results demonstrate that graduating seniors list more skills than are reported by LIBS 202 students including:
- write clearly and effectively
- think critically and analytically
- persist when faced with academically challenging work
- take responsibility for my own learning
- be successful in future courses and programs

LIBS 402 students also report that their learning community helps them to “work on connecting or integrating ideas/strategies/skills,” and that they spent more time “integrating ideas, strategies and skills from multiple sources” than the national average in all surveyed sections.

In contrast to LIBS 402 students, students in both LIBS 202 classes reported spending more time “analyzing elements of an idea, experience or theory.”

The Blended cohort surveyed in LIBS 402 in Fall 2012 were similar to other 402 sections with the exception of adding a higher score for “present my work, or work done as part of a group” which may reflect additional group work required in pre-credential education classes.

B. LIBS 402/403 Student Assessment Questionnaire

In Spring 2013, a new LIBS 402 survey was constructed in Moodle using assessment matrices and questions in the Hutchins School Upper Division Portfolio. This survey uses a combination of drop-down menus and written responses to assess student goals and objectives, perceptions of skill level on graduation versus entry into Hutchins, and overall satisfaction with the Hutchins program. The survey is divided into three sections – seminar skills, writing skills, and general skills and information (Appendix 11). The survey was repeated in Summer 2013 for the five students enrolled in the independent study version of LIBS 402, LIBS 403, to capture information from this population of students (Appendix 12). Drop down menu data was used to create graphs for both LIBS 402 Spring 2013 and LIBS 403 Summer 2013, which are discussed individually below. Analysis of written comments for both LIBS 402 and 403 were combined into a set of tables (Appendix 13).
a. Seminar/Verbal Skills Assessment

Students who participated in this survey were asked to self-assess their skill level at entry and at exit from the Hutchins program in several categories including: 1) discuss effectively; 2) discuss critically; 3) listen consciously; 4) comment relevantly; 5) comment constructively; 6) presentation preparation skills; and 7) verbal presentation skills.

Results from the 48 students surveyed in LIBS 402 in Spring 2013 (Figure 12) show:

- **All students reported verbal skill levels in all categories as “good,” “very good” or “excellent”** with the exception of presentation preparation (2%) and presentation skills (4%), even though some students listed “inadequate” or “needs improvement” on entry.

- **Discuss Effectively.** 100% of students reported their skill level as either “very good” (56%) or “excellent” (48%) at graduation.

- **Discuss Critically.** Students who reported their ability as “very good” increased from 8% at entry to 56%; scores in the “excellent” category rose from 0% to 35%. The combined percentages of “needs improvement” and “inadequate” dropped from 62% at entry to 0% at exit.

- **Listen Consciously.** Students who reported their ability as “very good” increased from 38% to 46%; “excellent” ratings rose from 4% to 46%. The combined percentages of “needs improvement” and “inadequate” dropped from 19% at entry to 0% at exit.

- **Comment Relevance.** Students who reported their ability as “very good” increased from 4% at entry to 58%; scores in the “excellent” category rose from 0% to 29%. The combined percentages of “needs improvement” and “inadequate” dropped from 50% at entry to 0% at exit.

- **Constructive Comments.** Students who reported their ability as “very good” increased from 6% at entry to 60%; scores in the “excellent” category rose from 0% to 21%. The combined percentages of “needs improvement” and “inadequate” dropped from 63% at entry to 0% at exit.

- **Presentation Preparation Skills.** Students who reported their ability as “very good” increased from 19% at entry to 50%; scores in the “excellent” category rose from 0% to 29%. The combined percentages of “needs improvement” and “inadequate” dropped from 41% at entry to 2% at exit.

- **Presentation Skills.** Students who reported their ability as “very good” increased from 10% at entry to 58%; scores in the “excellent” category rose from 0% to 17%. The combined percentages of “needs improvement” and “inadequate” dropped from 60% at entry to 4% at exit.

- **Listen Consciously.** Students who reported their ability as “very good” increased from 38% to 46%; “excellent” ratings rose from 4% to 46%. The combined percentages of “needs improvement” and “inadequate” dropped from 19% at entry to 0% at exit.

- **Comment Relevance.** Students who reported their ability as “very good” increased from 4% at entry to 58%; scores in the “excellent” category rose from 0% to 29%. The combined percentages of “needs improvement” and “inadequate” dropped from 50% at entry to 0% at exit.
Figure 12: Hutchins School Student Self-Assessment of Seminar Skills
Comparison of Entry and Graduation Skill Levels; LIBS 402, Spring 2013, n=48
• **Constructive Comments.** Students who reported their ability as “very good” increased from 6% at entry to 60%; scores in the “excellent” category rose from 0% to 21%. The combined percentages of “needs improvement” and “inadequate” dropped from 63% at entry to 0% at exit.

• **Presentation Preparation Skills.** Students who reported their ability as “very good” increased from 19% at entry to 50%; scores in the “excellent” category rose from 4% to 29%. The combined percentages of “needs improvement” and “inadequate” dropped from 41% at entry to 2% at exit.

• **Presentation Skills.** Students who reported their ability as “very good” increased from 10% at entry to 58%; scores in the “excellent” category rose from 0% to 17%. The combined percentages of “needs improvement” and “inadequate” dropped from 60% at entry to 4% at exit.

Results from the students surveyed in LIBS 403 in Summer 2013 (Figure 13) indicate similar trends as the LIBS 402 data. It is important to realize that each student represented 20% of the score in each category. Result highlights include:

- 0% of students reported skill levels as “inadequate” or “needs improvement” upon graduation, despite 40% to 60% in these categories upon entry into the program.
- Students reported skill levels at either “very good” or “excellent” in categories “discuss effectively,” and “listen consciously,” “comment relevance.”
- Student scores were lower (included scores of “good”) in categories “discuss critically,” “constructive comments,” “presentation preparation,” and “presentation skills.”

In addition to the information obtained through these drop-down menu comparisons of entry and exit skill levels, students were also asked to answer several written response questions with regard to their verbal communication skills. Written comments were read carefully and categorized. The percentage of students surveyed that gave answers in a particular category was then computed. Highlights of these results are tabulated in Appendix 13. Written responses from LIBS 402 students are reported as a percentage of the 48 students surveyed; LIBS 403 responses are listed as the number of students per total students (5).

**Three Things Learned During Seminar Experiences.** When asked to “list at least three things you have learned during your seminar experiences in Hutchins” students most commonly responded:

- Courage to express opinions and open up (26.53% LIBS 402; 3 of 5 students LIBS 403)
- The ability to think critically (20.41% LIBS 402)
- Not judging others; respect differences (16.33% LIBS 402; 4 of 5 students LIBS 403)
- Believe in my own opinions and voice (14.29% LIBS 402; 1 of 5 LIBS 403)
- Increased spiritual/self-awareness (14.49% LIBS 402)
- Open mind to other viewpoints (12.24% LIBS 402)
- Importance of good listening skills (12.24% LIBS 402; 1 of 5 students LIBS 403)
- Increased self-confidence; empowerment (12.24% LIBS 402; 1 of 5 students LIBS 403)

Other top answers (8.16% LIBS 402) included increased creativity, participation in a community of learners, better public speaking skills, and constructive thinking and speaking skills.
Figure 13: Hutchins School Student Self-Assessment of Seminar Skills  
Comparison of Entry and Graduation Skill Levels; LIBS 403, Summer 2013, n=5
Seminars as an Effective Form of Education. When asked “Has seminaring has been an effective form of education for you? Why or why not?”

- 83.34% of students in LIBS 402 and 100% of students in LIBS 403 replied “yes.”
- Five students (10.42%) of students in LIBS 402 reported “yes, if” with qualifications
- Three students (6.25%) responded “no”

Seminar Performance. When asked “Are you satisfied with your performance in seminar? What would you change?”

- 93.75% of students in LIBS 402 and 100% of students in LIBS 403 responded “yes”
- 4.17% of students in LIBS 402 responded “sometimes”
- 2.08% reported “no”
- Common elements students mentioned that they wish they could change about their seminar performance included speaking up more often in class (16.67%), being better prepared (12.24%), being better at promoting even participation in class (6.12%) and listening better (6.12%).

Favorite Seminar Classes and Qualities. When asked “which seminars were your favorites? Why?” the following details were described:

- Students listed 31 different seminars that they enjoyed. Among the top listed were LIBS 320D Inner Geographies (14.58% LIBS 402; 1 of 5 students LIBS 403), LIBS 320A Shop ‘til You Drop (10.20%), LIBS 102 (10.20%), LIBS 320C Bollywood (8.16% LIBS 402; 1 of 5 students LIBS 403), LIBS 202 (8.16%), and LIBS 320D Death Dying and Beyond (8.16%).
- Favorite seminar qualities included seminars which: involved all students; involved relatable topics, seminars; included topics students were passionate about; included integrated projects; encouraged students to share personal revelations; had a high level of student preparation; allowed students to present their work to each other; and included long, flowing discussions.

Strongest Verbal Skills. Students were asked “based on the above assessment of your verbal skills, list at least three of your strongest verbal skills.” The most common responses included:

- Confident in my speaking skills (27.08% LIBS 402; 1 of 5 LIBS 403)
- Good listener (18.75%)
- Speak clearly (18.75% LIBS 402; 1 of 5 LIBS 403)
- Speak persuasively and passionately (12.5%)
- Have courage to speak my mind (12.5%)
- Can relate the texts to keep discussions focused on the topic (10.4%)
- Speak loudly and eloquently (10.4%)
- Ask good questions (10.4%; LIBS 402; 1 of 5 LIBS 403)
- Think and analyze critically (10.4%)

Students also reported the ability to respect differing opinions, skill at formal presentations, the ability to think before they speak, building on the comments of others, and learning to facilitate discussions.
b. Written Skills Assessment

Students who participated in this survey were asked to self-assess their skill level at entry and at exit from the Hutchins program in several categories including: 1) informal writing skills; 2) formal writing skills; 3) creative writing skills; 4) ability to analyze written materials; 5) written communication skills; 6) technical writing skills; 7) compositional writing skills; and 8) referencing skills. Results are presented graphically in Figure 14.

Results from the 48 students surveyed in LIBS 402 in Spring 2013 (Figure 12) indicate:

- **Informal Writing Skills.** Students who reported their ability as “very good” increased from 19% to 46%; “excellent” ratings rose from 2% to 42%. The combined percentages of “needs improvement” and “inadequate” dropped from 39% at entry to 2% at exit.

- **Formal Writing Skills.** Students who reported their ability as “very good” increased from 10% to 73%; “excellent” ratings rose from 2% to 12%. The combined percentages of “needs improvement” and “inadequate” dropped from 50% at entry to 2% at exit.

- **Creative Writing Skills.** Students who reported their ability as “very good” increased from 12% to 50%; “excellent” ratings rose from 2% to 31%. The combined percentages of “needs improvement” and “inadequate” dropped from 43% at entry to 0% at exit.

- **Analysis of Written Materials.** Students who reported their ability as “very good” increased from 4% to 60% “excellent” ratings rose from 0% to 15%. The combined percentages of “needs improvement” and “inadequate” dropped from 69% at entry to 0% at exit.

- **Writing Communication Skills.** Students who reported their ability as “very good” increased from 10% to 50%; “excellent” ratings rose from 4% to 38%. The combined percentages of “needs improvement” and “inadequate” dropped from 35% at entry to 2% at exit.

- **Technical Writing Skills.** Students who reported their ability as “very good” increased from 12% to 44%; “excellent” ratings rose from 4% to 12%. The combined percentages of “needs improvement” and “inadequate” dropped from 48% at entry to 2% at exit.

- **Compositional Skills.** Students who reported their ability as “very good” increased from 12% to 54%; “excellent” ratings rose from 8% to 25%. The combined percentages of “needs improvement” and “inadequate” dropped from 31% at entry to 2% at exit.

- **Referencing Skills.** Students who reported their ability as “very good” increased from 17% to 48%; “excellent” ratings rose from 8% to 15%. The combined percentages of “needs improvement” and “inadequate” dropped from 48% at entry to 6% at exit.

Results from the students surveyed in LIBS 403 in Summer 2013 (Figure 13) indicate similar trends as the LIBS 402 data. It is important to realize that each student represented 20% of the score in each category (Figure 15). Result highlights include:

- 0% of students reported skill levels as “inadequate” or “needs improvement” upon graduation, despite 20% to 60% in these categories upon entry into the program.

- Students reported the answer “excellent” less often than their LIBS 402 counterparts; “formal writing skills,” “analysis of written materials” and “referencing skills” only indicate “good” or “very good” skill levels.
Figure 14: Hutchins School Student Self-Assessment of Writing Skills
Comparison of Entry and Graduation Skill Levels; LIBS 402, Spring 2013, n=48
Figure 15: Hutchins School Student Self-Assessment of Writing Skills
Comparison of Entry and Graduation Skill Levels; LIBS 403, Summer 2013, n=5
• Only 1 of the 5 students surveyed reported “excellent” skills, and only in “informal writing,” “creative writing,” “written communication skills,” “technical skills” and “compositional skills.”

Students in both LIBS 402 and LIBS 403 were also asked to write responses to several questions. Highlights of these results are tabulated in Appendix 14. Written responses from LIBS 402 students are reported as a percentage of the 48 students surveyed; LIBS 403 responses are listed as the number of students per total students (5).

**Three Writing Improvements.** When asked to “list at least three ways that your writing skills have improved during your time in Hutchins” top student responses included:

- Grammar and punctuation skills (39.58% LIBS 402; 2 of 5 students LIBS 403)
- The ability to “wrestle with” and analyze (37.50% LIBS 402; 2 of 5 students LIBS 403)
- Increased creativity (25%)
- Concise language; clear writing (12.50% LIBS 402; 1 of 5 students LIBS 403)
- Ability to connect thoughts and topics (12.50%)
- Learning that repetition/practice is the key to success (12.50% LIBS 402; 2 of 5 students LIBS 403)
- Ability to write better conclusions (10.42%)
- Use of evidence and examples to support writing (10.42%)

Students listed an additional 31 writing improvements including becoming more confident writers, learning to include both sides of an argument, varying sentence structure, writing a strong thesis, and learning to use multiple drafts.

**Strongest Writing Skills.** Students were asked to “list at least three of your strongest writing skills. Please describe how these skills were strengthened during your time in Hutchins.” The most commonly listed writing strengths included:

- Grammar and punctuation (26.32% LIBS 402; 3 of 5 students LIBS 403)
- Creative expression (26.32% LIBS 402; 2 of 5 students LIBS 403)
- Incorporate examples and quotations (18.75%)
- Structure, outlines and organization (16.66% LIBS 402; 3 of 5 students LIBS 403)
- Vocabulary, word choice and sentence structure (14.58% LIBS 402; 1 of 5 students LIBS 403)
- Ability to write about “anything” (14.58%)
- Unique voice (10.42% LIBS 402; 1 of 5 students LIBS 403)
- Include feelings; personable (10.42% LIBS 402; 3 of 5 students LIBS 403)
- Express and support my opinion (10.42%)
- Persuasiveness and communication (10.42%)

Students listed an additional 25 skills including concision, vivid descriptions, professionalism, transitions, and good introductions.

