

From: SLRP II PPS Subcommittee¹

To: Curriculum Committee

Re: *Revised: A Proposal for a Substantial Integration of Principled Problem Solving with the Guilford College General Education Curriculum*

Date: March 18, 2013

Background

The naming and development of Principled Problem Solving as a significant aspect of the Guilford College educational experience is well underway. For several academic years, the Center for Principled Problem Solving has worked with students, faculty and staff to define and implement PPS courses, projects, programs and events. PPS, in name, approach, and content is beginning to fulfill its pedagogical potential for drawing together in meaningful ways our community's focus on values and the ethical dimensions of knowledge with our equally important commitment to fostering the practical application of this knowledge. PPS, it might be said, provides opportunities to both deepen the educational experience while increasing the relevance of our shared learning to the worlds in which we live.

The campus-wide recognition of and participation in PPS efforts is now at a critical stage. Although a significant number of faculty and a growing number of students and staff have been involved in PPS efforts, broadening the embrace of PPS in name, content and approach must increase if this is to become a recognized core of the Guilford College experience. To this end, the CPPS is increasing its efforts to collaborate with departments and programs to identify and support PPS undertakings.² The Curriculum Committee approved PPS designator for courses and seminars hosted by the Center will aid in this effort. And supportive attention given to the approved FYE 101 Learning Outcome that focuses on a complex problem will expand discussion of the PPS Foundations curricular tier. But in order to move PPS

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² The CPPS has provided interested faculty with resources (money, programming development and support, course release associated with the CPPS Faculty Fellowship program) to aid in defining, developing and doing PPS. Recently, the CPPS made available research and development grants for faculty interested in exploring and designing possible PPSE Minor curricula. As the integration of PPS with the Gen Ed curriculum moves forward, the CPPS will make similar funds available for faculty for the purposes of relevant research, course and syllabus design or redesign, etc. The CPPS will work with Faculty Development to create appropriate structures and resources for the development of PPS related teaching and learning opportunities.

toward a more central role in the life of the College it is necessary that it become more substantially integrated with the curriculum.

Subsequent to an initial review by Curriculum Committee, this proposal has been reviewed and revised by the Subcommittee in light of current thinking and in reaction to input from faculty, students and staff. The proposal has been shared with the CPPS Faculty Fellows,³ the SLRP Coordinating Committee,⁴ and with the campus in a Community Time open discussion. An accompanying document, Appendix 1, includes written feedback from faculty.

The following proposal for further integration of PPS with the curriculum targets the General Education Program for three reasons:

1. The original intent for the PPS idea and effort clearly included the establishment of a broad and substantial PPS presence in the curriculum, particularly within the General Education program. From the first SLRP, “Across the curriculum, preparation for and participation in PPS will become a central feature of student, staff and faculty experiences at Guilford College,” (pg. 20) and, “Though we must be sensitive to the different needs and learning styles of adult and traditional-aged learners, *problem solving will become a focus for our general education requirements in our “practical liberal arts” curriculum* [emphasis added]. (21)
2. The components of the General Education program offer a coherent structure for the increased curricular integration of PPS that will encourage faculty participation in ways consistent with creative pedagogy, intellectual integrity, and academic freedom. And in moving forward in this manner, PPS will become an integral part of the Guilford educational experience rather than a relevant add-on.
3. The uniqueness and importance of the College’s commitment to PPS—and thus to this Guilford-specific educational experience—deserves to be emphasized in a manner that reflects the shared wisdom of the faculty that is expressed in our General Education framework.⁵

³ Past and present CPPS Faculty Fellows include: Nancy Daukas, Kyle Dell, Sherry Giles, David Hammond, Karen Hayes, Jeff Jeske, Jack Zerbe

⁴ SLRP Coordinating Committee membership: Kathy Adams, Melanie Lee-Brown, Erin Dell, Kyle Dell, Kent Grumbles, Jeff Favolise, Mark Justad, Stephanie Kriner, Alan Mueller, Jack Zerbe

⁵ This document has been prepared and discussed with an internal focus, drawing primarily upon Guilford’s curricular and planning documents and the solicited input of faculty and administrators. However, the effort to invest colleges, and more specifically, liberal arts curricula, with effective and ethical practice, can be found nation-wide among a broad range of institutions. This effort has been spurred both by key individuals in academic leadership positions and by organizations such as the American Association of Colleges and Universities and the Carnegie Foundation. As such, there are good resources and on-going research and collaborative discussions available to the college moving forward with this effort. It is worth noting, however, that the attempt to infuse our curriculum with

The goal of the following proposal is to start a significant conversation on how we can best integrate PPS further into the College curriculum, first with the Curriculum Committee and eventually with the faculty as a whole as indicated by established governance and decision-making policies. No doubt there are many areas that will require discussion with a proposal of this nature and many of them have already come to our attention after preliminary discussions of this set of ideas. However, and as mentioned above, the timing is right for a renewed faculty discussion of PPS at Guilford and so the items below are offered as a whole and in the spirit of dialogue and with the assumption that there is much to be discussed on the way toward a more mature proposal.

