

## **Saint Mary's Core Overview: Where are we?**

- Learning Goals: broad descriptions of areas, and justifications  
Adopted spring 2008
- Learning Outcomes: specific, measurable skills, habits and exposures  
Adopted spring 2011
- Core Curriculum Committee  
Elected spring 2011
- Beginnings of associations between courses and Learning Goals

**Main goal for 2011-12:** finalize those associations (i.e., “designations”) for courses first-year students routinely take.

## **Chief Duties for 2011-12**

### Departments:

- Apply for "Core Designation" for some of their courses (Fall)

### Working Groups:

- Vet those applications: Are these courses appropriate for the core? Do they fulfill the requisite learning outcomes? (Winter)

### Core Curriculum Committee:

- Final determination of core courses (Early Spring)

Working groups are liaisons between departments and CCC.

Each WG consists of

- Chair (a member of the CCC)
- Four appointed faculty members (experts and interested others)
- Community assistance (when desired and appropriate)

## Old Core Requirements

- Collegiate Seminar: 4 courses
- Composition: 2 courses
- Area Requirements:
  - Area A: Humanities: 2 courses
  - Area B/Mathematics: 1 course
  - Area B /Science: 1 lab course
  - Area C: Social Sciences: 2 courses
- Theology & Religious Studies: 2 courses
- Diversity: one course.
- Language: level 3 proficiency
- January Term: four courses

## Problems with Old Requirements

- *Lack of integration* between areas of the core, exacerbated by a “silo mentality” of department/program ownership of areas
- *Lack of consistency* in the Area Requirements, which were defined purely in terms of breadth, not in terms of core learning
- *Lack of intentional development and integration* outside of the major disciplines
- *Lack of oversight and ability to make changes*, as there was no assessment and no faculty body responsible for the core

## **Key questions driving the new core:**

- What do we want students to learn? What knowledge and skills do we wish them to gain?
  - i.e., *learning goals and outcomes*
- Where are our students learning successfully, and where do they (and we) need to improve?
  - i.e., *assessment*
- How can we review (and revise) our choices?
  - i.e., the *Core Curriculum Committee and Working Groups*

# **The Core Curriculum**

A familiar structure (areas)

Very different mindset (learning outcomes)

Needful of a catchier name ( ?? )

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## **New Core Requirements**

- Collegiate Seminar - 4 courses
- Composition - 3 courses (upper division writing)
- Artistic Understanding - 2 courses
- Mathematical Understanding - 1 course
- Scientific Understanding - 1 course
- Social, Cultural, Historical Understanding - 2 courses
- Theological Understanding - 2 courses
- Engaging the World Goals - 4 goals
- Language - level 3 proficiency
- January Term - 4 courses

**The nuts and bolts of the new core:** It's not primarily about the courses ...

- Twelve Learning goals – broad areas of learning that define the new core
- Learning outcomes – specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students must learn and which will define core courses and experiences
- Rationales – the Senate's official “signing statements” for the outcomes, which guides their interpretation and application
- Assessment – meaningful and manageable measurement of student learning

## **The nuts and bolts of the new core: 3 areas of 4 goals each**

The Core Curriculum is the foundational and essential learning expected of all undergraduate students and the processes by which students achieve that learning.

### **Habits of Mind**

- Critical Thinking
- Shared Inquiry
- Written and Oral Communication
- Information Evaluation and Research Practices

### **Pathways to Knowledge**

- Mathematical and Scientific Understanding
- Artistic Understanding
- Theological Understanding
- Social, Historical, Cultural Understanding

### **Engaging the World**

- The Common Good
- American Diversity
- Global Perspective
- Community Engagement



**The nuts and bolts of the new core:** Where the goals will be fulfilled and assessed

**Habits of Mind** – Through an integrated and developmental effort by Composition (2 courses), Collegiate Seminar (4 courses), and upper-division writing in the majors (1 course), supplemented by other programs such as FYAC. All these constituencies sit together on the Habits of Mind WG, chaired by Jim Sauerberg.

**Pathways to Knowledge** – Through courses offered by various departments. Each goal has its own WG, chaired by a CCC member, which will be responsible for reviewing and designating courses submitted by departments.

**Engaging the World** – Either through departmental courses or through approved co-curricular or extra-curricular learning opportunities. There is a WG to oversee the “community” goals (the Common Good and Community Engagement) and one to oversee the “diversity” goals (American Diversity and Global Perspective), each chaired by a member of the CCC.