**How Hutchins Could Improve Instruction of Writing Skills.** Students were asked “if applicable, please list ways in which your time in Hutchins could have been more helpful with
regard to improving your writing skills. Please list any ideas for improvement on the Hutchins program with regard to writing skills and experiences.” Students listed a total of 23 possible improvements. The top suggestions included:

- More professor feedback/attention to papers (33.33% LIBS 402; 2 of 5 students LIBS 403)
- Grammar classes prior to LIBS 327; LIBS 327 being offered in lower division (12.5%)
- More one on one consultation with professors (8.33%)
- Requirement for all students to take papers to the writing center (6.25%)
- More variety in writing assignments (4.17% LIBS 402; 1 of 5 students LIBS 403)

Students were asked a multi-part question: “Based on your assessment of your writing, what are your chief writing strengths? Weaknesses? If you could change one thing about your writing what would it be? What things about your writing would you never want to change? Why?”

**Writing Strengths.** The most commonly listed writing strengths included:

- Creativity (18.75%)
- Voice (16.67% LIBS 402; 1 of 5 students LIBS 403)
- Textual analysis; wrestling with ideas (14.58%)
- Structure and organization (10.42% LIBS 402; 1 of 5 students LIBS 403)
- Passion (8.33% LIBS 402; 1 of 5 students LIBS 403)
- Use of evidence and quotations (8.33%)
- Flow (8.33%)

**Writing Weaknesses.** The top weaknesses students mentioned in their writing were:

- Grammar, punctuation and technical skills (22.92%)
- Proofreading (14.58%)
- Procrastination (8.33%)
- Poor vocabulary and word choice (8.33%)
- Low level of academic writing (8.33%)
- Wordiness and rambling (8.33% LIBS 402; 1 of 5 students LIBS 403)

**Never Change.** Elements of their writing that students would never change include voice (27.08%), creativity (8.33%), level of analysis (4.17%), and simplicity (4.17%).

**Best and worst papers.** Students were also asked to “gather all of your Hutchins term papers, short papers, response papers, etc. Take your two best papers and your two worst papers and examine them. Why did you consider these papers your best or worst? How much contrast is there between these papers? Use this space to describe the papers and what you discovered through this analysis.”

Students reported that their best papers:

- Were written about topics they were interested in (27.08% LIBS 402; 1 of 5 students LIBS 403)
- Papers they connected with personally (22.92%)
- Papers they were passionate about writing (16.67%)
• Well researched an analyzed (14.58% LIBS 402; 2 of 5 students LIBS 403)
• Encouraged creativity (14.58%)

The worst papers:
• Were not fun to write; didn’t like the book; no connection (20.83%)
• Were hard to understand in terms of text chosen or assignment instructions (14.58%)
• Students were lazy (14.58% LIBS 402; 1 of 5 students LIBS 403)
• That lacked analysis or were shallow (10.42% LIBS 402; 1 of 5 students LIBS 403)

Favorite writing assignments. Students were asked “what were your favorite writing assignments in Hutchins (list at least 2).” Top answers included:
• “This I believe” from LIBS 327 (31.25%)
• Autobiography in LIBS 102 (29.17%)
• “In an instant” from LIBS 327 (16.67%)
• “Mother tongue” from LIBS 327 (8.33%)
• Classroom observation essay from LIBS 312 (8.33% LIBS 402; 1 of 5 students LIBS 403)
• Travelogue freewrites from LIBS 320D Inner Geographies (8.33% LIBS 402; 1 of 5 students LIBS 403)

Students also listed 34 additional favorite writing assignments from 19 other LIBS courses.

Least favorite writing assignments. When asked “what was your least favorite writing assignment? Why? What could have been done to improve the assignment?” students responded (unsurprisingly) that they dislike final papers (27.08%), research papers (22.29%), and other difficult assignments that aren’t research papers (22.92%)

c. General Skills Assessment

The final part of the Moodle survey given to LIBS 402 Spring 2013 and LIBS 403 Summer 2013 classes asked students to assess their general skill levels in categories based on the Upper Division Portfolio assessment matrices and questions, our interest in obtaining information about graduation, unit loads and difficulty in obtaining courses, and our interest in information regarding student perceptions of the inclusion of information regarding socially sensitive issues.

A series of questions based on the assessment matrices in the Upper Division Portfolio were used to assess student perceptions of their skill levels at entry into and exit from Hutchins. These questions use a scale from Level 1 (less advanced) through Level 3 (more advanced) and are included in the Hutchins Upper Division Portfolio assessment matrices. Results indicate:

• **Interdisciplinary Thinking.** Level 3 (highest level), “I link disciplines and think beyond boundaries” rose from 6% at entry to 81% at graduation in LIBS 402, and from 40% to 80% in LIBS 403. (Figures 16-17)
Figure 16: Interdisciplinarity
Comparison of Entry and Graduation Skill Levels
LIBS 402, Spring 2013, n=48

Figure 17: Interdisciplinarity
Comparison of Entry and Graduation Skill Levels
LIBS 403, Summer 2013, n=5
• **Understanding of Academic Materials.** Students who ranked themselves at Level 3 “Sophisticated understanding of materials; critical of sources; insightful ideas” rose from 6% to 48% (LIBS 402) and 20% to 60% (LIBS 403) on graduation. (Figures 18-19)

• **Use of Multiple Perspectives in Written and Spoken Work.** Students who ranked themselves at Level 3 “I am consistently aware of other perspective and viewpoints” rose from 19% to 88% (LIBS 402) and 40% to 80% (LIBS 403) on graduation. (Figures 20-21)

• **Creative and Higher-Level Synthesis.** Students who ranked themselves at Level 3 “I find creative paths, link ideas, see relationships between concepts, and enjoy both risk and ambiguity” rose from 8% to 71% (LIBS 402) and 20% to 100% (LIBS 403) on graduation. (Figures 22-23)

• **Written and Oral Communication.** Students who ranked themselves at Level 3 “My prose is elegant, I appeal to higher levels of reasoning, and use multiple media well” rose from 4% to 46% (LIBS 402) and 20% to 60% (LIBS 403) on graduation. (Figures 24-25)

• **Seminaring Skills** Students who ranked themselves at Level 3 “I contribute complex and creative insights to the seminar discussion and balance my roles as speaker and listener” rose from 6% to 71% (LIBS 402) and 20% to 80% (LIBS 403) on graduation. (Figures 26-27)

Another series of questions were used to assess student perceptions of their skill levels at entry into and graduation from Hutchins. Students were asked to rank their skill level on a scale from 1 (inadequate) to 5 (excellent). These are also included in the Hutchins Upper Division Portfolio assessment matrices. Results indicate:

• **Familiarity with Various Forms of Creative Expression.** Students who ranked their skill level as “excellent” rose from 4% to 42% (LIBS 402); Students rating themselves “very good” rose from 0% to 60%, with no students reporting “excellent” (LIBS 403) on graduation. (Figures 28-29)

• **Ability to Express Self Creatively.** Students who ranked their skill level as “excellent” rose from 4% to 38% (LIBS 402); students rating themselves “very good” rose from 0% to 40%, with no students reporting “excellent” (LIBS 403) on graduation. (Figures 30-31)

• **Willingness to Learn Through Creative Expression** Students who ranked their skill level as “excellent” rose from 6% to 54% (LIBS 402) and 0% to 40% (LIBS 403) on graduation. (Figures 32-33)

• **Independent Thinking and Questioning** Students who ranked their skill level as “excellent” rose from 2% to 40% (LIBS 402) and 0% to 40% (LIBS 403) on graduation. (Figures 34-35)

• **Make Sense of a Wide Array of Ideas and Opinions** Students who ranked their skill level as “excellent” rose from 0% to 35% (LIBS 402) and stayed at 20% (LIBS 403) on graduation. (Figures 36-37)

• **Use Values to Interpret the World** Students who ranked their skill level as “excellent” rose from 2% to 31% (LIBS 402) and stayed at 20% (LIBS 403) on graduation. (Figures 38-39)
Figure 18: Depth of Understanding of Materials Comparison of Entry and Graduation Skill Levels
LIBS 402, Spring 2013, n=48

Figure 19: Depth of Understanding of Materials Comparison of Entry and Graduation Skill Levels
LIBS 403, Summer 2013, n=5
Figure 20: Use of Multiple Perspectives
Comparison of Entry and Graduation Skill Levels
LIBS 402, Spring 2013, n=48

Figure 21: Use of Multiple Perspectives
Comparison of Entry and Graduation Skill Levels
LIBS 403, Summer 2013, n=5
Figure 22: Creative and Higher Level Synthesis
Comparison of Entry and Graduation Skill Levels
LIBS 402, Spring 2013, n=48

Figure 23: Creative and Higher Level Synthesis
Comparison of Entry and Graduation Skill Levels
LIBS 403, Summer 2013, n=5
Figure 24: Written and Oral Communication
Comparison of Entry and Graduation Skill Levels
LIBS 402, Spring 2013, n=48

Figure 25: Written and Oral Communication
Comparison of Entry and Graduation Skill Levels
LIBS 403, Summer 2013, n=5
Figure 26: Seminaring Skills
Comparison of Entry and Graduation Skill Levels
LIBS 402, Spring 2013, n=48

Figure 27: Seminaring Skills
Comparison of Entry and Graduation Skill Levels
LIBS 403, Summer 2013, n=5
Figure 28: Familiarity w/ Forms of Creative Expression
Comparison of Entry and Graduation Skill Levels
LIBS 402, Spring 2013, n=48

Figure 29: Familiarity w/ Various Creative Expressions
Comparison of Entry and Graduation Skill Levels
LIBS 403, Summer 2013, n=5
Figure 30: Ability to Express Self Creatively
Comparison of Entry and Graduation Skill Levels
LIBS 402, Spring 2013, n=48

Figure 31: Ability to Express Self Creatively
Comparison of Entry and Graduation Skill Levels
LIBS 403, Summer 2013, n=5
Figure 32: Willingness to Learn via Creative Expression
Comparison of Entry and Graduation Skill Levels
LIBS 402, Spring 2013, n=48

Figure 33: Willingness to Learn via Creative Expression
Comparison of Entry and Graduation Skill Levels
LIBS 403, Summer 2013, n=5
Figure 34: Independent Thinking and Questioning
Comparison of Entry and Graduation Skill Levels
LIBS 402, Spring 2013, n=48

Figure 35: IndependentThinking and Questioning
Comparison of Entry and Graduation Skill Levels
LIBS 403, Summer 2013, n=5
Figure 36: Make Sense of Ideas & Opinions
Comparison of Entry and Graduation Skill Levels
LIBS 402, Spring 2013, n=48

Figure 37: Make Sense of Ideas & Opinions
Comparison of Entry and Graduation Skill Levels
LIBS 403, Summer 2013, n=5
Figure 38: Use Values to Interpret the World
Comparison of Entry and Graduation Skill Levels
LIBS 402, Spring 2013, n=48

Figure 39: Use Values to Interpret the World
Comparison of Entry and Graduation Skill Levels
LIBS 403, Summer 2013, n=5
Additionally, students were asked a series of written response questions concerning their educational goals, experiences in the Hutchins program, and perceptions of their educational abilities as they graduate from SSU. Charts were created based on common answers to the various questions posed. The charts include a summary of all responses ranked by most common answers. (Appendix 15)

**Reasons for Entering College.** Students were asked “Why did you enter college? What did you hope to achieve? Do you feel that you have met your goals? Why or why not?” The most common reasons for entering college were:

- Expected/supposed to (35.42%)
- To be successful in a future career (27.08%)
- To become a teacher (27.08%)
- To learn (17.85%)
- To become a better person (10.41%)

**Educational Goals.** Of students surveyed, 97.71% (LIBS 402) and 100% (LIBS 403) of students indicated that they felt they had met their educational goals.

**Why Hutchins?** When asked “why did you enroll in the Hutchins program instead of some other program?” students most commonly responded:

- Wanted to become a teacher (33.33%)
- Pedagogy (reading/writing/seminaries) (22.92%) plus 1 of 5 students (LIBS 403)
- Good reputation/unique program (18.75%)
- Small classroom size (16.67%)
- No tests (12.50%), plus 1 of 5 students (LIBS 403)
- Thought it was my only choice to become a teacher (8.33%), plus 2 of 5 students (LIBS 403)
- Accident/mistake (8.33%), plus 1 of 5 students (LIBS 403)

Other responses include that it fit well with their learning disability, that it creative, that it encourages critical thinking, and because it is a socially engaged program plus 18 other reasons.

**Hutchins Positive Elements.** Students indicated that they “enjoyed being in the Hutchins program because” they:

- Enjoyed the pedagogy (especially seminars) (31.25%), plus 1 of 5 students (LIBS 403)
- Experienced a strong sense of community/family (29.17%)
- Created strong relationships with faculty (25.0%) plus 1 of 5 students (LIBS 403)
- Created strong peer relationships/friendships (22.92%)
- Encouraged them to become lifelong learners (20.83%)
- Helped them see the world in a new way; exposure to new cultures/ideas (18.75%)
- Improved their critical thinking skills (18.75%)
- Allowed them to find out who they really are; personal growth (16.67%)
- Felt that their opinions mattered (12.5%)
- Came out of their shell; expressed opinions (12.5%)
- Learned to find their own answers; think for themselves (10.42%)
• Enjoyed the student centered curriculum and active learning (10.42%)
• Enjoyed creative expression and freedom of expression (10.42%)
• Enjoyed the variety of topics studied (10.42%) plus 1 of 5 students (LIBS 403)

Students also mentioned increased confidence to speak their mind, better writing skills, challenging curriculum, interdisciplinarity, and increased adaptability. One student indicated that they did not enjoy Hutchins (2.08%).

**Hutchins Negative Elements.** When asked to describe how they “found the Hutchins program difficult or frustrating” students responded:

- Reading workload was too heavy (27.08%) plus 2 of 5 students (LIBS 403)
- Seminars were not always balanced or peaceful (14.58%)
- Difficult transition into the Hutchins pedagogy; assignments not clear (10.42%)
- Wanted more variation in pedagogy (lectures) 8.33%)
- Wanted students to be held accountable for work (8.33%)

Other frustrations included wanting more teacher preparation materials, lack of consistency between professors, peers were not always informed, wanted more guidance with difficult readings.