Proposal

The College should revise the General Education program to reflect a major emphasis on Principled Problem Solving. This can be done in a manner that draws upon the three curricular tiers of PPS (foundations, narratives and practices, applications), PPS learning outcomes developed for this proposal, PPS learning outcomes developed and used in the PPS Scholars Program, builds upon and enhances the interdisciplinary aspects of the general education curriculum and furthers additional priorities of Guilford's General Education curriculum.

The proposal is designed to accomplish the integration of PPS with the General Education program in both name and substance. The proposal includes four parts that may be implemented independent of each other or undertaken simultaneously. Parts 1-3 integrate PPS with existing components of the General Education curriculum and require no substantial changes to current teaching and staffing models. Part 4 is a one-credit addition to the General Education curriculum that offers students a substantial opportunity for reflection on their PPS efforts over the course of their tenure at Guilford. Part 4 would require additional staffing for this one-credit laboratory. This document suggests a two-year plan to be accomplished in successive academic years.

Given that the CPPS was established to develop and promote PPS, this proposal assumes that the Center will play a significant role in advancing the proposed undertakings. Exactly how this will play out is to be determined but it is assumed that both administrative and financial support will come from the Center to implement this proposal. To date, the CPPS has supported Faculty Fellowships and departmental and individual faculty undertakings with expertise as well as financial and administrative support. It is the intention of the CPPS to continue to support faculty members as resources are available. As with all curricular matters, however,

PPS is ambitious by comparison and unusual in its focus on seeking broad faculty guidance and ownership.

it is assumed that responsibility for the final scope and nature of PPS curricular integration falls within the realm of the established faculty governance structure.

The proposal includes four substantial suggestions listed here and discussed below:

- 1) FYE 101, the first year seminar, should be renamed *PPS 100* and emphasis be placed on the relevant PPS related faculty-approved learning outcome in use since the Fall of 2011. [Fall 2013]
- 2) Explorations—Critical Perspectives should be renamed *Explorations—Principled Problem Solving Perspectives*, a PPS learning outcome proposed below should be added to these courses and the individual course category (DUS, Intercultural, Social Justice/Environmental Responsibility) criteria be revised or expanded in a relevant manner. [Fall 2014]
- 3) The IDS 400 title is replaced with *PPS 400* for courses fulfilling the IDS capstone requirement. This change would require both the addition of a PPS learning outcome to these capstone courses as well as the addition of meaningful hands on engagement indicative of the PPS Applications curricular category for some capstone courses. [Fall 2015]
- 4) A one credit *PPS 400 Laboratory* focusing on Principled Problem Solving reflection and integration should be created and required of all seniors.

Discussion

1) PPS 100 (Fall, 2013)

Current “PPS” General Education Foundations Learning Outcome:

Students will describe the ethical implications of a complex problem using two different disciplinary perspectives.

Beginning the fall semester of 2013, FYE 101, which already carries the approved PPS learning outcome stated above, should carry the label PPS 100. (Note: FYE 102 might be renamed FYE 100 and continue its current focus. The separation of the two classes may actually be less confusing for students.)

These courses would retain the established FYE 101 learning outcomes and continue the practice of asking faculty to create unique interdisciplinary seminars that draw upon their expertise and interests. The FYE program and staff would continue to shepherd these courses and work with incoming students as they currently do.

Two changes would be undertaken to make first year seminars consistent with the PPS 100 designation:

- a. PPS 100 syllabi will include a section that explains what Principled Problem Solving is and how it is integrated into Guilford's curriculum. Standard language for this purpose would be drafted, approved and made available through the Faculty Conference Moodle session for faculty to include in syllabi.⁶
- b. Faculty will clearly indicate the aspect or aspects of their PPS 100 seminar that help students accomplish the approved PPS related FYE 101 learning outcome (see above). The CPPS, in cooperation with Faculty Development and FYE leadership, will convene workshops to help faculty develop this aspect of their PPS 100 syllabus. The Center could, on a regular basis, host guest speakers, student events, etc., during the fall semester designed to introduce PPS to all first year students while drawing on topics, approaches, etc., found in PPS 100 courses. Faculty will have the opportunity to incorporate these events into their syllabi as desired. This first-semester introduction to PPS has the potential for further development as the FYE program leadership, PPS 100 faculty, and CPPS staff see both possible and appropriate.

