

The Neumann University Core Experience Newsletter **August 2012** **Volume 2, Issue 1**

Dear Colleagues,

During the past three years, the Core Task Force has worked with members of the entire Neumann University community (faculty, administration, staff, students, and Board of Trustees) to review and revise the undergraduate Core program. Approved by Faculty Senate in December 2011 and by the Neumann University Executive Council in February 2012, the revised philosophy emphasizes that Core is an experience, rather than a set of courses. Although the revised Core includes specific required courses, there is an expectation that the knowledge, skills, competencies and values will be deepened by every experience, every course, and every encounter that a student has both inside and outside the classroom. Therefore, the Core learning outcomes are supported and promoted through specified Core courses, courses in the student's major program of study, and co-curricular activities.

The revised Neumann University Core Experience applies to students entering the University in Fall 2012. The revised philosophy and learning outcomes apply to students in the traditional undergraduate program, as well as the Degree Completion Program in Liberal Studies.

In order to remain transparent and to promote understanding and appropriate implementation and assessment of the revised Core experience, the Core Task Force will hold focus groups, information sessions, and workshops. In addition, this newsletter and the Neumann University Core Experience webpage, currently "under construction," will serve as channels for ongoing communication. Do not hesitate to contact me or any member of the task force with questions you may have and/or to suggest workshops or speakers related to the Core.

Sincerely,

Dr. Pat Hutchins, OSF

Finally-approved *Neumann University Core Experience*

On December 6, 2011, Faculty Senate approved the revised Neumann University Core Experience. In a meeting with the Core Task Force on December 21, 2011, Dr. Linda Suskie (then Middle States Commission liaison with Neumann University) made a strong recommendation that the task force simplify and reduce the number of Core learning outcomes and express the outcomes in terms of the expectations for Neumann graduates. In response, the Core Task Force reviewed and revised the philosophy and learning outcomes, *retaining the content approved by Faculty Senate*. The Executive Council approved the revised Core with the simplified wording in February 2012. During the subsequent Core mapping process, faculty and task force members identified and corrected minor wording issues. The finally-approved Neumann University Core Experience philosophy and learning outcomes follow.

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Philosophy

The Neumann University Core Experience flows directly from the University's mission as a liberal arts institution in the Catholic, Franciscan tradition and lies at the heart (*cor*) of the University itself. The campus community unites to impart the knowledge, skills, competencies and values that create opportunities for students to integrate faith and reason, grow in social responsibility, and prepare for personal and professional leadership roles in the local and global community.

Core Learning Outcomes

Active engagement in the Neumann University Core Experience, including credit-bearing courses and co-curricular activities, provides Neumann University graduates the opportunity to achieve the following learning outcomes.

Comprehension: Think critically, creatively, and analytically

Analyze and solve complex problems; demonstrate quantitative reasoning and scientific literacy; and explore the relationship of contemporary and historical events and issues.

Contemplation: Engage in meaningful reflection

Apply the principles and values of the Catholic Franciscan tradition to personal, professional, and societal questions and issues; engage in self-reflection; embrace life-long learning; discern career and vocational choices; and recognize and appreciate creative expression.

Conscience: Act ethically and responsibly

Demonstrate personal, professional, and academic honesty; accept responsibility for the consequences of their actions; engage as responsible members and leaders of diverse groups; and exercise ethical decision-making, informed by the Catholic Franciscan tradition, in a variety of settings.

Compassion: Respect all of creation

Honor the worth and dignity of each person; interact respectfully in the local and global community; engage in service to promote the common good; and demonstrate environmental awareness and stewardship.

Communication: Communicate effectively

Express ideas clearly and effectively in spoken and written form; use technology competently; and access, evaluate, cite, and credit information using accepted conventions.

Suggestion for Faculty: Include on your syllabus the Core Learning Outcomes which you address in the course.

Development of a Core Map

Consistent with the integrated nature of the revised Core experience, the Core Task Force invited faculty members teaching Core courses and courses in the majors, and staff members whose responsibilities support the achievement of the Core learning outcomes, to identify the courses and activities which support each Core learning outcome. Based on the Core Map developed, the Core Task Force planned a three-year cycle of assessment. The Core Task Force will invite faculty members and representatives of co-curricular areas to review and revise the Core Map on an on-going basis.