**Personal Participation Changes.** When asked to “list three things you would like to change about your participation in the Hutchins program” students most commonly responded:

- Participate more actively in all seminars (45.83%), plus 3 of 5 students (LIBS 403)
- Do all the readings every time (29.17%)
- Participate more in Hutchins Community events (art show, Zephyr) (16.67%), plus 2 of 5 students (LIBS 403)
- Get to know teachers more; use their office hours (16.67%) plus 1 of 5 students (LIBS 403)
- Started Hutchins in LIBS 101; completed lower division (12.5%)
- More self-motivation with difficult topics (12.5%)  
- Less procrastination; better time management (12.5%)

Additional answers included wanting to employ more critical thinking, speaking more effectively in seminar, being more relaxed, being more confident, and taking notes in seminar discussions.

**Never Change.** Students were also asked to “list three things you would never change about your participation in the Hutchins program.” Most common answers included:

- Speaking my opinion; standing up for beliefs (35.42%) plus 1 of 5 students (LIBS 403)
- The professors I had (22.92%)
- Relationships with peers (20.83%) plus 1 of 5 students (LIBS 403)
- New openness to others’ opinions; respect for others (14.58%) plus 1 of 5 students (LIBS 403)
- The classes I took (14.58%)
- Improved listening skills (12.5%) plus 1 of 5 students (LIBS 403)
- My decision to be in Hutchins (12.5%)
• My excellent level of preparation for class (12.5%)
• The class structure (small size; seminar format) 10.42%

Other responses included learning to ask good questions, finding my voice, improved critical thinking skills, using my Hutchins information in other classes, projects, and field trip experiences.

**Topics.** The top topics that students were “most interested in learning about” included teaching (12.5%), cultures (10.42%; plus 1 of 5 students LIBS 403); human motivations (10.42%), how children learn (8.33%) and environmental issues (8.33%). Students were “least interested in learning about math (10.42%; ) and politics (10.42%). Additionally, 20.83% of students in LIBS 402 and 1 of 5 students in LIBS 403 of students said that they learned that they love to learn about all topics and responded “N/A”.

**Influence on Views.** When asked “has your time in Hutchins influenced your social, political, religious and intellectual views?” students indicated that they have a better understanding of politics and government (20.83%), that they are more confident discussing these topics in social situations (14.58% LIBS 402; 1 of 5 students in LIBS 403), and that they have a deeper understanding of religion and spirituality (14.58%). Ten students (7 in LIBS 402; 3 in LIBS 403) responded little change in their beliefs – in fact challenging those beliefs in Hutchins classes made their beliefs stronger.

**Greatest Skills.** Students were asked “what do you think are your greatest skills in the following areas: 1) intellectual; 2) artistic; 3) creative; 4) social? In which of these areas have you improved most during your time in Hutchins? What specific experiences helped you to improve?” Top answers included:

• Intellectual. Critical thinking (14.58%); reading comprehension (12.5%) and thinking outside of the box (10.42%)
• Artistic. Pushing the envelope (12.5% LIBS 402 plus 2 of 5 students LIBS 403); better 2d drawing skills (10.42%); and better 3d art skills (6.25%)
• Creative. Creative writing skills (25%); general creativity (25% LIBS 402; 1 of 5 students LIBS 403); and better creative thinking skills (6.25%)
• Social. More social confidence (18.75%); ability to respect others (16.67% LIBS 402; 2 of 5 students LIBS 403); ability to interact with anyone (10.42%); more confident communication (10.42% LIBS 402; 2 of 5 students LIBS 403); and courage to voice opinions (8.33%)

**Skills In Need of Additional Improvement.** Students were asked “which of the above skills do you feel you still need to develop?” Top answers included: intellectual skills as a lifelong learner (37.50%); artistic skills (33.33% plus 2 of 5 LIBS 403 students); all skills throughout my lifetime (18.75%); social skills (12.5%) and creative skills (12.5% plus 1 of 5 LIBS 403 students).
Five Year Plans. When asked “what do you hope to be doing five years from now?” students responded:

- Be a credentialed classroom teacher (39.58% plus 2 of 5 LIBS 403 students)
- Don’t know because Hutchins exposed me to so many options (12.5% plus 1 of 5 LIBS 403 students)
- Be in a committed relationship (8.33% plus 1 of 5 LIBS 403 students)
- Teach special education or special needs children (8.33%)

Feel Educated? When asked “now that you are graduating, do you feel "educated" 89.58% of LIBS 402 and 80% of LIBS 403 students responded “yes.” One student in LIBS 403 responded “yes and no” without further explanation. Two students in LIBS 402 responded “no” because “my learning isn’t over” as their explanation for answering “no.” Some students responded “yes” with qualifiers including “I don’t have a clear career path,” “I feel socially but not academically educated,” “because learning doesn’t end,” and “I wanted more specific knowledge.”

Life Goals. When asked “what do you hope to accomplish in your life? Has your time in Hutchins influenced these goals? If so, how? If not, why not?” students most commonly responded that they:

- Want to be a good teacher; positively influence kids (27.08% LIBS 402; 2 of 5 LIBS 403)
- Want to be part of a happy family (18.75% LIBS 402; 2 of 5 LIBS 403)
- Want to do something that makes me happy (16.67%)
- Want to make a difference in the world (12.5% LIBS 402; 1 of 5 LIBS 403)
- Want to travel the world (10.41%)

Of students surveyed: 83.33% said that Hutchins influenced their goals; 6.25% said that Hutchins had no real impact because their goals were set prior to Hutchins; 8.33% did not answer the question; and 1 student said “yes and no” with no explanation.

Lifelong Learner? 100% of all students in both classes responded that they consider themselves to be a “lifelong learner.”

Personal Insights Gained Through This Assessment. When asked “write a brief summary of what you learned about yourself and your relationship to the Hutchins program through the completion of this assessment” students responded that they:

- Realized they had changed and learned a lot in Hutchins (16.67%)
- Realized that they are unique and accomplished individuals (16.67%)
- Realized that Hutchins was a positive experience (10.41%)
- Realized that they are a better writer (8.33%)
- Realized that they are a better communicator (8.33%)

Major Track. Of the 44 students that responded to this section of the survey, 45% of LIBS 402 and 0% of LIBS 403 students completed Hutchins Lower Division. In LIBS 402, 32% of the students were Track I (Interdisciplinary), 68% Track II (Teacher). In LIBS 403, 40% (2 students) were Track I, and 60% (3 students) Track II.
Access to Necessary Courses. When asked “did you have trouble getting any classes required to graduate?” 75% of students in LIBS 402, and 80% of students in LIBS 403 reported no difficulty getting the classes they needed to graduate.

Impacted Classes. Students who reported difficulty in obtaining classes to graduate “on time” (25% LIBS 402; 20% LIBS 403) were asked to:
“Rate the difficulty of obtaining the class using this scale:
1 = I did not get the class the first time, but did get the class the next time I tried
2 = I did not get the class for multiple semesters
3 = I had the HARDEST time getting this class!”

Results indicated that KIN 400 and LIBS 330 were the most difficult classes to obtain enrollment in, followed by LIBS 320 Core Classes, with Core B was most difficult to obtain. Other classes consistently mentioned were LIBS 327, LIBS 312, ethnic studies courses and LIBS 308.

Average Unit Loads. When asked “about how many units did you take per semester (on average)?” 11% of students in LIBS 402 and 40% of students in LIBS 403 averaged 9-12 units per semester. 59% (LIBS 402) and 60% (LIBS 403) of students took 13-16 units per semester, and 30% in LIBS 402 taking more than 16 units.

Semesters to Graduation. Results to the question “how many semesters did it take you to graduate (count intersession and summer as semesters) can be found in Figure 40. Overall, 54% of students graduated early or on time, 86% graduated with the addition of one semester, and 93% with the addition of two semesters.

Intersession and Summer Courses. When asked “did you choose to take summer or intersession classes to graduate "on time" 39% (LIBS 402) and 80% (LIBS 403) responded “Yes.” Only 23% of students said they decided to “take summer or intersession classes just because [they] wanted to.” Students who were unable to take intersession or summer courses due to financial constraints was 32% (LIBS 402) and 20% LIBS 403).

Treatment of Sensitive Issues. Students were asked to “share your thoughts (if you feel so inclined) about how well Hutchins does/does not address sensitive issues like ethnicity, white privilege, socioeconomic differences, etc. This information will help us understand how well we are doing in these areas - and how we might improve.” Students responded that Hutchins:
- Does a good job addressing sensitive issues (76.47% LIBS 402; 2 of 5 students LIBS 403)
- Spends too much time addressing these issues (5.13%)
- N/A (5.13%)
- Nine students declined to answer

In the following responses, on student (2.56%) indicated that: 1) Hutchins did a really bad job (with extensive examples); 2) that the campus isn’t diverse and this is what causes diversity problems at SSU; 3) that they wanted a more conservative point of view in classes; 4) that not all whites enjoy the same degree of privilege due to socioeconomic factors, and 5) that Hutchins leans too much toward a Latino/a point of view.
Figure 40. Semesters Required to Graduate – Hutchins School of Liberal Studies LIBS 402 (Spring 2013) and LIBS 403 (Summer 2013)

Semesters at SSU Prior to Graduation

- Graduated early: 2%
- Graduated on time (native = 8, transfer = 4): 18%
- 1 extra semester (native = 9, transfer = 5): 18%
- 2 extra semesters (native = 10, transfer = 6): 5%
- More than 2 extra semesters: 2%
Selected Additional Comments. When asked to give any additional comments, a few students replied with additional rants and suggestions for improvement. Below are some of these key comments – just the suggestions, none of the praise. The comments center around a few key themes:

LIBS Course Offerings and Content.
- “allow people to have more choice in the cores they take. The cores are what makes the program so unique and attracts students to want to be a part of it.”
- “bummed about not being able to get into any of the cores I wanted to”
- “did not have the leisure of choosing the cores I preferred.”
- “I wish there were more cores offered.”
- “more field trips and outdoor art related things. More diversity and/or speakers and trips that educate social, cultural, political and religious issues”
- “a few more classes about teaching for track 2 students”

Lack of Respect for Hutchins Program on Campus.
- “very frustrating doing all of the hard work involved, only to be undermined by other majors at SSU. I have never worked so hard in my educational career. I have never read so many books and written so many papers that it makes me upset when other students outside of our major mock us for not having to take tests. Yes, testing is hard and not suitable for all student learning types, but reading the mass amount each day and writing as much as we do isn’t a joke. I wish there was a way for students to understand the complexity of what we do each day in class.”
- “does not deserve such a bad reputation and I feel that the Hutchins major participants do not discriminate against other majors”

One Student’s Expression of General Dissatisfaction.
- I am disgusted by the tuition and price of parking for a 4-6 building school (one's a high school?) with most of the parking housing or reserved. We lack security on campus (bookstore robbed twice with no arrests really?). I won't even go into the lack of food choices. I have made a lot of bad choices in my life but coming to SSU is the biggest mistake I have made. I feel like I could have gone through this program in high school because it felt like 3 hours of girls talking about bullshit for a majority of my time here

C. Hutchins Track III Blended Program Survey

In response to rumors of the Blended Program being under scrutiny for being too expensive, 26 Blended students at various stages in Track III were surveyed in Spring of 2012 using a survey created on surveymonkey.com (see Appendix 16).

The results provided needed information regarding why these students choose this accelerated pathway, why they choose to attend Sonoma State University (SSU), what they liked best about the program, and what they found difficult.
**Educational Experiences.** When asked “on a scale of 1-10, how beneficial has the Blended Program been in your educational experience,” 50% responded with a 10/10, 30.8% with a 9/10 and 7.7% with an 8/10. In total, 88.5% of students surveyed rated the Blended program 8 or above, with only 3 students expressing dissatisfaction. Overall, students seem to believe that the Blended program was of benefit to them in their educational career. In fact, 73.1% of the students said they would “not change a thing.” The other students wished they had time to study abroad (15.4%) or do Track II instead of Blended (which allows for minors and more choices in choosing classes) (11.5%).

**Why Blended?** When asked why they chose to become part of the Blended Program, 100% of the students indicated it was because they could get a B.A. in Liberal Studies and a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential in 4 years instead of 5 years. Other main reasons for choosing the program were the excellent reputation of Hutchins (76.9%), ease of pursuing a B.A + Credential (61.5%) and belief in the Hutchins pedagogy (57.7%).

**Why SSU?** Additionally, 88.5% of the students surveyed decided to attend SSU because they specifically wanted to be part of the Blended Program. Other top reasons for choosing SSU included a desire to be in Hutchins (76.9%), because they like SSU (57.7%) and because of the excellent reputation of SSU (34.6%).

Analysis of the student written comments (survey questions 5-8, Appendix 17):

**Students enjoyed the program because:**
- They were given valuable classroom experience from the beginning of the program (34.62%)
- It is cost effective and time saving (26.92%)
- They formed close relationships with their peers (23.08%) and faculty (15.38%)
- They enjoyed the unique educational experience that Hutchins offers (23.08%)
- They appreciated the staff support in advising and ensuring their required unit loads each semester (7.69%)

**Students found the program difficult because:**
- They had limited choices and opportunities (limited class choices (11.54%), no study abroad or minor in other programs (11.54%)
- The program was difficult and challenging in terms of workload and time management (11.54%)
- The program requirements for projects and classroom observation caused stress or overwhelm (7.69%)

**Students believe that the Blended Program should continue because:**
- It is cost saving and puts them into a classroom faster (46.15%)
- It is a challenging program designed for students who know that they want to teach (23.08%)
- It is a realistic introduction to teaching and includes field experience (15.38%)
- It combines teaching experience with the Hutchins experience (15.58%)
- The program creates excellent teachers (11.54%)
D. Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA)

At the request of Sean Johnson, SSU Director of Institutional Research, LIBS 402 participated in the CLA examination for Sonoma State University in May 2013. This assessment uses student scores to measure an institution’s contribution to the predicted higher-order learning skills of the student body. This is done by comparing actual student CLA test scores to expected CLA scores (which are created by using student ACT and SAT scores and other measures). Results show that Sonoma State University is just under the expected scores. Hutchins students ranged from “well below” the expected scores (especially if they took very little time to complete the assessment) to “well above” expected scores. Overall, Hutchins students were in alignment with overall SSU student scores (Appendix 18).

E. CSU and SSU Institutional Measures

FTES (full-time equivalent students). Hutchins is one of the largest departments on campus. FTES has varied from 257.46 in 2006/2007 to 240.53 in 2013.

SFR (student-faculty ratio). Hutchins is often described as “expensive” compared to other departments. SFR has ranged between a low of 16.48 in 2010/2011 to a new high of 20.47 in 2012/2013. When compared to other departments in the School of Arts and Humanities (Figure 41) particularly English (writing intensive so class size is limited) and Art Studio (requires small class sizes as part of its pedagogy) Hutchins is competitive in both SFR and FTES.

FTEF (full-time equivalent faculty). Hutchins FTEF in 2006/2007 was 2.65 and is now 1.75 a drop which reflects retirements and resignations over this period.

Graduation. Hutchins graduates the third highest number of undergraduates each year for at least the past ten years, and graduates more students than any discipline in Arts and Humanities. Student surveys also indicate that the majority of students in LDGE continue in LIBS until graduation.

