Rationale:
Liberal arts colleges are often criticized for providing a “knowledge for the sake of knowledge” style of education. The essence of the liberal arts in practice, however, is not knowledge for the sake of knowledge, but knowledge gained and/or applied outside of the classroom. This connection between our programs and the world at large is the critical link that differentiates a liberal arts in practice education from simply a liberal arts education, and it provides extraordinary meaning and value to what Beloit offers. Our faculty, students, and alumni seek to engage with, improve, and learn from the world around us through programs ranging from internships, research, and entrepreneurship to sustainability, volunteering, and community action.

Description:
If learning and/or applying knowledge beyond the classroom is central to the DNA of a Beloit education, and it represents a good solution to market demands, then a key question is: how can we expand our strength in this area? Some possibilities:

- **Replace traditional majors and departments with interdisciplinary development domains.** The question we should be asking students is not what do you want to major in, but what do you want to do in the world? The answer to this question is the dream a student harbors as she searches for a college and navigates her way through life in college and beyond. What might the domains look like? Some possibilities include health and wellness, education and research, nonprofit and public service, business and entrepreneurship, technology and innovation, fine and performing arts. If we were structured in this way, we could adjust the focal knowledge and skills prioritized in each of the interdisciplinary domains to be current with evolving needs (e.g., sustainability, global citizenship, business intelligence) instead of being married to isolated knowledge bases.

- **Create explicit, multi-stage, developmental programs for each of the interdisciplinary domains, (akin to what is already occurring in the sustainability program).** Each pathway could start with relevant coursework, then progress to student involvement in projects, and then, ultimately, student leadership of projects. The final stage would serve as both a program capstone and the fulfillment of a curricular liberal arts in practice requirement.

- **Award professional development certificates in key aspects of the interdisciplinary domains.** Some examples could include sustainability, leadership, organizational ethics, data analytics, and intercultural engagement. One recently proposed example of this is the “Mellon Leadership Certificate.” Mellon Leadership students would connect the intercultural literacy and leadership skills they gain in the classroom and in leadership settings, transfer this learning back and forth, and reflect on the entire process. This occurs in three steps: 1) Completing a menu of “C” courses and a leadership development course; 2) Performing an intercultural leadership role (on or off campus) while taking a concurrent seminar similar to the Duffy (structured, advised, monitored, mentored, reflective); 3) A final independent research project. These certificates would be credentials recognized on student transcripts.

- **Help every student develop an e-portfolio that reflects a rich body of intellectual, professional, and personal development.** This would be an electronically stored collection of a person's experiences, achievements and artifacts, together with their reflections on their own learning. Arming each student with such a platform would allow Beloit graduates to stand out in the post-college marketplace, and provide a much more robust representation of each student’s abilities to prospective employers, graduate programs, etc. than just a transcript. Indeed, more than 4 out of 5 employers say an electronic portfolio would be useful to them in ensuring that job applicants have the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in their company or organization.
A Beloit “Mod-Quad” Time-Structure Scenario

Rationale/Background
The community ideas submitted repeatedly and variously called for changes to our time structures, from the week to the year. These were tied to calls for more flexibility and diversity, more integrated coordination and connection among the elements of students’ education, deeper immersion in their experiences, and more capacity for realizing the liberal arts in practice. Rather than proposing a specific set of LAP initiatives, this scenario offers a broader structural framework within which a range of LAP components could be developed and implemented to allow the college to embark on a pathway of institutional experimentation around the liberal arts in practice.

