

From: Larry Peterson

Sent: Thursday, December 04, 2014 11:58 AM

To: Amy Rupiper Taggart; Donald Schwert

Subject: RE: Quest: regrets about removal of science lab requirement

Don,

I'll echo Amy's thanks for your thoughtful comments. I remember in the GE revision of the 1990s that you were one of the most consistent and articulate commentators on the proposed changes.

I'll begin with the Committee history about this. At one point, some of us had actually advocated increasing the GE lab experiences with a two-semester linked sequence so students got a more in-depth exposure to the way a particular science interrogated the world. That died because of the lack of lab space and the potential scheduling difficulties.

Here are some relevant items from our minutes

January 28, 2014

- ✓ We next discussed whether labs were necessary and beneficial for students. Seth noted that the content of the lab students are presently doing in the GE courses is not very useful to them because it is scaled back so much.
 - We would like to explore if applied learning could be designed to be more beneficial to students.
 - Should it be an embedded requirement for all majors?

February 4, 2014

- Lab courses/applied learning – Are the present one-credit labs in the sciences valuable for non-science majors?
 - Larry and Kevin Walsh discussed this last week. Larry thinks that Student Government will ask about this in one of their new weekly polls.

Student government never did the poll. As I re-read the minutes and refresh my memory, I believe the decision came down to the perception that our present labs were just students "following directions in a

cookbook” in many cases and that unless we could offer a more robust experience it was not a good use of time and resources.

I also certainly agree with Amy that in no way is this model “cast in stone.” The purpose of this and other meetings is to get feedback so we can improve it.

lp