Career Preparation. Hutchins is, in some ways, focused on preparing students to enter the workforce through particular career pathways.

- Hutchins can be considered a “career pathway” for approximately 2/3 of our students who enter into the workplace (after a credential program) as Pre-K through 6th grade teachers.
- Hutchins offers a Blended program (Track III) which allows students to graduate in 4 years with both at BA and a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential (blended programs are being re-emphasized in new regulations forming statewide according to Dean Ayala)
- Hutchins provides a flexible “career pathway” for multiple areas through our Track I program, including pre-MBA, pre-law, and preparation for graduate schools in various disciplines. Our graduates also often work in non-profit organizations.
III. RESPONSES TO THE 2006 PROGRAM ASSESSMENT “ACTION PLAN”

Recommendations from the 2006 Program Review centered on several key areas including: A) teaching learning methods; B) course content; C) learning objectives; D) recruitment and mentoring; E) assessment; F) advising and mentoring; and G) other areas of importance. Quotations from the 2006 Program Assessment are italicized.

A. Teaching and Learning Methods:

1. Quality of Analysis and Connection Making. “Quality of analysis and connection making in student essays, particularly with regard to the conceptualization and use of disciplinary content and interdisciplinary methodologies.” Based on the suggestion of the 2006 external reviewer, Hutchins began to pay more attention to teaching students to analyze more deeply, connect ideas across disciplines, and increase interdisciplinary thinking. Fortunately, the Learning Communities Online Survey helped us to assess how students feel they are doing in this regard. All LIBS classes surveyed reported “very often” more than the national average in the categories: “reflect on new insights and understandings” (making connections); “use what I’m learning to contribute to another class” (making connections, interdisciplinary thinking); “think critically and analytically”
(analyze more deeply); and “work on connecting or integrating ideas and strategies” (making connections, interdisciplinary thinking). Students also reported spending more time in LIBS classes “synthesizing ideas, experiences or theories” and “integrating information from multiple sources” than the average of students surveyed nationally.

2. **Streamlining Narrative Evaluations.** “Possible streamlining of time consuming numerical and narrative evaluations of student performance.” Student evaluations in lower division are still done using narrative modes. Most professors also compute letter grades in lower division classes, often because 90.63% of LIBS 202 students reported choosing letter grades for either 2 or 3 possible semesters of the four semester sequence. Though time consuming, most Hutchins professors believe that the narrative element of the evaluation describes the strengths, weaknesses, and educational options for individual students more accurately than a letter grade alone. It is unlikely that this position will change in the near future, though slight modifications to categories and content of the evaluations are still being suggested and debated.

3. **Lower Division Writing Tutorials.** “Examining the structure and consistency of Lower Division Writing Tutorials and Labs (which showed a relatively high level of student dissatisfaction in surveys).” Immediately following the 2006 review, attempts were made to more fully implement consistent writing tutorials across seminar groups in lower division classes. Different methodologies were tried in various seminars, but with little consistent success. Some professors emphasize writing through multiple drafts and peer editing of student papers, but only a few professors now call these periods “writing tutorials” and hold them during a set time of the week in class. Few students currently complain about writing tutorials (they were not mentioned on any of the surveys in this document) likely because they are either not called “writing tutorials” or they are not conducted uniformly in every lower division class. In short, writing is more strongly emphasized in some classes more than others. Hutchins professors need to decide if and how to implement these tutorials in future classes.

4. **Time Change of Lower Division Modules.** “A possible change in the time modules of Lower Division offerings (now 9:00-12:00 MWF and 1:00 – 4:00 F) in response to student surveys indicating a strong preference for later class times.” The idea of beginning classes at 10 AM rather than 9 AM was considered by the faculty and dismissed as untenable, especially with regard to module scheduling. Faculty decided that they were unwilling to give up additional seminar time, and also that moving the courses to a slightly later time (10AM to 1 PM) would preclude students from taking 12-1 PM classes.

**B. Course Content:**

1. **Balance of Text Types in Lower Division.** Consideration, at the request of the external reviewer, to adjust “the balance of “Presentist,” “Core,” and “Primary Source” texts in Lower Division syllabi. The faculty discussed this at length shortly after the 2006 review and decided to disregard the external reviewer’s obvious bias toward ancient texts and to
continue to infuse the curriculum with a mixture of both classical and current materials. Texts do not have to be ancient to become core curricular texts.

2. **Information Competency.** *Examine course content through the lens of “Information Competency.”* Strides have been made to help students to become more competent at assessing information content and source, and using multi-media in their presentations and coursework. This question seems almost irrelevant now in terms of teaching students how to use technology, as students are much more tech-savvy than they have ever been. Annotated bibliographies are widely used throughout the Hutchins curriculum, in LIBS 320B WET WILD and PLT, in LIBS 327 Language Literacy and Pedagogy, in several sections of LIBS 302, and other classes as a way to help students learn to evaluate the quality of source material. In LIBS 101, students attend an informational session in the library, supervised by a teaching librarian, to become familiar with the informational technologies supported by the library, basic ideas of information literacy, and specific guidelines for their research project (typically a research project about evolution). Many LIBS 302 instructors also take their students to the library, teach students how to assess information quality, and require a research paper or annotated bibliography to teach incoming transfer students similar skill sets. Despite these efforts, students responded that they feel that Hutchins professors “encourage them to seek resources on campus” less often than the online survey national average.

3. **LIBS 327 Language, Literacy and Pedagogy.** Consider “*Dropping or revising LIBS 327 Language, Literacy and Pedagogy in light of the high degree of repetition of its content in post-B.A. Multiple Subject credential courses.*” We have made great strides in the efficiency, quality and impact of LIBS 327, mainly due to the strong teaching skills of Ianthe Brautigan Swensen. Prior to hiring Professor Swensen, the class circulated through various LIBS professors with some background in English, but no formal training in how to learn or teach grammar. It is not surprising that the class was less than successful. Now, though students informally complain about grueling grammar homework in LIBS 327, surveys indicate they wish they had taken the class sooner (10%), that their grammar improved significantly (39%), and that grammar is now one of their three strongest writing skills (26%). Additionally, three of the top four “favorite” writing assignments mentioned by LIBS 402 and 403 students are required in LIBS 327. LIBS 327 is now an incredibly successful course which we hope will continue to be supported for our Track II and Track III students. In fact, we could use more sections of the course, as it was listed by students as a class that was difficult to obtain enrollment in, and is therefore, usually restricted to seniors only. Students would benefit from the opportunity to take this class in their junior, rather than senior year of coursework.

4. **The “Appearance of Science.”** *Address the “Appearance of Science” in the Lower Division.* This is not a new issue in Hutchins, and continues to be an area of concern, as mentioned by students in the LIBS 202 surveys (“better science instruction” 34%; more organization on field trips and labs 20%). Lengthy and detailed discussions concerning the role and nature of science instruction LDGE occurred during LIBS faculty retreats in 2010 and 2011 as a result of our efforts to rearticulate LDGE in response to shifts in the SSU GE pattern. At that time it was decided that Dr. LaMoreaux would continue to
implement Lower Division lab sequences as she did during her participation in Lower Division courses, in addition to her duties as Director, and that Hutchins would include labs in all Lower Division courses.

This overload proved to be untenable, and Dr. LaMoreaux refused to continue to create, plan, and implement Lower Division field trips and laboratory experiences due to unpaid labor issues, a perceived lack of support from several members of the Lower Division cadres, and uneven follow-through on lab assignments by members of the faculty and students in their seminar groups. A lengthy and heated discussion resulted during the Fall 2012 LIBS faculty retreat around this issue. LIBS faculty discussed our collective level of commitment to science and science labs in Lower Division, and possible new logistics for implementation. Some professors even argued that selected science content might shift out of Hutchins and be required as classes taught outside of LIBS. After a lengthy debate, the faculty renewed their commitment to hands-on science in Lower Division, and agreed to pay specialists like Russ Scarola (a chemistry and biology teacher and Hutchins MA graduate) and Joann Vrilakas (a biological anthropologist) to conduct lab sequences, paid for through student fees.

Labs conducted in 2012-13 were mostly successful, albeit a tad unorganized (as was reflected in the comments from the students), largely because of this transitional situation. Faculty also committed to including a pre-lab and a post-lab symposium to each field or lab experience to ensure that laboratory and field experiences are placed within the context of other course materials, made more understandable to both students and faculty, and analyzed more thoroughly. Implementation of these additional symposia was also successful and will be continued in the future.

Since the faculty reached this agreement and implementation prior to the GE rearticulation and collectively determined that the new labs were not substantively different in curriculum and content from what was articulated in previous GE cycles, it was agreed that there was no need to rearticulate science as part of this most recent Lower Division GE rearticulation process. However, as a substantial percentage of students are still dissatisfied with science curriculum, this area needs to be reexamined closely and creatively.

C. Learning objectives:

1. Connecting LIBS 302 Introduction to Liberal Studies and LIBS 402 Senior Synthesis. “Review and revise course objectives of and learning objective continuity between LIBS 302 Introduction to Liberal Studies and LIBS 402 Senior Synthesis, focusing particularly on the inconsistent use of the Upper Division Portfolio and Information Competency curriculum.” LIBS 302 and LIBS 402 are more clearly connected than they were in 2006. A document was created that outlines information to be covered in LIBS 302 that links directly to the Upper Division Portfolio and LIBS 402 requirements. Most professors are careful to ensure that these requirements are met (Appendix 19). Additionally a LIBS 302 Entrance Survey, similar to the LIBS 402 Moodle Survey, also based on the Hutchins Upper Division Portfolio questions and
assessment matrices, is currently in the final stages of development, and will be administered for the first time, by all instructors of LIBS 302, in Fall 2013.

2. **Hutchins Pedagogy Project and Hutchins Dialogue Center.** “Use the “Hutchins Pedagogy Project” to train students in seminar process and require them to lead seminars in elementary school classrooms in collaboration with local school districts.”

**Hutchins Pedagogy Project.** The Hutchins Pedagogy project was successfully implemented in several elementary schools through LIBS 312 and LIBS 330 for several years immediately following the 2006 review. However, due to time constraints, and excessive demands on faculty who teach LIBS 330 and LIBS 312 (the courses are larger than other classes in our curriculum), this project is no longer implemented as part of LIBS 330 and LIBS 312. However, two students in LIBS 402, Spring 2013 recently took elements of the pedagogy project, including “Touchstones” and Touchpebbles” curriculum and seminar dialogue techniques into a sixth grade classroom in Santa Rosa.

**Hutchins Dialogue Center.** The Hutchins Dialogue Center (HDC) did not exist in 2006. The mission of the HDC is “to build an inclusive and humane community both locally and around the world fostering thoughtful, open-minded discussion with diverse people of all ages, cultures and backgrounds." In the past year they have carried out their mission by establishing partnerships with an impressive array of organizations. The HDC, under the direction of Hutchins alumna and part-time instructor Margaret Anderson, has been involved in promoting dialogue both on and off campus. The HDC continues to receive funding, including a $25,000 grant for this coming academic year. Margaret Anderson has also spread her facilitation techniques and expertise by offering seminar training to Freshmen Year Experience (FYE) faculty. She has built dialogue/seminar training via activities, tools and structured lessons to faculty as professional development each year she has been involved in FYE.

The HDC collaborates with Hutchins, Associated Students (ASP), the HUB (Honoring, Uniting, Building), Residential Life, other departments on campus, the Sonoma State American Language Institute (SALLI), and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI). Some recent HDC projects include:

- Bill Ayers Lecture; Modern Media Dialogue Lecture Series, 2010
- Modern Media Dialogue Series, Spring 2010
- “War Made Easy” Movie and Discussion event with Norman Soloman and Tony Kashani, May 2010
- Alternative Economic Models Discussion Group
- The Good Life Dialogue Series (with OLLI and SALLI)
- Engagement Dialogue Series tied to “Gender Equity & Title IX: It Isn’t Just About Sports” with Donna Lopiano, January 2013.
- “Is It Time For An International Court of Human Rights to Establish An International Democratic and Equitable Order? Margaret Anderson was on this panel at the International Bill of Rights (IBOR) conference in Geneva, June 6, 2013
• Creation of the Campus Dialogue "Team" (CDT) during the fall 2013-spring 2014 school year here at Sonoma State University to enhance civility through the practice of dialogue.

D. Recruitment and mentoring

1. Track I (B.A. Liberal Studies):

   **LIBS Track I Enrollment**. “Aim to increase enrollment in LIBS Track I (non-teacher preparation), as well as mentoring these students more effectively into careers and postgraduate education” There has been a recent effort to more effectively recruit Track I students to the LIBS program through Seawolf Decision Day presentations, recruitment at Student Orientations, and by targeting high school programs with similar pedagogies. More needs to be done to inform campus and community entities about the Hutchins program in general, and the benefits of pursuing an interdisciplinary education in particular. Greater access to undeclared majors during Student Orientation sessions might help our recruitment efforts as more students become aware of Hutchins.

   **LIBS BA/MBA track.** “Investigate the construction of a LIBS B.A./MBA program in collaboration with School of Business & Economics, including a possible “Green MBA.” A BA/MBA pathway was created in collaboration with the School of Business and Economics (Appendix 20). Though this program has been in place for several years, it is currently underutilized and underpublicized. Completion of this track prepares students to enter the MBA program after completing a BA in Liberal Studies. The pathway begins either with LIBS 101, or as a transfer into the Upper Division Program. More recruitment and visibility should be encouraged. It would also be helpful to assign a faculty point person to oversee developments in this pathway.

2. Alumni. “Create a web link to Track I alumni biographies and careers pathways.” The Hutchins School does have an official alumni association associated with HIPP. As it says on the HIPP website, “The Association of Hutchins Alumni (AHA) is a network of individuals interested in life-long learning, featuring occasional seminar reunions.” We conducted a 40 year reunion in 2009 which was well attended by alumni and showcased several seminars and workshops. Hutchins also did an outreach to alumni in 2012 through a successful fundraising effort spearheaded by Michelle Covington in University Development. Other efforts to engage alumni include an alumni webpage [http://sonoma.edu/hutchins/alumni/](http://sonoma.edu/hutchins/alumni/), a Facebook page [https://www.facebook.com/SSUHutchins](https://www.facebook.com/SSUHutchins) and a Hutchins twitter account. A recent effort to collect information on Hutchins alumni through Facebook gathered information about nine alumni within 24 hours and could be expanded to gather more information in the future.

