

RETHINKING VERSUS RE-TWEAKING EDUCATION:
A CASE FOR A COMPREHENSIVE LIBERAL ARTS
CURRICULUM AT BYU-IDAHO

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This is a discussion of liberal education in the context of the Gospel. Its objects are to help students learn how to learn, to integrate knowledge for them in a pattern parallel with the integrated story of humanity, and to conduct them through their first adult phase as life-long learners.

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“Liberal education” means education that liberates the mind, freeing it from ignorance of intellectual traditions and the inabilities to think critically and communicate clearly. I recommend a curriculum that is interdisciplinary and includes all four undergraduate years, though it may be adapted to a two-year or a one-year model.

Higher education suffers from the disease of compartmentalization or, as Barr and Tagg denominate it, atomization.¹ Symptoms include the multitude of departments and specializations found on campuses throughout the country, including our campus. The myriad of majors and plethora of programs lead students into a struggle to integrate what they learn. We must admit that the current cafeteria-style curriculum, where students choose à la carte, results in a segmentation of knowledge. For instance, the illusion that knowledge of forces shaping the Industrial Revolution is unimportant in the development of classical thermodynamics, when in reality one greatly affected the other, is perpetuated by separating the study of chemistry from that of 18th-19th century history. A second example might be a lack of understanding the influences of Hellenic philosophers on apologists for the early Catholic Church. As Latter-day Saints, we find ourselves under divine mandate to study a variety of disciplines (Doctrine and Covenants 88:78-79), and implicit in this mandate is a charge to discover connections between disciplines, integrating all truth into one whole. But our fragmented system, our usual sense of a teacher’s responsibility, and the inexperience of our students all militate against their integrating what they learn.

In this essay I will review the need for students to better understand and appreciate the interconnectedness of knowledge, that is, the need for them to receive a more liberal education. I will argue that, rather than follow the world’s increasingly fragmented system, BYU-Idaho should increasingly help students find cross-disciplinary connections and develop abilities to express their ideas in speech and writing using a classics-based general education curriculum. With the goal of educational integration through a classical emphasis, I will outline a program for instruction in

liberal education to meet the needs of BYU–Idaho, also suggesting plans for implementing and modifying the program.

LIBERAL EDUCATION IN THE CHURCH

Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. — John 8:32

Despite the current political connotations of the word, a liberal education does not parallel any particular political agenda or leaning. Elder John A. Widstoe presents the nonpolitical definition of liberal education in a 1941 Improvement Era article, “The word liberal, correctly used, has a noble meaning...[a liberal person] places truth above all else and hungers for truth.” He continues:

He is anchored to the rock of truth, as he may see it. He never wavers from the basic, underlying principles of the cause...to which he is committed...His liberalism lies in his constant attempt to make the underlying unchanging principles of the cause he represents serve the changing conditions of the day. He may differ with the superficial conventions of the past, but not with its established truths. He may refuse to continue the church architecture of the past but will insist that the ancient truths of the Gospel be taught in every building dedicated to worship. He may be forever seeking, under changing conditions, to make the doctrine of human brotherhood more effective in behalf of the needy. He is a believer who seeks to use his beliefs in every concern of life.

He concludes with this:

Under the definition of true liberalism, the Church of Jesus Christ is preeminently liberal... The Church recognizes that there is constant change on earth but insists that every change must respect and use the basic doctrine of the Church, and must be for human good.... Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints do not need to look elsewhere for a liberal Church.²

If the world was changing in 1941, it is changing more rapidly today. In order to fulfill Elder Widstoe’s definition of “liberal,” Latter-day Saints must discern how changing times require changing application of eternal gospel truths. In their professions, in their church responsibilities, and in the home, they must support and defend the faith, as always with an eye toward applying that faith for the benefit of their fellowmen. Such a mandate requires that Latter-day Saints know and understand how to adjust in a shifting world while keeping their anchor strong. Perhaps more than ever, we and our students need to become independent thinkers.