## Learning Goals and Outcomes: A specific example

- **Area C:** take two courses from Anthropology, Economics, History, Politics, Psychology, Sociology, and (in some cases) Ethnic Studies and Women's Studies.
  - The emphasis is on the number of "dips" into these specific departments (but not through social science courses in, say, Kinesiology)
  - There is no emphasis on what has to occur in those courses.
  - Cannot "double-dip" these Area requirements with major requirements. E.g. a Sociology major still had to take two non-Sociology courses in this area.
- **Social, Historical and Cultural Understanding Learning Goal:** meeting the SHC LG requires two courses in which students explore human data (outcome #1), learn social science or historical theory (outcome #2), and practice social science or historical method (outcome #3).
  - The emphasis is on student learning (and our teaching) of these learning outcomes.
  - No department "owns" this LG. Courses in the traditional departments will have to teach these outcomes in order to receive designation. Courses outside the traditional departments that teach these outcomes with disciplinary expertise may also receive designation.
  - Students can "double-dip" all core requirements with their majors.

## **SMC Core Curriculum Course Designation Procedures: WGs**

- 1) The WG Chair has the authority to invite other community members to WG meetings. S/He also has the authority to close meetings.
- 2) It is the proposer's responsibility to submit a complete, well-formed application. However, when desired by the WG, its Chair may ask the proposers for additional information. When the need arises, the WG may also ask for the input of those knowledgeable about the proposal.
- 3) WG chairs are encouraged to work with proposers, with the assistance of the CCC Chair when necessary, to align proposals with the core. In particular, proposers should be allowed to submit revisions when the WG feels the proposal has merit but is lacking in one or more ways.
- 4) The Working Groups do not keep minutes. Instead WG Chairs will report to the CCC on each application. This report will be a brief outline of strengths and weaknesses, or, alternately, an annotated approval-rubric.
- 5) Working Groups should endeavor to work by consensus. When the opinions of the members on a proposal fail to reach consensus, the Chair will poll the individual WG faculty as to whether they 'recommend' or 'not recommend' (allowing 'abstain') designation for the core, and will report this vote as part of her/his report.
- 6) The WG chair is responsible for meeting the assigned timelines.

## **SMC Core Curriculum Course Designation Procedures: CCC**

- 1) As the faculty's elected, representative body, the CCC has final authority for the designation of courses for the core.
- 2) For each proposal, the CCC will consider the material presented by the WG Chair, and will endeavor to respect the recommendation of the WG.
- 3) If necessary, the CCC may consult members of the college community.
- 4) When the CCC feels its consideration is sufficient, it will, by majority vote, do one of the following
  - (i) Designate the course for the core,
  - (ii) Deny designation for the core, or
  - (iii) Remand the proposal back to the WG for further work.

A quorum, which is defined as five faculty members, must be present during the vote, and the required majority is a majority of those present.

- 5) When a course has been denied designation, the Chairs of the CCC and the appropriate WG will request a meeting with the proposer(s) to discuss the proposal. If circumstances demand, the CCC and WG chair can agree to bring the proposal back to the CCC for reconsideration.
- 6) The CCC will report to the UEPC and Senate on the courses it has designated for the core. Information on votes and earlier discussion is not within the purview of those bodies, and will not be forwarded.
- 7) The Chair of the CCC is responsible for meetings the assigned timelines.

## **(Partial) Core Curriculum Timeline: 2011-2012**

### **September 2011:**

- Course submission requirements, Application process finalized (CCI/C)
- Course proposal evaluation rubrics developed (WGs)
- Chairs identify candidate courses (departments)
- Form of Collegiate Seminar determined (Campus)

### **October 1st 2011:**

- Course proposal evaluation rubrics finalized (WGs)
- Chair submit interest statement to CCC (departments)

### **October 2011**

- English 3/4/5 substance finalized (HoM WG, English)
- Workshops or open sessions for course (re)designers (CCI/C)

### **October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

- Open sessions for faculty writing course designation applications
- Working groups discussion of assessment rubrics (WGs)

### **November 2011:**

- LG Assessment Rubrics under development (WGs)

**December 2011:**

- Designation applications due (departments)

**December/January 2012:**

- Designation applications evaluated, dept's contacted if concerns (WGs, CCC)

**February 2012:**

- Revised applications due, if necessary (departments)
- Revised applications evaluated (WG's, CCC)

**April 2012:**

- Everything decided for 2012-13

**May 2012:**

- SMC Core course offerings published (CCIC, College Communication)

**June 2012:**

- Orientation of first-year students

**August 2012**

- First-year students begin in SMC Core