

University Undergraduate Core Committee

Tuesday, July 30th, 2019

VH room 219

9am – 12pm

Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Ellen Crowell, Jay Haegen, Judy Geczi, Bryan Sokol, Gary Barker, Steve Sanchez, Bonnie Wilson, Bill Rehg, Jennifer Rust, Kelly Lovejoy, Ness Sandoval, Ellen Carnaghan, Kim Druschel, Ryan McCulla, Christopher Thomas, Michael Swartwout, Joseph Nichols, Kyle Crews, Ginge Kettenbach, Louise Neiman, Amber Johnson, Laura Rettig

- 1) Call to Order and approval of meeting minutes for July 16th and July 23rd.
 - Minutes approved with revisions

- 2) Announcements
 - Debie Lohe is present to get a sense of the progress and help the Core Director and plan the details of the retreat on 8/6. UCC Retreat will be held August 6th from 9:00-4:00 at Boileau Hall. The retreat will focus on refining core components, curricular mapping to our Core SLOs, and overall architecture.
 - Amber Johnson (CAS) and Bonnie Wilson (School of Business) will be rotating off the committee next week.
 - In recognition of the UCC's hard work over the past year, all outgoing, current and incoming members are invited to Dr. Pestello's for dinner on August 20th. Amelia Arnold will be sending invites with time, for entire group.
 - UCC is on track to produce the Common Core proposal by mid-September. This gives Chairs/departments about a month to think about how their programs would map onto this new core, and to ask for clarification/ small modifications. The goal is to have formal responses start coming in at the beginning of November so we can negotiate and find a balance for the final draft. The final draft will go out the beginning of December and vote will likely happen at the first faculty assemblies of the spring semester.
 - Jay Haugen stated if the vote on the Common Core proposal is passed in January/February the Registrar office will start working on a pilot targeting Fall 2021 start up.

3. Discussion: Disciplinary distribution within the core
UCC discussed various and competing approaches to how a disciplinary distribution might be structured within a core, in ways that capitalize on faculty capacity, interest, aptitude but that also make sure students move outside their comfort zones.

Layering on themes to all courses in the core prevents high-credit hour programs to flexibly double-count core and major.

Yet if some disciplinary areas carry the burden of thematic overlays (for instance, ones that accord to SLOs 5, 6, and 7) then we have an equity issue. Why should some disciplinary areas be themed but others would not carry this requirement?

If no areas are necessarily themed, how do we ensure that the content-based SLOs (5-6-7) are richly achieved in this core? [Noted that SLO 9 is already embedded into the SLU experience for many students who are already doing internships, practica, -- we need a way to collate all experiences and have students to write a reflection so everyone is doing the same artifact in the end]

4. Related questions about overlap between core / major:

Can the integrative seminar be one delivered in the major as a capstone in Engineering? IPE? Mike Swartwout (Engineering) strongly supports having some common core course for every SLU student. This forces students from all programs to mix with others in different majors—have shared experience.

We know that for the First year seminar and integrative seminar, we will need most the most willing faculty to teach. The more SLO's embedded in these, the harder this will be. Programs like IPE are already delivering integrative seminar-type classes. IPE 4900 does this.

How do we craft a structure that can be built upon later that you might have people from colleges/departments who devise a route through? We are striving to create a structure that welcomes ground-up innovation. But we won't be able to produce a structure that will garner 100% agreement. 80% is okay and let go of 20%.

BREAK

5. SLO 2 Complex Questions/Core Distribution.

Questions remain within the UCC of whether this course must be interdisciplinary. "Complex Questions" is a class for which we will need many faculty members.

UCC member asks: Are the classes being team taught?

The feedback from the survey suggested that team teaching as a mandated part of the core is no. If the UCC mandates the courses need to be team taught by two different disciplines, this will not pass. But nothing would prevent faculty from developing a team-taught version if its approved into the core under these guidelines.

For "Complex Questions," should students have already taken or be taking various distribution components? To what extent is the complex question class imagined as connected to the distribution? Is this a complex questions a capstone for the core, or a culminating experience coming out of the distribution? The UCC came down on this: the complex question class should draw on the whole core. It should not be imagined as a conclusion to only disciplinary distribution.

UCC discussed the fact that not all faculty approach their courses as problems to be solved. SLO2: The last clause of SLO2 asks students to synthesize knowledge for systemic inquiry and innovation. Where are we asking students to do this? Should the course be focused on a question or a problem? One UCC member noted that Boston College calls their approach to integrative thinking "conflict problems and enduring questions", which opens this up to not merely problem solving—could be "How books changed history."

On question of delivery / prerequisites: Bonnie Wilson observed that we need to allow these courses to carry externally imposed prerequisites, since many programs are already doing something like this, and we will need lots of buy-in to get these integrative seminars delivered across campus. Doisy rep agreed, based on IPE program. Engineering rep also agreed that prohibition of prerequisites for courses approved into the core would inhibit ability for high-cred-hour programs to overlay core and major requirements—something we know we need to make sure our proposal allows for.

6. Thanks to Amber Johnson (CAS), Bonnie Wilson (Business), for all of their hard work and dedication. We will miss you!
7. Adjourn