

# **Recommendations to the UAF Faculty Senate for the Revision of UAF's Core Curriculum and Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes**

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**Prepared by the Core Revitalization and Assessment Group**

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## Executive Summary

The Core Revitalization and Assessment Committee make the following major recommendations (further details are given in the detailed recommendation section):

1. 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. The LEAP outcomes are as follows (<http://www.aacu.org/leap/vision.cfm> Accessed April 20, 2009; specific additional UAF outcome recommendations are noted parenthetically):

Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World – through study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages and the arts – focused by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring;

Intellectual and Practical Skills, including inquiry and analysis, critical and creative thinking, written and oral communication (including the current upper division oral and writing intensive requirement), quantitative literacy, information (and technology) literacy, teamwork and problem solving – practiced extensively, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects and standards of performance;

Personal and Social Responsibility, including civic knowledge and engagement – local and global (including globalization, sustainability, knowledge of Alaska and Alaskan issues, and the current *understanding of global economic interdependence* Core curriculum component), intercultural knowledge and competence, ethical reasoning and action, and foundations and skills for lifelong learning – anchored through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges;

Integrative and Applied Learning, including synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies – demonstrated through the application of knowledge, skills and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems (through, in part, first-year courses).

Adoption of these outcomes has several advantages. First, the outcomes have been well developed by scholars across the nation, and many institutions and state systems, e.g., Oregon, are adopting these outcomes. Second, LEAP provides guidance on educational practices to achieve the Essential Learning Outcomes, and there is a great deal of current work underway on how to assess student learning of these outcomes (see VALUE - Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education, <http://www.aacu.org/value/> accessed April 20, 2009). Third, the

LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes include modern expectations such as integrative and applied learning, civic knowledge and engagement at both local and global levels, skills for lifelong learning and teamwork. Fourth, much of UAF's current Core curriculum will carry over into a new hybrid Core based on the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes.

2. UAF should implement a simple effective assessment of the new hybrid Core using multiple tools (e.g., survey and course embedded learning assessment) and have a clear assessment oversight process.
  - a. The National Survey of Student Engagement and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement have already been implemented at UAF and should continue to be administered on a regular periodic basis as indirect measures of student learning in the new hybrid Core.
  - b. Three common approaches to directly measure student learning are assessment at the course, program, or institutional level. UAF currently uses course assessment to determine how well students have learned intended outcomes associated with specific Core curriculum courses. Program-level assessment embeds assessment within Core courses but summarizes results for the Core, as a whole. Institutional-level assessment embeds assessment in upper division courses in the majors. Because UAF's Core curriculum is the foundation for AA and AS students, institutional assessment is not optimum for our purposes. The committee recommends that UAF establish objectives for the LEAP major learning outcomes described above and adopt a program level assessment process. Because students are more likely to do their best if assessment processes also have course grade and completion consequences, the committee generally supports a course embedded process. However, the focus of the embedded assessment should be on the new hybrid Core learning objectives not an assessment of an individual course as it is now.

## Introduction

UAF's baccalaureate Core curriculum was approved in 1990 and implemented during the fall semester 1991. The Core has not been reviewed in depth since its inception. Thus, the time has come for a thorough reassessment of the Core.

An important reason for re-evaluating the Core is that many changes—both technological and sociological—have occurred since 1990. For example, the students UAF admitted in 1990 had probably only recently begun using personal computers, and the internet and electronic communications were far less pervasive. Globalization of the economy, while important in 1990, has increased dramatically since then. Recent trends in Core/general education requirements suggest a re-evaluation of the Core is needed as well. For example, the Association of American Colleges and Universities Greater Expectations project discusses four education outcomes: inquiry, civic, global, and integrative learning. The examination of the Core provides an opportunity for both refinement and change.

Another major reason to re-examine the Core is that UAF must soon begin intensive work on an institutional self study that will lead up to reaccreditation in 2011. The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) has recently approved a major change in its accreditation standards. Although some specifics as to how this will affect UAF's accreditation process remain unknown, key aspects are clear. In particular, universities will be required to engage in a continuous cycle of planning, implementation, and assessment. Student learning outcomes assessment will become an even more important part of the accreditation requirements and process.