2) Explorations--Principled Problem Solving Perspectives (Fall, 2014)

Proposed PPS General Education Explorations Learning Outcome:

Students will analyze a problem that has ethical dimensions.

The General Education Explorations—Critical Perspectives courses will be renamed *Explorations—Principled Problem Solving Perspectives*, beginning fall semester of 2014. The four category names of these explorations, Diversity in the U.S., Intercultural, Social Justice/Environmental Responsibility, will retain their titles but

⁶ Possible standard syllabus language: **Principled Problem Solving (PPS) at Guilford** Guilford College has identified PPS as a core element of the Guilford educational experience and is in the process of creating, identifying and enhancing PPS opportunities throughout the curriculum. PPS is focused on efforts to effectively put the Colleges' core values (community, diversity, equality, excellence, integrity, justice & stewardship) to work in the world. Complete information about PPS at Guilford and the Center for Principled Problem Solving can be found on the College's web site at: <http://www.guilford.edu/academics/principled-problem-solving>.

The PPS curricular levels include:

- a. *PPS Foundations*: This level of PPS seeks to identify and/or understand a specific problem or opportunity using discipline-based critical analysis, and the use of values-based reflection.
- b. *PPS Narratives and Practices*: This level examines and assesses case studies or examples of PPS from across the globe.
- c. *PPS Applications*: This involves observing, planning and/or executing hands on efforts to engage real world problems or opportunities guided by one or more of Guilford's seven core values.

the established criteria will be revised or expanded to include a PPS lens or emphasis building on the proposed learning outcome, “Students will analyze a problem that has ethical implications.” Discussion with faculty about the nature and scope of the revisions to the existing CP criteria required for this change will be facilitated through the Curriculum Committee. The middle tier of the PPS curriculum focusing on case studies may provide a framework for this discussion. This series of changes will help our students to make a more explicit connection between the PPS Perspectives courses, the College’s core values, and PPS aspects of the curriculum as a whole.

The new PPS category would function in the same way as the current critical perspectives courses do (double-counting between various other requirements). As with the discussion of PPS 100 above, the Center will support and work with faculty as deemed appropriate to develop PPS focused pedagogical resources and activities. And while the wholesale renaming of these courses (from Critical Perspectives to *Principled Problem Solving Perspectives*) may at first seem too broad in scope, a closer look at the actual requirements of the courses that fulfill these requirements are clearly consistent with the PPS approach.

The inclusion of the proposed PPS learning outcome in classes carrying the Social Justice/Environmental Responsibility designation is a relatively natural extension of the SJ/ER criteria. Given that students in these classes are to become better prepared to be agents of change by, among other things, examining possible methods of seeking change on the personal, social or institutional levels, the problem articulation required of the learning outcome is already implied. Further, these courses are to help students explore “possible meanings of justice and responsibility in relation to society and/or the environment.” Requiring the articulation of a moral stance (or moral stances) is, of course, consistent with Guilford’s notion of principled problem solving in both method and approach. (See Appendix 2 for the SJ/ER requirements in full.)

The Diversity in the U.S. category also includes criteria that potentially match with the intent of the proposed learning outcome above. For example, given that these classes are to emphasize cultures and identities that have been underrepresented or undervalued in U.S., using relevant texts, presentations, or assignments to examine why the underrepresentation has occurred could address the PPS learning outcome specifically. Also, the criterion for these classes that reads, “Courses will challenge the assumption that there is one neutral American culture or identity and that other expressions are non-normative and inferior,” suggests the explicit engagement of a problem that has ethical dimensions, namely the hegemony of the dominant culture cloaked in neutrality. (See Appendix 2 for DUS requirements in full.)

The requirements for the courses that fulfill the Intercultural requirement suggest substantial consonance with the PPS learning outcome proposed above. Courses meeting this requirement are, among other things, required to “examine issues from multiple perspectives” and to “stimulate comparative thinking about values.” These stated requirements mesh nicely with a values-based consideration of a major

problem. In addition, the broad goal of this category of classes of helping our students to be able to deal “responsibly with international issues” could no doubt be advanced by the examination of the ethical dimensions of broad cross-cultural issues or events. (See Appendix 2 for Intercultural requirements in full.)

3) PPS 400 Capstone (Fall, 2014)

Proposed PPS General Education PPS 400 Learning Outcome:

Students will propose and may undertake a collaborative and values-based response to a real world problem.

