

CORE Curriculum Task Force Newsletter

August 2011

Volume 1, Issue 2

Dear Colleagues,

During the summer months, members of the Core Task Force have continued to meet about the revision of our Core program. We have revisited the work we shared with you in the first Core Task Force Newsletter and have discussed thoughtfully all the feedback we received. Our work will continue later this month and into the first weeks of September. We believe that we are on target to prepare a formal recommendation for the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee and are confident that we will be ready to implement the revised Core in the Fall of 2012.

We have met with various individuals and groups impacted by the tentative decisions we have reached, and in some cases we have re-shaped ideas based on insights shared. Through this second newsletter, we wish to communicate our progress to date. We invite your comments.

Please contact me if you would like to meet personally or in a small group or within a department or division to discuss the content of this newsletter.

Thank you!

Dr. Pat Hutchins, OSF

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO THE REVISED CORE PROGRAM

- Remove INT 202 (Exploring Diversity) as a required Core course. Embed Catholic Social Teaching into the required Ethics course; strengthen learning outcomes related to intercultural competence in required Language courses; incorporate service-learning into required Language courses
- Remove CA 206 (Public Speaking) as a required Core course. Embed introduction of Oral Communication into English 101 and 102 with continual development and reinforcement across the curriculum
- Develop a required course (or experience) for all transfer students to provide introduction to mission, values, University culture, and University services
- Include Economics (Microeconomics and/or Macroeconomics) as one of the Social Science Liberal Arts choices
- Include PolSci 101 (The American Political Process) as one of the History Liberal Arts choices
- Invite every major program to identify at least one course in which to integrate Service-learning (this would mean that every student participated in at least two Service-learning courses before graduation - Language and one Major course)
- Develop a Capstone course in every major (may be re-designed senior seminar) following criteria established by Core Task Force
- Review the requirements for the Academic Minors
- Where feasible, encourage students to pursue an Academic Minor or an intentional sequence of electives
- Investigate the One Book One Campus program for first year students which invites students and faculty to read a common book and explore questions related to the book across several disciplines
- Develop 1-credit **elective** course in Career Exploration for second semester of first year for "Undecided" students (Michael Mullen's suggestion which Task Force supports)
- Reconsider language used for title and all components of the revised core
- Require that common courses develop and use common syllabi

RECOMMENDED SEQUENCE OF CORE COURSES

First year

INT 101

English 101 followed by English 102

Theology 104

Math

Lab Science (Athletic Training, Biology and Nursing majors)

Social Science

First or Second Year

World Language

Second Year

Ethics

Lab Science (majors other than Athletic Training, Biology and Nursing)

Third or Fourth Year

Upper level Theology and Philosophy

– selected by students or required by division (third or fourth year)

Fourth Year

Capstone (not included in credit count)

*Fine Arts, Literature, and History may be taken any year unless prerequisite for another course

Total Credit Count: 41 -44 (if 6 language credits are needed)

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

We received many comments related to our choice of names for the revised Core program and the four components (The Neumann University Undergraduate Experience – NUUE; Common Ground; Foundational Education; Liberal Arts; Integration into Majors and Minors).

We are open to alternate titles and welcome your suggestions.

Here are some ideas we have considered.

We invite your suggestions.

The Neumann Experience instead of the Neumann University Undergraduate Experience

Mission and Heritage instead of Common Ground

Academic PILLARS or *Educational PILLARS* or *PILLARS of Academia*

(Practical Intellectual Living Learning and Relational Skills) instead of Foundational Education

The Professions instead of Integration into Majors and Minors

GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES OF THE NEUMANN UNIVERSITY CORE CURRICULUM

Active engagement in the four components of the Neumann University Core Curriculum will enable Neumann University students/graduates to:

1. Reflect on the compatibility of faith and reason with specific reference to the Catholic Franciscan intellectual and spiritual tradition and commit to actions consistent with Reverence, Integrity, Service, Excellence, and Stewardship: **Commit to the Values of Education in the Catholic Franciscan Tradition.**

Students will:

- Respect the worth and dignity of every person by engaging responsibly in the NU living and learning community
- Participate in service-learning within the undergraduate program
- Maintain a degree completion plan
- Demonstrate care and stewardship for creation by enhancing the University environment
- Understand and respect the basic tenets of Catholic Christian theology and philosophy in the Franciscan tradition through successful completion of required Theology and Philosophy courses
- Value personal spiritual development by seeking and participating in opportunities for spiritual growth
- Make choices which promote physical and mental wellness.

Assessment of Learning Outcomes:

By engaging in integrated service learning experiences and recording these experiences on their electronic portfolio, students will reflect on their personal commitment to live the tenants of Catholic Social Teaching and the NU Franciscan values

2. Participate as ethical human beings, responsible citizens, and emerging leaders in a global community: **Act responsibly within a global community.**

Students will:

- Act with integrity in completing academic requirements and engaging in campus activities
- Complete an Ethics course as part of the undergraduate program
- Interact sensitively and respectfully with persons from all cultures through on-campus and off-campus experiences
- Engage in opportunities that develop leadership potential on and off campus
- Participate in the democratic process on and off campus
- Contribute to the improvement of society as an undergraduate student

Assessment of Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of the Ethics and World Language courses, students will write a reflection paper on their integration of Franciscan values and their worldview and post such on their electronic portfolio.