The process for assessing student learning outcomes from the Core should be re-examined as well. Currently, student learning outcomes assessment for the Core curriculum assesses individual courses. Our accrediting organization's expectations require a more holistic approach to assessing outcomes from the Core.

To facilitate this process the Provost, in cooperation with the Faculty Senate, named a working group comprised of the chairs of the college/school curriculum councils (or alternates named by the Dean, if they were unable to serve); supplemented with faculty representation from Mathematics, English, and Communication; a member of the Faculty Senate Core Review Committee; and a student selected by ASUAF. The charge of this group was twofold:

- I) Review national trends in the content for core curriculum/general education, hear from campus constituents on issues related to the current Core and their ideas for revisions, and prepare for the Faculty Senate and the Provost a summary report with their recommendations. The working group should focus their attention on the common intellectual experiences our baccalaureate students should have, not the specific courses that would satisfy these experiences.
- II) Examine alternative holistic assessment processes and make a recommendation for assessing student learning outcomes from the Core.

The following report summarizes the group's findings and recommendations.

## Review of National Trends

To help prepare the Core Revitalization and Assessment Group for their work, four faculty members attended the AACU “Ready Or Not: Global Challenges, College Learning, and America’s Promise” conference, January 21-24, 2009 in Seattle, Washington and two faculty members attended the “General Education, Assessment, and the Learning Students Need” February 26-28, 2009 in Baltimore, Maryland.

Educating group members through attending the above national meetings, reading national trend sources (see below), and discussing among themselves significantly impacted member opinions about appropriate learning outcomes and assessment. In particular, discussions about the diversity of UAF’s students--e.g., nontraditional, full-time versus part-time, AA/AS and traditional first-time freshmen baccalaureate students--and hearing from faculty and staff in different units of the institution influenced group discussions and recommendations.

The committee met twice per month during the 2008 fall and 2009 spring semester. All meetings were open. Among non-committee members attending were the Dean of the Libraries, one library faculty member, one student, and staff advisors from the Academic Advising Center, Rural Student Services, the School of Education.

A Blackboard site was established to share information and sources on national trends. The information posted included the following:

- Core or General Education learning outcomes and/or requirements for UAF’s peer institutions. The list of peer institutions was provided by UAF’s Planning, Analysis and Institutional Research;
- Excerpts from “College Learning for the New Global Century; A Report From the National Leadership Council for Liberal Education & America’s Promise” (2007) by the Association of American Colleges and Universities. This is also known as the **LEAP** project;
- A summary of commonly used assessment approaches for Core or general education curricula. This summary included information on portfolios, capstone experiences, and the three major national tests commonly used; the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA; [http://www.cae.org/content/pro\\_collegiate.htm](http://www.cae.org/content/pro_collegiate.htm)), ACT’s CAAP Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (<http://www.act.org/caap/>), and ETS’s MAPP = Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress (<http://www.ets.org/portal/site/ets/menuitem.1488512ecfd5b8849a77b13bc3921509/?vgnnextoid=ff3aaf5e44df4010VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD&vgnnextchannel=f98546f1674f4010VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD>); Alternatives to the above national tests are portfolios and capstone experiences - however, these must be used to assess the Core, not just the major. Illinois State University uses a portfolio system (see <http://www.assessment.ilstu.edu/generaleducation/process.shtml>); California State, LA uses a collection of methods (see

<http://www.calstatela.edu/academic/aa/ugs/geassess/geplan.htm>) and the Florida Community Colleges use a variety of assessment tools (see [http://www.fccj.edu/campuses/mccs/instruction/liberal\\_arts/models\\_assessment.html](http://www.fccj.edu/campuses/mccs/instruction/liberal_arts/models_assessment.html)); the following additional sources of information on assessing core and general education curricula were useful:

- a. The president of the AACU gave a good summary linking assessment to the LEAP outcomes (See <http://www.aacu.org/meetings/generaleducation/gened2008/documents/Keynote.pdf>)
  - b. There is a pod cast of this presentation available online at <http://www.aacu.org/meetings/generaleducation/gened2008/index.cfm> then scroll down to find "Designing Assessments that Deepen Learning: At the Intersections of General Education and Assessment" by Carol Geary Schneider, President—AAC&U; and Peggy Maki, Education Consultant and Assessment Series Editor Stylus Publishing, LLC.
  - c. James Madison University (Virginia) is nationally recognized as a leader in outcomes assessment. We may not model UAF after them but looking at their approach may give you some idea about what the best are doing. Look at the general information at <http://www.jmu.edu/assessment/JMUAssess/Practice.htm> then look at their general education material and assessment at <http://www.jmu.edu/assessment/JMUAssess/GenEdOverview.htm>
- Toward Intentionality and Transparency: Analysis and Reflection on the Process of General Education Reform by Rita Kean, Dean of Undergraduate Studies, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Nancy Mitchell, Interim Director of General Education, University of Nebraska-Lincoln and David E. Wilson, Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Pages 4 - 8, Peer Review, Fall 2008, Association of Colleges and Universities;
  - What's Next on Accountability and Assessment powerpoint presentation from the IHE Audioconference on Assessment January 15, 2009 webinar attended by some group members;
  - Information and Communications Technology Literacy Proposal, submitted by the Center for Distance Education, in the College of Rural and Community Development, for Information and Communications Technology Literacy;
  - A brief summary of the Voluntary System of Accountability project, a partnership between the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) prepared by Dana Thomas (see <http://www.nasulgc.org/NetCommunity/Document.Doc?id=417>).

## **Gathering Constituent Input on the Core and Ideas for Revision**

Because the group was charged with hearing from campus constituents the following approaches were taken to gather constituent input:

- Assistant Provost Thomas addressed the Dean's Council asking them to invite each department to submit written input;
- Group members were asked to meet with department chairs in their college/school to solicit input directly and invite departments to submit written statements;
- A faculty and staff survey was prepared and distributed from February 20 to March 6, 2009. All full-time faculty and staff advisors were asked by email twice (once on February 20 and again on March 2) to complete the survey. The survey resulted in 184 responses (142 or 81.6% faculty). Attachments summarize the full collection of responses and tabulate responses for individual colleges and schools;
- Two group members met with the ASUAF senate on March 1, 2009 to gather student input;
- Open forums for student, faculty and staff were held as follows:
  - An audio conference for constituents at rural campuses was advertised widely and held March 6, 2009;
  - An open forum in the Wood Center Multilevel Lounge was held March 17, 2009 and
  - Two group members attended the student round table discussion at the Tanana Valley Campus on March 18, 2009.

## Detailed Recommendations

1. UAF should adopt a hybrid Core Curriculum (A Core with more flexibility through additional student choice of classes) rather than Core or General Education requirements. The committee voted 7 in favor of a new hybrid Core and 3 in favor of full General Education. No one on the committee supported retaining the current Core in its current form. This recommendation is supported by results from the faculty and staff survey; 53.2% of respondents supported (agree or strongly agree) keeping a Core while only 35.2% supported a General Education curriculum – 46.4% supported a blended (hybrid) model with a small number of Core requirements and a collection of general education requirements. Sixty-nine percent of respondents indicated that the current Core as a whole needs revision. Additional flexibility of class choice is supported by an examination of the Core curricula of UAF's peer institutions. The following specific issues need attention in new hybrid Core:
  - a. The Perspectives on the Human Condition component of the current Core was singled out as the component needing significant revision (67.1% of survey respondents). In particular, the following issues need attention:
    - i. The number of credits in this component of the Core was viewed as too high by the committee and by respondents to the faculty and staff survey (much too high or somewhat too high (51.1%), about right (42%), and much too low or somewhat too low (6.9%)). A reduction of 3- 4 credits is recommended.
    - ii. The substitution of foreign language coursework for a portion of this component of the Core needs attention in two areas; first, ethics should be a requirement for all students. Students taking the Alaska Native language, other non-English language, or American Sign Language option should not be allowed to avoid the ethics requirement as currently allowed; second, students completing the language option should not have to take more credits than those who do not.
  - b. Comments received on the survey and in public forums also indicated concern about the quality of learning outcomes in lower division written and oral communication requirements and how those courses are implemented.
  - c. The number of credits required in the current Core (38-40) was considered much too high or somewhat too high by 34.5%, about right by 58.2% and much too low or somewhat too low by 7.4% of respondents. The committee voted 6 in favor of reducing the number of credits and 3 voted to retain the current number of credits required. The committee recommends a reduction in the number of credits required for the new hybrid Core to a range of 34–36 credits.
3. UAF should adopt the AACU Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) Essential Learning Outcomes as the new major learning outcomes from our new hybrid Core curriculum. The LEAP outcomes are as follows (<http://www.aacu.org/leap/vision.cfm> Accessed April 20, 2009):

Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World –  
through study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences,



humanities, histories, languages and the arts – focused by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring;

Intellectual and Practical Skills, including inquiry and analysis, critical and creative thinking, written and oral communication, quantitative literacy, information literacy, teamwork and problem solving – practiced extensively, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects and standards of performance;

Personal and Social Responsibility, including civic knowledge and engagement – local and global, intercultural knowledge and competence, ethical reasoning and action, and foundations and skills for lifelong learning – anchored through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges;

Integrative and Applied Learning, including synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies – demonstrated through the application of knowledge, skills and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems.

Appendix 1 compares UAF's current Core curriculum and the AACU Essential Learning Outcomes side by side. The committee voted unanimously (10 – 0) in favor of adopting the AACU Essential Learning Outcomes as the basis for a new hybrid Core curriculum. This recommendation is supported, in part, by constituent input received on the faculty and staff survey on question 9 related to the skill sets that should be addressed. In particular, integrative learning, teamwork, problem solving, critical and creative thinking were strongly supported by respondents of the survey.

Adoption of these outcomes has several advantages. First, the outcomes have been well developed by scholars across the nation, and many institutions and state systems, e.g., Oregon, are adopting these outcomes. Second, LEAP provides guidance on educational practices to achieve the Essential Learning Outcomes, and there is a great deal of current work underway on how to assess student learning of these outcomes (see VALUE - Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education, <http://www.aacu.org/value/> accessed April 20, 2009). Third, the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes include modern expectations such as integrative and applied learning, civic knowledge and engagement at both local and global levels, skills for lifelong learning and teamwork. Fourth, much of UAF's current Core curriculum will carry over into a new hybrid Core based on the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes. Appendix 1 compares UAF's current Core and the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes side by side with key differences underlined.

4. Implementation of the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes should include the specific learning outcomes listed below; these outcomes may be addressed through additional courses or content embedded in one or more courses:
- a. Globalization , with a choice of completing foreign language courses, spending a semester abroad, having a service learning experience working with immigrants, or completing a world history, world geography or international economics course. The committee noted that this requirement is consistent with the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes and supported this outcome unanimously. As part of this outcome the committee recommends that the current *understanding of global economic interdependence* Core curriculum component be retained.
  - b. Sustainability (or Adaptation and Resilience) should be included as a learning outcome with a choice of emphasis on energy, the environment, social justice, or economic sustainability. The committee noted that this outcome could be included in the Personal and Social Responsibility component of the LEAP Essential Learning outcomes and unanimously supported inclusion of this outcome.
  - c. Outcomes related to knowledge about Alaska and its people, --e.g., Alaska Native Studies, Alaska and climate change, etc., --should be included as options within a new hybrid Core curriculum. The committee noted that this outcome relates to the *civic knowledge and engagement – local and global* outcome listed under Personal and Social Responsibility item in the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes. The committee supported (vote 8-2) inclusion of this option even though only 48% of respondents to the faculty and staff survey supported inclusion.
  - d. A first-year seminar course should be a required component of the new hybrid Core curriculum to facilitate student engagement and retention. This requirement is supported by the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes listing of methods for achieving the goals of liberal education (see High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter (2008) by George D. Kuh – an excerpt is included in Appendix 2).