3. Minors and Study Abroad. “Encourage Minors in LIBS and participation in Study Abroad programs, including those designed by Hutchins faculty (such as LIBS 400 Americans in Paris, offered in Paris by Drs. McGuckin and M’Panya in June, 2007).”
Interdisciplinary Studies Minor. The Interdisciplinary Studies Minor has been re-energized in the past three years. Some students who choose to major in other disciplines after Hutchins Lower Division GE now also choose to remain connected to LIBS through the minor. A minor checklist was developed in 2011 to facilitate advising of LIBS minors (Appendix 21). Students are encouraged to choose to pursue a LIBS minor during the final LIBS 202 group advising session. We are, however, now contemplating deemphasizing the minor to accommodate the needs of our majors as LIBS 320 core classes are highly impacted.

Study Abroad. In addition to our students’ high degree of participation in the CSU International Programs there are also programs sponsored by Hutchins. The study abroad program in Paris in June 2007 was highly successful. LIBS continues to encourage and facilitate study abroad at SSU. Many of our students, in both Tracks I and II choose to spend at least a semester abroad, and units accrued are seamlessly woven into LIBS upper division requirements. Drs. McGuckin and M’Panya are considering another Paris trip in the near future. Dr. McGuckin continues to work closely with International Programs at SSU and to advise Hutchins study abroad students.

4. Tracks II and III (Multiple Subject and Blended Programs):

Admissions. “Realistically assess the actual number of committed admits, the department will be meeting with the Admissions team in order to generate more accurate lists of new admits” Our Academic Advisor, currently Donna Garbesi, works closely with the Hutchins Director, Admissions and Records, faculty in non-LIBS classes required for Track II and Track III majors, the Academic Transition Team, Freshmen Student Orientation and Advising (SOAR), the Dean of Arts and Humanities, the School of Education, teaching pathway groups both on and off campus, and other campus and community entities as required. Additionally, it would be helpful if Hutchins were more carefully supported in our admissions process. For example, this year full time freshmen applicants who tried to choose Hutchins as an admissions option were blocked from doing so because of a coding error in CSU mentor. When we asked to have this fixed, we were told it could not be, and this error made recruitment for our Fall 2013 LDGE cohort difficult and likely resulted in interested freshmen being unable to enter our program.

Transfer Student Recruitment. “Take a more proactive approach to recruiting and enrolling transfer students” This admonition may have been appropriate in 2006, but is no longer appropriate given the current financial climate. In fact, LIBS has recently applied for impaction status and will not be admitting any transfer students in Spring 2014. Our Academic Advisor still works closely with local junior college counselors, especially during teacher pathway events. Efforts are also made to keep articulations with local junior colleges accurate and available.

Advisement. “Recruit and advise potential students more thoroughly” Great strides have been made in this area since the employment of Donna Garbesi as our Hutchins Academic Advisor. This position should never be downsized or made optional as it is vital to the smooth functioning of the Hutchins School, particularly with regard to Tracks
II and III. The Hutchins Academic Advisor plays vital roles in recruitment for the Hutchins Lower Division, recruitment and administration of Track III Blended, transfer and freshmen orientations, ongoing advisement of students, particularly in Track III and Track II, and countless other vital tasks. Students now have opportunities to meet regularly with an advisor, to be advised during every semester in LIBS Lower Division, to be advised when coming into the program either as a freshman or as transfer students, and to be given valuable advising as they near graduation. In fact, Ms. Garbesi’s work is so exemplary that she was recently recruited by the Dean to advise other majors in the School of Arts and Humanities.

E. Assessment

1. **Survey Data from CIRP YFCY.** “Review and discuss the results of CIRP YFCY surveys given to Freshmen and Sophomores in the Hutchins Lower Division program by the Office of Institutional Research, May 2006 (survey data is not expected until December, 2006).” This data is currently unavailable, but many different assessments have been conducted since 2006, particularly in the past few years (see “Section II. Recent Assessment Data and Activities” above).

2. **Reduction of Excessive Assessment-Related Time Demands on Faculty.** “Further discuss and refine assessment practices with regard to the Upper and Lower Division Portfolios, Information Competency, and Lower Division evaluations, with the aim of improving quality and consistency while seeking to reduce what the External Reviewer identified as excessive time demands on faculty.” As mentioned above, this concern has been discussed by Hutchins faculty on multiple occasions, and no major changes in assessment modalities, other than adding a graded option to LDGE, have been deemed necessary.

F. Advising and mentoring in the major, in GE (if applicable)

1. **Track III Blended Advising.** “Schedule regular special advising meetings every semester for each of the four LIBS/EDMS Blended cohorts.” This is now standard practice. Informational meetings for Blended students in each cohort are held prior to first registration each semester. Students are also encouraged to meet with the Hutchins Academic Advisor as needed.

2. **Collaboration with the School of Education and Multiple Subject Programs.** “The School will continue to collaborate with the School of Education and other Multiple Subject programs (AMCS, CALS, and ENSP) in mentoring Multiple Subject students, participating in the reformed Teacher Education Council (TEC) and the newly proposed Multiple Subjects Interdepartmental Council (MUSIC).” Collaboration occurs with the School of Education, AMCS, CALS, and ENSP in response to curricular changes, pressing needs, or other necessary interactions. Connections between these disciplines could be more actively fostered through improved and open dialogue regarding the needs of all entities involved. The Hutchins School also works cooperatively with educational
councils, community groups and other entities when the need arises – particularly to align our curriculum with state or national requirements.

3. **Lower Division Advising.** “The Hutchins School will continue to schedule Advising Days for Lower Division LIBS students near end of the four-semester General Education sequence in order to advise on the Upper Division LIBS major, alternate majors, and transfer to other institutions.” Hutchins has expanded advising of Lower Division GE students to include advising sessions each semester, rather than only near the end of the LDGE sequence. This helps students to better prepare themselves for upper division LIBS requirements, to fulfill lower division requirements for other majors they may choose after completion of Lower Division GE, to complete any necessary remediation, and to explore future educational options.

4. **Communication with Majors.** “The Director will continue to use the new program listserv LIBS Announce to provide timely information to all majors.” The 2006 listserv has been replaced with LIBS-Announce, which is used frequently by the Director to inform students about requirements, upcoming academic deadlines, new classes, registration information, internship opportunities, community and campus events, scholarship opportunities, and other important information. Additionally, Hutchins has recently revamped their webpage, and has created Facebook and Twitter accounts.

G. Other areas deemed to be of importance

1. **Unit Model Re-Visioning.** “Create a “Re-Visioning” committee composed of Drs. Hammond, Lamoreaux, McGuckin, and Vazquez. The committee will draft a Program Revision proposal based on a 4-unit model that matches workload and compensation norms in the Freshmen Year Experience and other Sonoma State university programs.” After much research and exhaustive discussion, it was determined that a 4-unit model does not fit well with Hutchins pedagogy, given the requirements of teaching in LDGE. Movement to a 4-unit model would effectively gut upper division, as professors could only teach 1 rather than 2 upper division courses per semester – severely limiting the number of Upper Division small seminar courses taught each semester and thereby decreasing available courses in the major.

2. **Faculty Offices.** “Seek additional office space for Part Time faculty, and identify a space for a new office/seminar classroom for the anticipated Tenure Track hire in 2007.” Recent reductions in the number of Hutchins faculty have made this a moot point. Our full and part time staff currently has access to office/classroom space. We may need one additional office for the new 2013 hire.

3. **Part Time Allocation and Communication.** “The Director of the Hutchins School will communicate anticipated Part Time staffing needs and allocation to Lecturers well in advance of every semester. The Director will clearly communicate to Lecturers CSU policies and entitlements with regard to Part Time hiring. Part Time faculty will be invited to participate in faculty meetings and Retreats to discuss Lecturer issues.” The Director of the Hutchins School works closely with the Dean, the Office of Faculty
Affairs, and part time instructors to clearly communicate entitlements, fulfill those entitlements as allocations allow, and invite part time faculty to attend retreats that are geared toward part time faculty and major pedagogical issues. Since 2006 part time faculty have participated in several faculty retreats and events. More could be done to include these colleagues as their willingness permits.

4. Faculty Collegiality. “Seek to improve communication and collegiality in a program requiring close collaboration at all levels of the curriculum, the Spring 2007 Hutchins Faculty Retreat will employ the services of an outside facilitator.” The Hutchins faculty did meet with a facilitator at the 2007 Spring Faculty Retreat. This allowed all professors to state their views in a more neutral environment; many issues were brought up, heard, and reconciled. The Hutchins faculty has experienced a few terse or heated moments in faculty meetings since, but issues are typically addressed on the spot or shortly thereafter, with fences mended and promptly collegiality restored. Collegial relationships between faculty members are the norm, rather than the exception in the Hutchins School.

IV. EXTERNAL REVIEW AND RESPONSE

A. Report of Visit of Associate Professor, James C. Hall, New College, University of Alabama, and Executive Director, Consortium for Innovative Learning Environments, March 12-13, 2013

Introduction

I was very happy to have the opportunity to visit with faculty, staff, students, and administrators at Sonoma State and discuss the current situation of the Hutchins School of Liberal Studies. I spent two days and visited four classes, spent time with current and past faculty, met advisors and support staff, and conversed with students from each track in the program. The program is thriving under the strong leadership of Heidi Lamoreaux and should have an important role to play as Sonoma grows and evolves.

Like many similarly embedded programs across the country, it struggles to maintain an appropriate educational economy of scale, while continuing to deliver the intensive liberal arts experience that is its signature. Workload issues complicate morale and can make it difficult for a program established to deliver learning innovation to be outward looking and forward moving.

These challenges are shared across the “innovation sector” of U.S. higher education. Some of our experience situates us strategically to participate in both local and national debates about affordability, efficiency and student-centeredness; some of our commitments make it hard for us to reconcile core educational values with pressure from external constituencies. It is important to learn to take advantage of local opportunities, proceeding confidently and celebrating the value of what we do, while also not being afraid to rethink basic practices to look for ways to advance the strategic priorities of individuals and groups across the institution.

Background and National Context
Between 1965 and 1975, hundreds of educational experiments were launched in the public higher education sector that hoped to make the undergraduate experience less a matter of cafeteria-style course selection and credit accumulation. A product of general social upheaval – the Vietnam war, the decline of in loco parentis, a general atmosphere of cultural experimentation – education reformers, both conservative and liberal, sought to make student experience cohesive, holistic, relevant, and attentive to life-long learning goals.

Some of Hutchins’ distinctiveness at this historical moment comes from their willingness to learn from an earlier reform tradition driven by the work of John Dewey, Alexander Meiklejohn, and Robert Hutchins himself. This tradition (c.1925-1945) was more attentive to questions of national cohesiveness and emphasized the identification of core texts and reading as a critical practice. Not that many of the experiments have survived through 2013 wholly intact. Many programs evolved and became more conventional interdisciplinary courses of study while others took on campus general education and degree completion responsibilities oftentimes both a response to changing campus conditions and economic drivers. A few programs have regularly reinvented themselves with clear attention to the first principles of founders, while others have closed, amalgamated with other units, or slowly dissolved unable to convince students or academic leadership of continued need or relevance.

The current moment is an unusual one for that portion of the U.S. higher education market that self-consciously emphasizes their connection to a 60s legacy or earlier reform traditions. On the one hand, there is an argument to be made that student-centered practices nurtured in these environments are exactly the solutions being proposed to current enrollment bottlenecks, graduation and retention challenges, and concerns with career and life preparation. On the other, there is great nervousness that Federal and State intervention in the name of efficiency puts key educational values at risk.

**The Hutchins Ideal in Practice**

To an uninitiated outsider, the Hutchins program can be dizzying indeed: some nomenclature is specifically local and not always translatable or generalizable to the larger innovation sector. Multiples tracks, upper and lower divisions, and, above all, the peculiarities of K12 teacher training in California, make it very difficult sometimes to imagine on-going, inter-institutional conversations that would be productive.

All this changes when one has the opportunity to see Hutchins’ instructional staff in action with their students. The program is rooted in skilled, embodied, and ethical conversation, and involves talented scholar-teachers helping students to mastery of key texts and ideas from core cultural and intellectual traditions. For me the greatest pleasure was seeing that there was a rich belief in the idea that dialogue and deliberation can be taught. Too often instructors in seminar-style programs assume that conversation and close reading are natural skills only a product of effort and will. Time and time again, I saw instructors make specific adjustments to a room, to a student response, to a syllabus, even to body language, all in the name of making explicit to students how mutually enhancing dialogue actually occurs. And students were not unaware or
unappreciative of these efforts; they understood themselves to be product of a particular kind of
education, and valued the efforts made by teachers and peers to make exchange lasting and
meaningful.

In general, there was greater investment in teaching the practice of inquiry, cultivation of
curiosity, than worrying about content coverage or ideological coherence. While a common
critique of progressive enterprises like Hutchins is that they are too often a mode of
indoctrination, I saw a remarkable range of opinion expressed and affirmed and the most
consistent attention directed to building a shaping coherent arguments based on systematic
presentation of evidence.

Of that cohort of late 60s schools, Hutchins tends to be more book centered than most.
They are less driven to provide maximum student flexibility, even as they remain richly student
centered. Hutchins faculty and students take reading seriously as a means to promoting lifelong
learning and to engaged, active citizenship. Perhaps the most distinctive and elegant and moving
aspect of the program is that the vast majority of instruction in the seminars is delivered in
around a table in faculty offices. At first I wondered whether or not this was just physically
comfortable or productive of student attentiveness, but I really came to love – and found it
echoed in student comments – the fullest integration of faculty lives with the act of teaching.
Family photos, books and art work, and conversation come together in a superb message about
the meaning and function of learning over the course of a lifetime.

Students:

I spent time with about 25 students distributed evenly from amongst the various degree paths.
They were enthusiastic conversation partners.

Students consistently report satisfaction with the quality of instruction they receive in the
program and juniors and seniors, in particular, are able to carefully and accurately describe
program outcomes and goals. They are enthusiastic about a commitment to the liberal arts and
recognize its important role to play in individual development

Students also recognize that the unusual relationship to teaching certification pathways creates
interesting challenges for community building. Too many students find themselves on Hutchins
doorstep, they say, because they get directed there by outside advisors with little interest in
explaining the program’s particular values and learning style. As such, there is some frustration
– not unusual in small liberal arts seminar programs of this type – that there is a too large portion
of seminars not pulling their weight or not fully invested in the program’s key values.

Faculty

The great joy I have had in working with this sector of higher education over the past decade or
so has been seeing faculty so totally dedicated to the teaching enterprise and believing with real
and authentic passion that their work has value. The Hutchins faculty is no exception to this
pattern. In conversation (with me, to be sure, but, more importantly, seeing it informally in
exchange with each other) they express enthusiasm for ideas, patterns and problems outside their
own narrow disciplinary orbits and speak in detail about the learning needs and challenges of
individual students. They understand their particular role in the educational economy to be to
inculcate in a self-selected small portion of students a love for the liberal arts, for dialogue and
transformative conversation, and to produce critical thinkers able to utilize accepted practices of
evidence-based inquiry and interpretive judgment. They are not put off that there is no great
cultural enthusiasm for this work at the moment, little cultural capital to be gained, nor that the
great majority of students do not make their way to their doorstep. They should be continuously
congratulated for their dedication to their task and the passion they bring to the table.