Description
The academic year is recast into four 7-week modules (hence “mod-quad”) roughly aligned with our current semester system. Students typically take 2 units during each module for a total of 8 units a year. Faculty would normally teach 6 units a year (no more than 2 units per module, with variations of 2.1.2.1 load being typical). These modules could realize the following outcomes:

- offer students shorter and more intensely immersive coursework, while potentially enhancing their success by focusing and simplifying their concurrent areas of study.
- make interdisciplinary, experiential, and other collaborative integrative exchanges more logistically viable (with faculty and students engaged in fewer courses at a given time) as well as more central and vital as a conceptual framework. High-priority LAP initiatives (such as student work, internships, wellness, research projects, student-proposed courses, career development, and community engagement) would be more integrated into and structurally aligned with the general curriculum.
- allow faculty to bundle our current curriculum into these shorter modules while proactively encouraging more variable, interactive, and project-oriented pedagogies, such as labs, studios, fieldwork, and workshops to complement discussion and lecture components.

Some Possible Logistical Details
- Regular classes and LAP offerings could be .5 or 1-unit. Full-time students could enroll in 1.5-2.5 units per module. We could set some target graduation requirement for LAP units (2?) and total units (30 units?).
- Classes are offered 2x weekly in one of four blocks: M/TH or T/F for 3-hour blocks in morning or afternoon (e.g., 9-12 or 1-4). Half-unit offerings could use all or portion of regular blocks to meet various contact/workload variables. No classes on Wednesday, which is for projects, special activities, presentations, practicum, symposium etc. Major committee meetings on Wednesday 8-10 am.
- Faculty could offer one of the following each year instead of a regular 1-unit class (the “new 5+1”): a .5-unit tutorial (with smaller enrollment cap than normal), .5-unit class, or .5-unit LAP offering.
GAMIFYING BELOIT

Rationale:
College is in some ways already a game. The LAP has as part of its aims the goal of helping students break out of the traditional classroom-learning paradigm and actualize their education in meaningful ways, and gaming would be a productive paradigm for pursuing the LAP mission. This would be an opportunity to recast both Beloit and games in a new way. We would adopt games as a model for un-traditionalizing education, but also use Beloit to un-traditionalize approaches to gaming. In the essay "Gaming Literacy: Game Design as a Model for Literacy in the Twenty-first Century" (in 'The Video Game Theory Reader 2), Eric Zimmerman outlines a new definition of literacy based on systems, and argues that games are the best method for teaching students to be systems-literate. Since games, in theory and design, promote people's ability to operate productively within and around systems, they are a powerful way to prepare students to be versatile and cope with a variety of challenges in creative and meaningful ways.

Proposal:
Make games and gamification a core component of education at Beloit. While several faculty incorporate some element of games or play into their courses, a larger institutional commitment could prove rewarding for students, and help Beloit establish a more unique identity. Such a commitment could take one of three possible forms:

1. A new domain for Games, and a requirement that each department contribute to it in some form. Like the LAP requirement, it could have several options for how a course can contribute (e.g. Play, Game Design, Gaming Literacy).

2. An interdisciplinary major in Games Literacy. While this could involve departments like Computer Science, Art, or Creative Writing and resemble the type of Game Design majors taught at other institutions, it would be more broad and liberal arts-y in its aims--that is, it would stretch beyond design to establish and promote skills in games/systems literacy.

3. Reconceptualizing the FYI/semester/year/4-year experience on a grand scale as some sort of an ongoing game. The reflects the big picture ideas advanced in Jane McGonigal's book 'Reality is Broken.' Since in many ways college is already set up as a game (goals, rules, obstacles), this would not actually be as labor intensive as it may seem, but might be disruptive in just the right ways. It could even be a productive IDST project to imagine what this might look like, and we could perhaps create a track of students who want to 'play' Beloit, leaving others to pursue the more established experience if they so desire.

All of these approaches should be revenue neutral, since they rely on leveraging resources of people and place that Beloit already possesses. The Quest Academy in NY has pioneered approaches like this, and it has served to make them distinctive in the k-12 field.
The Liberal Arts in Practice... Amplified!

RATIONALE
The Beloit Project calls for us to put the Liberal Arts in Practice at the center of Beloit College’s operations. This proposal pulls together three themes that each run through multiple idea submissions, infusing the LAP into student employment, the class schedule, and the senior year. This both puts the LAP at the center of what we do, and opens up possibilities for many kinds of LAP experiences for students.