The basic model proposed is similar to The Ohio State University, where faculty compete to teach freshman seminar topics of their choosing and are paid on top of their normal workload to teach them (see <http://freshmanseminars.osu.edu/index.cfm>; see especially – how to propose a seminar at: <http://freshmanseminars.osu.edu/Propose.cfm> accessed April 20, 2009). The group recommends a content-based course with some collection of advising and retention requirements such as the following:

- Develop a sense of a community by increasing student interactions with faculty and developing support networks and friendships among classmates

- Learn university-level expectations – e.g., time spent outside of class
- Submit a four-year plan (two-year for AA/AS) on DegreeWorks
- Check UAOnline for their first-year progress report
- Receive individual enrollment help as necessary, e.g., how to add, swap, drop, withdraw, change major, check account balance, etc.
- Register for the following semester
- Learn the purpose and intended learning outcomes of the new hybrid Core curriculum and learn about the major represented by the faculty teaching the seminar
- Improve academic skills
- Become familiar with campus resources and organizations
- Develop critical thinking and writing skills
- Receive encouragement to plan a career
- Develop good citizenship (e.g., voting, volunteerism, taking part in public hearings, etc.)

The committee recommends the seminar courses have an "F" designator and an oversight process developed to ensure the advising and retention objectives are being implemented in each such course.

The committee supports alternative equivalent courses that could be an existing course in the major that adopts the advising and retention requirements, e.g., ES 101 – Introduction to Engineering. The committee was split on whether skill-based classes for underprepared students, e.g., DEVS 101 – Skills for College and Career Success, which adopt the advising and retention requirements, should be another available option.

- e. Technology and information literacy was the most significantly supported content area (81.7%) in the faculty and staff survey. It is hard to imagine a college major that will not be impacted significantly by technology in the future. The specific technology required will depend on the student's major, and should be covered in the major. However, the ability to understand and make scientific arguments, based upon mathematics, and the ability to communicate those arguments in written form dictate that all students develop functionality in word processing and spreadsheets early on in their academic career. The ability to expeditiously, accurately, and fruitfully search for pertinent information on the topic at hand dictates that an information technology course be taken early on in the student's academic career.

Therefore, the committee recommends that a 1-credit Technology and Information Literacy course be mandatory within the first 20 credits of a student's curriculum. Because many students will come to UAF MS Word and MS Excel literate, a module in

this course will assess the students' ability in those topic areas and allow placement into the next course module or require further skill development in those topics. Because word processing and accurate information searching are critical to many beginning courses, it is important that we address these topics early on in every student's career.

- f. The committee recommends that a capstone course in each major should be an element of the Core curriculum to facilitate the *synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies* element of the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes and assessment of a revised Core. However, a capstone course would not be required for AA or AS students.
  - g. The committee recommends that the upper division oral and written communication requirements be retained.
5. There are three common approaches to assessment of Core or General Education curricula ([http://amps-tools.mit.edu/tomprofblog/archives/2006/04/719\\_three\\_level.html#more](http://amps-tools.mit.edu/tomprofblog/archives/2006/04/719_three_level.html#more), accessed April 23, 2009). Below is an excerpt from that URL

#### THREE LEVELS OF GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT

Campuses typically use one or more of three basic approaches to assessing the general education program. They focus on assessment at the course, program, or institutional level. Course-level assessment ascertains how well students have mastered learned outcomes associated with specific general education courses. Faculty who staff these courses routinely assess course outcomes, refine their courses based on results, and report findings and changes to an oversight committee. Assuming course outcomes are well aligned with program outcomes, results can be generalized to the program, as a whole.

Program-level assessment embeds assessment within general education courses, and results are summarized for the program, as a whole. For example, Noel (2001) and colleagues examined two arts and humanities learned outcomes by developing a rubric and using it to assess student products from a sample of upper-division arts and humanities courses. The focus was on the program, not each individual course.

Institutional-level assessments usually embeds assessment in advanced courses in the majors, allowing the campus to see how well learning in the general education program generalizes to learning throughout the institution. For example, students at Truman State University (2004)

complete a general education portfolio in senior-level capstone courses in the major, and the portfolios are assessed to see how well students have mastered general education outcomes. This approach includes a check that students who have transferred from other institutions have developed the marks of a Truman State graduate.