The faculty were not unaware of or willfully inattentive to the difficult environment in which
they were currently working, or the ways in which other members of the SSU community were
experiencing the current public higher education context. They recognized that they worked in a
situation of extreme scarcity and that persons of good will and faith sometimes had different
ideas about what the future of higher education might or should be. At the same time, there was
a sense that sacrifices had already been made and that teaching and advising loads cannot be
exploitative. There was an expressed fear at an evolution of the program that saw the majority
of instruction be given to adjunct or other contingent labor. Right now, Hutchins faculty teach
the equivalent of 18 units per semester, a workload more typically of a strapped community
college rather than an ambitious regional, comprehensive university.

It is probably time to revisit in an open way the sustainability of such workloads. But, to do so,
it's probably true that faculty will need to be open to putting everything on the table including the
very shape of the lower division seminars themselves. It won’t be a popular activity, but I think
some investigation of whether 12 unit blocks invite a kind of institutional misrepresentation of
work. Fair or not, administrators (and to some extent the public itself) tend to think in terms of
“courses taught” and not in terms of actually labor expended. If the 12 unit seminars were
actually recorded as four different 3 unit components I wonder if there would be a casualness
about a faculty member talking about teaching six separate course preparations? In seminar
programs like these faculty believe deeply in the integrity and challenge of such intensive
learning and reading experiences, but it only makes sense to ask questions about the optics
involved.

The faculty were clearly happy with current leadership in the program and believed that they had
a strong and articulate advocate in Professor Lamoreaux.

Program Structure

As I previously highlighted, the past 40 years has been a mixed bag for experimental programs.
Despite the mainstreaming of key ideas – small seminars, empowering student ambition and
learning, inquiry and problem driven course structures – it has been hard to find a sustainable
economy of scale that produces needed credit hour production, “majors,” and graduates.
Hutchins has been fortunate to have shaped a set of educational pathways that feed the teacher
certification needs of the state of California. It seems to have provided some long-term security,
sense of purpose, and guaranteed work where other programs have suffered through pendulum
shifts in cultural enthusiasm for distinctive learning styles.
For an interdisciplinary liberal arts program that does not have large-scale institutional responsibilities for degree completion pathways (Bachelor of General Studies, for example), Hutchins supports a large number of majors. As I’ve described via account of my conversation with students above, this large number of students means real variance in overall programmatic coherence and cohesiveness. There is an odd kind of dissociation in a program that distinguishes itself with a set of educational outcomes not wholly – or perhaps transparently – aligned with student goals and desires.

It is also worth highlighting a similar sense of non-alignment or redundance that a casual outsider observer might experience in the context of a modest sized College of Arts and Humanities. It is a complex, flexible, interdisciplinary environment that happens to coexist with other sometimes fragile complex, flexible interdisciplinary environments (e.g., American Multicultural Studies, Chicano and Latino Studies, various interdisciplinary minors).

**Student learning**

Hutchins is extremely diligent in documenting student learning through a comprehensive (and labor intensive for the Director) process of portfolio development focusing on the achievement of graduating learners. There seems to be a sense on campus that there was a moment in SSU’s history when Hutchins had a real leadership role to play in directing attention to the documentation of student learning. However, the combination of external accountability pressures that have required other units to get their act together and workload pressures that have forced Hutchins faculty to make difficult choices have perhaps diminished any sense of the program functioning as a teaching and learning avant garde.

The Hutchins practice is cumulative and relies heavily on student self-reporting and simple checklist markers of achievement of requirements and goals. Arguably, best practice now mixes student self-reporting with other diagnostics and course level assessments that align with more general program goals. While Hutchins students do not come to the program as a pure cohort, there do seem to be opportunities at gateway points to gather simple measures of key learning achievements, especially in the areas of critical thinking, interdisciplinary writing competency, reading comprehension, and self-actualization and autonomy. More active and authentic assessment practice today would involve sharing the duty of evaluating the current student portfolios amongst a subcommittee of two or three instructors, such that faculty-determined key measures could be assigned on a simple scale of “not achieved,” “achieved,” or “achieved with distinction.” State-of-the-art practice would involve not only documenting that students have completed particular learning tasks, but some effort to document that there is a relationship between participation in the program’s instructional efforts and intellectual and personal growth.

It’s hard to do with a limited cohort, but I think the exciting – and scary – thing to do is to look for ways to focus on the accomplishments and experience of Hutchins’ students by comparative measures. Ask institutional research to assist in the work of comparing how Hutchins students respond to instruments like NSSE to SSU students more generally. Be sure that Hutchins students are represented in the delivery of the College Learning Assessment, and don’t be afraid to meditate on both positive and negative measures.
Resource Environment and Challenges for the Future

Like other public institutions of higher learning, Sonoma operates within an environment of diminished public support, calls for greater accountability, and increasing legislative demands for education aligned in a direct way with workforce development needs. It means difficult times for liberal arts units and an end to expectations of straightforward retirement replacements or growth in faculty lines that proportionally track increases in overall enrolments.

There is no reason to believe that this situation will change in the short or mid-term. As such, liberal arts programs need to be innovative in seeking out partnerships, taking the lead in ongoing quality enhancement efforts, and, in general, invested in the question of overall campus success.

The greatest threat to innovative liberal arts programs has always been one of passivity. “Sitting back” can manifest itself in multiple ways: (a) a kind of institutional depression, a fretting that folks don’t recognize your value or want your insights, (b) gambling that the cultural pendulum will swing back such that your key educational practices are once again privileged, or (c) a more active petulance, a sense of drawing up the garrison, and shouting that everyone else be damned. Thankfully, I don’t see any of these positions as a fair description of Hutchins or its faculty. They are working hard, delivering on their professional responsibilities, and, like many of us across the country, scratching their heads trying to make sense of just what our country wants out of higher education at the moment.

At the same time, I hope this moment of review and reflection can be used to coax the unit back to first principles of experiment, relevance, and innovation, in addition to the admirable defence they make of liberal learning, student autonomy, and conversation. In general, I see a university that very much wants the program to thrive, and, more importantly, recognizes Hutchins as a signature program in some ways key to both its history and its future. I think the courage that is required is to take SSU at its word and be willing to engage in dialogue about aspects of Hutchins’ work.

Non-Complex Interventions:

I can highlight a number of straightforward interventions that might be engaged and are rooted in observations from my visit and my experience managing at Hutchins-like program in a public university environment for 10 years:

1. alumni relations – One of the first casualties of an overworked faculty and director is the ability to maintain active relationships with alums and friends of the program. Hutchins has engaged the most familiar strategies at some point in its existence, but I’d encourage some shared responsibility – amongst the Director, the faculty, and the development office – to:
   a. generate a comprehensive and well-kept database of program alumni
   b. regularly invite alums to campus to deliver a named lecture and/or participate in career oriented seminars
c. build internship networks amongst alumni
d. establish an alumni leadership council with scholarship fundraising responsibilities

2. investigate opportunities to enhance office staff with work-study and other student workers. It’s key that the workspaces of programs like Hutchins be hives of activity. It communicates excitement, institutional investment, and local energy, and allows for continuous attention to the details of community outreach via management of social media, and conventional means of public relations like signage, flyers, brochures and the like.

3. assign a faculty member to the service responsibility of building student community. Ensure that an organizational council of Hutchins’ students has institutional recognition, and look for long-term ways to secure physical space for students to gather informally — as Hutchins’ students and to promote a sense of cohesion.

4. work to ensure that Hutchins’ students are represented even beyond their proportion to the undergraduate population at SSU in university structures that highlight undergraduate research, study abroad, community engagement and service. Again, consider making it a specific faculty service assignment to gather and distribute information about student accomplishments to alumni stakeholders, and university news outlets.

Possible futures: Long Term Conversations and Considerations

My sense is that faculty are primarily concerned about maintaining a liberal arts delivery system that prioritizes intimate scale and the values/skills of critical thinking, life-long learning, and active citizenship. More than anything, they would like to continue as an identifiable community of full-time, tenured scholars, large enough to support their own personal growth, professional development and need for peer conversation and able to provide authentic and meaningful advising and mentorship relationships. They feel most at risk in an environment increasingly dominated by growth in contingent faculty and simultaneously pressured to deliver course content in larger and larger course environments.

I want to congratulate and praise the faculty for having already taken steps since the last review to take programmatic responsibility for general education delivery to non-Hutchins students and experiment with large enrolment classes. Such steps should earn the program real credibility from SSU administrators and demonstrate a willingness to assist with institutional bottlenecks and external accountability issues.

I see two sets of strategies as potentially enhancing of the program while protecting its key values and commitments. I think both pathways are viable and can be pursued with vigor after an active and collaborative set of reflections with all possible stakeholders. My key assumptions are that there is no reason to believe that the current resource environment is about to change or that there will not be further moves towards centralization in the California state system.
a. Strategies of consolidation building upon known strengths

Right now the Hutchins program accepts all-comers and perceives itself to be open to any student with a future interest in the teaching profession, any student with an interest in maximizing degree flexibility, or any student with an interest in a general liberal arts education on an intimate scale. Ironically then, one measure of programmatic success becomes a continuous growth curve, and a smaller more contingent faculty cohort must manage an ever-greater number of students. There is a specific institutional logic in play – significance and sustainability is to be measured according to the number of learners served – that may or may not serve SSU’s current needs.

I would encourage some conversation that investigates whether there is potentially more value-added to both Hutchins and SSU in a program model that centres not endless growth but a high visibility, highly selective entry, pre-professional development program.

I would highlight that while there are maybe 50-100 embedded experimental liberal arts programs in public university settings in the United States, only Hutchins is so closely aligned with the production of teachers. It is surprising to me that more has not been made of this nice entanglement, philosophically, programmatically, and visually. There is an opportunity here to celebrate a distinctive path that aligns nicely with shared public concern about the production of citizen-teachers richly prepared to produce learners for the new workforce in the context of radical diversity.

I’d hope that investigation of this pathway – if nothing else – would stimulate two conversations: (a) the role of Track 1 to the ITDS option within the College of Arts and Sciences and (b) the need for substantive engagement between the College of Education and Hutchins faculty.

The first conversation, in terms of consolidation, might involve asking the question whether or not students conceptually invested in Track 1 might be better served and advised by the College, as a means of clarifying the meaning and identity of the program and streamlining workloads.

The second conversation is far more important I think and involves initiating on-going and continuous exchange with the College of Education as a partner. I could find few markers anywhere on the university, college or program websites that acknowledged an implicit contract or set of relationships between the programs. Students and some administrators acknowledged some muttering on the part of Education faculty about being uncertain or unknowledgeable of Hutchins learning outcomes, or, more aggressively, real scepticism about the value of the learning model as a pathway or preamble to professional certification. Regardless of whether or not his muttering ever hits some dangerous critical mass, it is a missed opportunity not to establish mechanisms by which the Hutchins faculty and the College of Education do not enter into continuous exchange about mutual and distinctive needs and concern.

Would Hutchins and SSU benefit by celebrating, supporting, and developing a program with a specific enrolment target and a challenging set of educational measures richly measured?
b. Strategies of entrepreneurial growth and forging new partnerships

A second set of strategies would focus on looking outwards in anticipation of new partnerships and roles for the program to play. Unlike the first strategy, it is more comfortable with significant growth but is more attentive to partnerships that are suggestive of new revenue streams, or simply position the program more effectively against other moves at the state level that would Hutchins unsustainable.

At other campuses with embedded, experimental programs, these partnerships have included:

(a) identifying interdisciplinary degree structures at the undergraduate and graduate level that give the program a specific role to play in managing student learning and progress but mostly require the repackaging of current curricula across the campus environment into new and dynamic pathways

(b) Identifying interdisciplinary degree opportunities that are true partnerships and involve faculty hiring, curriculum development, and targeted grant opportunities

(c) Taking a more active role in conversations about degree completion needs and general education and declaring an openness to helping with curricula that assist students with accumulated credit hours from multiple institutions. Currently this work is done with special focus on adult, working students, but I think there is an opening to participate in a fuller conversation about SSU and 6 yr graduation rate that might pose questions about how Hutchins could be a key partner.

In the case of options (a) and (b), I think key is becoming an active partner in strategic conversations about the direction of the university as a whole and recognizing opportunities created by parallel developments. We have discovered on my own campus programs and departments (sometimes limited in new program development by specific disciplinary accreditation requirements) anxious to find an ambitious new partner with enough curricular flexibility

For instance, it seems likely that the continued development of the Green Music Center will mean more undergraduates with an interest in the creative knowledge industries making their way to Sonoma as a matter of first choice. My own experience in Alabama has been that this cohort of students is little attracted by a conventional conservatory education and will have interest in combining work in digital media, theatre, communications, business, and the visual arts. Moreover, a cohort with a strong sense of vocation is often hesitant to embrace an open-ended liberal arts model even when such a model provides for more flexibility and personal growth. Sometimes it is important to shape flexible pathways that have the aura of substance and support of professional networks.

It strikes me that similar opportunities may exist in other intellectual and professional areas with strong ties to landscape, location, and economic growth: sustainability, global development, entrepreneurship, tourism, sport and recreation, new digital media, alternative education, and non-profit management.
Would Hutchins and SSU benefit from reshaping or expanding the program into a kind of curricular incubator and educational entrepreneur able to assist other units with new program development while extending their own liberal arts and liberal values footprint to fields otherwise more distinctly vocational in orientation?

A changing Sonoma state

I readily acknowledge that the pathways described – consolidation and/or growth – are contradictory and are so in acknowledgment that there are certain kinds of knowledge that are just unavailable in a short site visit. It may be that the third option, i.e., do nothing – continuing on as is – is actually quite viable, but my strong instinct and reflection is to think that it is not. I worry that the heavy investment in pre-certification pathways without ongoing collaboration with the College of Education or careful attention to developments at the state level about the future of teacher training are very risky. I worry that this is not the moment for digging a moat and hoping to be left alone.

Remarkably, it strikes me as a moment not unlike Hutchins’ original founding. Social upheaval, a reorientation of cultural attitudes towards higher education, and an openness to bold, transformative action should be familiar enough to those with long enough institutional memory.

It is exciting is that the intellectual capital and a rich body of pedagogical experience is already in place this time around. There is no question about the quality of instruction, the credibility of the basic course structures, the learning enthusiasm of the students, and the authentic character of the achievement. It is really just a matter of re-asking the kinds of questions that were asked in 1968 and reminding ourselves that those questions were asked in the spirit of the well-being of the whole – all of SSU, all of California, all of the potential students – and not just those who might find it convenient or attractive to opt for the transforming experience of talking about books with skilled teachers and engaged conversation partners.