“Liberal” derives from the Latin *liber*, also the source of “liberty,” the clear implication being that education, or an educated populace, is a key to freedom. What kind of education? As Elder Widstoe explained it, liberal education anchored in the Gospel can produce an independent

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thinker who will make a difference in his home, his community, and the land where he lives. The scriptures are replete with examples of revelatory processes where the Lord requires such independent thinking of those who seek knowledge. For instance, when the Brother of Jared sought for an answer to the problem of dark barges, the Lord insisted on his coming up with an answer rather than giving it to him (Ether 2:23-3:5). The vision of the Lord given to the Brother of Jared is an example of the trust given him after he exhibited not only faith, but also study in determining what a suitable solution to his problem might be (Doctrine and Covenants 88:118). We may also note that Nephi was “led by the Spirit” (1 Nephi 4:6) only after he and his brothers attempted to retrieve the plates using their own devices. In contrast, Oliver Cowdery found himself chastised after not applying his own intellect to solving the challenge of translation that was placed before him (Doctrine and Covenants 9:7-8). One of the basic tenets of the gospel is that any blessing granted requires obedience to the law associated with that blessing (Doctrine and Covenants 130:18-19). Implied here is that the law must be properly understood for the blessing to be granted, and such understanding does not come without proper effort.

How do these interconnected principles of faith, study, and blessing affect us as educators? We should ask ourselves if our programs, our courses, and our teaching encourage independent analytical and synthetic thinking; that is, do they help students learn how to think? Dr. Oliver DeMille, president of George Wythe College and a mainstay of the regional home-schooling movement, put it this way in an October 2000 seminar:

The goals of the public school [are], [first,] educate the poor, [second,] to [help them] get a job, [third,] by teaching them what to think.... The primary goal of professional education is to train professionals: managers, doctors, dentists, and other trade professionals, electricians, mechanics, blacksmiths. You can go through history and you will find these same systems. And, the second goal is to teach them when to think...; the third type of education [is] leadership. Its goal is to train leaders. How? By training them how to think.³

Given President Clark’s emphasis on our students becoming leaders,⁴ learning how to think, or more appropriately how to learn, becomes essential. But do our classes teach students how to learn? Some reflection leads to the conclusion that most traditional lecture-style classes follow more of a “what to learn” rather than a “how to learn” model, i.e., students are told what they should know and recall on an exam. The major drawback of this model is that they are not stretched to learn outside the “what” that has been outlined. Indeed, they will insist that examinations asking for more than simple recall are somehow unfair;

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a general chemistry student wrote as much by way of complaint on a recent exam in my class.

Do students understand, for example, that the social forces at work during the Renaissance and the onset of the Enlightenment also led to Newton's laws of physics, or Boyle's gas law, or the basic development of the scientific method? Do they understand that the same forces were essential stages leading toward the Restoration? Probably not, for in their schooling they have not been challenged to think in such ways. Twenty years from now, few students will remember anything about chemistry, but if they could be introduced to the process of critical thinking by discovering relationships among social structures, scientific progress, and religious thought, then they may be involved in a "learning to learn" process.

The question, then, is how to encourage students to learn how to learn. An idealized model of an academic program geared toward this goal exists in the New Program at St. John's College, Annapolis MD and Santa Fe NM. "New Program" is capitalized because it is the only program on campus. A more detailed summary of their program follows, but it is based on three underlying principles⁵:

1. A curriculum based on the seminal works of literature, science, philosophy, and art throughout all periods of history. These works, not the instructor, are the source of knowledge for coursework.
2. A shared responsibility for discussion and communication of ideas between instructors and students. Since the source of the knowledge is the source material and not the instructor, students find they must search these texts for the knowledge they seek. Moreover, since the classroom experience is discussion-based rather than lecture-based, students share with the instructor the burden of acquiring, synthesizing, and internalizing the information, while making connections between pieces of seemingly disparate pieces of information. Indeed, students at St. John's may find that the instructor is also encountering the course material at the same time as they are, and is in that sense he or she is an example learner rather than an "instructor."
3. Essay-intensive assessment along with a great reduction in the use of objective exams. The students write, and write often. They must learn how to clarify and refine their arguments. Because they cannot rely on multiple-choice exams or other objective tools to demonstrate their knowledge, they learn to communicate effectively in writing. Coupled with the oral skills acquired in the discussion-based classes, this is an excellent way to help students become effective communicators.