The Core Assessment Plan and Process

In June 2012, the Learning Outcomes Assessment Task Force reviewed and approved a plan to assess the Core Learning Outcomes. The assessment cycle follows:

Communication outcomes	AY 2012-2013
Contemplation and Conscience outcomes	AY 2013-2014
Comprehension and Compassion outcomes	AY 2014-2015

Early in the spring semester each year, the Core Task Force will meet with faculty and staff members who will be involved in the assessment process during the following academic year and share the assessment plan and relevant rubrics, surveys, and other assessment measures. Faculty and staff members will identify the best courses and/or activities and the best assignments to use as artifacts for assessment. It is anticipated that the assignment, project or activity chosen will be one that is already a regular part of the course or activity. Core Task Force members will work with faculty to select at random artifacts from 20% of the students enrolled in the targeted courses. In the case of co-curricular activities, when the population of students is relatively small (e.g. students in the Student Leadership Institute or senior athletes), all students may be included in the sample assessed.

The Director of Core will invite members of the Core Task Force, other faculty, and related staff members to participate in an annual "Assessment Week" during which assessment of the collected artifacts will occur. In some cases, the Core Task Force may collaborate with an existing assessment group (e.g. Writing) to avoid duplication. The Task Force will share assessment results with appropriate members of the Neumann community at the beginning of each academic year and monitor plans for continuous improvement.

The Core Director and members of the Core Task Force began conversations with members of the Neumann community during Summer 2012 to explain the assessment plan for the Communication outcomes. Discussions will continue early in the semester to ensure that everyone understands the assessment process for the learning outcomes related to oral and written communication and information literacy, the areas that will be assessed during the 2012-2013 academic year.

Professional Development

Professional development is critical to promote understanding, implementation, and assessment of the *Neumann University Core Experience*. The task force is committed to offering quality programs for faculty and staff. To date the Task Force has offered professional development opportunities on Liberal Education and the Franciscan Tradition (January 10, 2012) and Oral Communication (May 8, 2012); **a workshop on Information Literacy is scheduled for August 23, 2012**. The Task Force has also offered support in the development of Service-Learning and Capstone courses. The Core Director and the Task Force will offer an array of professional development workshops, on-line resources, and “consultations” with specific disciplinary groups to ensure an understanding of the Core, the meaning of each Core learning outcome, the assessment process, how to facilitate student achievement of the outcomes, and how to use results of the assessment process to improve student learning. The Task Force encourages all faculty and staff members to avail themselves of these opportunities and to offer suggestions for future professional development. We will also make every attempt to record the workshops and make them available on-line for those unable to attend.

Suggestion for Faculty and Staff: Begin to use and share with your students the recommendations presented by Erik Palmer on Building and Performing a Speech. If you did not attend the workshop on May 8, 2012, you will find links to the suggestions on the Neumann University Core Experience webpage (under construction).

The Neumann University Core Experience Webpage

With the expert assistance of Lisa Cadorette, the revised Neumann University Core Experience will soon have a web presence. The website will include current and archived Core newsletters, the Core philosophy and learning outcomes, required Core courses, a link to the Service-Learning website, a downloadable resource booklet with guidelines for developing Capstone courses, an outline of the Core Assessment plan and schedule, links to helpful resources to promote Core learning outcomes, and links to the complete Core Map and Assessment Plan. This site will also include dates of information sessions and professional development related to the revised Core.

Core information sessions and Q & A

For those who wish to explore in greater depth the revised Core philosophy and learning outcomes and gain an overview of the Core Assessment Plan, the following information sessions will be offered. All sessions will be held in the newly renovated Assisi Room (Rm. 332) on the third floor of the library. To ensure a seat please contact Sr. Mary Ann McCarthy one week in advance of each date at mccarthm@neumann.edu or leave a message at 610-358-4270.