The SSU community can be proud of everything the Hutchins faculty and students does. It’s a remarkable concord of sensibility and grounded in sound pedagogical practice, openness to accountability measures, and sensitivity to student need. It’s all delivered with passion and received with enthusiasm. I hope the SSU community as a whole can be convinced to continue to invest in its sustenance and well-being.
B. Response to External Review by Dr. James Hall, Ph.D.

The Hutchins School was delighted that Dr. Hall agreed to review our program as he was the Director of a similar program, New College, at University of Alabama from 2002 to 2012, and is currently the Executive Director of the Consortium for Innovative Environments in Learning. Dr. Hall’s background and experience make him uniquely qualified to understand and evaluate the strengths and peculiarities of the Hutchins School, and to place Hutchins within a broader national context.

1. Hutchins in a National Context. One of the most helpful outcomes associated with Dr. Hall’s visit was the placement, in a formal document by an expert in the field, of Hutchins within a national context of similar programs. In reading his evaluation, it is important to recognize that the Hutchins School is unique, even among a cadre of similar, and rare programs. Quotations from Dr. Hall’s review are italicized. From Dr. Hall’s review we learn several important things about the Hutchins Program as it compares to similar programs:

- **Hutchins is thriving.** The Hutchins School, unlike many similar programs, is “thriving” more than 40 years after its creation. “Not that many of the experiments have survived through 2013 wholly intact.” This fact alone is commendable.

- **Hutchins pedagogy is rooted in earlier reform traditions.** The Hutchins School, patterned after the tradition of Robert Hutchins and others, is attentive to “questions of national cohesiveness and emphasized the identification of core texts and reading as a critical practice.” Reading and analyzing texts through seminar discussion is the core of the Hutchins program. We also strive to help students become active citizens and lifelong learners.

- **Hutchins is still innovative.** Hutchins follows “student-centered practices” that are “exactly the solutions being proposed to current enrollment bottlenecks, graduation and retention challenges, and concerns with career and life preparation.” The larger educational system, particularly with a new emphasis on learning communities and “high impact practices” is beginning to more widely adopt what Hutchins has been doing for over four decades. In fact, the Association of American College and Universities national advocacy group “LEAP” (Liberal Education and America’s Promise) has outlined a set of learning outcomes (http://www.aacu.org/leap/vision.cfm) and high impact educational practices (http://www.aacu.org/leap/hip.cfm) as essential for liberal education in the 21st century (Appendices 22 and 23). Discussion of implications of these documents in relation to Hutchins will be discussed in Section V (below).

- **Hutchins is uniquely aligned with the production of teachers.** “I would highlight that while there are maybe 50-100 embedded experimental liberal arts programs in public university settings in the United States, only Hutchins is so closely aligned with the production of teachers… There is an opportunity here to celebrate a distinctive path that aligns nicely with shared public concern about the production of citizen-teachers richly prepared to produce learners for the new workforce in the context of radical diversity.”
2. **Commendations.** We are pleased that Dr. Hall found so many elements of our program praiseworthy. In fact, Dr. Hall offered considerable praise for Hutchins throughout his evaluation, emphasizing near the end that “The SSU community can be proud of everything the Hutchins faculty and students does.” Some of his commendations include:

- **Hutchins pedagogy is sound.** “The program is rooted in skilled, embodied, and ethical conversation, and involves talented scholar-teachers helping students to mastery of key texts and ideas from core cultural and intellectual traditions.” Instructors and students within Hutchins know that more often than not, seminar pedagogy works. In fact, students listed seminars as one of their favorite elements of the Hutchins experience.

- **Hutchins teaches students how to dialogue critically.** “There was a rich belief in the idea that dialogue and deliberation can be taught... Time and time again, I saw instructors make specific adjustments to a room, to a student response, to a syllabus, even to body language, all in the name of making explicit to students how mutually enhancing dialogue actually occurs.” In light of the 2006 recommendation to increase connectivity and interdisciplinarity in student papers and experiences, professors have tried even more diligently to teach students how to learn, how to analyze texts, and how to express their insights in seminar discussions.

- **Hutchins cultivates curiosity and inquiry.** “There was greater investment in teaching the practice of inquiry, cultivation of curiosity, than worrying about content coverage or ideological coherence. While a common critique of progressive enterprises like Hutchins is that they are too often a mode of indoctrination, I saw a remarkable range of opinion expressed and affirmed and the most consistent attention directed to building a shaping coherent arguments based on systematic presentation of evidence.” We admit that the downside to this cultivation of curiosity is that it can include a reduction in content coverage, but we maintain that the information that students encounter in this pedagogy is often remembered with greater depth and frequency than memorized facts and figures. We also emphasize the practice of analytical thinking across our curriculum.

- **Hutchins creates inviting learning environments.** “Perhaps the most distinctive and elegant and moving aspect of the program is that the vast majority of instruction in the seminars is delivered in around a table in faculty offices. At first I wondered whether or not this was just physically comfortable or productive of student attentiveness, but I really came to love – and found it echoed in student comments – the fullest integration of faculty lives with the act of teaching.” Our unique configuration of classrooms as both public and private space encourages students to see their professors as people, not just as scholars, and invites more relaxed and intimate conversations in seminar.

- **Students are satisfied with their education.** “Students consistently report satisfaction with the quality of instruction they receive in the program and juniors and seniors, in particular, are able to carefully and accurately describe program outcomes and goals.” The assessments reported in Section II of this document support that the vast majority (greater than 90% of students surveyed) are satisfied with the educational experiences they received in Hutchins.
• **Students are committed to liberal arts education.** Students “are enthusiastic about a commitment to the liberal arts and recognize its important role to play in individual development.” Assessments also support that students understand that the Hutchins pedagogy is designed to create lifelong learners who continue to learn and grow throughout their lifetime. In fact, 100% of students in LIBS 402 and 403 who were asked if they consider themselves lifelong learners responded “yes.”

• **Faculty promote interdisciplinarity.** Faculty “express enthusiasm for ideas, patterns and problems outside their own narrow disciplinary orbits and speak in detail about the learning needs and challenges of individual students.” Students who participated in assessments praised faculty for accessibility, willingness to form relationships with students, their ability to bring many different topics to the table, and their interdisciplinary thinking.

• **Faculty are committed to the Hutchins pedagogy and to their students.** “They understand their particular role in the educational economy to be to inculcate in a self-selected small portion of students a love for the liberal arts, for dialogue and transformative conversation, and to produce critical thinkers able to utilize accepted practices of evidence-based inquiry and interpretive judgment…. They should be continuously congratulated for their dedication to their task and the passion they bring to the table.” Given the workload of Hutchins professors versus other members of the SSU community, Hutchins faculty members do demonstrate a firm dedication to the Hutchins pedagogy and to the personal and intellectual development of individual students.

• **Hutchins embraces teacher certification preparation.** “Hutchins has been fortunate to have shaped a set of educational pathways that feed the teacher certification needs of the state of California. It seems to have provided some long-term security, sense of purpose, and guaranteed work where other programs have suffered through pendulum shifts in cultural enthusiasm for distinctive learning styles.” Though this commitment to Track II and Track III students (see “Concerns” below) could be interpreted to cause schisms within the student body and cries for greater emphasis of teacher preparation curricula, the Hutchins school takes pride in creating broad based liberal arts experiences for these future educators.

• **Hutchins is dedicated to portfolio and other forms of assessment.** “Hutchins is extremely diligent in documenting student learning through a comprehensive... process of portfolio development focusing on the achievement of graduating learners.” Section II of this document is additional proof that Hutchins is serious about the quality and quantity of assessment of student learning. Individual professors take comments on their Student Evaluations of Teaching Effectiveness (SETEs) seriously, participate in assessment efforts, promote the use of portfolio assessment throughout the curriculum, and show high interest in using resulting information to modify and enhance student learning.
• **Hutchins has become more active in SSU academic instruction.** “I want to congratulate and praise the faculty for having already taken steps since the last review to take programmatic responsibility for general education delivery to non-Hutchins students and experiment with large enrolment classes. Such steps should earn the program real credibility from SSU administrators and demonstrate a willingness to assist with institutional bottlenecks and external accountability issues.” Hutchins now provides two new courses for the underserved sophomore GE population – LIBS 204 (Minorities in American Cinema; GE C1/Ethnic Studies) and LIBS 208 (Africa and the Diaspora; GE C1). Both classes seat around 200 students and now also count as part of the LIBS major. Additionally, Dr. Eric McGuckin will be designing a new LIBS 208 course for Spring 2014.

3. **Concerns.** Dr. Hall also outlined concerns about certain elements of the Hutchins school, including workload issues, student concerns, and future directions.

• **Student Cohesiveness.** Dr. Hall suggests that the tension between students who understand and appreciate the Hutchins pedagogy and students who desire a more traditional curriculum that includes lesson plans and additional teacher preparation can create “real variance in overall programmatic coherence and cohesiveness. There is an odd kind of dissociation in a program that distinguishes itself with a set of educational outcomes not wholly – or perhaps transparently – aligned with student goals and desires.”

While Dr. Hall is correct that some students desire a more elementary teacher focused curriculum, the results of several of the surveys indicate that student satisfaction with their Hutchins experience remains high. Specifically, even though 33.33% of the surveyed students in LIBS 402 entered Hutchins to become elementary school teachers, only one student said she “did not enjoy Hutchins” (2.71%), nearly 90% of exiting LIBS 402 and LIBS 403 students reported that they “feel educated” and 97.71% of students in LIBS 402 and 100% of students in LIBS 403 reported that they felt they had “met their educational goals.” Additionally, students reported that elements they most enjoyed about Hutchins were the seminars (over 30%), the strong sense of community (29%), meaningful relationships with faculty (25%), strong peer relationships (23%), and the encouragement to become lifelong learners (21%). Only 8.33% of students reported entering Hutchins “by mistake or accident.” And this does not mean they did not appreciate their education there.

• **Uneven Student Participation and Preparation.** “…There is some frustration – not unusual in small liberal arts seminar programs of this type – that there is a too large portion of seminars not pulling their weight or not fully invested in the program’s key values.” This continues to remain a problem, which has been partially alleviated in Lower Division through the implementation of the graded option and accompanying shifts in levels of student responsibility and participation (60% of LIBS 202 students said that grades “motivate students to work harder in class). A few LIBS 202 students mentioned that they wanted “fairer grading” and 11.58% of LIBS 402 students indicate
that they want stricter grading and more accountability for lazy students. This is an area that needs to be addressed.

**Faculty Workload Issues.** Dr. Hall observes “there was a sense that sacrifices had already been made and that teaching and advising loads cannot be exploitative.” He continues to say “it is probably time to revisit in an open way the sustainability of such workloads. But, to do so, it’s probably true that faculty will need to be open to putting everything on the table including the very shape of the lower division seminars themselves.” He also asks the important question “if the 12 unit seminars were actually recorded as four different 3 unit components I wonder if there would be a casualness about a faculty member talking about teaching six separate course preparations?”

Workload has been an issue since the inception of Hutchins when the decision was made to give 6 units of official instructor credit for 12 hours of teaching time in LDGE classes. Granted, most people on campus think of Hutchins as “expensive,” not realizing the way that unit loads are calculated in LIBS. Truthfully, lower division classes are intense. They require instructors to read at least 50% new material each semester the course is re-taught, due to changes in the curriculum created by collaborative teaching. Additionally, much of the content is out of the official disciplinary domain of individual professors. However, teaching these classes is also highly rewarding. Also, workload has decreased in the past 10 years with the inclusion of cadre planning meetings on the first Friday of the month while student seminar independently, rather than in additional meetings. There has also been an overall reduction in the number of professors to do formal writing tutorials, and an overall reduction in the number of Friday afternoon symposia in recent years. Furthermore, there are only 15 students in each lower division section, we get to really know our students, and we believe in what we are doing. In short, yes, it is difficult, but most of us feel it is worth the sacrifices – to a point. This issue will be, and should be, however, an area for further examination (again) and discussion (yet again).

**Portfolio Assessment Practices.** “More active and authentic assessment practice today would involve sharing the duty of evaluating the current student portfolios amongst a subcommittee of two or three instructors, such that faculty-determined key measures could be assigned on a simple scale of “not achieved,” “achieved,” or “achieved with distinction... State-of-the-art practice would involve not only documenting that students have completed particular learning tasks, but some effort to document that there is a relationship between participation in the program’s instructional efforts and intellectual and personal growth.” This is not something the Hutchins School has considered prior to receipt of Dr. Hall’s report. The portfolio evaluations are typically part of the instructional requirements in LIBS 402, but students might benefit from a more thorough and collaborative evaluation process. Additionally, LIBS 402 and LIBS 302 have, or are, adding more descriptive measures to assessment using the Moodle online surveys.

**Comparative versus Self-Reported Assessments.** “The Hutchins practice is cumulative and relies heavily on student self-reporting and simple checklist markers of achievement of requirements and goals. Arguably, best practice now mixes student self-reporting with other diagnostics and course level assessments that align with more
general program goals... the exciting – and scary – thing to do is to look for ways to focus on the accomplishments and experience of Hutchins’ students by comparative measures.” Dr. Hall is correct. We do need to assess our students by more diagnostic assessments in addition to self-reported assessments. We have recently participated in the CLA assessment, and will likely continue this practice in future LIBS 402, and possibly LIBS 302 and LIBS 101 classes. The Director will work closely with the Director of Institutional Research to determine which assessment modalities will be most effective for gathering information for both Hutchins and SSU. However, it is important to realize that how a student “feels” about or “self-evaluates” their educational experiences provides important information regarding educational outcomes. Additionally, our Portfolio Assessment includes an analysis of the work previously done and that analysis is in turn corroborated by a faculty member, so it is not just self-reporting or touchy-feely.

- **Campus Collaboration Issues.** “I worry that the heavy investment in pre-certification pathways without ongoing collaboration with the College of Education or careful attention to developments at the state level about the future of teacher training are very risky. I worry that this is not the moment for digging a moat and hoping to be left alone.” This is an interesting contradiction. At one point Dr. Hall commends us for being so closely allied with teacher preparation, and later indicates that this alignment may be “risky.”

Our relationship with the School of Education could be improved, but is complicated by several factors that are vital to consider, and of which Dr. Hall was likely unaware:

- The School of Education (SOE) has recently created an Early Childhood Education (ECE) major, their first undergraduate degree program. SOE naturally wants their new endeavor to succeed, and though this program is designed for pre-school teachers rather than elementary school teachers, there is some competition for students between the ECE major and Hutchins.

- SOE does not want to “play favorites” by emphasizing and promoting the Hutchins teacher preparation program over others smaller programs like AMCS, CALS, and ENSP. They give equal billing in their advertising to all preparation majors even though Hutchins graduates dozens more than the other program combined.

- SOE has recently started to combat anti-teaching biases in media and negative community perceptions of teaching by promoting the idea that “any major can lead to a credential” in their teacher pathway orientation sessions. This position further hampers possible efforts by SOE to promote Hutchins.