I am not suggesting an unaltered adoption of St. John's program on this campus. There are several reasons why this is unfeasible; they will

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be outlined later. However, a brief historical synopsis of their program is informative.

ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE AND THE "NEW PROGRAM"

The St. John's program originated with Stringfellow Barr and Scott Buchanan, academics and Rhodes Scholars, who had observed first-hand the tutorial methods used at Oxford. Reviewing what was happening in the United States, they found the all-elective cafeteria system and the traditional lecture class unsatisfactory, generally incorporating the downfalls outlined above. They set out to develop a program of discussion-based liberal education, abandoning the lecture model and replacing the cafeteria with standard readings. Initial work on their program was done in the 1930s at the University of Virginia and the University of Chicago. In particular, they were influenced at Chicago by President Robert Maynard Hutchins, who had similar thoughts on the failures of the postsecondary educational system. Fierce resistance to change was met at both institutions, however, and little of substance was accomplished.

By happenstance they came across the ideal place where they could test their model. St. John's College in Annapolis, MD, the third oldest college in the United States, was facing a crisis. Enrollment was down, and the college had just lost accreditation. In 1937, Barr and Buchanan were brought onboard, with Barr as the College President and Buchanan as Dean, and their efforts turned the college around, creating a powerful experiment with remarkable success. While changes are constantly considered, the basic elements of the program remain intact.

No Menu of Majors

The program initiated at St. John's was radical for its time or for ours. Barr and Buchanan did away with all other degrees and instituted a single degree, the BA of Liberal Arts. All studies are based on a required program encompassing great works in Western thought. Homer, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle are the order of the day for freshmen. The program moves chronologically through the medieval era for sophomores, the Renaissance for juniors, and founding documents of the United States and writings of modern thinkers in the senior year. The formidable St. John's College reading list for 2005-2006 is available at www.stjohnscollege.edu. All members of each year's class follow the same program, giving all of them common thread of discussion. For example, any freshman can meet any other freshman on campus and immediately engage in discussion of, say, the Oedipus plays of Sophocles. Even so, the canon is under constant review and is altered from time to time.

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The study of language is an important part of the program. Initially, tutorials in Greek, Latin, German, and French were required. Translations from the original tongues into English encouraged understanding of nuance and fine detail in representing one language through another. Currently, Greek and French are the foreign languages required, combined with the study of Shakespeare and British and American literature.

Science and mathematics are included in their historical context of development. Buchanan found divisions between literature, history, science and math forced and artificial. Mathematics is taught by studying the works of Euclid, Ptolemy, Copernicus, Appollonius, and Newton; biology by studying Aristotle, Mendel, Darwin, and others; chemistry and physics in Lasovier, Dalton, Mendeleev, Einstein, Planck, Rutherford, Millikan. A one-year music laboratory has been added, focusing on works of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, and others. Scientific, mathematical, and musical principles are always examined in their historical and social contexts.

Objective examinations are not used, and grades are deemphasized. Essays and oral examinations are the methods by which students demonstrate their knowledge. Grades are recorded at the registrar's office for transfer or graduate school applications, but they are not commonly discussed. The focus is on mastery of material and ability to learn independently, not on what is required to get an A.

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From Professor to Tutor

Faculty underwent a wholesale change in the way they go about their occupation. Rank was abolished; today, all instructors are now simply "fellows and tutors of the college." All tutors are expected to teach anywhere in the program. In a given year, a student could find his French tutorial being conducted by a tutor with a PhD in chemistry; or someone with a MA in literature may suddenly find herself teaching music theory. This changes faculty from fountains of knowledge to exemplary learners, since a tutor may be learning the subject at the same time as the students. Thus, the objective of the faculty is to illustrate to the students how to learn, not to provide certain set points of knowledge. Experiential learning, rather than absorption and recall, is the focus of the program.

