

Revising
UAF's Core Curriculum
and its assessment

Why revise the Core now?

- The current Core was implemented fall semester 1991 and it has not been reviewed in depth since
- UAF will be reviewed for reaffirmation of institutional accreditation in fall 2011
- There have been many changes since 1990, e.g., the internet and electronic communications were far less pervasive and globalization of the economy has changed dramatically.

The Core Revitalization and Assessment Committee

- Anne Armstrong, School of Education
- Diane Wagner, College of Natural Science and Mathematics
- Jacob Joseph, School of Management
- John Yarie, School of Natural Resources and Ag. Sciences
- Karen Grossweiner, College of Liberal Arts
- Charlie Mayer, College of Engineering and Mines
- Trent Sutton, School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences
- Ron Illingworth, College of Rural and Community Development
- Michael Harris, Core Review Committee and CNSM
- Elizabeth Allman, College of Natural Science and Mathematics
- Christine Cooper, College of Liberal Arts
- Kirsten Halpin, Student
- Convener Dana Thomas, Vice Provost

Committee's Charge

Draft a report proposing the following:

- The common intellectual experiences our baccalaureate and AA students should have – not the specific courses that will satisfy these experiences.
- How these experiences should be assessed in the holistic sense (an expectation of accreditation) – not individual course assessment as we have now.

Committee Research

- Review of National Trends
 - Extensive Readings (Blackboard page)
 - 6 members attended national conferences
- Input from constituents
 - Survey (184 responses)
 - Department chair meetings in colleges/schools
 - Deans Council
 - Open forums

Committee's Recommendation

- UAF should adopt the AACU Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) Essential Learning Outcomes as the new major learning outcomes from a new hybrid Core curriculum (specific additional UAF outcome recommendations are noted parenthetically)
- See http://www.uaf.edu/uafgov/faculty/08-09_senate_meetings/159/CoreRecommendations.pdf

Accreditation Requirements

The general education component of undergraduate programs demonstrates the following:

- an integrated course of study that helps students develop the breadth and depth of intellect to become more effective learners and to prepare them for a productive life of work, citizenship, and personal fulfillment.
- represents an integration of basic knowledge and methodology of the humanities and fine arts, mathematics and natural sciences, and social sciences.

Accreditation Requirements Continued

- Applied degree and certificate programs of thirty (30) semester credits or forty-five (45) quarter credits in length contain a recognizable core of related instruction with identified outcomes in the areas of communication, computation, and human relations that support the program's goals or intended outcomes.

Student Expectations

Our Underachieving Colleges by Derek Bok,
Princeton University Press (2006) – page 281

“According to one survey, 60 percent of Arts and Sciences professors do not even think that preparing for a good job is a particularly important goal for undergraduates. In sharp contrast, almost three-fourths of entering freshmen regard it as the *most* important reason for going to college.”

STEP 1: Revision of the Core and its Assessment

- Identify the intended learning outcomes

The motion proposed today begins this work

Step 2: Revision of the Core and its Assessment

Identify courses and experiences to achieve the intended learning outcomes

- Identify small working groups from across UAF, e.g., math faculty alone should not set the quantitative requirements; report committee members are willing to serve!
- Focus on intended outcomes, not courses, emphasize shared responsibility for achieving outcomes
- Add greater flexibility for transfer students
- Attempt to achieve similar SCH production among units to reduce the fear of losing faculty members

Step 2 cont.

How we teach is important

- **Connecting Essential Learning Outcomes with High-Impact Practices (see appendix 2 in committee report)**
 - Explore “big questions”
 - Undergraduate research
 - Learning communities (multiple courses linked to a “big question”)
 - First-year seminars and experiences
 - Skill-intensive courses (quantitative reasoning, oral communication, and information literacy across the curriculum)
 - Collaborative assignments and projects
 - Internships
 - Service and community-based learning
 - Capstone projects and culminating experiences

Step 3: Revising the Core and its Assessment

Identify a process to holistically assess the intended learning outcomes of the Core

- Move away from individual course based assessment to reduce the burden on faculty
- Implement assessments required by the Voluntary System of Accountability, which were developed through a partnership between the American Association of State Colleges and Universities and the Association of Public And Land-Grant Universities

See <http://www.voluntarysystem.org/index.cfm>

Step 4: Revising the Core and its Assessment

- Establish a process for periodic review of components of the Core and the Core as a whole.
- Establish a process for periodic review of Core Assessment
- Align these processes with the seven year accreditation process