

## **Material for Faculty Forum on General Education at UAF**

April 7, 2011

### **Introduction**

The UAF Core Curriculum has changed little since its adoption nearly 20 years ago, even as both the academy and the world our graduates enter have changed radically. Efforts to update and revitalize UAF's general education programs have been underway for at least 3 years, but even though many faculty agree on what they don't like about the core curriculum, there has been little agreement on how it should be updated or changed. Doing so is a multi-step process in which we, the faculty, will need to address these key questions:

1. What intellectual impact do we want to have on all of our students? What learning outcomes do we want?
2. What general education structure and composition will we use to achieve these learning outcomes?
3. How will we assess our success in achieving these learning outcomes?
4. How will we “close the loop” and use these assessments to improve our curriculum?

Developing a set of expected undergraduate student learning outcomes is the necessary first step in this process: we need to know our objectives before anything else. The General Education Revitalization Committee (GERC) has drafted the following set of desired learning outcomes, which were based on both the previous work by the Core Revitalization and Assessment Group and the Achievement Centered Education program at the University of Nebraska Lincoln. It consists of four broad categories of goals, followed by required tasks that would demonstrate achievement or proficiency in each of those areas. The GERC now seeks input from a broad cross-section of faculty to help improve these goals prior to submitting them for consideration for adoption by the UAF Faculty Senate.

**DRAFT proposed learning outcomes for the undergraduate program (BA, BS, AA, AS) at the University of Alaska Fairbanks**

1. **Build Knowledge of Human Institutions, Socio-Cultural Processes, and the Physical and Natural World** through study in the theory and application of the natural and social sciences, technologies, mathematics, humanities, histories, languages and the arts
  - Use knowledge of the natural and physical world and scientific methods to address problems through inquiry, interpretation, analysis, and the making of inferences from data, to determine whether conclusions or solutions are reasonable.
  - Use knowledge, historical perspectives, analysis, interpretation, critical evaluation, and the standards of evidence appropriate to the humanities to address problems and issues.
  - Use knowledge, theories, methods, and historical perspectives appropriate to the social sciences to understand and evaluate human behavior.
  - Use knowledge, theories, or methods appropriate to the arts to understand their context and significance.
2. **Develop Intellectual and Practical Skills across the curriculum**, including inquiry and analysis, critical and creative thinking, problem solving, written and oral communication, information and technological competence, and collaborative learning
  - Write texts, in various forms, with an identified purpose, that respond to specific audience needs, incorporate research or existing knowledge, and use applicable documentation and appropriate conventions of format and structure.
  - Demonstrate communication competence in one or more of the following ways: (a) by making oral presentations with supporting materials, (b) by employing a repertoire of communication skills for developing and maintaining professional and personal relationships, or (c) by creating and interpreting visual information.
  - Use mathematical, computational, statistical, or formal reasoning (including reasoning based on principles of logic) to solve problems, draw inferences, and determine reasonableness.
  - Collaborate with others to produce an outcome that addresses an identified goal
3. **Acquire Tools for Effective Civic Engagement** in local through global contexts, through an awareness of globalization, interdependence, sustainability, knowledge of Alaska and Alaskan issues, intercultural competence, and ethical reasoning
  - Explain ethical principles, civics, and stewardship, and their importance to society.
  - Exhibit global awareness or knowledge of human diversity through analysis of an issue relevant to Alaska.
4. **Integrate and Apply Learning, including** synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies, adapting them to new settings, questions, and responsibilities, and forming a foundation for lifelong learning.
  - Generate a creative or scholarly product that requires broad knowledge, appropriate technical proficiency, information collection, synthesis, interpretation, presentation, and reflection.