Seminars Centered in Discussion

While tutorials and laboratories are held during the day and retain the semblance of a traditional course, the hallmark of the program is the seminar. Seminars are held two evenings a week for two hours. During seminar, a section of one of the books for a given group of classmen (freshmen, sophomores, etc.) will be under discussion. Since all are following the same program, the same book will have been read by all. Two tutors lead a discussion of 15-20 students. Buchanan places two tutors

in each seminar to keep one another from slipping into lecturing. Rather, tutors usually start the seminar with a probing question, e.g., asking the question, “What is justice?” to start a discussion of Plato’s Republic, and students are expected to take on the discussion from there, with the tutors asking questions periodically to keep the discussion on track.

Though not intended by Buchanan, his model follows to the method of learning described in Doctrine and Covenants 88:122, where the Lord says:

Appoint among yourselves a teacher, and let not all be spokesmen at once; but let one speak at a time and let all listen unto his sayings, that when all have spoken that all may be edified of all, and that every man may have an equal privilege.

President Hinckley has invited all to participate and be edified: “We recognize all of the virtues and the good that you have. Bring it with you and see if we might add to it.”⁶

There are obvious reasons why a program such as St. John’s could not be transferred wholesale to BYU–Idaho. The combined student body at both St. John’s campuses is only about 1,000 students. The student-to-faculty ratio at their school is maintained at 8:1, and their tuition is approximately \$33,000 per year.⁵ President Clark’s imperatives are moving us to a larger student body, a lower teacher-to-student ratio, and minimal tuition. Yet we may remember that Barr and Buchanan first considered implementing their ideas at the Universities of Virginia and Chicago, both large schools with higher student-to-faculty ratios. A complete two-year program for underclassmen at Virginia was proposed in the early thirties. And Buchanan in his later years considered a combination including liberal arts, technical education, and vocational experience.⁷

With this in mind, at BYU–Idaho we could consider a liberal education program focusing on the integrative nature of knowledge, a study concentrating on great works and revealed knowledge. We could study biology starting with Aristotle, mathematics from Ptolemy, and chemistry beginning with Dalton, all the while making connections to the larger world each man lived in by studying history, literature, and philosophy. We could continue, perhaps accelerate, our de-emphasis on lecture and learning to increase faith as an element of academic studies.

SCENARIOS FOR A DISCUSSION-BASED, LIBERAL EDUCATION MODEL

Implementation could start in a faculty discussion group with three objectives: to rehearse leading discussions with colleagues, to practice the roles of discussants, and to build confidence and enthusiasm with the program. Discussion would emphasize quality of questions, uses

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of supporting materials, versatility and logic in thought, and effective communication in speech and writing.

A number of curricular models could successfully administer a discussion-based liberal education. Tables A, B, and C and the descriptions that follow them outline a four-year model, a two-year model, and a one-year model respectively. With slight modification, a three-year model could be sketched. Each outlines topics to be studied within a set of generalized disciplines. These are only examples; the specific content for each topic can be modified and should be reviewed frequently. The primary goal is to cultivate independent learning capacities within students, not mastery of a set of texts or passages or authors. Texts for courses are original works or their translations.

Advantages and disadvantages occur in each model. Table D presents a summary of these for each example. Disadvantages are primarily time-based. For instance a one-year program would load up a student's first year, not leaving much opportunity to begin major study in a discipline. For disciplines requiring a four-year sequence of major courses—chemistry, physics, music—this is a concern. A two-year program would be more manageable in this respect. A four-year model might be ideal from the curriculum standpoint, but could pose challenges to articulation agreements. Flexibility is the key, however, and even using more than one basic model could be contemplated.