3. Demonstrate the ability to think creatively, reflectively, and critically: **Think critically.**

Students will:

- Use appropriate methods and reasoning to analyze complex topics and issues and solve complex problems
- Demonstrate competency in using numerical data to understand and analyze real-life applications
- Engage productively as members and leaders of teams to achieve common goals
- Reflect consistently on learning and learning processes while engaged in the undergraduate experience.
- Bring a personal perspective to enrich the learning and living community of NU

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

Assessment of Learning Outcomes:

Within the capstone course or its equivalent, students will engage in authentic academic research and/or critical analysis and will present their work to a group of peers and professionals in a formal presentation. They will keep a record of their development in the processes of undergraduate research and critical analysis on their electronic portfolio(to be reviewed annually beginning in year 2.)

4. Communicate effectively in a variety of ways with diverse audiences: **Communicate effectively.**

Students will:

- Write and speak clearly and effectively.
- Use technology competently.
- Access, evaluate, and credit information from a variety of sources
- Demonstrate reflective listening skills.
- Communicate willingly and effectively in a language other than one's primary language
- Demonstrate intercultural competency within the parameters of the NU community and one's intended profession

Assessment of Learning Outcomes:

In all forms of communication, students will use Standard English or, as applicable, the standards of a World Language, and the standards and protocols for academic writing and oral presentation, and will be held to such by having their (major) course assignments assessed by the Neumann University Rubrics for Oral and Written Communication.

5. Explore the meaning of self, others, and society through engagement and reflection in the study of the Liberal Arts:
Explore meaning in their lives and in others.

Students will:

- Analyze the relationship of contemporary and historical events and issues
- Understand and appreciate human creativity and diversity in the arts and literature
- Demonstrate scientific literacy and understanding of the process of scientific inquiry
- Apply knowledge and skills of behavioral or social sciences to the major field of study

Assessment of Learning Outcomes:

While engaged in the study of the Liberal Arts, the student will choose to integrate the Mission of the University and to reflect on his/her own personal development in this area of study through selected assignments or course activities. These reflections with the accompanying activity or assignment will be posted on their electronic portfolio as directed by the instructor.

6. Accomplish major program outcomes and expectations and confidently pursue a career or further study:
Complete a major program of study.

Students will:

- Apply and receive acceptance into a Major program before completing 60 credits
- Graduate within six years of initial admission to a post-secondary institution
- Utilize the services of the NU Career Office to complete an application to graduate school or acquire skills to conduct a job search before graduation
- Complete successfully an internship, coop, student teaching, or clinical placement

ON-GOING WORK OF THE CORE TASK FORCE

Identify responsibilities of all constituencies across the University for implementation of the revised program (academic programs and student life programs)

Identify professional development needed to ensure proper implementation of Core revision (Suggestions are welcome!)

Adapt relevant AAC&U VALUE rubrics for Neumann University (Assessment workshops Fall 2011)

Develop VALUE rubrics for areas not included in AAC&U model (Catholic Franciscan tradition & RISES)

Identify the “Signature” courses within the revised Core program (i.e. the courses which are uniquely expressive of the values and culture of Neumann)

Identify how transfer students will fulfill the goals and learning outcomes of the Neumann University Core curriculum

Develop a common understanding of Capstone projects and identify how the Capstone requirement will be met in each major program

Develop and utilize portfolios

Develop process for determining how co curricular experiences might fulfill student learning outcomes

Develop and use common rubrics for written and oral communication, including documentation appropriate to discipline

Specify use of Writing Manuals in every class throughout undergraduate experience

Develop a curriculum map to identify courses and experiences in which Core learning outcomes are addressed (for several good resources on curriculum mapping link to http://www.google.com/cse?cx=011623608364967583008%3A1x9o_ojnz28&q=curriculum+map

The Winter 2010 issue of *Peer Review* is especially good and totally on-line.

Develop a plan for assessing learning outcomes

Recommend a structure to support the revised Core curriculum

Develop a business plan which identifies costs (personnel and financial) associated with implementing the Core revision

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Association of American Colleges and Universities <http://www.aacu.org/index.cfm>

See especially the sections on Liberal Education and General Education.

Several articles and reports are available in full text format. In addition, podcasts and videos are available.

Surveys and Research Reports related to the essential goals of higher education, high impact practices, expectations of employers, etc. are available at

<http://www.aacu.org/resources/liberaleducation/index.cfm>

Please review the entire webpage and download relevant documents.

A United Endeavor: Promising Practices in General Education at Catholic Colleges and Universities, Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities

http://www.accunet.org/files/public/A_United_Endeavor.pdf

Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education, Middle States Commission on Higher Education

http://www.msche.org/publications/CHX06_Aug08REVMarch09.pdf

Student Learning Assessment, Middle States Commission on Higher Education

http://www.msche.org/publications/SLA_Book_0808080728085320.pdf

The Catholic Intellectual Tradition in the Catholic University – by Monika K. Hellwig

http://www.sacredheart.edu/pages/2525_cit_in_the_catholic_university.cfm

The Catholic Franciscan Intellectual Tradition

See related articles at <http://libguides.neumann.edu/content.php?pid=218203>

Integration of Franciscan Tradition into various disciplines and also into student life

See related articles at <http://libguides.neumann.edu/content.php?pid=218203>