Thursday, September 6	8:15 to 9:00 AM
Wednesday, September 12	4:30 to 5:15 PM
Friday, September 14	8:15 to 9:00 AM
Thursday, September 27	4:30 to 5:15 PM

Neumann University Core Experience Task Force

In order to ensure continuity in the implementation process, the following members of the Core Task Force appointed in August 2009, will continue to serve:

Janelle Ketrick-Gillespie, Ed.D. (Arts & Sciences)
Claudia Kovach, Ph.D. (Arts & Sciences)
Ahmed Nuriye, Ph.D. (Arts & Sciences)
John Kruse, Ph.D. (Theology)
Sr. Dorothy Bredehoft, Ed.D. (Education)
Nancy Laplante, Ph.D. (Nursing and Athletic Training)
Arde Shahmaei, Ph. D. (Business)
Sr. Janet Thiel, Ph.D. (AVPAA)
Sr. Pat Hutchison, Ed.D. (Core Director)

We welcome to the Task Force:

Jilian Donnelly (Continuing Adult and Professional Studies)
James Gallo (representative of Co-curricular areas)

Jil Donnelly replaces Dr. Tish Szymurski and Jim Gallo represents co-curricular areas.

Core Course Requirements for all Major Programs in Traditional Undergraduate Program

Note: Requirements may be fulfilled by transcribed courses or approved equivalent experiences. Students transferring into Neumann University may meet some of the course requirements through equivalent credits accepted in transfer from regionally accredited, degree-granting institutions.

Signature Courses

INT 101	The Neumann Experience	1 credit
THEO 104	Theological Foundations	3 credits
THEO XXX	One Theology course at 200 level or above	3 credits
PHIL 102	Exploring Ethics	3 credits
PHIL XXX	Any designated PHIL course at the 200 level or above	3 credits
CAPSTONE	Capstone Course offered in the Major	included in major

SERVICE LEARNING:

Included with the 2nd Theology course and one additional course in the major program of study.

Educational Foundation in Liberal Arts

ENG 101 Rhetoric and Writing I 3 credits

ENG 102 Rhetoric and Writing II 3 credits

ENG XXX Any designated English literature course at the 100- or 200- level 3 credits

Math 3 credits

One of the following courses:

MATH 102 Introductory Statistics

MATH 103 College Algebra

MATH 106 Mathematical Decision-making

MATH 110 Precalculus

MATH 205: Mathematical Modeling for Teachers II (for students seeking teaching certification)

Science 3 credits/1 credit lab

One of the following courses:

BIO 105/115 Principles of Biology/Lab

BIO 107/117 General Biology I/Lab

CHEM 101/111 Fundamentals of Chemistry/Lab

CHEM 102/112 Chemical Investigations/Lab

CHEM 107/117 General Chemistry I/Lab

ENV 105/115 Introduction to Environmental Studies/Lab

PHYS 105/115 Physical Science/Lab

PHYS 125/135 Earth and Space Science/Lab

PHY 107/117 Physics I/Lab

Social Sciences 3 credits

One of the following courses:

ANTHR 101 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology

ANTHR 102 Principles of Cultural Anthropology

POLSC 101 The American Political Process

PSYCH 101 General Psychology

SOC 101 Principles of Sociology

ECON 201 Macroeconomics

History (Any History [*HIST*] course at the 100- or 200-level) 3 credits

Fine Arts: Art, Music, or Theater (Any designated Art [*ART*], Music [*MUS*], or Theater [*THEA*] course, or *PHIL 260, The Philosophy of Music*) 3 credits

Modern Language & Diversity 3 credits

One Modern Language course at the Elementary II level or higher satisfies this Core requirement. Modern Language at the Elementary I level counts toward General Elective credit. See alternative ways to satisfy the Modern Language Core Requirement in the Neumann University Catalog. Questions should be referred to the professor who teaches the language.

TOTAL CORE CREDITS 41 credits

***Although students in the Degree Completion Program in Liberal Studies meet the outcomes of the revised *Neumann University Core Experience*, Core Course requirements are determined by the Division of Continuing Adult and Professional Studies.**