In its one-year or two-year forms, this program would replace the current general education system and would consist of 24 credits.⁸ The four-year model would replace general education and the religious education requirement.⁹

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	Language and Literature	Arts	History and Political Science	Mathematics and Natural Science	Religion
First Year: Ancient Foundations (F101, F102) 4000 BC-AD 400	Homer Sophocles Socrates, Plato Roman Writers Ovid, Virgil	Egyptian, Greek and Roman Art and Architecture	Egypt Greece Babylon Roman Empire	Euclid Aristotle (Logic and Geometry)	Pearl of Great Price Book of Mormon (1 Nephi-Alma) Old Testament
Second Year: Medieval and Renaissance Foundations (F201, F202) AD 400-AD 1650	St. Augustine Dante, Chaucer, Machiavelli Shakespeare	Medieval Art Architecture Gothic Age Renaissance Music	Feudal Europe Late Middle Ages Renaissance	Copernicus, Galileo Newton (Algebra and Astronomy)	New Testament Book of Mormon (Helaman-Moroni) Apostasy Reformation
Third Year: Foundations of the Restoration (F301, F302) AD 1650-AD 1900	British Literature Adam Smith Enlightenment	Baroque, Classical Music 18th Century Architecture 19th Century Art	Colonization Revolutions (Europe and America)	Lavoisier Dalton Darwin (Chemistry and Biology)	Doctrine and Covenants Church History Lectures on Faith Jesus the Christ
Fourth Year: Modern Foundations (F401, F402) AD 1900-present	Orwell Huxley American Literature	Romantic, Modern Art and Music Cinema	20th Century History World at War Secular Humanism	Einstein Watson, Crick, et al. Pauling (Physics and Modern Topics)	Teachings of the Living Prophets

Religion will be the primary focus of study during one third of the class time and will be interspersed among discussion of other subjects.

In the four-year model, each course is assigned five credits and meets four class hours per week with a two- or three-hour laboratory. The laboratory will be used for exploration of scientific principles, synthesis and analysis of scientific data, critiquing music, writing, presentation of original compositions (writing, music), and special tutorials. Religion will be the primary focus of study during one third of the class time (five weeks within a 14-week semester) and will be interspersed among discussion of other subjects.

Table B. Two-year Liberal Education Curricular Model

	Language, Literature, and Philosophy	Arts	History and Political Science	Mathematics and Natural Science
First Year: Ancient Foundations (F101, F102) 4000 BC-AD 1400	Homer Sophocles Socrates, Plato Ovid, Virgil St. Augustine Dante, Chaucer Machiavelli	Egyptian, Greek and Roman Art and Architecture Medieval Art and Architecture Gothic Age Renaissance Music	Egypt Greece Babylon Roman Empire Feudal Europe Late Middle Ages Renaissance	Euclid Aristotle (Logic and Geometry) Copernicus, Galileo Newton (Algebra and Astronomy)
Second Year: Renaissance/Modern Foundations (F201, F202) AD 1400-present	Shakespeare and British Literature Adam Smith Enlightenment Orwell Huxley American Literature	Baroque, Classical Music 18th Century Architecture 19th Century Art Romantic Modern Art and Music Cinema	Colonization Revolutions (Europe and America) 20th Century History World at War Secular Humanism	Lavoisier Dalton Darwin (Chemistry and Biology) Einstein Watson, Crick, et al. Pauling (Physics and Modern Topics)

In the two-year model, each class is assigned six credits per semester and meets five hours a week with one two- or three-hour laboratory. Unlike the one-year model, mathematics and science are not separated from arts and letters into a different class. The laboratory is used for exploration of scientific principles, synthesis and analysis of scientific data, critiquing music, writing, presentation of original compositions (writing, music), and special tutorials.

