

The Neumann University Core Experience

March 2014

Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 2

Dear Colleagues,

It is difficult to believe that there are only eight weeks remaining in the semester. Thank you for all that you are doing to support the implementation of the revised Core program. This newsletter serves as an update on the Core Communication Assessment process, a status report on the Conscience and Contemplation Assessment process, and a preview of the Comprehension and Compassion assessment process.

Thank you in advance for making time to read this newsletter!

Sr. Pat Hutchison, OSF

Core Curriculum Task Force Members

We are happy to welcome to the Core Curriculum Task Force Sarah Cazella, Director of Student Activities, as the representative of the co-curricular areas. Please feel free to contact any member of the task force with questions or concerns you may have.

Janelle Ketrick-Gillespie, Ed.D. (Arts & Sciences)
Claudia Kovach, Ph.D. (Arts & Sciences)
Ahmed Nuriye, Ph.D. (Arts & Sciences)
John Kruse, Ph.D. (Theology)
Daniel McKee, Ed.D. (Education and Human Services)
Nancy Laplante, Ph.D. (Nursing and Health Services)
Arde Shahmaei, Ph. D. (Business and Information Management)
Jilian Donnelly, M.Ed. (CAPS)
Sr. Janet Thiel, Ph.D. (AVPAA)
Sarah Cazella (Co-curricular representative)
Sr. Pat Hutchison, Ed.D. (Core Director)

Core Assessment 2012-2013: Focus on *Communication*

During the 2012-2013 academic year, *Communication* competencies were the focus of the Core Curriculum assessment. Specifically, learning outcomes associated with oral and written communication and information literacy were assessed. In Fall 2013 faculty were invited to participate in Lunch and Learn sessions to review assessment results (Written Communication: September 9-12; Information Literacy: October 7-10; and Oral Communication: November 4-7). Assessment results were also posted on SharePoint.

After reviewing assessment results, faculty in every division provided an analysis and action plans guided by five questions:

- ◆ How do these results compare with your experience with student work in the classes you teach?
Are the results similar to what you experience?
- ◆ How do the results compare with your expectations for satisfactory learning?
Are you satisfied with the results?
- ◆ What ideas do you have to improve student achievement in your classroom and/or in your major?
When do you think these ideas could be implemented?
- ◆ What modifications (if any) would you suggest for the assessment process of communication learning outcomes?
- ◆ What support do you need to improve communication competencies within your program?

A summary of responses was shared at the Faculty Development program on January 14, 2014. In addition, the results of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) questions related to Communication were shared. The entire Core Communication Report (revised and updated on February 14, 2014) is available on the SharePoint site (AA; assessment; Core Experience Assessment Report 2012-2013; 2-14 Core Communication Assessment 2012-2013).

Core Assessment 2013-2014: Focus on Contemplation and Conscience

This year assessment focuses on learning outcomes related to *Contemplation* and *Conscience*. The Core Task, in collaboration with faculty and staff members, revised the Assessment Plans for these learning outcomes and developed rubrics adapted from the nationally validated AAC&U VALUE rubrics. The revised assessment plans and rubrics are posted on the NU Core Experience website.

There are many opportunities, both in the classroom and beyond, to support student growth in reflection and ethical reasoning. The Service-Learning website contains excellent resources for reflection which can be adapted for use in the classroom and in conjunction with co-curricular activities <http://www.neumann.edu/academics/service-learning/reflection/default.asp> The Mentor Commons program on *How Can I Promote Deep Learning through Critical Reflection?* by Barbara Jacoby, is also a valuable and practical resource.

Core Assessment 2014-2015: Focus on Compassion and Comprehension

The focus of the assessment process next year will be the learning outcomes related to *Compassion* and *Comprehension*. Faculty workgroups are in the process of adapting AAC&U VALUE rubrics for use in the assessment process. Faculty who teach social sciences, math and upper level courses which promote quantitative literacy, science, history, and language will identify artifacts to be assessed. However, it is the responsibility of the entire campus to support and promote outcomes related to the core learning outcomes.

Service-Learning

Beginning in Fall 2014 every upper level theology class and at least one course in every major program will integrate Service-Learning. Many faculty members have already incorporated Service-Learning into their classes and have generously shared their experiences with those who are still in the planning process. Fifteen faculty members attended the Lunch and Learn sessions on Service-Learning in February 2014. Due to the snow some faculty members were not able to attend. For the names of faculty members who are willing to share their experience developing Service-Learning courses, please contact Sr. Pat Hutchison or Kathy McCauley.

Please visit the Service-Learning website <http://www.neumann.edu/academics/service-learning/default.asp> which includes policies, procedures, and a wealth of resources for identifying community partners and successfully developing and implementing a course. The Mentor Commons website is another valuable resource for Service-Learning, especially *How do I get started with Service-Learning?* and *Will Service-Learning work in my discipline?* by Barbara Jacoby, PhD of University of Maryland, College Park www.mentorcommons.com

Please note that faculty members developing new Service-Learning courses must submit the Course Approval Form found on the Service-Learning website <http://www.neumann.edu/academics/service-learning/default.asp> As stated in the Service-Learning policy <http://www.neumann.edu/academics/service-learning/facultyresources/PolicyAS106.pdf> the form and a draft of the syllabus must be submitted to Kathy McCauley by June 15. For assistance in completing the form and developing the Service-Learning components of a syllabus, please contact Sr. Pat Hutchison or Kathy McCauley.

Capstone Courses

By academic year 2015-2016, every major is required to offer a capstone course. Please review the document *Capstone in the Majors* available on the NU Core Experience website <http://www.neumann.edu/CoreExperience/Capstone.pdf> The Mentor Commons program *How Do I Develop a High-Impact Capstone Course?* with Barbara Jacoby, PhD is also an excellent resource. Please consider attending the Lunch and Learn sessions which will focus on Capstones on March 17 (11:30 to 12:30), 18 (11:30 to 12:30), 19 (12:40 to 1:40), or 20 (1:00 to 2:00). Faculty members have been piloting aspects of Capstones in Senior Seminars and some faculty and students will share their experiences at the sessions.

Important Reminders for Everyone (especially advisors)

There is an inner logic to the sequence of courses for the new Core, especially the signature courses. Theology 104 is foundational for Philosophy 102 and both form the foundation for the upper level theology and philosophy courses. Offering courses throughout the student's career (Theology 104 in first year; Philosophy 102 in second year; and the upper level theology and philosophy courses in the third and fourth years) invites students to consider what literature calls "big questions" as they mature.

Students who entered Neumann University in Fall 2012 (whether as first year or transfer students) follow the revised Core program. Web Advisor and the Catalog note the prerequisites for courses and, where applicable, the number of credits necessary to enroll in courses.

The sequence of signature courses has been carefully constructed. Students must take these courses in the following order:

INT 101 must be taken in the first year

Theology 104 must be taken in the first year

Philosophy 102 must be taken in the second year after students have successfully completed Theology 104

Upper level Theology and Philosophy courses must be taken in the third or fourth year
after successful completion of Theology 104 and Phil 102.

Transfer students who entered Neumann University after Fall 2012 must take courses in the sequence noted above and should adhere as closely as possible to the year noted. Transfer students are not required to take CA 206 or INT 202 (unless the course has been retained in the major). In addition, Philosophy 103 (Introduction to Philosophy) is not required in the revised Core.

In a recent email Dr. O'Sullivan emphasized the importance of observing the proper sequence: *In the event that a written exception to this policy is necessary in order to ensure timely program progression for a student, please submit your request by email to Dr. John Mizsoni (Philosophy) or Dr. John Kruse (Theological Studies).*