

Model I.A Distributive Model

HOPE

Thinking Through **HOPE**: The Heart
Of
Purposeful
Education

PLU aims to produce global citizens, future leaders, and whole, richly-informed persons. At the heart of the university is the general education curriculum—**HOPE**. Through this program of study, students begin the process of shaping not only a career, but more importantly a life of meaning and purpose. This general education, in which students grapple with life's most fundamental questions, is deepened and complemented by the specialized work students undertake in their majors.

HOPE gives each student a broad based foundation of knowledge across a wider range of disciplines, develops diverse ways of thinking and establishes multiple frameworks for understanding self, others, and the world. HOPE prepares students for further study in pursuit of a vocation dedicated to “thoughtful inquiry, service, leadership, and care—for other people, for their communities, and for the earth.”

First Year Experience Program: 4-8 separate semester hours

Inquiry Seminar: Writing (4 semester hours)

Inquiry Seminar: 190 (4 semester hours—double dips with a GUR or major requirement)

January Term (4 semester hours—usually double dips with a GUR or major requirement)

History Cultures, and the Natural World: 20 semester hours

Science and Scientific Method (4 semester hours)

Natural Science, Computer Science, or Math (4 semester hours)

Mathematical Reasoning (4 semester hours)

Anthropology, History or Political Science (4 semester hours)

Economics, Psychology, Sociology, or Social Work (4 semester hours)

Creativity, Critical Interpretation, and Reasoning: 16 semester hours

Art, Music, or Theater (4 semester hours)

Literature (4 semester hours)

Philosophy (4 semester hours)

Religion (4 semester hours)

Two **Perspectives on Diversity**--fulfilled by courses taken for the Core or within the major.

Physical Education (4 semester hours)

Senior Seminar/Project (2-4 semester hours—double dips with major requirement)

Total Hours: 44-48 separate hours

Model I.B Distributive

The PLU Experience

The PLU Experience gives each student a broad based foundation of knowledge across a wide range of disciplines, develops diverse ways of thinking and establishes multiple frameworks for understanding self, others and the world. The PLU Experience prepares students for further study in pursuit of a vocation dedicated to thoughtful inquiry, service, leadership and care.

The Common Experience: 20-24 separate semester hours

The common experience begins with the First Year Experience Program and continues through a carefully crafted set of requirements designed to educate the whole person in body, mind and spirit and to spark personal, community and global values for care, leadership and service. The Common Experience melds academic challenge with co-curricular experiences to set the foundation for further study.

- First Year Experience
 - Writing (4 semester hours)
 - Inquiry Seminar (4 semester hours, double dips with a general or major requirement)
 - January Term (4 semester hours, but usually double dips with a general or major requirement)
- Mathematical Reasoning (4 semester hours)
- Science and Scientific Method (4 semester hours)
- Perspectives on Diversity: Alternative Perspectives & Cross Cultural Perspectives (8 semester hours—double dip with courses taken for a general or major requirement)
- Physical Education (4 semester hours)
- Religious Studies (4 semester hours)

The Core & Capstone Experience: 24 separate semester hours

The Core continues through a personalized selection of courses in the liberal arts and sciences. These courses provide further challenges and opportunities to develop the perspectives and skills necessary to embody the PLU mission. The Capstone is the culmination of the Common Experience, Core and Major Program requiring a demonstration of both the breadth and depth of knowledge necessary to pursue a vocation and life dedicated to thoughtful inquiry, service, leadership and care.

- Art, Music & Theater (4 semester hours)
- Literature (4 semester hours)
- Philosophy (4 semester hours)
- Anthropology, History or Political Science (4 semester hours)
- Economics, Psychology, Sociology or Social Work (4 semester hours)
- Natural Sciences, Computer Sciences or Mathematics (4 semester hours)
- Senior Seminar (2-4 semester hours—double dips with major requirement)

The PLU Experience embodies the mission of the University, and together with the Major Programs provides all PLU graduates with a high quality, distinctive education as expressed in the Integrative Learning Objectives and embraced in the Principles and Guidelines of General Education as adopted by the PLU Faculty. Regardless of major program or vocational pursuit, the Common Experience makes us each a Lute!

Total Hours: 44-48

Summary and evaluation

Model I A and B: Distributive

Overview: These distributive models provide a fairly standard range of distribution requirements. One frames them in the language of **HOPE: The Heart of Purposeful Education**; the other as **The PLU Experience**. In both, requirements are organized in some way rather than just listed. **HOPE** requires the Freshman Year Experience Program, 20 semester hours of “History, Cultures, and the Natural World” and 16 semester hours of “Creativity, Critical Interpretation, and Reasoning.” **The PLU Experience** is organized into two parts: 20-24 hours in “The Common Experience” and 24 hours in “The Core and Capstone Experience.”

Evaluation: Because our current Core I requirements are distributive, one of the strengths of a distributive model is familiarity: we know that we can afford it (III.1.a), we know how to guide students (first-year and transfer) through it (III.3.a), and we know how to plan for it. The framing language adds a coherence (II.2.a) both by grouping the requirements into categories and by providing a rationale for general education (II.3.a). The framing language and clustering show that a distributive model *can* be intentional in design and *can* demonstrate coherence. As the framing language often draws directly from the “Principles of General Education” (II.1.b) and the “Guidelines for PLU’s General Education Program,” both models reflect what the faculty collectively value (and formally adopted) in terms of our heritage and mission and our academic and curricular goals (I and II generally). The framing language for both models emphasizes the importance of vocation (I.1.g), and the **HOPE** plan calls further attention to questions of value and meaning and the whole person (I.1.b,d), thereby implicitly tying the requirements to a Lutheran tradition (I.3.a, b). In addition, **The PLU Experience** framing language specifically references the importance of the liberal arts and sciences (I.1.e), the ILOs (II.1.a), the Principles of General Education (II.1.b), discernment and formulation of values (II.4.d), and interactions with others (II.4.e).

There are limitations to these models, however, as sometimes the framing language overstates its claims. For example, while the framing language indicates a goal of producing “global citizens” (I.4.a) and caring for the earth (I.4.c), students are not required to take coursework that confronts such concerns. Some values articulated in the guidelines, such as an acknowledgement of place (I.5.a), are addressed neither in the framing language nor in the course requirements. The program would still require oversight to ensure that courses are rigorous (I.1.a), that they attend to vocation (I.1.g), and that ILOs are met (II.1.a). In the **HOPE** plan, while the framing language claims a relationship with majors, nothing is curricularly in place to ensure that a mutually supportive and informing relationship occurs (II.6.a). In **The PLU Experience**, the relationship between general education and the major is vested solely and then only linguistically in the capstone, and it makes no reference to stimulated faculty (II.9.c).

(This summary is based on the longer evaluations which can be found at plu.edu/~gened.)