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Table C. One-year Liberal Education Curricular Model			
	F101, 102: Arts and Letters (6 credits/semester)	F103,104: World Civilizations (3 credits/semester)	F105,106: Math and Science (3 credits/semester)
Ancient and Medieval Foundations (4000 BC-AD 1400)	Letters and Arts Homer Sophocles Socrates, Plato Egyptian, Greek and Roman Art, Architecture St. Augustine Dante/Chaucer Medieval Art Gothic Age Renaissance Music	Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece Roman Empire Muslim World Feudal Europe Late Middle Ages	Euclid Aristotle (Logic and Geometry) Copernicus, Galileo Newton (Algebra and Astronomy)
Renaissance and Modern Foundations (AD 1400-present)	Shakespeare and British Literature Adam Smith Enlightenment Baroque, Classical Music 19th Century Art Orwell Huxley American Literature Romantic Modern Art/Music Cinema	Renaissance Colonization Revolutions (Europe and America) 20th Century History World at War Secular Humanism	Lavoisier Dalton Darwin (Chemistry and Biology) Einstein Watson, Crick, et al. Pauling (Physics and Modern Topics)

In the one-year model, Foundations 101 and 102 are assigned six credits per semester and meet five hours a week with one two- or three-hour laboratory. F103, 104 and F105, 106 are each assigned three credits per semester, with F103/104 meeting two or three times per week and F105/106 meeting two hours per week with a three-hour laboratory. The three classes together constitute twelve credits per semester. The laboratory is used for exploration of scientific principles, synthesis and analysis of scientific data, critiquing music, writing, presentation of original compositions (writing, music), and special tutorials.

Table D. Advantages and Disadvantages of Curricular Model		
	Advantages	Disadvantages
Four-year model	<p>Constant undercurrent of liberal education accompanying major study</p> <p>Presents religion in concert with other disciplines rather than segmented</p> <p>Could accommodate a senior thesis project tying the student's discipline with core subject matter</p>	<p>Potential difficulty with incoming or outgoing transfer students</p> <p>Board of Trustees must be convinced of the benefits of integrating religious education with other courses</p> <p>Some skill-intensive subjects (e.g., math) are not discussed in a concentrated fashion; this may be a difficulty for less prepared students</p>
Two-year model	<p>More flexibility with transfer students</p> <p>6 cr/semester still allows students to begin major program studies</p> <p>Disciplines not separated</p>	<p>Major sequencing likely still required</p> <p>Religion still compartmentalized</p>
One-year model	<p>Easier to incorporate into current University system</p> <p>All freshmen oriented to a more rigorous environment through taking Foundations before other courses</p>	<p>12 cr/semester; difficult to begin major program</p> <p>Knowledge still segmented into arts/letters, history, and math/science</p> <p>Completed in one year, may perpetuate "getting out of way" mentality</p>

At five credits per semester, the entire four-year sequence would compose 40 credits. Some adjustment of majors, in terms of sequenced courses, would be necessary. An initial set of classical works would be specified in the all-required program, subject to periodic assessment and revision. Additionally, some LDS works would be required university-wide, such as the Standard Works and perhaps Joseph Smith's *Lectures on Faith* or Talmage's *Jesus the Christ*. The Board may require some convincing to combine the study of religion with other curricula, but I believe students will learn more of religion and its application in this liberal education program than in the current system that treats religion as a separate discipline. As religion is not compartmentalized in the life of a Christian, so it ought not to be compartmentalized in study.

The seminar method is a necessary ingredient of the curricular models, so implementation would require training faculty in Socratic questioning and inquiry-based classroom activities. Likewise, the role of faculty as exemplary learners would be emphasized. Since BYU-Idaho will retain multiple major options, most faculty will remain experts in their fields. Even so, the goal should be for students to see faculty members as examples

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of being constantly engaged in learning, rather than as keepers of sets of facts and guardians of grade points awarded for recalling facts on multiple choice exams. A liberal arts program may have greater potential for and easier access to the kinds of research that students and faculty should engage in at BYU-Idaho.