4. **Recommendations.** It is important realize, when responding to Dr. Hall’s recommendations for change that there are a few underlying tensions present in the Hutchins ecosystem. First, we are torn between the pressure to increase the number of students we teach, while trying to preserve the small class size and seminar pedagogy which is the hallmark of our program. Second, most of the changes that could be made in reaction to Dr. Hall’s recommendations
require more faculty work, which, given the already heavy workload, creates additional difficulties. Keeping these two tensions in mind, it is important to address the recommendations made by Dr. Hall.

- **Improving Alumni Relations.** “One of the first casualties of an overworked faculty and director is the ability to maintain active relationships with alums and friends of the program.” We agree with Dr. Hall’s specific recommendations and believe that we can, and should create a more active database of alumni. As previously mentioned, we have already created an alumni web page, a Facebook page, a twitter account, completed outreach through the Office of Development through a fundraising effort, and completed a successful 40 year reunion. We will discuss the possible establishment of a leadership council as suggested by Dr. Hall. Hutchins needs to focus on involving alumni more frequently in our curriculum as guest speakers, and strive to build better alumni networks. Gathering information, given multiple outreach methods, should be fruitful. For example, alumni that responded to a request for information over the past 48 hours indicated that they now pursue a variety of occupations including a deputy probation officer, an elementary school teacher, a high school ESL teacher, a substitute teacher, a LCSW specializing in gerontology, a special education teaching assistant, a youth employment program director, a preschool teacher, an attorney/professor, and law student. It is important to remember that all of these proposed alumni outreach activities will require faculty effort, and therefore, will increase workload.

5. **Creating a “Hive of Activity” in the Hutchins Office.** “Investigate opportunities to enhance office staff with work-study and other student workers. It’s key that the workspaces of programs like Hutchins be hives of activity. It communicates excitement, institutional investment, and local energy, and allows for continuous attention to the details of community outreach via management of social media, and conventional means of public relations like signage, flyers, brochures and the like.” This is, once again, a helpful set of suggestions. Hutchins has employed student workers in the office in the past, but this employment requires funding. Some students also spend time in the office as part of internships or independent studies. Additionally, students in LIBS 402 in Spring 2013 created a new “lending library” which is now housed in the Hutchins office, and may attract students to spend more time in this public space. Perhaps greater use could also be made of the Hutchins Dialogue Center, located near the Hutchins office, as a place for students to relax and share ideas. The Hutchins faculty will discuss ways to implement some of these ideas into our community; implementing these suggestions will, again, require additional faculty work.

6. **Building Student Community.** “Assign a faculty member to the service responsibility of building student community. Ensure that an organizational council of Hutchins’ students has institutional recognition, and look for long-term ways to secure physical space for students to gather informally – as Hutchins’ students and to promote a sense of cohesion.” Again, perhaps the HDC could serve as a gathering space for students. Hutchins has formerly had faculty members who volunteered to promote and encourage student participation in the Hutchins club and associated events, but as workloads have
increased and faculty numbers decreased, remaining faculty are often less able to find time and energy to devote to this, or any, additional enterprise.

- **Increasing Student Visibility on Campus.** "Work to ensure that Hutchins’ students are represented even beyond their proportion to the undergraduate population at SSU in university structures that highlight undergraduate research, study abroad, community engagement and service. Again, consider making it a specific faculty service assignment to gather and distribute information about student accomplishments to alumni stakeholders, and university news outlets.” Another wonderful idea that would promote greater community, greater visibility, and higher levels of student participation and involvement. Once again, these activities require the oversight of faculty members and increase workload. The Hutchins faculty will discuss possible ways to increase LIBS student and faculty visibility on campus.

- **Long Term Planning and Considerations.** In his assessment, Dr. Hall gives Hutchins three options for the future including: 1) “consolidation building upon known strengths;” 2) “growth and forging new partnerships;” and 3) “continue on as is.” Though presented as “contradictory” it is possible that these pathways are not entirely mutually exclusive.

- **Consolidation building upon known strengths.** Hutchins has no desire to participate in a “continuous growth curve.” In fact, Hutchins has recently applied for impaction and will not be admitting new transfer students in Spring 2014. We simply cannot teach more students than we already do unless given additional resources of faculty and space. Even with the new hire in 2013, LIBS majors will still likely struggle to get LIBS 302 (vital for entry into the major), LIBS 320 (core courses), and teacher preparation courses like LIBS 330, LIBS 312 and LIBS 327.

- **Growth and forging new partnerships.** It is possible for Hutchins, even in a period of contraction regarding increased enrollments, to reach out to other campus and community entities with the hope to “become an active partner in strategic conversations about the direction of the university as a whole, and recognizing opportunities created by parallel developments.” Hutchins does have potential to engage entities off and on campus with regard to “landscape, location, sustainability, global development, entrepreneurship...” etc. However, increased outreach will, once again, require faculty to add to their workload.

- **Continue on as is.** Failure to implement all of the suggestions given by Dr. Hall does not necessarily mean that Hutchins will “continue on as is.” We never have. Hutchins has evolved since its inception to adjust to changing cultural elements, differences in student population, increasing or decreasing financial resources, and other factors. The imaginative problem solving that we attempt to inculcate in our students is also present in our faculty. Perhaps the key is to choose elements of our future pathway carefully, allowing for overlap in ideas and directions.
V. CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Strengthening Weaknesses. Hutchins still has work to do, adjustments to consider, and decisions to make. Based on student evaluations and the recommendations of the external reviewer, Hutchins should continue to improve in these areas:

1. Pedagogical considerations. The Hutchins School needs to focus on improvement in several areas that either have not been completely resolved since the 2006 Program Review, or that were recently discovered through assessments or the external review process.

   • Writing tutorials. Students in LDGE courses do copious amounts of writing including response papers, essays and research papers in every course in LDGE. Additionally, essays and research papers are often peer edited and redrafted multiple times. There is no doubt that Hutchins is a writing intensive program that improves student writing. The question surrounding “writing tutorials” is mainly one of semantics. Hutchins faculty should decide to either call writing exercises “writing tutorials” which are specifically implemented as such, or to continue less formal methodologies that are currently in place.

   • Science content and implementation. Though strides have been made in emphasizing science content and creating more even treatment of science in all LDGE seminars and courses, science content and implementation is still of concern to both LIBS students and Hutchins faculty. Hopefully as the content that has been delivered in LDGE is emphasized and implemented in the future, students will feel that science is given sufficient treatment in LDGE classes and that labs and field experienced are more well-organized and engaging.

   • Uneven student participation and questions of fairness and equity. Hutchins professors need to examine the root causes of student perceptions that many students are not held sufficiently accountable for being “lazy” or that grades are not perceived to be fair and uniform across seminar groups or classes.

   • Assessment considerations. Self-reported student evaluations should continue to be implemented both in the Washington Center online survey, LIBS 402/403 surveys, and LIBS 302 surveys. Additionally, the Hutchins School needs to implement more consistent and frequent use of the CLA and other similar assessment tools.

   • Promotion of Track I, the minor, and the MBA pathway. Students cannot take advantage of these programs unless they are aware they exist. Students on campus and community members need to be aware of the unique and creative educational pathways, in addition to teacher preparation, that exist within Hutchins.
2. **Increased External Collaboration.** The Hutchins School needs to reach beyond the confines of Rachel Carson Hall to more effectively collaborate with alumni, the School of Education, other campus entities and community partners.

- **Alumni relations.** A database of Hutchins alumni professions and activities should be created, with the goal of creating a network of Hutchins alumni. Efforts to use social media and fundraising outreach to contact alumni should be continued. Alumni should be encouraged to participate in Hutchins curriculum by giving guest lectures or workshops when possible.

- **Relationship with the School of Education.** Despite the barriers in place that prevent complete collaboration with the SOE, efforts should be made to promote more collegial interactions and more accurate dissemination of information to faculty in the SOE. Perhaps we could open a dialogue to assess how Hutchins and the SOE might move forward more collaboratively in the future.

- **Increased campus visibility and cooperation.** The Hutchins school needs to get serious about self-promotion. We need to let the campus and extended community know who we are, what we do, and how well we do it. Hutchins students need to become more visible on campus through promotion of the Hutchins Club, participation in research and other activities, and by increasing the visibility and viability of the program whenever possible.

3. **Workload Issues.** The workload of Hutchins professors should be reexamined in context of Dr. Hall’s concerns and recommendations. Hutchins faculty should reconsider changing the nature or content of written student evaluations, and be unafraid to try to find the creative solutions to the dual tensions of quality (small classes) vs. quantity (larger classes) and implementation of new ideas/projects vs. increased faculty workload.

B. **Building on Strengths.** Based on an assessment of parts II through IV of this document, it is apparent that Hutchins is a strong, vital program with potential for future innovation, continued creativity, and high levels of student learning. One way to discuss the strengths of the Hutchins School is to place the content of this document within the framework of the Association of American Colleges and University’s Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) “essential learning outcomes” and “high-impact educational practices” as these outcomes and practices are in alignment with Hutchins pedagogy and educational mission.

1. **Hutchins and Essential Learning Outcomes.** According to LEAP, essential learning outcomes for liberal education include:

- **Knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world, including study in natural sciences and mathematics, social sciences, histories, languages and the arts.** Hutchins provides students with interdisciplinary content that is connected across disciplines. Students mention high levels of satisfaction with their educational experiences through seminar discussion of a wide variety of topics. Students are
taught to bridge ideas across disciplines, to make the information they learn relevant to their lives, how to find and evaluate information, and to desire to continue a lifetime of learning. Students mentioned an increased interest in cultures, experiences that were rooted in real-world situations and a desire to travel and experience for themselves. Hutchins still needs to work on improving the content and delivery of natural sciences curriculum but the curriculum that is, and has been delivered, is rooted in cultural and ethical contexts.

- **Intellectual and practical skills including inquiry and analysis, critical and creative thinking, written and oral communication, quantitative literacy, information literacy, and teamwork and problem solving.** Information gained from student surveys indicate that students have excellent critical analysis skills, the ability to think creatively, excellent written and excellent oral communication skills including the ability to listen to others, to keep an open mind, and to respect the views of others. Based on student assessments, Hutchins could improve in the areas of quantitative literacy, information literacy and teamwork and problem solving – though student scores were not particularly low in any of these areas.

- **Personal and social responsibility including civic knowledge and engagement (local and global), intercultural knowledge and competence, ethical reasoning and action, and foundations for lifelong learning.** Again, Hutchins students reported high levels of awareness of local and global issues, a desire to be more socially responsible and “make a difference,” and an increased interest in other cultures. Of the LIBS 402 and 403 students polled in the Moodle survey, 100% responded that they consider themselves to be “lifelong learners.” One alumna put it this way when asked to describe the benefits of Hutchins: “Hutchins helped move local and global issues from my heart to my head. I learned how to stop simply feeling about injustice and start actively becoming a part of the solution (and, of course, continue to feel - in Hutchins we feel EVERYTHING)…. I don't think I'll ever forget Hutchins; pieces of Hutchins fill my home from my open mind, to my desire to seminar about everything, to the books that adorn our shelves. I'm so proud to be a Hutchie!”

- **Integrative and applied learning including synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies.** Students most clearly demonstrate this quality as they assemble their LIBS 402/403 portfolios, write an “intellectual journey” paper that traces their educational experiences, create a final capstone paper or project, and then present that paper or project as part of a final “fair.” Hutchins can always improve how curriculum is delivered, the efficacy of individual seminar discussion, the fairness of grading, and other factors throughout the entire Hutchins curriculum.

2. **Hutchins and high-impact educational practices.** According to LEAP, high-impact educational practices include:

- **First-year seminars and experiences.** Students who enter Hutchins as part of LDGE are part of a common cohort that experiences a wide range of intellectual activities
which typically include field trips, science experiences, intensive reading of common
texts, guest speakers, films, seminar discussions, and creative projects. Similarly,
new transfer students, if able to enroll in LIBS 302 Introduction to Liberal Studies,
also experience a carefully constructed set of experiences and curriculum to introduce
them to the culture of Hutchins.

- **Common intellectual experiences.** Student common experiences do not end with their
freshmen year. Students in LDGE continue to form friendships, share experiences
and learn as part of a common cohort. These common intellectual experiences
continue throughout upper division in the form of core classes, which though they
might vary in topic, have, at their core, seminar based pedagogy.

- **Learning communities.** The Hutchins School of Liberal Studies is one of the original
learning communities at SSU. We have over 40 years of experience in
implementation of and success with learning community structures, curricula and
methodologies.

- **Writing-intensive courses.** Students leaving Hutchins are often amazed at the volume
of papers written when they compile their portfolios. Students in LDGE commonly
write three essays, and weekly or tri-weekly preparation or response papers. Upper
division courses use combinations of research papers, annotated bibliographies,
creative writing, prep or response papers, in-class freewrites and journaling to
promote frequent and improved student writing.

- **Collaborative assignments and projects.** Hutchins LDGE students complete several
group projects including film creation, community service projects, group lab
assignments, group field trip reports, and other group activities. Upper division
students may work collaboratively on group projects depending on their choice of
courses.

- **Undergraduate research.** This area is barely utilized by the Hutchins School at this
time. Some students have written and presented papers in professional research
venues, but most students do not take advantage of these opportunities. Given the
nature of teaching responsibilities in Hutchins, faculty are less likely than some of
their counterparts of campus to create research programs that are easily compatible
with student interests and abilities. This is an area where Hutchins could clearly
improve.

- **Diversity/global learning.** Students who answered questions about diversity and
sensitive issue treatment in Hutchins replied that Hutchins is doing a good job on the
whole, and some even complained that issues of diversity are over-emphasized.
Hutchins curriculum helps students discuss issues of race, gender, sexuality, politics,
privilege and oppression – in the United States and globally. Clearly, there is always
room for improvement in this area, particularly given the lack of diversity in the
student population and accompanying lack of awareness of other viewpoints.
• **Service learning, community-based learning.** This is another area which could be improved. As Dr. Hall pointed out, Hutchins students and faculty could form more and stronger relationships with campus and community entities. LIBS 202 does contain a community service element, and some instructors in upper division courses require service learning components in their classes. More could be done to amplify and expand these efforts.

• **Internships.** Students in Track I are required to participate in internships. Often Track II students also create experiences in the community through internship opportunities.

• **Capstone courses and projects.** LIBS 402, Senior Synthesis, is the capstone course in the Hutchins School. Students are required to compile a portfolio, assess that portfolio, assess their learning experiences, write an intellectual journey paper, create a final project or paper, and present that project or paper in a community venue. The Hutchins faculty recently increased the rigor and expectations of LIBS 402 final projects and papers and added the community presentation aspect to the course.

Clearly the Hutchins School of Liberal Studies participates in many, though not all, of the high-impact practices and essential learning outcomes outlined by the Association of American Colleges and Universities. Though there will always be room for improvement, the Hutchins School of Liberal studies continues to provide educational experiences that leave lasting impacts on the lives of its students.