DESCRIPTION
1. At work
All student work--of any type--is a LAP opportunity for reflecting, making connections, and transferring skills (in both directions, from work to the classroom and vice versa). This involves training, mentoring, and development, but most importantly, it involves a clear plan for reflecting on the connections between the work (whatever it is) and other aspects of the Beloit experience and beyond. The facilitation of the LAP experience at work happens through the student’s advisors/mentors--both those directly connected with the student in the workplace, as well as the student’s academic advisor.

2. Through the class schedule
We currently have a schedule that distributes four courses over two 15-week blocks. A LAP class schedule shifts the two 15-week blocks of four courses each to two 12-week block of three courses each, plus a three-week block of one course. So students are still taking four courses over 15 weeks, but they are distributed differently (3-1/3-1 instead of 4/4, essentially). This opens up more opportunities for blocks-style teaching (both on and off campus, including short-term study abroad and other travel-oriented learning), where students have their full attention on one course for three weeks. Possible January and May terms would move the year from 4-4-1 now to 3-1-(1)-3-1-(1). Students would always take three courses in the twelve-week semesters, and then would utilize two or three of the three-week blocks. Faculty could distribute their typical 5-course load flexibly across these slots; some may teach largely/exclusively in the 12-week slots, while others might focus more on the 3-week slots.

3. In the senior capstone
The senior year is a kind of intersection--a time of both deep synthesis (especially through collaboration) and meaningful preparation. The senior year will thus conclude in the spring with a 2-unit capstone course, each taught by a two-person multidisciplinary faculty team, and each oriented around some issue or problem in the world (broadly construed, including local foci) that requires serious interdisciplinary thinking. The themes of the variety of capstone courses offered in a given year will be determined *both* by student interest and faculty capacity/expertise. Whatever the theme, these capstones will focus on bringing expertise from different disciplines to bear on understanding and addressing the issue/problem. Projects and assignments will focus on students interacting and collaborating with each other, and may (depending on the course) involve off-campus work. Another focus of the class will be on attending carefully to the meaning of this kind of synthetic experience for life beyond Beloit.
**Brainstorming scenario: the living liberal arts (LLA)**

**I. Rationale:**
The living liberal arts in a nutshell: create just enough structure to ensure that students cannot live, work, or learn here without being immersed in LAP at all times. This scenario seeks to facilitate a liberal arts education that is 1) broad, 2) deep, 3) exploratory, and 4) liberating. This proposal creates the minimal structures necessary to foster the creativity, collaboration, flexibility, and independence necessary to foster those four characteristics. Structural changes to curriculum, residential life, and student work will facilitate this “living liberal arts” education. *(note: for the purposes of this proposal, and in the spirit of the living liberal arts, many logistical details have been overlooked, with the hope that the proposed scenario creates the flexibility to account for some of those logistics)*

**II. Proposal:**

**A. Curriculum:** Classes will exist to provide structured support and facilitation of learning and exploration. Each semester, students will enroll in two courses, one independent team study, and complete one credit of college service.

- **Courses:** Taking only two courses at a time will allow courses to be longer, deeper, and more intensive. These courses will be interdisciplinary, inquiry-based, and collaborative in nature, and therefore further disciplinary graduation requirements should not be necessary—it will be impossible for students to complete their education at the College without being involved in multiple disciplines.

- **Independent team studies:** Teams of three to five students collaborate on a single undertaking for the semester. These teams can be composed of students from multiple years to encourage peer mentoring. These studies will be student-designed and will require submission and acceptance of a proposal. Examples of independent team studies: a Biochemistry independent study for four students that know they need background in biochemistry in order to succeed at the MCAT, or three second-year students interested in directing and producing a one-act play.