REGARDING THE ACADEMIC CANON

There will be disquietude regarding the use of a required set of texts in all liberal education courses. But for two reasons standardization is necessary. First, as outlined previously, by having a set of texts common to all sections of liberal education, all students have a common knowledge base from which to participate in discussion. A sophomore reading Shakespeare's *The Tempest* can immediately converse with any other sophomore on campus. Fellow classmates within a major will be able to talk about how liberal education courses relate to their major courses of study because they will have studied the same texts. Yet, though the texts in each course may be the same, the experience of each student will be unique as he encounters the material in his own way. Each discussion in class will also be unique, as will individual conversations outside of class. In this manner, a unique academic experience will be offered to each student.

A second reason for a canon is to ensure equality from section to section in terms of academic rigor. It has been suggested (and rightly so) that the liberal education sequence should be among the most challenging courses on campus.¹⁰ Using a unified curriculum and addressing the manner of instruction in these courses will help to ensure that this is the case. There should be general agreement as to the cognitive level and the general method of instruction, i.e., discussion-based as opposed to lecture-based, for classes in the liberal education sequence.

There will also be an ongoing discussion about what to canonize. My model has included primarily Western civilization. One reason for this is that the Restoration of the Gospel has been primarily a Western phenomenon. Texts from Asia, India, Meso-America, and other areas should be considered as well, particularly as the Church becomes an increasingly global entity.¹¹

CONCLUSION

This program will demand much more than the current general education curriculum. It will require both students and faculty to be diligent, reflective scholars, engaged in a comprehensive, rigorous, and challenging examination of some of the greatest literary, historical, and

scientific literature ever created. It will develop important abilities in critical reading, logical thinking, and written and oral communication.

This program may be considered beyond the reach of some of our current students. However, the program we design must cater to the students who will attend this institution in the long term, in addition to those who are here now. I strongly believe that, as Church membership continues to grow and the number of students who wish to attend BYU–Idaho increases, academic standards for this University will become more stringent as a matter of course. Moreover, we must ask ourselves if our offerings truly push our present students to reach beyond their current selves. Are they “seek[ing]...out of the best books...learning, even by study and also by faith” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:118), or do they gravitate towards the path of least resistance? To “learn by faith” requires a trial of faith (see Ether 12:6), and the witness received as students and faculty extend themselves beyond their current limits can be truly rewarding. To paraphrase the Master Teacher, we should ask ourselves what manner of student, what manner of faculty, what manner of University ought we to be (see 3 Nephi 27:27)? As we collectively reach for our full academic potential, we honor the Lord by using the facilities He has granted us. ☺

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NOTES

1. Barr, R. B. & Tagg, J. “From Teaching to Learning—a New Paradigm for Undergraduate Education.” *Change*, 27 (10): 12-25 (1995).
2. Widstoe, J. A. “Evidences and Reconciliations: xlii. What is a Liberal Religion?” *Improvement Era*. October 1941, 43.
3. http://www.gwc.edu/newsletter_2000_oct.asp, accessed January 2006.
4. Clark, K. B. “Inaugural Response.” *BYU–Idaho Inaugural Ceremonies*, 11 Oct 2005.
5. www.stjohnscollege.edu, accessed January 2006. Nelson, C. A. “Radical Visions: Stringfellow Barr, Scott Buchanan, and their efforts on behalf of education and politics in the twentieth century,” *Bergin & Garvey*, 2001. My descriptions of the St. John’s Program are taken from Ref. 6 and part I (pp.3-65) of Nelson.
6. Dew, S. L. *Go Forward with Faith: The Biography of Gordon B. Hinckley*, Appendix B, “Press interview with Mike Wallace.” *Deseret Book*, 1996. Accessed on line through www.gospelink.com, January 2006.
7. Nelson, C. A., “Radical visions:..” p. 174.
8. It is assumed that some requirements, such as the foreign language requirement for a BA degree, would be appended to the major program.
9. Even so, it is not envisioned that religious education electives would be done away with, nor would other elective classes be done away with, such as physical education activity classes. It would be expected, however, that some elements of the current GE program (e.g., the basic skills requirement) would be obtained through other means than at present, perhaps through experiences in the activities program or in the university’s ecclesiastical units.

10. Jerry Hansen, Presentation to general education working committees, February 2006.
11. David Peck, private communication, March 2006.