The committee makes the following recommendations:

- a. UAF should implement a simple effective assessment of the new hybrid Core using multiple tools.
- b. The National Survey of Student Engagement and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (at least for AA/AS students) have already been implemented at UAF and should continue to be administered on a regular periodic basis as indirect measures of student learning in the new hybrid Core.
- c. For direct assessment of student learning, the committee recommends that assessment be embedded within the new hybrid Core and, where appropriate upper division major courses, e.g., writing intensive but results summarized for the Core curriculum, as a whole. Thus, UAF would adopt both the program level and institutional level assessments in the three approaches discussed above. Because the AA and AS curriculum is largely comprised of the Core, care must be taken to ensure that the learning outcomes of these students are assessed in the process. The UAF should establish objectives for the LEAP major learning outcomes and adopt a process for gathering assessment information on whether those objectives are being met or not in Core courses. Because students are more likely to do their best if assessment processes also have course grade and completion consequences, the committee generally supports a course embedded process. However, the focus of the embedded assessment should be on Core learning objectives, not an assessment of an individual course. As an example of an embedding process, consider the assessment of written communication. In writing-intensive courses a sample of papers could be scored using a common rubric and sub-scores for word choice, effective use of evidence, sentence structure, voice, organization, etc., assessed for strengths and weaknesses across students. This would provide information about possible curricular reform in the Core curriculum. A similar approach could be taken in the natural sciences and mathematics; rubrics with sub-scores would have to be established for these areas.
- d. The majority of the committee preferred portfolio assessment over capstone course assessment of the Core and both of those approaches over the use of a national test; a minority supported using a national test for assessment of the core or at least parts of the core. The faculty and staff survey supported capstone assessment (74.7%) over portfolio (55.1%) and a national or local exam (25.9%).
- e. The committee supported the use of a portfolio for either a sequence of courses, e.g., English 111, 211 or 213 and writing intensive courses or for individual students as one tool

- to assess the Core. However, portfolios may work better for some outcomes, e.g., written or oral communication, than others, e.g., globalization or sustainability. Some committee members noted that a portfolio assessment process could be very time consuming and could become the responsibility of a small number of departments. If portfolios are adopted, fairness and appropriate compensation or workload will need to be addressed.
- f. A majority of the committee did not support the use of a national test to assess Core learning outcomes because this approach could lead to “teaching to the test.” However, several committee members supported the use of the Collegiate Learning Assessment test after hearing positive support for it at a national meeting and because it provides a simple assessment process. This test could be administered to all students in a common required course, e.g., the ethics course, late in a student’s program; however, AA and AS students are not required to take such a course so an alternative would have to be determined to assess their outcomes.
  - g. The committee did not support the use of a capstone course to assess the Core. Some committee members argued that capstone courses should focus on the major not on the Core. In addition, the committee recognized that AA and AS students currently do not take such a capstone course but their learning outcomes are based on the Core and so need to be assessed. However, the committee recognized that a capstone course was a likely prospect for assessing the integrative and applied learning, including synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies intended LEAP learning outcome and supports the idea of a capstone experience in each major.
  - h. More than one learning objective may be assessed using the same process or tool. For example, written communication assessment could serve multiple purposes if the writing prompt addressed sustainability, globalization, and/or real-world challenges.
  - i. A sample of student work, say ¼ of available student papers assessed according to a rubric, may be used to assess learning outcomes for the new hybrid Core. A census of all student work is not necessary.
  - j. The committee recognizes that different assessment processes and/or tools may be used for the various LEAP intended learning outcomes - e.g., we could have one assessment technique for communication and another one for everything else.
  - k. The committee was supportive of empowering colleges, schools and relevant departments to formulate assessment of new hybrid Core components instead of dictating an approach.

The committee discussed and voted upon a number of other outcome proposals. These proposals arose from committee members, comments submitted in the faculty and staff survey or suggestions received

at public forums. These outcomes are listed below with an indication of whether the committee was unsupportive or split in its opinion:

- Family issues – including prenatal care, child rearing, family types and family issues was not supported by the committee.
- Personal finance (split opinion)
- Fitness/health/nutrition (split opinion)

The committee also offers the following comments and recommendations related to specific courses in the current Core curriculum:

1. In addition to the currently offered courses in the traditional disciplines of science to fulfill the natural science requirement, offer a interdisciplinary more general science course for non-majors that teaches the scientific method through active inquiry and focuses on how different scientific disciplines approach related problems (, e.g., Integrative Studies 240 Scientific Thinking and Doing, and Interdisciplinary Approach (various topics) at Otterbein College, or Science I at the University of British Columbia) in addition to area specific science courses (BIOL, PHYS, etc).
2. The majority of committee members supported an additional alternative to the current 2nd year English course choices (Engl 211 and Engl 213). Specifically, the committee recommended the creation of Engl 214, Academic Writing about Technical Fields (or Business and Technology or Technical Writing). This new course would be similar to Engl 211/213, except with a different focus area. The course would be designed to continue development in critical reading, thinking and writing, using a platform of technical fields. There seems to be a great variance among universities concerning the content of a "Technical Writing" course. Many teach this critical reading, thinking and writing as discussed above, which we recommend --some teach "Writing business letters (letters of inquiry, complaint, evaluation, and job application with resume), preparing tables, graphs, process descriptions, technical instructions, abstracts, grant proposals, and technical reports (progress, laboratory, survey, incident, inspection, feasibility and research)," which is the course description of UAF Engl 314. Committee member, Charlie Mayer did an initial search of UAF's Carnegie Classification peers and found that Technical Writing is an allowable option in the majority of Electrical/Computer Engineering programs. This proposal would move UAF in line with the majority of our academic peer institutions.
3. ART/MUS/THR 100X was the most commonly singled out course for criticism by students and faculty. The majority of these comments suggested that because there are often three different instructors involved the content is difficult to follow and there is a lot of variability in teaching style among instructors. Also, most students do not grasp the utility of this course which means that its function has not been articulated well. One student who spoke to the committee indicated he had taken four Art courses but he was still forced to take this course. He felt that he had expressed his clear appreciation for the arts through these elective courses so he saw no point in being forced to take this lower-division requirement after completing those courses.

## Appendix 1

### UAF's 2008-09 Baccalaureate Core Curriculum

Through the baccalaureate core experience, every UAF student is expected to achieve:

Multidimensional competency in written and oral English — including comprehension of complex materials and creation of clearly organized presentations of soundly reasoned thought in both oral and written form;

A solid grasp of quantitative reasoning and mathematical application;

An intellectual comfort with the sciences — including the scientific method, frameworks that have nurtured scientific thought, traditions of human inquiry and the impact of technology on the world's ecosystems;

An appreciation of cultural diversity and its implications for individual and group values, aesthetics and social and political institutions;

An understanding of global economic interdependence, sense of historical consciousness and a more critical comprehension of literature and the arts;

A better understanding of one's own values, other value systems and relationships between value systems and life choices.

### The AACU Essential Learning Outcomes

Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World – through study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages and the arts – focused by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring;

Intellectual and Practical Skills, including inquiry and analysis, critical and creative thinking, written and oral communication, quantitative literacy, information literacy, teamwork and problem solving – practiced extensively, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects and standards of performance;

Personal and Social Responsibility, including civic knowledge and engagement – local and global, intercultural knowledge and competence, ethical reasoning and action, and foundations and skills for lifelong learning – anchored through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges;

Integrative and Applied Learning, including synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies – demonstrated through the application of knowledge, skills and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems.

Underlining indicates new learning outcomes compared to UAF's current Core curriculum



## Appendix 2 - **Connecting Essential Learning Outcomes with High-Impact Practices**

### Fostering Broad Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Natural World

- Common intellectual experiences (exploring “big questions” in history, cultures, science and society)
- Undergraduate research
- Learning communities (multiple courses linked to a “big question”)
- Diversity, civic and global learning
- Capstone Course

### Strengthening Intellectual and Practical Skills

- First-year seminars and experiences
- Writing-intensive courses (across the curriculum)
- Skill-intensive courses (quantitative reasoning, oral communication, and information literacy across the curriculum)
- Collaborative assignments and projects
- Undergraduate research
- Internships

### Deepening Personal and Social Responsibility

- Common intellectual experiences (exploring “big questions” in history, culture, science and society)
- Diversity, civic, and global learning
- Ethics-intensive courses
- Collaborative assignments and projects
- Service and community-based learning

### Practicing Integrative and Applied Learning

- Learning communities (multiple courses linked to a “big question”)
- Undergraduate research
- Service and community-based learning
- Internships
- Capstone projects and culminating experiences