*To facilitate this curriculum, the College will need to revisit the paradigms of majors in their current incarnations.*

**B. Housing:**
Students live in intentionally designed co-operative communities on a smoke-free campus, and they are a part of their housing community for all four years of their college education. This means that any particular house will have first through fourth-years. These houses can be special interest based, but don’t have to be. Each student house is responsible for:

- Creating space to host one course and one wellness workshop per semester (classes on the residential side)
- Housekeeping and grounds for their house
- Meals in their house
- At least one City of Beloit community collaboration per year

**C. Student work:**
All students will be required to complete eight College Service credits, so they will work in service to the college every single semester that they are enrolled. This service will take the form of apprenticeships in College departments and offices. For example, students may work for grounds, accounting, chemistry department, etc. There will be incentives and structures in place to encourage students to stay in the same apprenticeship for at least two semesters, creating the possibilities for peer student mentoring and more meaningful projects.
Liberal Arts in Practice Developmental Stages

Rationale/Background
Within the Liberal Arts in Practice Developmental Model, we have indicated the developmental milestones for young alumni. However, our relationship with a student and our opportunities for development begin when we first make contact, when a student is considering attending the college. Strengthening the bookends of students’ four year education would lead to stronger relationships with two important constituencies and increase our impact on students’ lives.

Description
- **Stage One: Imagining the Liberal Arts** As prospective Beloiters, students are imagining themselves as Beloit College students. They are paired with an admissions counselor, who navigates the enrollment process, and a current student, who answers the specific questions about student life and academics. They attend a series of Liberal Arts in Practice learning opportunities, which bring together current students, faculty, and alumni. Examples include student-alumni panels for job shadowing trips and faculty-student research symposia. Students progress to the next stage once they matriculate.
- **Stage Two: Exploring the Liberal Arts** In their first year on campus, students explore the opportunities that Beloit offers, both in and beyond the classroom. They are paired with a First Year Initiative seminar, which includes an intentional cohort of peers, peer mentor (OL/TA), and faculty advisor. The seminar includes college readiness skills development in addition to exploration of an academic topic of interest. Students progress to the next stage upon successful completion of 8 courses and documentation of 3 introductory beyond the classroom experiences.
- **Stage Three: Experimenting in the Liberal Arts** Students transition from exploring the liberal arts experience to developing theories about their future paths. Each student is connected with an alumni mentor, who answers questions about their future academic and professional aspirations. They are also required to complete a short declaration of intent, when declaring their major(s). Outside of the classroom, the students are expected to increase their level of responsibility in one beyond the classroom opportunity. Students progress to the next stage upon successful completion of 16 courses, a declaration of intent, and documentation of 4 alumni mentor conversations.
- **Stage Four: Cultivating the Liberal Arts** Students develop roots into their communities of choice and their disciplines. They deepen their expertise in their area of study, culminating in a Symposium session in either spring of their third year or fall of their fourth year. They also create and engage in significant Liberal Arts in Practice Experiences, through the Liberal Arts in Practice Requirement. This includes internships, studying abroad, independent research, or synthesizing two or more classroom and beyond the classroom experiences. This experience is supported in a required reflective class, led by a faculty or staff mentor. Students progress to the next stage upon successful completion of 24 courses, including the Liberal Arts in Practice Requirement course, and their symposium.
- **Stage Five: Connecting the Liberal Arts** In their final year on campus, students make connections between their declaration of intent and the realities of their academic and professional journeys. They engage in a Capstone course, which covers the culmination of their academics and guidance in creating a sustainable future life. Students reconnect with their alumni mentor to create professional networks in their chosen fields. Students progress to the next stage upon successful completion of 31 courses, including the capstone, as well as all of their major(s), domains and skills requirements.
- **Stage Six: Transferring the Liberal Arts** Alumni remain connected to the college, by becoming mentors for younger students. As they engage in their careers, they mentor current students, which helps them to reflect on their own experiences while contributing to the college. They support the college through creating Liberal Arts in Practice experiences in their workplaces and home communities, returning to campus to reflect on their work experiences as scholar-practitioners, and mentoring current students in the previous five stages.