By fall semester of 2014 General Education capstone courses will be titled *PPS 400* capstone courses and will offer our students a senior level PPS experience. The long-term goal will be to maximize the number of capstone courses with significant PPS Application experiences defined in the approved PPS curriculum as, “observing, planning and/or executing hands on efforts to engage real world problems or opportunities guided by one or more of Guilford’s seven core values.” Not all *PPS 400* capstones would have to include a hands on experience but would be required to integrate the above PPS learning outcome in a substantial manner while continuing to accomplish the intentional interdisciplinary focus currently required of IDS 400 courses. One goal of this change is to offer students a high-level academically framed experience of PPS integration. Another goal of this transition is to generate high-quality PPS Applications level undertakings that meet IDS and faculty expectations and provide our students with a memorable senior PPS experience.

As with the suggestions above in the Foundations and Explorations areas, the necessary criteria for this new category would need to be discussed, drafted and approved by faculty with the goal of expanding on the current strengths of IDS 400 and filling out PPS in a uniquely Guilford fashion. In addition, it is anticipated that the Center will work with faculty over time to identify and coordinate hands on PPS 400 applications experiences to allow for coordination, shared projects, collective impact, etc.

4) PPS 400 Laboratory (2015-2016)⁷

The *PPS 400 Lab* (or *PPS Capstone Lab*) is a one-credit course required of all seniors. Four fast track sessions of the Lab would be offered during the academic year with

⁷ The PPS Lab was added to this proposal at the request of the Curriculum Committee in a review of an earlier version of this document. It was thought that the addition of the Lab would make for a more visible and robust integration of PPS and the General Education curriculum overall and provide one more way to bring CCE students directly into the PPS framework. Alternatives to a one-credit lab that would require additional staffing might include a one-credit online reflection assignment or even a zero credit PPS Lab requirement. In the Community Time meeting to discuss this proposal, students, faculty and staff seemed supportive of the opportunity for students to engage in this kind of reflective learning opportunity but concerns about staffing, the additional credit, and adding to the workload of senior students were raised.

class time totaling 12 contact hours. Summer or J-Term sections of the Lab might be offered as well. Seniors would take the Lab either while enrolled in the PPS 400 course or after that course had been completed. The lab would be staffed as the FYE 102 lab is staffed and instructors would teach from a common syllabus to be created and submitted to Curriculum Committee for approval. The Lab would facilitate structured reflection on the PPS elements of students' Guilford experience in a small group setting with guidance and support from an instructor. The curriculum would include discipline specific and experiential learning components tied to PPS and conclude with a written or performed outcome that could be integrated with the e-portfolio. CCE students would be encouraged to integrate their broader life experience into the work of the Lab. Emphasis on PPS tools and method, ethics and leadership, identifiable talents and skills might be included. The course would have the additional advantage of offering students the opportunity of placing their cumulative Guilford experience into intentional dialogue with expectations for life after college, adding an important of reflective integration to the senior experience. These labs would not be discipline specific but might be grouped by themes or media students wish to use to accomplish their reflective integration, e.g., creative writing, film, etc.

Concluding Remarks

The proposal above, if adopted in the whole, would substantially advance the integration of PPS with the College curriculum. It would mean that all entering traditional students would encounter PPS in their first semester, that traditional and CCE students would be exposed to PPS in the PPS Perspectives courses and PPS 400 capstone courses, that many students would experience PPS 400 hands-on projects, and that all students would complete a senior PPS Lab with a focus on individual integration. The senior lab would have the additional advantage of being personalized to meet the life and professional expectations of CCE students who will not have the structured introduction to PPS found in the PPS 100 courses.⁸ Of course the General Education program is not the only place that PPS is to found on campus. Students and faculty also have the opportunity to undertake PPS experiences through the Center's programs and projects or in the College's classes and programs that

⁸ A required course-based introduction to PPS (PPS 100) for CCE and transfer students could further strengthen this proposal. Given the current pressure on the overall curricular requirements and some concern that Adult Transitions would not serve as an adequate vehicle for the introduction of PPS, no addition in this area has been suggested above. Several things suggest that this lack is not as important as it may first seem. First, all students will be engaged in PPS learning outcomes in both the PPS Explorations and PPS Capstone levels. Second, the PPS Lab allows for the integration of life and work experience within the PPS framework that should be of particular relevance to CCE students. Third, departments and programs, including the CPPS, provide students with course-based and project-based PPS learning opportunities accessible across a student's tenure at the college. Working with departments to identify how their students engage PPS specifically might help in drawing CCE students' educational experience more closely into dialogue with PPS. Additionally, if there is a perceived need to add an entry level required introduction to PPS for CCE students, it would seem wise to shape it to meet the experience and expectations of the CCE population.

already reflect a PPS approach or content. This proposal, however, will expose many more students to the values-based educational experience that Guilford is putting forward as Principled Problem Solving.